

## **Interdisciplinary Studies 3713**

### **MODES OF INQUIRY ACROSS THE FIELDS OF STUDY**

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#### **Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching: Mission and Goals**

It is the **Mission** of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching to foster intellectual and professional growth and integrity. To that end, the **goal** of the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching is to create a context that nurtures the interdisciplinary learner who:

- Acquires and demonstrates content and discipline knowledge
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgement of and engagement in research-based, reflective, culturally responsive practices
- Is a producer, disseminator, and critical consumer of research
- Demonstrates an awareness and acknowledgment of and engagement in social justice and equitable practices, and
- Articulates his/her professional philosophy and demonstrates a strong professional identity.

This course, IDS 3713, is one of many classes offered within the Department of Interdisciplinary Learning and Teaching that will fulfill this mission and goal.

#### **CATALOG DESCRIPTION**

Study of thinking in the sciences, social studies, mathematics, language arts, and fine arts through interdisciplinary investigations. Course experiences include modeling, practice, and analysis of ways of inquiring in the several subject areas, and seeking their implications for interdisciplinary inquiries.

#### **RATIONALE**

An educated person has the propensity and ability to continue to learn. Lifelong learning is possible if the individual is able to understand new developments in the various fields of study that comprise human experience: the sciences, the arts, and the humanities. This course examines the different ways of knowing and modes of inquiry practiced by scholars and thinkers to develop knowledge in diverse fields of study. Through this course, students examine the common qualities as well as unique attributes of inquiry in the several fields of study and the diverse ways in which people create meanings. Students will also explore how their individual perspectives, histories, experiences, and values influence the inquiry process.

## **GOALS OF UTSA CORE CURRICULUM**

Enable students:

- To assess the perspectives and accomplishments of the past.
- To move to the future with an informed and flexible outlook.

Promote:

- Intellectual adaptability;
- Ethical awareness;
- Transfer among diverse modes of thought.

Cultivate:

- Verbal, numerical, and visual skills that are necessary to analyze and synthesize
- Construct argument;
- Identify and solve problems.

Foster:

Understanding of the intellectual and cultural pluralism of modern society as it is reflected in each of the following:

Natural Sciences and Mathematics

Behavioral, Cultural, and Social Sciences

Language, Literature, and Artistic Expression

Develop:

Critical awareness of the continuities and discontinuities of human thought, history, and culture to prepare students to meet the demands of change.

### **Domain IV: Interdisciplinary Studies Objectives**

Students should:

- Demonstrate intellectual flexibility;
- Explore the bridges and barriers among various forms of understanding;
- Understand the nature and limits of different ways of knowing and different academic fields

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Course experiences are designed to develop:

- Language for expressing ideas about thought and thinking.
- Thinking dispositions: attitudes, values, and habits of mind concerning thinking.
- Knowledge and understanding of diversity of thought: different ways of thinking used by critical and creative inquirers in the natural sciences, mathematics, the literary arts, the fine arts, the humanities, and the social sciences.
- Comprehension of the common and the specialized processes of critical and creative inquiry that contribute to the generation of knowledge.
- Knowledge of the influences of content and context on inquiry.
- Abilities to apply knowledge and thinking strategies from one content area to another, and to find connections between and among seemingly different areas of knowledge.
- Abilities to reflect on your own thinking to identify the characteristics of your own inquiries.

## **COURSE CONTENT**

Course activities will explore inquiry in the natural sciences, mathematics, the literary arts, the fine arts, the humanities, and the social sciences. You will read scholars' analyses of their own inquiries, view videos of interviews with inquirers and biographies about them, and study analyses of critical and creative inquiry. You will also conduct your own inquiry into a topic of special interest and for which various resources are readily available.

Four questions serve as themes for this course. These questions should guide your reflections on course assignments and activities.

1. How is inquiry influenced by **context**; i.e., the body of knowledge, the language, and generally accepted beliefs, theories, and models (paradigms) in a field of study?
2. How is inquiry influenced by **context** (e.g., the era in which it is conducted and the characteristics of the inquirer: culture, gender, socio-economic status, ethnicity, age, experience, and other circumstantial and idiosyncratic factors)?
3. What are the **common qualities** of inquiry that apply to all the fields of study?
4. How is inquiry in each field **different** from inquiry in others?

## **COURSE ASSIGNMENTS**

### **1. INQUIRY PROJECT**

You will select a topic for your own interdisciplinary inquiry, which is of interest to you, and for which varied and sufficient resources for an in depth study are readily available. An inquiry topic selection form must be completed and submitted, showing your preliminary questions and the resources you have located for your inquiry. Your topic must be approved by your instructor prior to its exploration for your inquiry project. Please see the course calendar for the due date.

### **INQUIRY PROJECT PART 1 (20 points) See Course Calendar for Due Date.**

Part 1 of your inquiry project serves as a foundation for your search. That paper addresses these questions:

1. How would an inquirer use at least three different perspectives to approach your topic?
2. What questions would you ask from each perspective? What sources of information can you find?

You need to consult materials on your topic that provide you with some background knowledge prior to beginning your search. Then, you need to find various types of sources to develop your search. These might include living individuals, experimentation, personal documents, historical archives, artifacts, audiovisual resources, and books, among others. You are expected to be specific about the resources you plan to consult.

3. What are your hypotheses about ways of thinking that you might use in your search?

Guide to Selecting Resources: Where can I go, whom can I see, what can I consult that will help me answer these questions?

Guide to Thinking About Thinking and Ways of Knowing: What evidence do I have to support my assertions about the kinds of thinking that I think I will use as I explore this

topic from these different perspectives? Which of these ways of thinking that I am describing are presented in course readings and audiovisuals?

Requirements for the Inquiry Project Part 1: You must incorporate a minimum of six sources on thinking and ways of knowing in the fields through which you choose to view your inquiry topic, at least three of which must be from the course bibliography. Remember, these sources will not apply specifically to your topic, but to the modes of inquiry each discipline would employ to study the topic. Your Inquiry Project: Part 1 should be the equivalent of six double spaced print pages in length, not including title pages, illustrations, and bibliography. Follow APA guidelines for publication.

**Criteria for Inquiry Project Part 1** Your paper will be evaluated by the following criteria. Please consult this list when preparing your submission for Inquiry Project Part 1:

1. At least 3 different perspectives on your topic are included in your paper.
2. At least 6 sources on thinking and ways of knowing that are germane to the perspectives on your topic (3 must be from the course materials; all 6 may be from course materials).
3. The paper identifies researchable questions that you are asking about your topic.
4. The paper identifies resources that can be consulted to explore the questions you pose. Types of resources should include at least four (4) of the following: Places, objects/artifacts, People, films/videos, still pictures, documents, experiments, newspapers and magazines, personal papers (e.g., letters, notes, diaries), published books and printed materials, technological resources (CD-ROM, electronic media).
5. Your paper discusses your hypotheses about the ways of thinking that you might use as you conduct your exploration of the topic and demonstrates your understanding of the modes of inquiry explored to date in class and through course readings. Your references should illustrate these ways of thinking (see criterion 2).
6. Your paper demonstrates your ability to plan a substantive and creative inquiry.
7. The paper is clearly written in a narrative style.
8. A bibliography cites all sources in consistent format.
9. The paper is the equivalent of six (6) double-spaced print pages in length, not including title pages, illustrations, and bibliography.
10. The paper is free of typographical and grammatical errors.

**INQUIRY PROJECT PART 2 (30 points). See Course Calendar for Due Date.**

You will write a first-person narrative that describes your inquiry into the topic you have selected (and which has been approved by your instructor). This paper builds from Part 1 of your inquiry project, using at least three different perspectives and multiples of at least four different types of resources to explore your questions. Please note that you must determine that several of each of at least four different types of resources that are available to you before you develop your search.

The narrative reconstruction of your explorations, written in the first person, will explain the content and process of your inquiry, its achievements and limitations, the connections that you discover, and how the search developed as you consciously examined your topic from the perspectives of several different fields of study. The paper should read like a detective story. It should specify and give examples of the ways of thinking that you used when conducting the search.

The text of Part 2 of your inquiry project should be about 15-20 double spaced print pages in a font size no smaller or larger than 12 point, with 1 inch margins and headers and footers, excluding support materials and references. A list of all references consulted must be attached. Please follow APA guidelines for publication.

### **Criteria for Inquiry Project Part 2**

The following criteria should be consulted as you write your narrative reconstruction of your search, report your findings, analyze your findings, and reflect on your thinking during the search:

1. The inquiry is clearly described in a first person narrative.
2. Questions from at least three (3) perspectives are identified.
3. Several resources of at least four (4) different types of are cited (e.g., several people, places, books, newspapers and magazines, etc.)
4. More than one source is cited for each of the major findings reported (to verify the finding).
5. The paper is about 15-20 double-spaced print pages, with one-inch margins all around. Font size is no smaller or larger than 12 point.
6. The paper is free of typographical and grammatical errors.
7. A composite bibliography cites all sources in consistent format.
8. The search builds from the discussion of thinking processes in Part 1 of your inquiry project by identifying the ways of thinking that were used during the search and explaining how those ways of thinking were useful to the search.
9. The paper identifies and explains the big ideas the author has formulated about the topic (i.e., principles, laws, theories, generalizations), and explains how those ideas are supported by the findings.
10. The search demonstrates the author's ability to conduct a substantive and creative inquiry.

### **STUDENT PRESENTATIONS (10 points) See Course Calendar for Dates**

An in-class presentation of the student's project development is scheduled toward the end of the course. Visual aids including PowerPoint and/or artifacts should be included in your presentation. The instructor will provide dates and specific guidelines. Dates for these are noted on the course calendar. Each presentation is worth 10 points.

**The recycling of student papers and/or research accomplished prior to the beginning of this class is strictly forbidden. Evidence of such activity will result in consequences outlined in your student handbook for scholastic dishonesty.** In this course you are expected to consult many and diverse primary as well as secondary sources. These will probably include interviews. Please make sure that you cite every source of information you consult and that you translate the language of your sources in your own words. Plagiarism is cause for dismissal from this university.

### 3. QUIZ Essay Questions (30 Points)

One quiz over course readings and class discussion will be given as a take home assignment. It is expected that students will apply their knowledge to the prompts provided and answer each question in paragraph form. Specific questions on course readings will be assigned for essay response. Written essays must be typed with one-inch margins, headers and footers. Each must be edited for spelling and grammar before submission. Font size should be 12 point. Use APA guidelines for publication.

#### **Criteria for Essays**

Essays will be evaluated by the following criteria. Please refer to these when preparing the entries for your portfolio:

1. The essay responds directly to the assigned question(s).
2. The points of view are clearly expressed.
3. Evidence for each point of view is taken from course readings, videos, and other supporting materials.
4. The essay demonstrates the author's thoughtful and thorough discussion of the question.
5. References are cited in a consistent format (APA) in the body of the essay.
6. A bibliography cites all sources in a consistent format for citations.

The activities completed at the Institute of Texas Cultures will be a major aspect of this quiz grade and should demonstrate your knowledge of the resources available to you and your ability to conduct social research.

#### **INQUIRY NOTEBOOK (10 points)**

You must keep a notebook, which chronicles your search into your selected and approved topic. Your instructor will provide guidelines for entries. See the web site, *Pathways for Inquiry*, for suggestions: <http://www.martinello.net>. At the conclusion of the semester, you will submit your Inquiry Notebook for evaluation. Your notebook will also take into account your participation in the class discussions, attendance, Institute of Texan Cultures activities and WEBCT responses.

Your grade will be calculated in the following way:

|              |           |
|--------------|-----------|
| Project 1    | 20 Points |
| Project 2    | 30 Points |
| Presentation | 10 Points |
| Quiz         | 30 Points |
|              |           |
| Notebook     | 10 Points |

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100 Points

#### **ACADEMIC HONESTY**

The University expects every student to maintain a high standard of individual integrity for work done. Scholastic dishonesty is a serious offense, which includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test or other class work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work and the unauthorized incorporation of that work in one's own work), and

collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing college work offered for credit). In cases of scholastic dishonesty, the faculty member responsible for the class may initiate disciplinary proceedings against the student.

### **ATTENDANCE**

Students are expected to attend all class meetings and to arrive on time for class. Because much of the learning in this course is gained through class participation, and your contribution will be important points will be deducted for excessive absences from your final total of points earned in this class. Please notify your professor through email if you have an emergency and will be unable to attend class. You will be responsible for class activities and getting your own copies of class notes when you have been absent. Excessive tardiness will also reduce your final grade.

### **CLASS PARTICIPATION**

Class sessions are intended to be interactive. I believe that we can learn a great deal from each other. Therefore, individual student contributions to discussion are considered important and desirable. You are expected to read all assignments for each class session prior to the class meeting. You should come to class prepared to raise questions from the readings, and, periodically, to report on your assignments for the course. During the semester, you may be given journal activities for your inquiry notebook that can enrich class discussion. It is expected that you will complete such assignments and include them in your notebook. Failure to do so will affect your grade.

### **READINGS**

You are expected to read and view all assigned references for this course. Essays and quizzes are designed to test you over the content of the readings.

### **MAKE-UP WORK**

Make-up work is permitted only for students who VERIFY that their absence is for religious reasons, incapacitating physical illness, or to conduct official University business. While some faculty may permit students to REVISE work that was previously submitted by the due date, no student will be permitted to submit late papers or to avoid scheduled quizzes or other assignments and course requirements which are listed on the course calendar and/or in the syllabus.

### **OTHER REQUIREMENTS and INFORMATION**

Students with disabilities must be registered with the Office of Disabled Student Services (MS 2.03.18; telephone 210-458-4157) in order to receive support services.

### **ExCET COMPETENCIES ADDRESSED BY THIS COURSE**

The Examination for the Certification of Educators in Texas (ExCET) is a state-mandated examination which purpose is to ensure that educators possess the necessary professional and content knowledge to teach in the Texas public schools. This course addresses the Elementary Comprehensive certification competencies listed on Attachment 1.

### **GRADES**

You are expected to study and to use the criteria for the assignments in this course. They are intended to guide you in completing the assignments. Please note, however, that merely meeting the criteria for an assignment does not constitute the highest level of achievement. The points for each assignment will be totaled for your final grade.

