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Disparate Disciplines Help Form New Learning and Practices

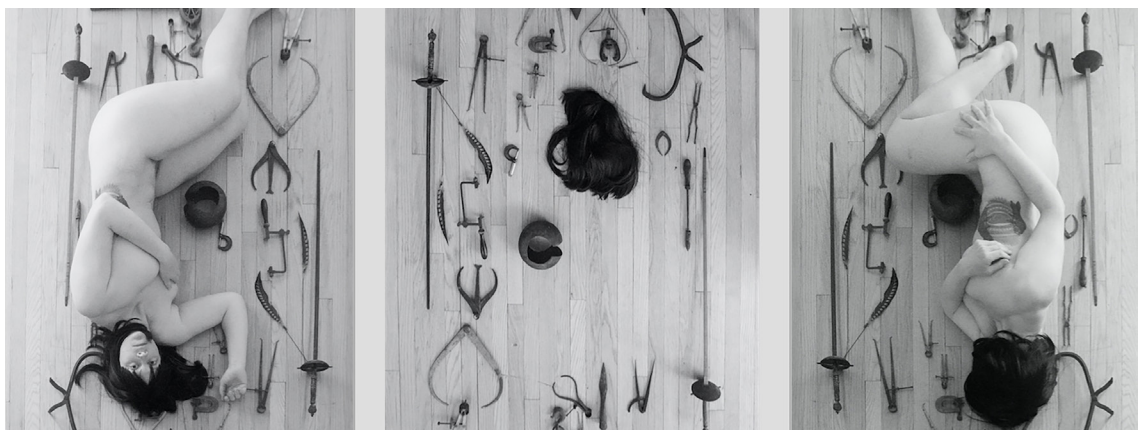*By Heather Van Uxem Lewis, Ed.D.*
Rutgers University

So much of what we focus on in interdisciplinary research is how content knowledge from seemingly disparate disciplines comes together to create new learning and practices. As an artist and university lecturer, it is about how I teach students as much as it is about the content. What I value as a visual artist is often times what I value in research and teaching, such as interaction between people and reflection on lived experience. These integrative processes are concepts that cross knowledge boundaries and academic silos.

As an artist, I integrate my thoughts and research into my photographs, installations, and performance pieces. In my most recent work, the images are a culmination of my research into artistic self-censorship. While the images may not be blunt and obvious to the viewer, it is the practice of making the piece that brings further illumination to my own thinking, perpetuating a reflexive cycle of investigation. For the viewer, it is an act of negotiating their lived experiences with the image to make meaning.

Expanding academic research into a visual practice is one facet of my instruction in non-arts college classrooms. Philosopher Maxine Greene, at the root of her philosophies, believed that participation in creating and/or appreciating art in the classroom dramatically changes the quality of student involvement. She believed that arts and the "role of the imagination is not to resolve, not to point the way, not to improve. It is to

Author and artist Heather Van Uxem Lewis expands her academic research into a visual practice in her non-arts instruction. In teaching Social Justice to undergraduates, Van Uxem utilizes a visual strategy called PhotoVoice.

Consilience as Way Forward for Interdisciplinary Studies of Religions

By Benjamin Bennett-Carpenter
Special Lecturer in Writing and Rhetoric and the Liberal Studies Program • Oakland University

Note: This is a revised version of a presentation given at the annual international meeting of the Association for Interdisciplinary Studies (AIS) at the University of Ottawa, Canada (28 October 2016).

Religions arguably are complex phenomena that require interdisciplinary studies. Though starkly obvious to AIS members and others engaged in interdisciplinary work, sometimes one must state to other colleagues and to the public at-large that no single discipline can do justice to the phenomena that end up being labeled "religion", "religions", or "religious", among other related labels such as "spiritual."

Religions are not unique in this fact of their complexity. Rather, religions may be considered one (immense) set of case studies in the interdisciplinary study of complexity.

Perhaps the value of studying religions or religious phenomena as case studies in the interdisciplinary study of complexity is starkly obvious also. Yet it may be valuable to highlight that if particular interdisciplinary studies of religions are effective, they may illuminate understanding of religions and also shed light on understanding complexity.

In this very brief introduction to interdisciplinary studies of religions, I suggest that a mature version of "consilience" – once proposed by E.O. Wilson (1998)

and more recently updated by Ted Slingerland and colleagues (with Bulbulia, 2011; with Collard, 2012; cf. Carroll 2016) – is a way forward that may be most productive.

Of course "religion", "reli-

Benjamin Bennett-Carpenter

gions", "religious", and related terms are hotly contested terms in the academic study of phenomena that scholars, researchers, and scientists label with these or related terms such as "spiritual" or "secular".

Yet, as put forward in the proposal to establish the Interdisciplinary Study of Religions (ISR, 2015) section of AIS, one may begin with at least a working description: "Commonly, religions are understood to include ideas and behaviors that engage superhuman agency through diverse strands of human culture from

history to the present-day."

The proposal to establish the ISR section goes on to say that the "interdisciplinary study of religions aims to bring comprehensive, integrated insights from multiple disciplines to the study of religions as complex human phenomena." AIS members will readily recognize that this takes the foundational work of Bill Newell, Julie Thompson Klein, Allen Repko, Veronica Boix Mansilla, and many others, and applies it to religions.

This application of course means moving beyond multidisciplinary studies that merely juxtapose valuable contributions from multiple disciplines in favor of interdisciplinary studies that "integrate two or more disciplines from [or within the] natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, arts, and/or professions" (ISR proposal 2015, emphasis added). Others may suggest that theological studies should be included in this range of disciplines, while also being clear that such studies for an organization like AIS would need to address a diverse, public, and plural audience and not include proselytizing. Meanwhile, studies from any perspective should avoid "silver bullet" explanations (Bennett-Carpenter 2014) that appear to reduce complex phenomena to merely one discipline's perspective only.

For many in the humanities, it

Consilience

is just such a fear that provokes reaction against the idea of "consilience". I recall the first time I read Wilson's Consilience, the benchmark work on the idea of the coherence or "unity of knowledge" demonstrated by the modern sciences. I was both very much impressed by the call for consilience across the disciplines and also somewhat horrified and embarrassed at how insufficient and naïve much of the discussion of the humanities, arts, ethics, and religions was. Still, the argument for the possibility for increased productivity of consilience between the natural and social sciences was – and remains – compelling.

Anxieties and fears about scientific reductionism also remain compelling. Yet I suggest a proper understanding of reduction and its relation to complexity may not only placate those who study religions in the humanities but may also show an added, possibly renewed, role for them. Recently this renewed role has been articulated in terms of a "second-wave consilience" (Slingerland & Bulbulia, 2011; Slingerland & Collard, 2012).

In short, Slingerland and colleagues argue for the study of religions to be brought fully into an evolutionary cognitive psychological framework while also returning to the irreplaceable, massively informative role of "thick description" that comes

through case studies, whether wide-ranging histories or individual instances as surveyed, investigated, and elaborated upon in the humanities.

The proposal for ISR (2015) states that it "seeks…problem- or case-based work on religions or religious phenomena that explicitly employs/integrates two or more disciplines" and/or seeks work that employs "interdisciplinary methods, concepts, or media as applied to scholarship/research on religions or religious phenomena."

On the one hand, arguably the most powerful explanations for religious phenomena in recent years have emerged from the social sciences firmly rooted in biology and cognitive neuroscience.

On the other hand, the magnificent textures of the lived experiences of such phenomena continue to be explored, articulated, and elucidated by those in the humanities and the arts.

A motto like *e pluribus unum* could still be a guiding emblem for those working across the sciences and humanities on complex human phenomena such as religious ideas and behavior.

Thus to propose a mature "consilience" is to keep these things in mind, along with the idea that "reductionism" is a modus operandi of the sciences (i.e. not a 'bad word') that is not necessarily in conflict with "complexity." One useful translation of a reduc-

tionist approach is to adopt, rather, a "building block" approach, as Ann Taves (2015) has called for. Either way, the reductionism of a mature consilience respects various levels of explanation, a point that has been made strongly in various ways, by among others Dawkins (1986); Bechtel & Richardson (1993) and Wilson himself (1998). Meanwhile what emerges from the combination of "building blocks" (as identified in reductionist method) is complexity (cf. Waldrop 1992).

To push this all a bit further within this short time and space we have here: a consilient approach to religions, along with being "interdisciplinary," will also be characterized by being naturalistic, mechanistic-reductionist (within complexity), and evolutionary. It will likely involve an approach to cognition as information processing within social and ecological systems. I can only assert this here as an invitation to others who are interested in these topics and who potentially would be interested in carrying on this discussion through AIS sections, meetings, and publications.

Consilience does not mean "collapsing humanities departments into biology departments or denying the significance of human-level truths." Rather, "All levels of explanation have their own emergent properties." (Slingerland & Bulbulia, 2011, p. 318) Moreover, Slingerland's

Still, the argument for the possibility for increased productivity of consilience between the natural and social sciences was – and remains – compelling.

New Practices

awaken, to disclose the ordinarily unseen, unheard, and unexpected" (p. 28). Art is a way of knowing, a way of learning, and a way of seeing.

In teaching Social Justice to undergraduates, I utilize in a visual strategy that is rooted in Participatory Action Research (PAR), a broad umbrella of research based on collaborative inquiry, called PhotoVoice. Like other forms of PAR, the research is interactive with specific communities.

Traditionally PhotoVoice is a formal project where a group uses photography to bring attention to a particular issue or movement. Typically, PhotoVoice research uses real cameras.

In a college classroom accessibility is paramount in a class with a limited window of time and resources and opt for students using the cameras in their phones. I combine the intensive in-class discussions of social theories with a large group PhotoVoice project.

The students create a research topic as a class that they then must go out and explore in their communities using their phones

Heather Van Uxem Lewis is an artist who also lecturers at Rutgers University in New Jersey. She has an Ed.D. in Interdisciplinary Studies and her Ed.M. in Art and Art Education from Teachers College, Columbia University. Currently, Heather is researching and writing on issues around self-censorship, emancipatory pedagogy, and interdisciplinary project based learning.

as cameras to collect guided research. The images are discussed online in a class blog as well as in class as a way to approach new ways of thinking about specific theories and ideas.

The students are asked to create dialogues about what they are learning in class, what they were attempting to capture in an image, and if this image is conveying some of those ideas. Much like standard research, sometimes the students come back with images that challenge their thesis, forcing them to reconsider their current position.

So often, first year undergraduate students–the majority of the students I teach–are trying to figure out what is expected of them in college. They will memorize and regurgitate their facts and figures back onto the page without thinking about why they are being asked to study them in the first place.

It is more challenging to think about what the ideas mean to you and then to show the class in a visual format with a verbal explanation referring to the texts. From there, the discussions burst into life. It is personal and the students begin to make connections to the ideas that help them create an informed opinion around a topic.

I do not have the authorization to publish the students' images. However, it isn't the images that are most important here. It is that in the end, the students were engaged in a critical dialogue with the issues we were studying beyond the classroom, into their daily lives, and with their communities.

Guess – Who I Am
By John DeCarlo

you think, about me
you write, about me
you poke and probe, me

you put me under FMRI
you put me under CAT Scan
what will you put me under, next?

but I put, you -- under
I put, you -- to sleep
I turn you off -- inducing deep slumber

then, if I wish, I inject REM dreams,
memory recalls, and mental incubations…

when I wake, you, up,
who do you think, I am?
who do you think, you are?

am I -- just -- servant and slave
weaving words, images and ideas through the ways and means of your brain?

still, you stare at your self, staring at your self, in the mirror:
ever slip across a really icy pond of ice – and try to get back up – without slipping on the ghostly ghost of self-consciousness…

the question is: who, is the brain of my brain?
do you think I am just a bloody bundle of neurons?
a trillion synapses that comprise your varied selves?

John DeCarlo is a frequent con-tributer to Integrative Pathways. An associate professor of writing studies at Hofstra, he recently received the Chancellor's Award for Teaching Excellence.

Coker College • Hartsville, S.C.

Internships Prepare Coker College Interdisciplinarians

By Julia F. Klimek
Professor of English and Coordinator of the Interdisciplinary Studies Program

When I developed the Interdisciplinary Studies program at Coker College in the fall of 2015, I talked to many of my colleagues, including the Director of Admissions and the Dean of Student Success. What I heard from them, and from our faculty, was that our students, many of whom are first-generation college students, have trouble articulating their skills and ambitions in a professional job interview. They may have the skills needed for a job, but as they have only applied them in a class environment, they are not always able to translate them into the "real world." I knew then that our interdisciplinary studies courses, the introductory IS200 and the capstone IS400, had to include applied work, either in the form of an internship or by including a presentation of an actual project that could showcase the students' skills, both disciplinary and interdisciplinary, to a potential employer. The need for such articulation is intensified by the fact that the BA in Interdisciplinary Studies can be

> *The need for such articulation is intensified by the fact that the BA in Interdisciplinary Studies can be mystifying to employers who are accustomed to traditional, field-specific degree titles, so that our graduates will always have to be ready to explain what it is they actually do.*

mystifying to employers who are accustomed to traditional, field-specific degree titles, so that our graduates will always have to be ready to explain what it is they actually do.

The second reason I included a 35-hour internship requirement in the introductory course was to give students a hands-on introduction to a career they might be interested in, to allow them to explore interests early on and at the same time experience in just how many ways the interdisciplinary skills we were working on in class during the same semester were ap-

Internships at Coker

. . . the internship experience gave students confidence in their choices and direction . . .

plicable to any office or business environment.

And indeed – in their journal entries, the first cohort commented on perspective taking, creating common ground, and integration of insights – all terms and skills introduced in the third chapter of Allen Repko and Rick Szostak's Introduction to *Interdisciplinary Studies*, the text book we were plowing through in tandem with the internship project. Class conversations prompted students to compare notes on their experiences, which in turn solidified their understanding of interdisciplinarian approaches.

Finally, the internship experience gave students confidence in their choices and direction – even the students who decided, after completion of the IS200 course this past spring, not to pursue interdisciplinary studies as a major but instead stick with their original choice of the traditional business major, reported having been inspired by the experience in an actual work environment.

They felt invigorated in their pursuit of a college degree that would put them into the position to succed in a career in business. We welcome this response early on as an indicator of persistence,

especially among first-generation college students, to whom college graduation seems a life time of suffering and stress away.

However, asking second-year students, many of whom have only just chosen this new major and are still unsure about many things in their educational path, to arrange and pursue an internship can be a challenge!

Cameron Flotow, 2017 graduate, was one of the interdisciplinary studies majors who completed an internship with Startsville, a business incubator organization in Hartsville, S.C.

The requisite soft skills of engagement, such as listening, showing up on time, and asking for help, are still somewhat in development – add to that crises over professional attire, transportation, and time management, and it becomes obvious that detailed instruction and close supervising support are of the essence.

I rely here on an initial presen-

tation from the Office of Career Development (the office usually facilitates internships for juniors and seniors but makes an exception for our class), which covers appropriate dress code, phone and texting etiquette, and some more general suggestions about how to contribute in a professional setting. Most of our students have some work experience, but it is usually in retail, fast food, or in informal settings, such as childcare or housecleaning. We spend a day in class talking about potential placements and how to go about connecting with managers and owners – and it turns out that even if I say three times that sending a resume over email and following up with a polite phone call is the way to go, the occasional student will still wander down the road to stop by the local museum, unannounced and in person, and is surprised when no interview is secured right away. Sometimes, alas, the museum is actually closed just then.

So, setting up the internships for second-year students, sending them out into the (admittedly

Just a Bit More Musical Space...

It doesn't even have to be
an ode to joy

A fugue of sadness
would suffice

Why does it come to bitter end?

Why does finitude sting me
like a yellow jack?

Why does it pierce, sting,
and burn to the core?

Why can't there be more --
just tell me: Beethoven -- is back!

Are we clear in my demand -- ??

I am not asking for more time,
just more, of his musical space

I want to ride the swells
of his intimations

I want to soar,
I want to dive --
I want to drown
in his musical embrace

For no one else makes feel
inter-twined passions
so strikingly real

So -- cast me out,
never reel me in

Wield me wild, wild tempest
curse me suffocating sea

Darkest dungeon I can face --
with a bit more of his musical space

By John F. DeCarlo

Internships at Coker

fairly kind and patient) professional world of rural and small-town South Carolina, is a bit of a push. We are usually half-way through the semester by the time the students are actually out there, contributing and logging in their hours. But the learning has already commenced.

And then, at some point, it clicks. Students report on their experiences:

"I was trying to set up the business's internet protocol so they could get their network to work more efficiently, and I tried all these different things and even consulted with my computer science professor, and I finally just had to tell the owner of the business: it's not going to work

the way you hoped it would. I felt bad about it, but I guess that's how it sometimes plays out."

"I was asked to help curate an exhibit on historical documents of this local company, and I suddenly realized that this town actually has a history – and that it has to do with writing."

"In the private school where I am doing my internship I have so much more freedom to play outside with the kids, and I love that part!"

"On Monday I spent two hours operating a button machine, and it was super boring."

"Last night there was a downtown music event, and I was accompanying the city manager as she was organizing the vendors, and suddenly she said, 'I have to take my kid to soccer practice, so you are in charge for the next 30 minutes. You are wearing the hat.' I was freaked out! I was in

charge! I have never been in charge! It took me about two minutes to catch my breath, and then I directed traffic to parking and helped the vendors plug their power cables in, and it felt incredible. I was wearing the hat."

And this is the moment, and the feeling, that makes it worth it: the realization that my students have skills, that they can enjoy (or sometimes not enjoy) working in a specific field, that they can solve problems and communicate not only inside the classrooms with their peers and professors, but be productive outside of the classroom.

When I was a student, I was routinely instructed by my professors on the value of internships. I thought they were out of their minds: I could not afford to spend hours or weeks work-

Giovanni's Room

Literature Helps Students Understand Cultures and Persons in Totality

*By D. Michael Keleher • Associate Professor • Dept. of Leadership & Integrative Studies
and Ardith A. Peters • Associate Professor • Dept. of Social Work and Human Services
Kennesaw State University*

In her 2009 TED lecture, "The Danger of the Single Story," Nigerian novelist Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie points out the importance of understanding cultures and persons in totality, not just through the "single story" that we are told, which may be interpreted as normative and thereby reductive. Where fiction allows for shifting, even contradictory points of view, academic texts are often construed as authoritative, employing "a single interpretive voice" that disguises its own subjectivity (Zickler & Abbott, 2000, p. 69).

This is not to say that faculty or textbooks are ineffective in delivering essential content to students, but we do argue that using literature as well can help to illustrate real-world themes and provoke engaged student exploration and discussion in social work courses.

As Cnaan (1989) explains, fiction assists with "translating abstractions into concrete terms" and ultimately helping "social workers see themselves, their values and their society from different perspectives" (p.182).

What follows is a description of how we taught James Baldwin's novel *Giovanni's Room* (1956) to enrich our students' understanding and application of psychosocial theories of development covered in their textbook.

Background

In "Fifth Avenue, Uptown: a

If Baldwin could help readers in the 1960s (regardless of geography or vocation) gain a new perspective on a tragic social reality, we decided that his work should be particularly illuminating for future social workers studying male sexual identity which, like poverty, is a central theme in Baldwin's fiction and non-fiction.

Letter from Harlem," Baldwin wrote the now famous aphorism, "Anyone who has ever struggled with poverty knows how extremely expensive it is to be poor" (Baldwin, 1960). Anyone who has ever worked in a helping profession—nurses, social workers, psychologists, doctors, etc.—knows that poverty is indeed expensive. Poverty is the direct consequence of a complex matrix of costs: health, housing, education, mobility, and the overall loss of dignity for its victims.

In arguing that poverty is a social injustice that cannot be reduced to a linear and conveniently deterministic perspective, Baldwin demanded his readers to question societal assumptions. If Baldwin could help readers in the 1960s (regardless of geography or vocation) gain a new perspective on a tragic social reality, we decided that his work should be particularly illuminating for future social workers studying male sexual identity which, like poverty, is a central theme in Baldwin's fiction and non-fiction.

One of the purposes of a social work course on human behavior is to articulate the importance of healthy identity development during adolescence and young adulthood. According to psychologist Erik Erikson (1968), the central developmental task during adolescence is solidifying one's identity. We selected *Giovanni's Room* for our discussion of developmental needs and psychosocial milestones of adolescents and young adults because the novel provides context for Erikson's descriptions of adolescence (identity vs. role confusion) and early adulthood (intimacy vs. isolation). We found, as well, that D'Augelli's (1994) framework for sexual orientation and gender

Giovanni's Room

identity was also useful in showing students how identity development unfolds in concurring and multiple paths, involving the person's self-concept, relationships with family, and connections with peer groups, community, and society as a whole. These models reveal that sexual orientation may be fluid at certain times in the life span and more fixed at others, and that human growth is intimately at function of and shaped by environmental and natural factors (Bilodeau & Renn, 2005). This fluidity and contextualization explored in the literature provides an appropriate theoretical backdrop for the experiences of the main protagonists in *Giovanni's Room*.

Giovanni's Room as Case Study

Giovanni's Room is used as a case study in a graduate course on human behavior in our university's Master of Social Work program. The primary textbook used in the course is Rogers' *Human Behavior in the Social Environment* (2013) which provides brief introductions to theories of social change and basic perspectives on social action organized around Erik Erikson's developmental psychosocial theory.

By the time the students were assigned *Giovanni's Room*, they had been introduced to several social change and developmental theories, had been shown Adichie's (2009) "Single Story" video, and had expressed great interest in the potential for drawing case

By the time the students were assigned Giovanni's Room, they had been introduced to several social change and developmental theories, had been shown Adichie's (2009) "Single Story" video, and had expressed great interest in the potential for drawing case studies from fictional works of significant social and cultural importance.

studies from fictional works of significant social and cultural importance. Since *Giovanni's Room* is a short novel, we assigned it two weeks prior to classroom discussion. After those two weeks of outside reading, the students came to class and were divided into two groups, one that would look at the following set of questions from the perspective of David's experiences; and the other would do the same but from Giovanni's point of view.

Geocultural and Psychological Aspects of Identity

1. How does David/Giovanni express his sexual identity when in France? How does D a v i d / Giovanni express his sexual identity back in his home country?

2. Who were part of David's/Giovanni's social circles in France? And who were part of David's/Giovanni's social and family circles back home? Describe the nature of D a v i d ' s / Giovanni's relationships within these social and family circles.

3. In what way do geocultural contexts shape David/Giovanni's expression of sexual i d e n t i t y ? Please provide at least three examples from your reading.

4. Using Erikson's psychosocial developmental theory, identify David's/Giovanni's de-velopmental stages? What psychosocial crises have they mastered? What psychosocial crisis do they still need to master?

5. David's/Giovanni's psychosocial development and expression of sexual identity are markedly different in France than they are back in their home country. Why do you think this is so?

Once the students returned to class, they were reassigned into groups of four, comprised of two students who wrote about David and two who wrote about Giovanni. After sharing their responses to the set of questions with their groups, one student from each group shared the team's findings with the class, explaining how different geocultural contexts linfluenced fluid expressions of sexual identity by the same character. They generalized experiential and behavioral patterns of similarity between David and Giovanni (cultural taboos, gender roles and the like) to hypothesize a correlation between sexual identity and geocultural context, concluding that geocultural context is indeed a significant factor in the expression of male sexual identity in the novel.

The students' next task was to discuss David and Giovanni's

Book Review

New Repko & Szostak Edition
# Offers 'More Focused Presentation'

By Pamela A. Zeiser
University of North Florida

Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory, 3rd Edition by Repko and Szostak (2017) is a more focused presentation of the interdisciplinary research process than earlier editions. While this comes at the cost of introductory material on interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary studies, which they have deleted (or, more accurately, shifted to another book), the result is a more nimble and, through clarifications and revisions, student-friendly textbook from which to teach. It retains and increases its value as the seminal text presenting an instrumental, step-based process for and useful examples of interdisciplinary research.

Comprised of chapters 1 and 2, "Part I: About Interdisciplinary Studies and Disciplines" presents introductory information to help orient students to interdisciplinary studies.

Chapter 1 introduces interdisciplinary studies as a whole, including definitions, assumptions, theory, and epistemology of interdisciplinary studies as well as how interdisciplinary studies differs from multidisciplinary, transdisciplinary, and integrative studies. Repko and Szostak (2017) remove content from previous editions, instead referring readers to Repko, Szostak, and Buchberger's (2014) *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* as a potential

companion text. Having taught from the first edition, I miss especially the lengthier discussions of definitions and of the history and evolution of disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies – though it is all now available in the Introduction text. This material really helped my students place their major within the larger context
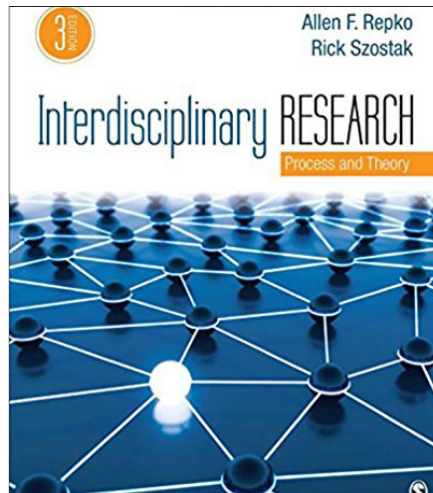
Allen F. Repko and Rick Szostak, Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory, 3rd Edition. Los Angeles: SAGE Publications, Inc., 2017. 425pp. Paperback (ISBN 978-1-5063-3048-8). $86.00.

of academia and develop an understanding of interdisciplinary studies.

Chapter 2 introduces numerous disciplines as well as the concept of disciplinary perspective vital to interdisciplinary studies: "a discipline's view of reality in

a general sense that embraces and in turn reflects the ensemble of its defining elements that include phenomena, epistemology, assumptions, concepts, theories, and methods" (Repko & Szostak, 2017, p. 32).

As in previous editions, a series of tables provide comprehensive and constructive overviews of disciplines across the humanities, social sciences, and natural sciences. These tables are useful not only for students of general interdisciplinary studies, but also those engaged in more specific areas such as environmental or international studies; students in these fields can benefit from an introduction to a wide variety of disciplines that may be relevant to their research.

I respect and applaud the goal of expanding and better explaining the interdisciplinary research process without making the book longer – it is, in fact, about 80 pages shorter than the second edition. This makes *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory,* 3rd Edition, more nimble and to the point, especially for interdisciplinary programs with separate introductory and research methods courses. This also means more of the book is relevant to that single course, especially at a time when students, parents, and

Book Review

even legislators pressure us to utilize all sections of the textbooks that students must purchase.

Faculty who miss material from previous editions can continue to include it through supplementary lectures. What started with the first edition of *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* in 2008 has evolved into a series of related books, including not only *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* but also *Case Studies in Interdisciplinary Research* by Repko, Newell, and Szostak (2012). This development is all to the good, pedagogically and for the field.

The removal of introductory interdisciplinary studies material to its own book does have its disadvantages. Faculty members in programs that combine both introductory interdisciplinary material and research methods into a single course or offer only an interdisciplinary capstone seminar now face additional challenges in course design and lesson planning with the third edition. At the very least, I recommend they read and utilize earlier editions (or *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies*) to add substance to their cov-

This makes Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory, 3rd Edition, more nimble and to the point, especially for interdisciplinary programs with separate introductory and research methods courses. This also means more of the book is relevant to that single course, especially at a time when students, parents, and even legislators pressure us to utilize all sections of the textbooks that students must purchase.

erage of interdisciplinarity and interdisciplinary theory and/or to prepare for student questions.

They may wish to design their course syllabus around both *Introduction to Interdisciplinary Studies* and *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3rd Edition. Of course, that brings with it the expense to students of purchasing two (or even three) textbooks, rather than one under previous editions.

These challenges and the availability of respected textbooks can, of course, motivate faculty to seek dedicated research methods courses in their interdisciplinary programs. In fact, it is clear in their Conclusion that Repko and Szostak promote the creation of dedicated research methods courses for pedagogical reasons, but faculty resources, course sizes, funding, credit hour limits, graduation rates, and other realities of university life today can

still prevent them.

The remainder of *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3rd Edition, presents the same practical ten-step interdisciplinary research process as previous editions. The authors continue to rely on a wide variety of interdisciplinary and disciplinary literatures, including those from non-North American sources.

"Part II: Drawing on Disciplinary Insights" prepares students for and instructs them on how to begin the research process. Chapter 3 introduces all ten steps and elaborates upon "Step 1: Define the Problem or State the Research Question" and "Step 2: Justify Using an Interdisciplinary Approach." Chapter 4 focuses on "Step 3: Identify Relevant Disciplines," retaining the practical emphasis on determining not just the relevant but also the most relevant disciplines.

The "Notes to Readers" boxes are an effective new feature throughout the book, which highlight key information and provide helpful hints to the different levels of readers addressed by the book: undergraduate students, graduate students, and scholarly researchers. In chapter 4, this box encourages students to take the

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"sub-step" of listing not only the potentially relevant disciplines but also their relationship to the research question. Doing so helps students prepare for the literature review by considering and narrowing both the list of relevant disciplines and the research question itself. It also reminds them that the steps in the research process are iterative. While much of the material was included in the second edition, the authors have clarified it and made it more visible to readers through the boxes in *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3rd Edition.

Chapter 5 teaches readers how to gather information about their research topic, which is "Step 4: Conduct the Literature Search." It includes challenges particular to interdisciplinary research, such as keeping track of sources based upon which discipline produced them, ensuring collection of information and scholarly insights from each relevant discipline, and maintaining an open-minded approach when confronted with disciplinary literatures. I do miss, from the first edition, the assignment of the terms organization, balance, and point-of-view to these challenges, as they gave my students and me a convenient "shorthand" way of referencing them.

Chapter 6 covers "Step 5: Develop Adequacy in Each Relevant Discipline." Given traditional criticisms of interdisciplinary studies as promoting breadth at

the expense of depth, this is essential for students to understand. The chapter focuses especially on disciplinary research methods, concluding with ways students can demonstrate evidence of disciplinary adequacy in the text of their completed research projects. Chapter 7 presents "Step 6: Analyze the Problem and Evaluate Each Insight or Theory." It further highlights the iterative process of research as Step 6 allows the readers to continue refining their research questions and relevant disciplines.

"Part III: Integrating Insights" concentrates on the heart of what makes this research process

Allen F. Repko and Rick Szostak succeed in producing a new edition that is more student-friendly and effectively research-centered.

unique: interdisciplinary integration. *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3rd Edition, defines integration as "the cognitive process of critically evaluating disciplinary insights and creating common ground among them to construct a more comprehensive understanding. The understanding is the product or result of the integrative process" (Repko & Szostak, 2017, p. 221). Chapter 8 provides readers with an understanding of integration as a concept and a process, debates over the role integration plays within interdisciplinary studies, and the goals of integration.

In chapters 9 through 13, Repko and Szostak (2017) present the remaining steps of the interdisciplinary research process: "Step 7: Identify Conflicts Between Insights and Their Sources," "Step

8: Create Common Ground Between Insights," "Step 9: Construct a More Comprehensive Understanding," and "Step 10: Reflect On, Test, and Communicate the Understanding.

Chapter 9 is on identifying conflicts" between scholarly analyses produced by disciplinarians. Chapter 10 explains the necessity of creating common ground because it is "the basis for collaborative communication across disciplines and integration of conflicting insights." Both Chapters 10 and 11 present techniques for doing so, as "interdisciplinary common ground involves modifying one or more concepts or theories and their underlying assumptions" (p. 269). The third edition keeps the "Exercises" at the end of each chapter, initially added in the second edition. These exercises can serve as discussion starters, group activities, and assignments, and they are particularly valuable in Part III because teaching undergraduates the integration process can be challenging.

Repko and Szostak (2017) have rewritten sections of most of the chapters in Part III, clarifying parts of the process by better explaining some of the more challenging steps and techniques. For example, in chapter 10, the authors have expanded their discussion of how to handle conflicts between disciplinary insights that result from conflicts in values, rights, or ethical positions. Chapter 12 explains how to produce the end goal of inter-

After Charlottesville
By Renée K. Nicholson

The neighbors have painted their house
A tasteful slate blue, the kind
a home improvement show
would tell us popped. Also,
trees removed, ones that might
topple into the roof.
Late summer is the time
for the last projects
before school and winter.
A weekend before we were all
mowing. Walking my dog, I stop
to chat. "Took longer
than I thought," my neighbor said.
Always does. I'd changed the route,
after my other neighbor, the one who flies
the stars and bars off his front porch,
asked to pet the same retriever. "No,"
I said, "I'm afraid you cannot." My voice
calm and low, like my father's when
disappointed. It surprised me.
This other neighbor
uttered heritage, right. He didn't
wear a grey wool suit
like the pictures I've seen
of Confederate men. That might make him
sweat. He's correct:
his right to fly

but my right too
to deny my dog's soft golden fur.
In my neighborhood, the sun
sets through deep
green pine needles. Last hints of
golden light. Slatted
dusk. Does it matter
that the neighbor
who painted his house
has skin a different shade
than my own? It doesn't change my story
except to those whose stories
never change. When
I tell my husband how much
I like the color of paint, he tells me
it's almost the exact same hue as my eyes.

Renée K. Nicholson, MFA, is the author of Round-about Directions to Lincoln Center (Urban Farmhouse Press, 2014) and co-editor of Bodies of Truth: Narratives of Illness, Disability and Medicine (University of Nebraska Press, forthcoming 2019). She is assistant professor in the programs for Multi-and Interdisciplinary Studies at West Virginia University and co-Primary Investigator in an expressive writing project at WVU Cancer Institute.

Book Review

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disciplinary research – a more comprehensive understanding of a complex research topic. Chapter 13 promotes the self-conscious reflection by a researcher on the process and result of integration and how to best present that result to readers, as the final step in the ten-step process.

The third edition of *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* presents a narrower focus on the interdisciplinary research process, offering revisions and clarifications in response to developments in the field and feedback from students, faculty, and researchers. I have yet to teach from the third edition, but I believe that, although some instructors might miss material shifted to companion textbooks, Allen F. Repko and Rick Szostak succeed in producing a new edition that is more student-friendly and effectively research-centered.

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Giovanni's Room

respective expression of sexual identity using Erikson's theory of psychosocial development.

Depending on geocultural context and, therefore, depending on the freedom with which they express their sexual identity, the students agreed both David and Giovanni are portrayed as fluctuating between stage five and six, between "identity vs. role confusion" and "intimacy vs. isolation."

As evidence, they provided actions and dialogue from the novel indicating where "mastery" of a developmental stage was shown by a healthy expression of sexual identity and where "crisis" suggested unresolved or repressed sexual identity.

Next, the students were asked to develop a theory of male sexual identity based on the world of *Giovanni's Room*. This is what we called a synchronic theorization, a theorization isolated in a timeframe without reference to past or future theories or cultural references.

Once the groups presented their theories and evidence, the entire class worked to develop a theory of sexual identity based on the broader historical timeframe of the novel as well as current socio-cultural perspectives, now allowing them to include more contemporary concepts and nomenclature ("coming out, "non-binary," etc.).

This shift to diachronic theorization–developing a theory based on all available cultural and historical references–allowed the students to explore and demonstrate how historical circumstances have influenced cultural views about sexual identity. They also identified the extent to which perception of sexual identities are always in fluctuation and vary based on social, geographical, cultural, and historical contexts.

Conclusion

By having the students take primary ownership of the research and discussion of Erikson's developmental theory and Baldwin's novel, our hope was that this relocation of agency would help to problematize a concept (male sexual identity) the students may otherwise approach from more solitary vantage points.

To that end, we feel confident that this objective was met successfully. Discussing Giovanni's Room gave our students a chance to collaboratively evaluate David and Giovanni's fictional struggles in order to gain theoretical and practical understanding of the real life struggles with which their future clients might be faced.

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Ardith Peters, Associate Professor, Department of Social Work and Human Services, has more than twenty years of experience in human services as a professor and practitioner. Her teaching and research interests include social theory, criminal justice, and homelessness. In recent years, in collaboration with KSU's College of Education, she has taken her students to Uganda each summer to work with an NGO on adaptive sports.

D. Michael Keleher, Associate Professor and Assistant Chair, Department of Leadership and Integrative Studies, focuses his teaching and research on rhetorical theory, intercultural learning, and web-based learning technologies. While Director of Integrative Studies at Kennesaw State University, he led a team in the development of several courses, a general studies track, and an online degree with concentrations in Business and Leadership Studies, all leading to an increase in Integrative Studies graduates from roughly 100 to more than 300 each year.

Consilience

Continued from page 3

"second wave" consilience positions the business of religions and religious phenomena at the "high" end of human activity, coherent with evolutionary science but also understood to engage the full powers of human beings' imagination, affect, and social engagement.

Many scholarly organizations already exist that engage religions and religious phenomena at the "high" end of the spectrum, the American Academy of Religion being one of the largest and most well-known. Some organizations, though not many, venture into social scientific efforts.

But with fairly few rare (and new) exceptions, such as the International Association for the Cognitive Science of Religion, most do not attempt to bridge the divide between evolutionary science and the social sciences, let alone the humanities. None that I know of, at least in the North American academy on religion attempt to both represent multiple disciplinary efforts from the humanities to the natural sciences and integrate them in a mature consilient manner. This, I strongly suggest, is the productive way forward for studies of religions in North America and internationally.

And, in conclusion, once again I suggest that consilient studies of religions also could be useful case studies for the now increasingly-growing interdisciplinary studies of complexity.

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INTEGRATIVE PATHWAYS

Internships at Coker

ing without pay, I had already worked and traveled widely for seveal years, I held any number of work posiåtions all over campus that demanded time management, humility, skills, and knowledge.

But the generation of students I work with today is quite different. My millennials need a little more of a push to launch, and they need opportunities to experience themselves in an environment that is not designed for their benefit. Especially in interdisciplinary studies, which can be confusing and abstract, it helps to apply insights as they learn them.

Invariably, their supervisor will ask at some point what interdisciplinary studies is all about, and when my students explain their course work and the ideas they learn about, more often than not they will hear: "That would have been the perfect field for me!" And this, then, is a final benefit of the internship for my students: a validation of their choices and ambitions, including their field of studies.

About AIS

The Association for Interdisciplinary Studies is the U.S.-based international professional association devoted to interdisciplinary teaching (including service learning), research, program administration, and public policy. Interdisciplinarity integrates the insights of knowledge domains to produce a more comprehensive understanding of complex problems, issues, or questions. AIS serves as an organized professional voice and source of information on interdisciplinary approaches and the integration of insights from diverse communities to address complex problems in education and research. Founded in 1979, it is incorporated as a non-profit 501(c)3 educational association in the state of Ohio.

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