

# Add Course Request

Submitted on: 2012-10-10 12:08:46

1. COURSE SUBJECT	INTD
2. COURSE NUMBER (OR PROPOSED NUMBER)	3995
3. COURSE TITLE	Individualized Study Across Academic Disciplin
4. INITIATING DEPARTMENT or UNIT	Individualized and Interdisciplinary Studies
5. NAME OF SUBMITTER	Monica Van Beusekom
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8. CONTACT PERSON	Kathryn Ratcliff, Chair, IMJR Comm
9. UNIT NUMBER of CONTACT PERSON (U-BOX)	2068
10. PHONE of contact person	Phone: 6-3886
11. EMAIL of of contact person	Email: kathryn.ratcliff@uconn.edu
12. Departmental Approval Date	01/20/2012
13. School/College Approval Date	UICC 4/30/12
14. Names and Dates of additional Department and School/College approvals	
15. Proposed Implementation Date	Term: Spring, Year: 2013
16. Offered before next printed catalog is distributed?	Yes
17. General Education Content Area	
18. General Education Skill Code (W/Q). Any non-W section?	
19. Terms Offered	Semester: Spring Year: Every_Year
20. Sections	Sections Taught: 1
21. Student Number	Students/Sections: 15
22. Clarification:	
23. Number of Credits	1 if VAR Min: Max: credits each term
24. INSTRUCTIONAL PATTERN	

This is an online course with some face-to-face opportunities at the Storrs campus. Regional campus students will be included in face-to-face opportunities through teleconferencing. The course will include lectures, readings, three 2-4 page papers, peer reviews, discussion board contributions, and an integrative exercise.

25. Will this course be taught in a language other than English?	No If yes, then name the language:
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26. Please list any prerequisites, recommended preparation or suggested preparation:  
None.

27. Is Instructor, Dept. Head or Unit <b>Consent Required</b> ?	Instructor
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28. Permissions and Exclusions:

29. Is this course <b>repeatable for credit</b> ?	No If yes, total credits allowed: Allow multiple enrollments in same term?
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30. <b>Grading Basis</b>	Graded
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31. If satisfactory/unsatisfactory grading is proposed, please provide **rationale**:  
n/a

32. Will the course or any sections of the course be taught as Honors?  
AsHonors

33. Additional Details:

34. Special Attributes:

35. **REGIONAL CAMPUS AVAILABILITY:**  
Because this is an online course, it will be available to students at all the regional campuses. Face-to-face opportunities will be made available to regional campus students through teleconferencing.

36. **PROVIDE THE PROPOSED TITLE AND COMPLETE CATALOG COPY:**  
  
No new catalog copy required.

Brief description of special topics course:  
  
Individualized Study Across Academic Disciplines  
Spring, 1 credit, instructor consent, graded.  
  
Introduction to disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity. Recommended for students exploring an application for admission to the Individualized Major Program. Instructor permission required. Offered by the Individualized Major Program.

37. **RATIONALE FOR ACTION REQUESTED**  
  
a) Reason for adding course:  
Students in the Individualized Major Program lack a structured opportunity to explore disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity at the start of their majors. The program currently requires students, at the time of application, to submit a 2-3 page statement of purpose

that provides an explanation of and rationale for their interdisciplinary plan of study. Program staff and members of the IMJR Advisory and Admissions Committee have found that students have difficulty articulating the contributions of different disciplinary perspectives to the theme of their major. The content of the statement of purpose (and an associated plan of study) are typically reviewed by academic advisors in the Individualized & Interdisciplinary Studies Program office and by (potential) faculty advisors to the particular students.

The variability in the quality of students' conceptualization of their majors and their personal versions of interdisciplinary study is often related to the different patterns of interaction and discussion with advisors. In general, students who engage in multiple discussions that explore both practicalities and concepts, and prepare multiple drafts of their statements of purpose, are those who produce more successful, conceptually complete individualized major proposals. This course is designed to provide a more structured format in which students develop their proposals and engage in relevant discussion.

The course, organized in eight modules, combines an introduction to disciplinary and interdisciplinarity with structured opportunities for the student to define his/her intellectual focus. Through TED talks and faculty podcasts about interdisciplinary issues, interdisciplinary academic case studies, and analyses of conceptual and methodological disciplinary differences and strategies for interdisciplinary integration, this course provides students with a framework within which to place their multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary focus of interest.

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- \*\*Explain the most significant differences between the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities and describe the key features of the disciplines relevant to his/her field of study;
- \*\*Explain multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity;
- \*\*Develop a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary plan of study;
- \*\*Analyze the challenges of and formulate strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplines.

b) Why course is appropriate for inclusion at 1000 or 2000 level:

n/a

c) Justification for enrollment restrictions:

INTD 3995 catalog copy indicates instructor consent.

d) Effect on other departments:

Students taking this course who intend to apply to the Individualized Major Program will be asked to consult with potential faculty advisors in the disciplines that are relevant to the focus of their major. Currently, students who seek admission to the Program must do the same; therefore, this will not create a new expectation of faculty advisors. Rather, consultation will now be done in the context of the course. (Students who decide not to pursue an individualized major will be asked to consult with current and potential faculty advisors in their (proposed) major(s).)

e) Amount of overlap with existing courses:

The only course specific to individualized majors is the capstone course (INTD 4600W) and

addressing disciplinary, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity only at the close of the major is inadequate. While there are other interdisciplinary courses offered at the University, to our knowledge, these courses do not specifically focus on such themes as the rise of disciplines, conceptual and methodological differences among the natural sciences, social sciences, and humanities, and strategies for integration across disciplines.

f) Other departments consulted:

This course is proposed by the Individualized and Interdisciplinary Studies Program, a unit within Enrichment Programs which report to the Provost. The Individualized Major is offered by two of the University's Schools and Colleges, CLAS and CANR. The C&C Committees of both colleges commented on the proposal before it was submitted to the UICC for approval in April 2012. UICC approved the course as an experimental course on April 30, 2012.

g) Effects on regional campuses:

Because this course is offered online it will be available to students at the regional campuses as well as Storrs.

h) Specific costs approved by dean:

There are no additional costs associated with this course.

i) If course is to be cross listed supply reason for cross-listing:

n/a

j) If course is to be offered as an experimental course provide reason:

This course is offered as an experimental course so that the Individualized Major Program can determine whether it will indeed meet the goals set out. This will allow the program to make any necessary changes before introducing it as a regular course in the curriculum and possibly a required course for the Individualized Major.

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### 38. SYLLABUS:

Online URL: ( [https://web2.uconn.edu/senateform/request/course\\_uploads/mbv02002-1349885326-IndividualizedStudyAcross.doc](https://web2.uconn.edu/senateform/request/course_uploads/mbv02002-1349885326-IndividualizedStudyAcross.doc) )

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**39. Course Information: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question**

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**40. Goals of General Education: All Courses Proposed for a Gen Ed Content Area MUST answer this question**

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**41. Content Area and/or Competency Criteria: ALL General Education courses, including W and Q courses, MUST answer this question.: Specific Criteria**

a. **Arts and Humanities:**

b. **Social Sciences:**

c. **Science and Technology:**

i. **Laboratory:**

d. **Diversity and Multiculturalism:**

<p>43. <b>International:</b>  e. <b>Q course:</b>  f. <b>W course:</b></p>
<p>42. <b>RESOURCES:</b></p> <p>Does the department/school/program currently have resources to offer the course as proposed  <b>YES</b>  If <b>NO</b>, please explain why and what resources are required to offer the course.</p>
<p>43. <b>SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION:</b></p> <p>new special topic if existing course.</p>
<p><b>ADMIN COMMENT:</b></p> <p>Approved special topics course 2.25.2013</p>

*This course was initially approved by the Individualized Major Advisory and Admissions Committee on Jan. 20, 2012. The IMJR Advisory and Admissions Committee consists of faculty from CLAS and CANR, the two colleges that offer individualized majors as well as representatives from the School of Business, School of Education and ACES, the director of the IMJR Program and a student representative. The Committee is chaired by Kathryn Ratcliff of the Department of Sociology and curricular decisions are voted on by the faculty members of the Committee. The proposed course was presented for comment to UICC (1/30/12), the CLAS C&C(3/20/12) and the CANR C&C(4/6/12). The feedback received was incorporated into a revised proposal that was approved by the IMJR A&A Committee on 4/19/12. This proposal (which included the appropriate UICC form, the syllabus below, as well as the CVs of the proposed instructors) was then submitted to and approved by the UICC on April 30, 2012.*

### **INTD 3995 Special Topics: Individualized Study Across Academic Disciplines**

One credit, graded course. Instructor consent.

This course introduces students to the ideas of disciplinarity, multidisciplinary, and interdisciplinarity and serves as a gateway to the Individualized Major Program. By exploring the history of disciplinarity, ways of thinking in the disciplines, and the debates surrounding interdisciplinarity, it seeks to provide

the student with the concepts and tools to design a multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary program of study in his/her area of interest.

This is an online course. Opportunities will be provided at least two times during the semester for students to meet each other face-to-face. The instructor will also be available for face-to-face office hours throughout the semester. Alternative arrangements will be made for students not in residence at the Storrs campus to engage with each other and with the instructor (e.g. Skype and teleconferences). Instructors will encourage students to attend lectures and other events on campus where they will hear and meet faculty members who exemplify approaches to scholarship discussed in class.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this course, a student should be able to:

- Explain the most significant differences between the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities and describe the key features of the disciplines relevant to his/her field of study.
- Explain multidisciplinary and interdisciplinarity
- Develop a plan of study that is multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary in character.
- Analyze the challenges of and formulate strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplines.

## Requirements

### Reading:

- Selected TED talks and University podcasts
- Tanya Augsborg, *Becoming Interdisciplinary: An Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* (Second Edition, Kendall Hunt, 2010), excerpts from Ch. 5 "Telling Your Story as an Interdisciplinary."
- Joe Moran, "The Rise of Disciplines," pp. 3-14 in Joe Moran, *Interdisciplinarity (Second Edition)*, London: Routledge, 2010.
- Janet Donald, "The Commons: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Encounters" and
- Gary Poole, "Academic Disciplines: Homes or Barricades?" in Carolin Kreber, ed. *The University and Its Disciplines: Teaching and Learning Within and Beyond Disciplinary Boundaries*, New York: Routledge, 2009.
- Thomas Benson, "Five Arguments Against Interdisciplinary Studies" and
- William Newell, "The Case for Interdisciplinary Studies" in William Newell, ed. *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature* (College Board, 1998).
- Information from academic disciplinary associations regarding the disciplines as well as other overviews of disciplines
- Case studies from National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science <http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/>; the Georgetown University Institute for the Study of

Diplomacy Pew Case Study Center <http://faculty.guisd.org/> ; and Problem-Based Learning Clearinghouse (Delaware) <http://www.udel.edu/pblc>.

### Participation in discussion board

Because this is an online course, participation in the HuskyCT discussion board is the key way that you will engage with the reading and the ideas of your fellow students and the instructor. Some discussion boards will require viewing/listening to podcasts by UConn faculty members.

- Four substantive contributions in response to instructor questions (300-500 words)
- Responses to other students' contributions at least once per module.

### Writing assignments

- Intellectual autobiography – 500-750 words (2-3 pages)
- Reflection on relevant disciplines – 750 words (3 pages)
- Statement of Purpose – 750-1000 words (3-4 pages) & Plan of Study

### Peer review

Each student will be paired with another student in the class and offer peer reviews for each of the three key writing assignments. Guidelines for peer reviews will be provided. Peer reviews will be shared with your partner and submitted to the instructor.

### Grading

Participation in discussion board: 35%

Peer reviews: 5%

Writing assignments

- Intellectual autobiography: 15%
- Reflection on relevant disciplines: 15%
- Statement of purpose and plan of study: 15%

Integration exercise (case study): 15%

## Course Outline

### 1. Introductions and student reflections on their intellectual interests

Reading: Tanya Augsburg, pp. 43-45 and 72-73

Due:

- Autobiographical map (1 pg) and intellectual autobiography (2-3 pg)
- Peer review of your partner's autobiographical map and intellectual autobiography

### 2. Multi/Inter-disciplinarity as a way to address complex public issues: TED Talks

How do different disciplines contribute to the analysis of key public issues, such as HIV-AIDS or poverty?

TED talks & University Podcasts, for example: Elizabeth Pisani, "Sex, Drugs and HIV: Let's Get Rational" TED Talk, Feb. 2010 ; Josette Sheeran, "Ending Hunger Now," TED Talk, July 2011; Mechai Miravaidya, "How Mr. Condom made Thailand a better place." Ted Talk

Due:

Discussion Board Contribution: (1) What is the key issue that the speaker is addressing? What questions is the speaker trying to answer? (2) What does the speaker think has been overlooked in past efforts to address this issue? Where does the speaker think the answer(s) lie(s)? (3) Identify three disciplines that you think would be primary contributors to addressing the issue this speaker discusses. Why? What other disciplines might also contribute in a secondary way? Why?

### 3. The natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities: the emergence of disciplines

The disciplines are grouped into the natural sciences, the social sciences and the humanities. How are these disciplinary groupings different? How did disciplines emerge? What are the consequences of the 'splintering' of knowledge?

Reading:

Joe Moran, "The Rise of Disciplines," pp. 3-14 in *Interdisciplinarity*, London: Routledge, 2002.

Janet Donald, "The Commons: Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Encounters" pp. 35-49 and Gary Poole, "Academic Disciplines: Homes or Barricades?" 50-57 in Carolin Kreber, ed. *The University and Its Disciplines*, New York: Routledge, 2009.

Due:

Discussion Board Contribution: Since the earliest recorded history, intellectual life in the West has seen a tension between all-embracing and specialist approaches to knowledge. (1) Identify two or three factors (historical, institutional) that have favored specialist approaches and led to the emergence of



disciplines. (2) How have relationships among the sciences, social sciences, and humanities developed over time? (3) Give one or two examples of how boundaries between disciplines have been maintained and broken? (4) Using Donald's examples, what are some of differences in the way disciplines teach us to think?

#### **4. Ways of thinking and practicing in the disciplines relevant to your interests**

Each student will identify two or three disciplines that are central to his/her academic interests and explore these in greater depth, using a range of sources as well as consultation with UConn faculty with relevant expertise in these disciplines and the student's specific interests.

Due:

- **Disciplines Paper (3 pages):**  
Identify two to three disciplines that are crucial to developing an understanding of your academic interests. For each relevant discipline: How does the discipline define itself? What phenomena are of central interest to this discipline? What types of questions does this discipline pose? What are some of the underlying assumptions of this discipline? How does this discipline differ from others that are relevant to your area of study?
- Peer review of your partner's Disciplines paper

Select Resources:

#### **Social Sciences:**

*Anthropology:* "What is Anthropology" American Anthropological Association:  
<http://www.aaanet.org/about/WhatisAnthropology.cfm>

*Economics:* American Economics Association: What is Economics--  
<http://www.aeaweb.org/students/index.php>

*History* (see Humanities)

*Political Science:* "What is Political Science" [http://www.apsanet.org/content\\_9181.cfm?navID=727](http://www.apsanet.org/content_9181.cfm?navID=727)

*Psychology:* <http://www.apa.org/careers/resources/guides/careers.pdf>

*Sociology:*

<http://www.nyu.edu/classes/persell/alntroNSF/Documents/Field%20of%20sociology033108.htm>

See also *Dictionary of the Social Sciences*, Craig Calhoun, ed. (Oxford University Press, available through the UConn library online)

#### **Natural Sciences:**

See *Access Science* at: <http://www.accessscience.com/index.aspx> an online encyclopedia (McGraw Hill) with general entries for Biology, Chemistry, Physics, Mathematics as well as entries for the many subfields of these disciplines.

### **Humanities:**

*History*: “Why Study History” American Historical Association  
<http://www.historians.org/pubs/free/WhyStudyHistory.htm>

*Languages & Literature*: Modern Languages Association: [http://www.mla.org/pdf/adfl\\_brochcollege.pdf](http://www.mla.org/pdf/adfl_brochcollege.pdf)

*Philosophy*: Guide to Philosophy, American Philosophical Association:  
<http://www.apaonline.org/publications/texts/briefgd.aspx>

## **5. Overview of research methodologies**

Both among and within disciplines there are often deep divisions regarding research methodologies. In this section of the course, students examine these debates surrounding experimental, quantitative, and qualitative methods. Reference will be made to the problems examined in module 2 and the disciplines discussed in module 4 to explore differing research methodologies, their underlying assumptions, and their strengths and limitations.

*[Note: We plan to develop a lecture on research methodologies. This may include a videotaped interview/short lecture with a UConn faculty member from each of the disciplinary groups: the natural sciences, the social sciences, and the humanities. ]*

Resources:

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php>

“Scientific Methods” in *Access Science* at: <http://www.accessscience.com/index.aspx> an online encyclopedia (McGraw Hill)

Discussion board:

What research methodologies are characteristic of the disciplines relevant to your interests? What are some of the fault lines or conflicts within disciplines and among disciplines regarding research methodologies? How does our understanding of research methodologies inform our perception of the differences and commonalities among specific disciplines?

## **6. Interdisciplinarity**

What does it mean to take an interdisciplinary approach? What have been the critiques of interdisciplinarity?

Reading:

Thomas Benson, "Five Arguments Against Interdisciplinary Studies" and William Newell, "The Case for Interdisciplinary Studies" in William Newell, *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature*.

Discussion board: Which of Benson's arguments are most convincing? Does Newell adequately respond to Benson's arguments? In what ways are Benson's and Newell's arguments relevant to your area of interest?

### **7. Conceptualizing an interdisciplinary plan of study**

Drawing on the intellectual autobiography and the disciplines paper prepared earlier in the semester, each student will select the courses most relevant to her/his area of interest and write a statement that explains why s/he has chosen this focus and why the courses/disciplines selected will best permit an exploration of this focus.

Due:

Statement of purpose (3-4 pages) & plan of study

### **8. Integrating knowledge across disciplines**

Students choose one of three case studies selected from an online case study archive. By annotating the case study and drawing a concept map, students will discern disciplinary lines of analysis and formulate an interdisciplinary approach to addressing the case study question.

Sources for case studies include:

National Center for Case Study Teaching in Science <http://sciencecases.lib.buffalo.edu/cs/> (many of the cases in this archive also include social scientific approaches.)

The Georgetown University Institute for the Study of Diplomacy Pew Case Study Center (cases with international, political, economic themes) and/or

Problem-Based Learning Clearinghouse (Delaware) <http://www.udel.edu/pblc>