

# 301: Foundations of Interdisciplinary Studies

Spring 2003

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Prerequisites: at least two courses in each of your emphasis areas.

## BIS 301 Overview

Disciplines are like cultures, metaphorically speaking. Each has its own distinct language. Very often, we understand the limits of cultures and attempt to bridge the gap we perceive between them by learning them as foreign languages. Interdisciplinary Studies is similar because your task is to make disciplines speak with each other as you attempt to address the barriers to human understanding, progress, development, survival, justice, and so on that people have created in their mission to advance just these goals. Your task bears both obstacles and opportunities that are, ironically, the separate languages that you have assigned yourself to master in your university experience as a BIS major. Overcome the obstacles, and seize the opportunities of invention that define your task. If you do this you will better be able to position yourself to contribute to the various communities of which you are a member.

**THIS SYLLABUS IS SUBJECT TO CHANGE.  
YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR KNOWING ANY CHANGES MADE.**

### Course Goals

- 1) understand interdisciplinary studies
- 2) understand disciplines in general, and concentration areas in particular, from an interdisciplinary perspective
- 3) understand individual strengths and opportunities for improvement with respect to future success in increasingly interdisciplinary workplace and societal settings

## SCHEDULE

(reading list attached)

DATE:

DUE/READ:

### PART ONE: INTRODUCTION TO INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

|                 |   |
|-----------------|---|
| Thur 23 January | The Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies<br>Course overview<br>Making disciplines work:<br>Your Stake in Interdisciplinary Studies   Read: Kleiman<br>Interdisciplinarity and Translation       Read: Shaw, Guterman |
|-----------------|---|

### PART TWO: THE CONTEXT OF INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| Thur 30 January   | TBA/Professional Workshop   |
| Thur 6 February ≡ | Research and Writing<br>History of Disciplines and Interdisciplinarity   Read: Klein<br>Dicuss: Movement, Place-ism and Interdisciplinarity |

### PART THREE: UNDERSTANDING INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

|                    |  |  |
|--------------------|--|--|
| Thur 13 February ≅ | Concepts   | Read: Meeth and White<br><u>DUE: RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL</u><br>(assignments due <i>in class</i> are <u>underlined</u> ) |
| Thur 20 February ≅ | Concepts<br>Debate<br>Symposium Groups Assigned: Lottery | Read: Petrie, Jager<br>Read: Benson, Newell, Nissani<br>(Research Paper Proposal returned)                               |

### PART FOUR: PUTTING INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES TO WORK

|                  |  |  |
|------------------|--|--|
| Thur 27 February | <u>MIDTERM EXAM (in class)</u><br>Interviewing, Resumes, the Question of BIS Major<br>Peer Editing: Resume (for Portfolio) [Bring: resume for peer editing]<br>Symposium Groups Meet |  |
| Thur 6 March ≅   | Topics Discussion<br>Critical Thinking Through Research<br>Interdisciplinary Problem Solving   | <u>DUE: TOPIC ESSAY 1</u><br><br>Read: Landry <i>handout</i>   |
| Thur 13 March    | Symposium Groups Meet  | <u>DUE: RESEARCH PAPER (first draft)</u>   |
| SPRING BREAK     |  |  |
| Thur 27 March ≅  | The Question of Values<br>Peer Editing: Plan of Study Proposal (for Portfolio) (see portfolio check sheet)<br>Topics discussion<br>Symposium groups meet                             | [Bring: plan of study proposal for peer editing]<br><u>DUE: TOPIC ESSAY 2</u><br>(Research Paper returned)   |
| Thur 3 April ≅   | Symposium Groups Meet<br>Peer Editing: Personal Statement (for Portfolio)  | [Bring: personal statement for peer editing]<br>(see portfolio check sheet)  |
| Thur 10 April ≅  | Summarizing Your Self: The Resume Revisited<br>Symposium Groups Meet<br>Discussion: Discipline   | <u>DUE: FINAL DRAFT OF RESEARCH PAPER</u><br><b>(Remember: SINGLE SPACED !!!!)</b><br>* BUY YOUR <u>SYMPOSIUM PAPERS</u> PRIOR TO <u>NEXT</u> CLASS<br>AVAILABLE AT ASU MAIN – HAYDEN LIBRARY COPY CENTER (CALL AHEAD) |

### PART FIVE: SYMPOSIUM

|               |                                    |   |
|---------------|------------------------------------|---|
| Thur 17 April | Symposium: Groups 1, 2, 3          | <u>DUE: PORTFOLIO</u><br><u>DUE: QUESTION 1</u><br>* BUY YOUR <u>SYMPOSIUM PAPERS</u> PRIOR TO <u>THIS</u> CLASS<br>AVAILABLE AT ASU MAIN – HAYDEN LIBRARY COPY CENTER (CALL AHEAD) |
| Thur 24 April | Symposium: Groups 4, 5             | <u>DUE: QUESTION 2</u><br>( <i>IMPORTANT: Portfolio returned</i> )  |
| Thur 1 May    | Final Thoughts, Course Evaluations | <u>DUE: FINAL EXAM</u>  |

## ASSESSMENT

| ELEMENT:   | POINTS          | YOUR POINTS | BRIEF DETAILS                               |
|--|-----------------|-------------|---|
| Research Paper Proposal  | 5               | _____       | 1 page text plus references section         |
| Midterm Exam   | 15              | _____       | (in class)                                  |
| Research Paper (first draft)   | 25              | _____       | c. 6 page text (c. 1500 words) + references |
| Research Paper (revised)   | 5               | _____       |   |
| Topic Essay 1  | 3               | _____       | 2 pages                                     |
| Topic Essay 2  | 3               | _____       | 2 pages                                     |
| Question 1   | 2               | _____       | 1 paragraph                                 |
| Question 2   | 3               | _____       | 1 paragraph                                 |
| Interdisciplinary Group Presentation   | 15              | _____       |   |
| <small>(NB: peer grading of <b>group</b> work at 50% of grade – see below)</small> |                 |             |   |
| Portfolio  | 10              | _____       | (includes resume and two 2 page essays)     |
| Final Exam   | 10              | _____       |   |
| Attendance   | 4               | _____       | (8 @ ½ point each)                          |
| <u>Extra credit</u> (“perfect attendance”)   | <u>2 points</u> | _____       |   |
| <b>TOTAL POINTS</b>  | <b>100</b>      | _____       |   |

All assignments earn grades of 0-100% (90-100=A, 80-89=B, 70-79=C, 60-69=D, <60=E). Total course grades are rounded up at e.g. 79.5, which becomes 80. Attendance will facilitate success in this course as announcements and details of assignments are frequently handed out in class.

## POLICIES CONDUCT

This course will be conducted according to ASU’s Code of Conduct and the BIS Integrity Policy, which are available on-line through ASU’s Home Page. Your work in this (and every) course must follow ASU’s Rules of Academic Integrity, which is also available on-line.

### ABSENCES/ATTENDANCE

Excused absences will be given for medical reasons. Such excuses must be in writing. Exceptions include religious holidays and extenuating circumstances. Contact me prior to other events in writing for consideration of approval. Arriving to class late without good reason constitutes an absence. (See also Extra Credit below.)

### LATE ASSIGNMENTS

**Only excused absences make late assignments without penalty possible. Otherwise, any late assignment loses 20% each weekday late. ALL WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS ARE DUE AT THE BEGINNING OF CLASS. IF AN ASSIGNMENT ARRIVES AFTER THIS TIME IT WILL BE CONSIDERED LATE. There are absolutely no exceptions to this policy. Technical difficulties with printers, disks, etc are not acceptable as excuses. Get your work finished on time. Hand in late assignments to the BIS front desk (where you should ask for the work to be dated) or to me personally. No work will be accepted after the last class period indicated in the schedule of this syllabus.**

## VERY IMPORTANT

**All written assignments must be submitted according to the instructions given here and in class.**

**In all cases, prepare your written assignments with exactly one inch margins on all sides.**

**Always double space between lines (exception: the final draft of your research paper).**

**Always double space between sentences (2 spaces after a period), as I do in this syllabus.**

***LEFT* justify your work. Use normal font size. DO NOT insert headers or footers.**

**IN THIS COURSE NEVER ATTACH A COVER PAGE TO A WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT**

**(exception: cover pages are appropriate for sections of your portfolio).**

**PAGINATE all written assignments that are more than one page in length:**

**position your page numbers at the top right of each page when you paginate,**

**and always suppress page 1 (so the number 1 does not appear).**

## DETAILS ON ASSIGNMENTS

NB: On each written assignment be sure to follow instructions for your heading (e.g. HEADING: name, title).

### MIDTERM EXAM

Covers everything in Parts 1-3 of the course. The Midterm Exam is worth up to 15 points of your total course grade.

### RESEARCH PAPER...

#### RESEARCH PAPER PROPOSAL

Form: Write a one page proposal for a research paper that you will complete this semester. Include a preliminary reference section of two sources that contribute to your thinking about the issue or problem about which you propose to write. This reference section will be in the form of endnotes. **Follow the article by Petrie (please see course readings) as a style guide (for your citations and references) for your proposal and your research paper!!!** BOTH OF THESE SOURCES MUST BE ACADEMIC SOURCES. One reference is of a source that can be clearly identified as being in *one* of your areas of concentration – the other reference in your *other* area of concentration.

**\*\*\*Your sources will be academic sources because they contain references to other works, either in the form of footnotes or endnotes.** Your two sources must be from JOURNALS (*NOT* BOOKS). Make a full photocopy of BOTH articles and submit them with your proposal. (**VERY IMPORTANT: for your research paper you will be required to attach photocopies of all your cited sources -- see below for details.**)

Substance: Consider carefully a research topic that lends itself to an interdisciplinary approach, drawing on your two areas of concentration. Your topic must be specific enough to be accommodated in just 1500 words. You must FOCUS. The paper must be DO-ABLE. Since this proposal is only one page long, you must get straight to the point. The substance of your proposal must be such that you refer to both of your preliminary sources. Use your two sources (cite them as you use them) as you explain your argument. Don't just say that your paper is about such and such. Try to begin to make an argument. Your research paper proposal is worth up to 5 points.

**HEADING (centered on top of page 1)**

[[useful] Title of Your Proposed Paper]  
[Your Name]  
[(Your) Concentration Area 1, Concentration Area 2]  
BIS 301  
Research Paper Proposal  
[day Month, year]

### RESEARCH PAPER (first draft)

Pay close attention to my comments on your graded proposal and proceed with your research paper. Write approximately 1500 words of text (about 6 pages). I count words, so you should, too. Your paper should begin with an indication of the substance of your paper, and then offer an organizing argument. This is an interdisciplinary paper, which means you must address your issue, identify/solve your problem by drawing upon your two concentrations. Whereas your proposal used only two sources, your research paper must use at least 6 sources, all of which must be academic sources (see \*\*\* above). This is the MINIMUM expectation. I expect more of a research effort than the minimum. I VERY STRONGLY URGE YOU TO EXTEND YOUR RESEARCH EFFORT BEYOND THE CONFINES OF YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN. **GO**

**TO THE LIBRARY!** [For your paper, a book is acceptable as an academic source if it contains references]. Again, you **MUST** submit a complete copy of each article you cite. If any of your sources are books, then submit a copy of the title page and the book's reference section. (If, for any reason, this is not practicable, please let me know well in advance of the due date.) Along with the article copies, and the first draft, you must also submit your graded proposal. Your research paper (first draft) is worth up to 25 points.

**HEADING (centered on top of page 1)**

[improved] Title of Paper  
Your Name  
BIS 301  
Arizona State University  
[day Month, year]

**REMEMBER: NO COVER PAGES EXCEPT IN YOUR PORTFOLIO!**

RESEARCH PAPER (revision)

Your task in your revision is to make changes and revisions (both editing and substantive) according to my comments and edits. VERY IMPORTANT: the revised version (final draft) of your research paper **MUST BE SUBMITTED SINGLE SPACED** (use double spaces between only the heading and text and between reference entries – the references themselves should now also be single spaced). Your grade for your revision is not an assessment of the paper, but rather of your ability to revise and improve your paper according to my comments and edits. The better you do on the first draft, the easier your time will be on the final draft. For this assignment submit the following: (1) your (*single spaced*) revision, (2) your graded first draft, (3) and your graded proposal. Make a copy of your paper for your portfolio. The revised paper is worth up to 5 points. **IMPORTANT: DO NOT STAPLE YOUR REVISION!!!!!!**

**HEADING (centered on top of page 1)**

[improved] Title of Paper  
 Your Name  
 BIS 301  
 Arizona State University  
 [day Month, year]

PORTFOLIO

Your BIS Portfolio is the centerpiece of your BIS experience to the extent that it is an ongoing record of your achievements and efforts. It contains your resume, two essays (Personal Statement and Plan of Study Proposal – about which later in the course – artifacts from your course work at university, and other artifacts relevant to your achievements and efforts so far. Return to the portfolio frequently as you proceed through the BIS core courses. If you make it a working document, it will work for you, now and after graduation. Carefully follow the check sheet and instructions that appear in your course pack. This assignment is worth up to 10 points of your course grade.

**REMEMBER: NO COVER PAGES EXCEPT IN YOUR PORTFOLIO!**

(See your portfolio check sheet for further explanation)

TOPIC ESSAYS

Prepare yourself to initiate a discussion in class based upon an issue, conflict, or problem by writing a 2 page essay. Your essay must be accompanied by 30 photocopies of a news (or newsworthy) item (taken from a newspaper or magazine article, or from any printed material) to be distributed in class. Please select a topic that you find interesting, relevant, or important. The topic should lend itself to a discussion of its interdisciplinarity. Your essay should begin with *one* paragraph that describes the issue, conflict, or problem. The remainder of the essay should be your analysis. Try to make your essay logical, coherent, succinct, and useful. This essay must also explicitly draw upon the ideas you've encountered in BIS 301. If you are chosen in class, you will **paraphrase** your essay, and motivate your classmates to think about that issue – the content of your essay should provoke discussion – it should **not** make conclusions about the issue. The essay you submit to Brian to be graded must also have a COPY of the item attached to it. In your essay focus on the multiple actors and perspectives, and the complexity, contradictions, dilemmas, paradoxes – in short, the interdisciplinarity – of the problem or issue about which you are writing – and its possible solutions. Remember to write well. You will write two of these essays. Each essay is worth up to 3 points.

**HEADING (centered on top of page 1)**

**BIS 301 Topic Essay,  
[a title (perhaps of the issue)]  
[Your Name]  
day Month, year**

**SYMPOSIUM...****INTERDISCIPLINARY GROUP PRESENTATION**

The final part of this course will be devoted to a Symposium that combines all the skills and knowledge you have gained in the course. Shortly following submission of your revised research paper, a compilation of all the papers written by the members of this class will be made available for purchase (the cost of this bound volume should be about \$15). **BUY A COPY!** Prior to this you will have been assigned membership in one of several groups. Each group will be responsible for a presentation that demonstrates the dynamic interaction of the issue(s) and approaches found within your research papers. Each group will give a 15 minute presentation followed by a 20 minute period of questions and answers – and discussion. Work together in your group to incorporate the principles of interdisciplinarity in your presentation. The format and content of your group presentation is up to you. Do not, however, present your papers to the class. Your work will have already been read and understood by everyone. Your task in the symposium is to move beyond the confines of your individual work and concentrations and generate a demonstration of interdisciplinary principles in action according to the multiple issues and approaches represented in the research of all the members of your group. Your success depends upon your collective effort. I strongly urge you to speak with me about your presentation. There are endless possibilities of what you might do. You could simulate a current or historical event, or a predicament or challenge faced in a particular work or organizational setting. You could play the roles of a diverse group of leaders or, alternatively, of “ordinary” citizens.” You could play a game of logic, offering sequential solutions to a particular problem. You could conduct a virtual reality scenario – as if you were on-line. Whatever you choose to do, pack as much content into 15 minutes as you can. This assignment is worth up to 15 points of your course grade. Half of this grade will be an assessment of your individual contribution – the other half will be of your group’s collective effort. My assessment of your individual grade will be averaged against a peer assessment by the other members of your group (50-50). On the day of your presentation, you need not have, nor hand in, anything in writing (although visual aids are welcome). Your group must, however, submit a group log, to which each member will contribute. This log is **CRUCIAL** to your group’s success because it demonstrates the effort your group (collectively and individually) made to complete the task. More details later.

**QUESTIONS 1 and 2**

The symposium gains an additional dynamic in a 20 minute period of questions and answers – and discussion – following each group’s presentation. There will be two days of presentations. On each of the two days, you will be expected to submit a written question for use in the question and answer period. Choose one group from each day. From each of those two groups select one person to whom you will pose a question. In one paragraph, your question must do three things: (1) establish a premise by drawing upon the ideas presented in this course – frame your question on this point; (2) briefly demonstrate that you have read the person’s paper by referring to it in a meaningful way; and (3) pose your (ONE) question – do NOT ask more than one question. (If you like, you might think of your question as resembling the sort of questioning that you would hear at a presidential press conference.) **BRING TWO TYPED COPIES** (handwritten questions will NOT be accepted) **TO CLASS. HAND ONE COPY TO ME, AND RETAIN THE OTHER COPY SO YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ASK YOUR QUESTION AT THE SYMPOSIUM.** Question 1 is worth up to 2 points.

Question 2 is worth up to 3 points.

**HEADING: BIS 301 Symposium Question 1 for [name of person], [Your Name]**

**HEADING: BIS 301 Symposium Question 2 for [name of person], [Your Name]**

**FINAL EXAM**

This is a comprehensive take home exam, which you will receive in due course. The Final Exam must be submitted on the last day of class, *in class*. It is worth up to 10 points.

**HEADING: BIS 301 FINAL EXAM, [Your Name]**

ATTENDANCE and EXTRA CREDIT

Attending class on (7) days designated in the syllabus schedule with the symbol  $\cong$  earns  $\frac{1}{2}$  point (one day is “free”), up to 4 points. Attending ***all*** days designated in the syllabus schedule with the symbol  $\equiv$  equals “perfect attendance,” and automatically earns you 2 extra credit points. We’ll take attendance at the START of class. Late arrivals will be considered absent – without documented excuses there are NO EXCEPTIONS to this!

## READING LIST

### BIS 301

**Kleiman, Carol.** “Flexibility, Entrepreneurship Vital in 21<sup>st</sup> Century Work Force, Futurists Say.” *Chicago Tribune*, 18.  
**Shaw, George Bernard.** 1944 “Envoy.” Chapter 44. In *Everybody’s Political What’s What*. London: Constable. 364-66.  
**Guterman, Lila.** 2001. “Do You Smell What I Smell? Neuroscientists Discover Crosstalk among the Senses.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* December 14: A17.

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**Klein, Julie Thompson.** 1990. “The Evolution of Interdisciplinarity.” In *Interdisciplinarity: History, Theory and Practice*. 19-39.

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**Meeth, L. Richard.** 1978. “Interdisciplinary Studies: A Matter of Definition.” *Change: Magazine of Higher Learning* 6 (August): 10.  
**White, James Boyd.** 1987. “Intellectual Integration.” *Issues in Integrative Studies* 5: 1-18.

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**Petrie, Hugh G.** 1976. “Do You See What I See? The Epistemology of Interdisciplinary Inquiry.” *Journal of Aesthetic Education* 10: 29-43.  
**Jager, Eric.** 2000. “Books, Computers, and Other Metaphors of Memory.” *Chronicle of Higher Education* September 22: B14.  
**Benson, Thomas.** 1982. “Five Arguments Against Interdisciplinary Studies.” *Issues in Integrative Studies* 1: 38-48. Reprinted in *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature*. Ed. William H. Newell. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1998. 105-108.  
**Newell, William H.** 1983. “the Case for Interdisciplinary Studies: Response to Professor Benson’s Five Arguments.” *Issues in Integrative Studies* 2: 1-19. Reprinted in *Interdisciplinarity: Essays from the Literature* Ed. William H. Newell. New York: College Entrance Examination Board, 1998. 109-22.  
**Nissani, Moti.** “Ten Cheers for Interdisciplinarity: The Case For Interdisciplinary Knowledge and Research.” *The Social Sciences Journal* 34(2): 201-16.

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**(Landry, Maurice.** 1995. “A Note on the Concept of ‘Problem.’” *Organizational Studies* 16(2): 315-43.)

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**\*\*PLEASE BE AWARE OF ANY ADDITIONAL READINGS THAT MIGHT APPEAR DURING THE SEMESTER\*\***

LINKS TO OTHER COURSE MATERIALS:

- [Portfolio Checklist](#)