

IDST495 - Interdisciplinary Studies Capstone

Fall 2018

INSTRUCTOR: Gail Ledford
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CLASS MEETS: Monday 5:15-8:00pm (EST)
Web enhanced using Blackboard

CLASS MATERIAL:

- Supplies for Portfolio Project – need later in semester
- No Textbook Required

CATALOG COURSE DESCRIPTION:

BIS major (558), senior standing, or permission of the instructor. Examination of interdisciplinary scholarship and problem solving, with application based on students' areas of emphasis in the major.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

- To understand why and how interdisciplinarians interrogate disciplinary perspectives
- To identify and develop attitudes that are conducive to interdisciplinary critical thinking
- To develop an understanding of interdisciplinary integration and its results.
- To develop and apply analytical tools gained from the disciplinary studies
- To compare disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to research

REQUIRED SKILLS:

- Ability to navigate Blackboard, including reading and posting messages and assignments
- Ability to navigate the Web (use a browser) and handle multiple open windows
- Ability to browse Web pages
- Ability to open and navigate PDF files using Adobe Acrobat
- Knowledge of how to create, send, open, close, and save files and attachments with Microsoft Word and Microsoft PowerPoint
- Basic word processing skills

CLASSROOM CITIZENSHIP:

On occasion, your peers or I may express an idea or give an example that you may not like or that may not be consistent with your life experiences and/or beliefs. We need to strive to remember the human factor in this class, and take care to express our rebuttals in a fashion that addresses the difference in our views, but does not attack the person. We also need to take care not to discount others' experiences, and to try to acknowledge that multiple perspectives exist. To this end, I will not tolerate communication that degrades or devalues anyone in the class.

COURSE POLICIES:

- All due dates and times for this class are in Eastern Standard time zone (if you have any questions about the time zone please see one of the various websites available like www.time.gov/).
- I will on occasion contact students through the Blackboard email list. This list does use your WKU email address. I encourage you to either regularly check this account or have it forwarded to the address that you regularly use. Please also be aware of the limitations on your mailbox; if it is full, your message will bounce back to me and I will not have any way of conveying relevant course information to you.
- Whenever possible (with the exception of urgent announcements or individual messages) I post course information and announcements on the announcements page of blackboard; I suggest you read these announcements on a daily basis.
- Make up assignments will **NOT** be permitted. In the case of an extreme documented emergency (not feeling well, vacations, weddings, computer issues unless it is an university computer issue, etc. do not count as emergencies) make-up opportunities may be granted, but make up assignments will be penalized at minimum one letter grade (or more at the instructor's discretion).
- A portion of this course will be completed in groups. A natural part of any group interaction is conflict. Conflict is not necessarily a negative phenomenon but can be uncomfortable. With the exception of violations of university policy, you are expected to deal with group problems on your own (i.e. without the intervention of the professor). I am however always available to act as a sounding board; please talk with me if you are having group difficulties.
- Emergencies will be dealt with on a case-by-case basis.

ASSIGNMENTS & PERFORMANCE EVENTS

- **Personal Portfolio 100 points (Individual)**
You will create a portfolio that summarizes your experiences as an interdisciplinary major but also allows you to present your background in a meaningful way to potential employers, graduate programs, or other interested parties. Your portfolio must include:
 - Title Page
 - Table of Contents
 - Personal Essay
 - Interdisciplinary studies program section (copy of program description and/or requirements as well as a statement of your area of focus that highlights some of the courses that you have taken and why they enriched your program of study)

- Personal discovery section (include a personal SWOT: strengths, weaknesses, opportunity or threats for future success): ideally this assignment will help you identify what characteristics make someone in your chosen field successful as well as help you identify your personal strengths and weakness and how those will either help or hinder your future success.
- Career section (resume, academic transcript, samples of writing/artwork/design/lesson plans/project, and other information that you think a professional in your field would find useful when evaluating you as a potential job candidate.

Please note that depending on your area of concentration, there may be other materials that you find useful to add to the portfolio. Feel free to add materials and customize the project to make it as valuable as possible to you in your future endeavors!

➤ **Personal Essay 50 points (Individual)**

This essay will be your opportunity to demonstrate the role of your interdisciplinary major in the larger academic environment as well as your own potential career. This essay will also serve as the introduction to your learning and career planning portfolio. As you write your essay, be sure to reflect on your entire college career and how your experiences have enriched you as well as made you a more marketable candidate in your intended field or career.

Expect to be graded on the overall interdisciplinary ideas and reflections that you present and support. Your final paper should be 2-3 pages with standard 1 inch margins, double-spaced, using a readable font such as Times New Roman 12 point font.

➤ **Cover Letter/Resume Writing assignment 100 (50 Cover Letter – 50 Resume) points (Individual)**

This assignment will be done in conjunction with a Career Service Workshop (details will be provided in class).

➤ **Personal Portfolio Presentation 50 points (Individual)**

Each student will be given an opportunity to present and discuss their portfolio in a one on one designated meeting with instructor.

➤ **Group Research Project: Proposal 50 points (Group)**

After conducting interdisciplinary research, gathering resources, and becoming more knowledgeable about your assigned topic, your group should prepare a brief statement (*no more than a 1/2 page*) that details the position (direction) that your group will be putting forward for the final project. Think carefully about your decision because *no changes* will be permitted unless your instructor has a concern about your topic or it does not meet the stated criteria. Failure to find enough research to complete the project is NOT a valid reason for submitting a topic change request!

➤ **Group Research Outline 50 points (Group)**

You will be divided into groups. Each group will be assigned a topic (Bluegrass music, Karst topography and caves, Coal, Tobacco, Bourbon whiskey, Horse industry – including horse racing, Auto industry, Poverty in Appalachia, Military or Tourism). You need to research the topic with a *Kentucky focus*. Your group will submit a comprehensive outline for your position presentation. Your outline should include in-text references as well as a bibliography or reference page. After conducting initial research, determine *the position* your group will further research and present to the class; one way to proceed with your topic would be to think about how Kentucky is positioned on a particular topic in regard to the larger United States. For example, you might decide to defend Kentucky's reliance on coal or tobacco in light of the national environmental or anti-smoking campaigns. This assignment is your group's opportunity to begin to figure out how to outline your main ideas and integrate the variety of references that you have found. The more detailed and thorough your outline is, the more feedback your instructor can provide you!

➤ **Group Presentation 50 points (Group)**

Because the group project is such an important (and interesting) piece to our class, I want you to have the opportunity to share your ideas with your classmates and to receive informal feedback from your peers as well as instructor. Although a variety of formats are possible (you could put together a PowerPoint presentation, a video, an audio clip, a demonstration, a display etc.) you will need to present your ideas to your class on your assigned days. You will also need to respond to class questions. Grading will be based on your project ideas, presentation of those ideas, and your ability to answer questions in a concise and accurate manner.

➤ **Peer Evaluations points/evaluation 50 points (Individual)**

You must complete a peer evaluation for each member of your group; please check the course schedule for due dates. You will evaluate members on a 5 point scale (5 being the highest and reserved for "ideal" group members who fully contribute to the project and 1 being the lowest, reserved for group members who only minimally participate in the completion of the project). The score you receive for your peer evaluation score will be the average of the scores your group members assign you, multiplied by 10. In the rare instance that a group member does not participate in any fashion towards the completion of the project, you can assign that member a 0. Any group member who receives consistent 0s from their group will receive a 0 on the assignment. I reserve the right to adjust individual paper/project grades based on the group's peer evaluations.

➤ **Attendance/Participation 100 points (Individual)**

Regular attendance is expected. The student is responsible for all information given in class. For five unannounced class meetings, participation points will be awarded. Students can earn up to 20 points during each of these sessions for a possible total of 100 points. Participation may include completion of an in class writing assignment, class discussion, and other activities. There are no make-up provisions for participation points; you must be present to earn.

GRADING SCALE

The final course grade will be based on how many points you have earned during the semester.

Personal Portfolio	100 pts	
Personal Essay	50 pts	540-600 = A
Cover Letter/Resume Writing	100 pts	480-539 = B
Portfolio Presentation	50 pts	420-479 = C
Group Research Proposal	50 pts	360-419 = D
Group Research Outline	50 pts	0-359 = F
Peer Evaluations	50 pts	
Group Presentation	50 pts	
Participation Points	100 pts	
Total Possible Points	600 pts	

Students must earn the specified number of points to achieve each grade level. There will be no exceptions, rounding, or curves.

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:

Dishonesty, such as cheating, plagiarism (unintentional or intentional), misrepresenting of oneself or an organization, knowingly furnishing false information to the University, or omitting relevant or necessary information to gain a benefit, to injure, or to defraud is prohibited. If the WKU Code of Student Conduct is violated the student may be expelled, suspended, placed on probation or given a lesser sanction. For more information such as definitions and examples of academic dishonesty visit

http://www.wku.edu/handbook/2009/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=59:academic-offenses&catid=36:academic-offenses&Itemid=60

Student work may be checked using plagiarism detection software

ADA STATEMENT

In compliance with university policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center in Downing Student Union, Rm. 1074. The phone number is (270)745-5004. *Please DO NOT request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a letter of accommodation from the Student Accessibility Resource Center.*

UNIVERSITY POLICY ON ABSENCES

For more information see:

http://www.wku.edu/handbook/2009/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=141:class-attendance&catid=38:university-policy&Itemid=55

I reserve the right to make changes to the course calendar, content, or assignments, as I deem appropriate throughout the semester. Such changes will be conveyed to you either in class or via email through blackboard.