IDS 494 Interdisciplinary Inquiry

COURSE DESCRIPTION
This course is designed for students to apply interdisciplinary studies as a mode of inquiry and to conduct preliminary research for their capstone projects in IDS 495. Students will learn to broaden and deepen their understanding of a well-defined research topic by analyzing the problem and evaluating relevant disciplinary insights into it. The course is split into two parts: 1) Inquiry as Conversation and 2) Inquiry as Research.

In Part I (Week 1-7), we will build a comprehensive list of readings that specifically address your research topic. You will then read each source critically and systematically in search of conflicting insights between your different areas of study. Upon completion of their readings, students will be given the chance to show they can participate in academic conversations by writing a literature review, which requires you to both summarize and synthesize relevant scholarly research. We will also be engaging in collective discussions about your topic in order to help you frame it as a problem worth studying.

In Part II (Week 8-15), students will conduct preliminary research to establish a foundation for their capstone projects. Together, we will develop a research proposal to guide in the collection and evaluation of sources, explore the process of doing research, and talk about how your research topic fits in with the existing body of literature you examined in the first half of the course.

COURSE GOALS
The lectures, readings, and assignments are intended to cultivate the growth and development of the interdisciplinary research process. The main goal is for students to evaluate disciplinary insights, identify conflicts between disciplinary insights, and to partake in interdisciplinary investigations in order to make their work legible and understandable to a wider audience. The course should compel us to consciously reflect on what it means to actually do interdisciplinary research – and why it matters for helping to address the world’s most pressing problems.

COURSE LEARNING OUTCOMES
In line with the University’s Undergraduate Learning Outcomes (UULO’s), upon successful completion of this course students will be able to:
• Contribute to critical conversations about interdisciplinary theory and practice
• Recognize complexity of problems and identify different perspectives from which problems and questions can be viewed
• Transfer knowledge and skills gained from general and specialized studies to new settings and problems, specifically in the design of the IDS Capstone project
• Identify conflicting disciplinary insights on their research topic
• Build on a substantial, interdisciplinary, original work using sound evidence
• Communicate research interests clearly in writing and orally to broader audience outside of their respective fields.
• Demonstrate awareness of one's own place in and effect on the world

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING
Participation/Discussion (10%)
Introduction and Research Plan (5%)
Working Bibliography (5%)
Critical Source Reviews (25%)
Themes of Research (10%)
Primary Research Analysis (10%)
Research Check-In (5%)
Preliminary Research Paper and Presentation (30%)

IDS Core Requirement
A grade of C or better is required in all IDS courses for a successful completion of the Bachelor of Interdisciplinary Studies degree.

Attendance
Attendance is a significant component of this class. As such, repeat or continued absences from class will not be tolerated. A student with more than four (4) unexcused absences will be dropped a letter grade. More than six (6) absences will result in automatic failure of the course. Arriving late or leaving early count for ½ an absence each. Please be considerate of your classmates and avoid disrupting their learning. Please alert me to any issues you may have in advance!!

Participation/Discussion (10%)
Learning is a social endeavor – and attendance and participation is a key component of learning. I expect each of you to be active agents in your own education. So participation means more than simply showing up. Active participation includes doing
the reading BEFORE class, listening actively, and engaging fellow students while maintaining respect for one another.

Assignments

**Introduction and Research Plan (5%) Due Date: Friday, January 22 by 5pm**

Students will introduce themselves to the professor and fellow classmates by writing a 3-4 paragraph (About 500-600 words) description of their capstone project and research plan that will guide their work for the rest of the semester. This brief description must include:

1. Your name and areas of study.
2. A brief abstract (summary of the most important points) of your topic and main research question.
3. An explanation of the specific steps you plan to take to collect and interpret data/evidence to answer your research question (methods) as well as the reasoning behind those methods- be sure to state why those methods are the best suited for answering your question (methodology).
4. A description of the types of data/information (primary sources) do you plan to collect to answer your research question.

**Working Bibliography (10%) Due Date: Friday, January 29 by 5pm**

All students must submit a bibliography of 12-15 peer-reviewed, published sources (scholarly articles, books, book chapters - all should be at least 10 pages in length) that will serve as their required reading list for the course. Please use UNLV’s wonderful library for these sources, there are so many scholarly articles that can be accessed online! Be sure to list the sources in alphabetical order by author's last name and choose one of the following citation styles based on your preference: MLA, Chicago, or APA. It does not matter which style you select, as long as you are consistent (e.g. don't use both APA and Chicago style in the bibliography). As you continue to complete research throughout the semester your bibliography will change and grow.

**Critical Source Reviews (25%) Due Dates: Thursdays (Week 3-Week 8) in class**

From Week 3 to Week 8 students will write a total of six critical source reviews (one each week). Each review will examine two of your chosen sources.

A critical source review is an analysis of a scholarly article/book that details the author’s main arguments and claims, key concepts, and methods/approaches used. Learning how to read critically and analytically is important for any researcher, but particularly important for interdisciplinary studies scholars who draw on the knowledge and
insights of various disciplines. The goal for this assignment, then, is to push you to continue to be receptive the disciplinary insights of your areas of study.

A Critical Source Review (CSR) is not just a summary of the text but is an opportunity for you to evaluate and analyze the text. As you are reading your source you will need to think about the strengths and weaknesses of the research, what perspectives are being presented, the different theories or methods employed by the author, and the overall framework used by the author.

Each source review (approx. 300-400 words) will require you to systematically and critically evaluate two secondary sources of your choice, and must include three paragraphs: context, summary, and analysis or critical opinion of the source.

I will provide more specific details and hand out a guideline during class in Week 2.

_Themes of Research (10%) Due Dates: March 23 and March 30th by 5 pm._
You will need to identify the four main themes from your secondary research. It requires you to both summarize – (report the important information in the source) _and_ synthesize (reorganize the information so that it sheds light on your topic). This assignment should be fairly easy because you will be using your Critical Source Reviews to complete the paper.
The Themes of Research demonstrate three skills: 1) your ability to search for relevant sources and information, 2) ability to choose key and reliable published works, and 3) your capacity to identify and compare/contrast main arguments and research methods. This assignment is important because it shows that you understand what the experts are saying about your topic, what is missing from the debate, and most importantly, how you plan to contribute to the conversation with your original research project. Further instructions will be forthcoming.

_Primary Sources Analysis (10%) Due Date: April 6th by 5pm._
Students will locate 4 primary sources that contain the most credible and convincing data/evidence or information to substantiate their working argument/hypothesis. Students will need to write about how these primary sources add to your thesis and substantiate your four main themes of research. Further instructions will be forthcoming.

_Research Check-In (5%) – Due Date: April 27th by 5 pm_
Students will submit a brief check in on the process and pace of their Part I- Research Paper. (250 words) The purpose will be to identify any areas of concern and for students to help one another in their writing and research for the final paper.
Preliminary Research Paper (25%, and Presentation, 5%) DUE DATE: May 11 by 5pm

For the final assignment, students will write an 8-10 page (double-spaced) preliminary research paper on their topic. As a preliminary paper for the IDS 495 capstone project, students are required to 1) apply the various methodologies laid out in their proposal to collect sources and evaluate them critically, and 2) develop a working thesis based on these sources. The preliminary research paper should help students work out any problems with finding sources, using sources to make claims, organization, and writing. Most importantly, it forces students to hone in on answering a specific set of research questions and thus narrow down the scope of their projects.

Students must also deliver a 6-8 minute presentation highlighting their key findings. The goal is to demonstrate your ability to conceptualize, conduct, write, and present scholarly research.

*Assignments are not optional. Students must complete ALL assignments to receive a grade and credit for the course.

*All papers must be double-spaced, 12pt font size, Times New Roman font, and 1” margins all around. Failure to format your paper to meet these guidelines will result in deduction of points for the assignment.

Academic Misconduct

Academic integrity is a legitimate concern for every member of the University community. We all share in upholding the fundamental values of honesty, trust, respect, fairness, responsibility, and professionalism. By choosing to join the UNLV community, students accept the expectations of the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, and are encouraged to always take the ethical path whenever faced with choices. Students enrolling at UNLV assume the obligation to conduct themselves in a manner compatible with UNLV’s educational mission. An example of academic misconduct is plagiarism. Plagiarism is using the words or ideas of another person, from the Internet or any other source without proper citation of the source(s). See the Student Conduct Code.

Auditing a Course

Auditing a course allows a student to continue attending the lectures and/or laboratories and discussion sessions associated with the course, but the student will not earn a grade for any component of the course. Students who audit a course receive the
same educational experience as students taking the course for a grade, but will be excused from exams, assessments, and other evaluative measures that serve the primary purpose of assigning a grade.

Classroom Conduct

Students have a responsibility to conduct themselves in class and in the libraries in ways that do not interfere with the rights of other students to learn, or of instructors to teach. Use of devices such as cellular phones and pagers, or other potentially disruptive activities are only permitted with the prior explicit consent of the instructor. Students are specifically prohibited to record classes without instructor authorization, including online/remote classes (either audio only, or video and audio). The instructor may rescind permission at any time during the class. If a student does not comply with established requirements or obstructs the functioning of the class, the instructor may initiate an administrative withdrawal of the student from the course.

Since the COVID-19 pandemic forced some instruction to be delivered remotely starting in Spring 2020, numerous students have asked instructors to record their synchronous classes, so that they can access them at their convenience. Instructors who agree to record their classes (audio only, or video and audio) should inform students in advance. Recorded lectures may not be broadly released to anyone, but made available exclusively to those students enrolled in the class during the particular academic term. Recorded lectures must be stored securely, and are subject to the Nevada System of Higher Education’s Records Retention Policy, meaning that the recordings can only be deleted 120 days after the end of class (i.e., after grades are posted). Once this requirement is met, the recordings should be deleted. Class recordings are protected from disclosure, as they are deemed part of an educational record under the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA).

Copyright

The University requires all members of the University Community to familiarize themselves with, and to follow copyright and fair use requirements. You are individually and solely responsible for violations of copyright and fair use laws. The University will neither protect nor defend you, nor assume any responsibility for student or employee violations of fair use laws. Violations of copyright laws could subject you to federal and state civil penalties and criminal liability, as well as disciplinary action under University policies. Additional copyright policy information is available.

Disability Resource Center (DRC)
The UNLV Disability Resource Center (Student Services Complex, SSC-A, Room 143, telephone 702-895-0866) provides resources for students with disabilities. Students who believe that they may need academic accommodations due to a permanent disability, temporary or permanent medical need, or academic support due to pregnancy are encouraged to contact the DRC as early as possible in the academic term. A Disabilities Specialist will discuss what options may be available to you. Students who are already registered with the DRC should request their accommodations online each semester, and make an appointment to discuss their accommodations with their instructors.

Final Examinations

The University requires that final exams given at the end of a course occur on the date and at the time specified in the Final Exam schedule. The Final Exam schedule is typically available at the start of the semester, and the classroom locations are available approximately one month before the end of the semester. See the Final Exam Schedule.

Identity Verification in Online Courses

All UNLV students must use their Campus-issued ACE ID and password to log in to WebCampus-Canvas.

UNLV students enrolled in online or hybrid courses are expected to read and adhere to the Student Academic Misconduct Policy, which states that “acting or attempting to act as a substitute for another, or using or attempting to use a substitute, in any academic evaluation or assignment” is a form of academic misconduct. Intentionally sharing ACE login credentials with another person may be considered an attempt to use a substitute, and could result in investigation and sanctions, as outlined in the Student Academic Misconduct Policy.

UNLV students enrolled in online courses are also expected to read and adhere to the Acceptable Use of Computing and Information Technology Resources Policy, which prohibits sharing university accounts with other persons without authorization. To the greatest extent possible, all graded assignments and assessments in UNLV online courses should be hosted in WebCampus-Canvas or another UNLV-managed platform that requires ACE login credentials for access.

Incomplete Grades

The grade of “I” (Incomplete) may be granted when a student has satisfactorily completed three-fourths of course work for that semester/session, but cannot complete
the last part of the course for reason(s) beyond the student’s control and acceptable to the instructor, and the instructor believes that the student can finish the course without repeating it. For undergraduate courses, the incomplete work must be made up before the end of the following regular semester. Graduate students receiving “I” grades in 500-, 600-, or 700-level courses have up to one calendar year to complete the work, at the discretion of the instructor. If course requirements are not completed within the period indicated, a grade of “F” will be recorded, and the student’s GPA will be adjusted accordingly. Students who are fulfilling an Incomplete grade do not register for the course, but make individual arrangements with the instructor who assigned the “I” grade.

Library Resources

Librarians are available to consult with students on research needs, including developing research topics, finding information, and evaluating sources. To make an appointment with a subject expert for this class, please visit the Libraries’ Research Consultation website. You can also ask the library staff questions via chat and text message.

Missed Classwork

Any student missing class, quizzes, examinations, or any other class or laboratory work because of observance of religious holidays will be given an opportunity during that semester to make up the missed work. The make-up opportunity will apply to the religious holiday absence only. It is the responsibility of the student to notify the instructor within the first 14 calendar days of the course for Fall and Spring courses (except for modular courses), or within the first 7 calendar days of the course for Summer and modular courses, of their intention to participate in religious holidays which do not fall on state holidays or periods of class recess. For additional information, please visit the Missed Classwork policy, under Registration Policies, on the Academic Policies webpage.

In accordance with the policy approved by the Faculty Senate regarding missed class time and assignments, students who represent UNLV in any official extracurricular activity will also have the opportunity to make up assignments, provided that the student submits official written notification to the instructor no less than one week prior to the missed class(es).

The spirit and intent of the policy for missed classwork is to offer fair and equitable assessment opportunities to all students, including those representing the University in
extracurricular activities. Instructors should consider, for example, that in courses which offer a “Drop one” option for the lowest assignment, quiz, or exam, assigning the student a grade of zero for an excused absence for extracurricular activity is both contrary to the intent of the Faculty Senate’s policy, and an infringement on the student’s right to complete all work for the course.

This policy will not apply in the event that completing the assignment or administering the examination at an alternate time would impose an undue hardship on the instructor or the University that could be reasonably avoided. There should be a good faith effort by both the instructor and the student to agree to a reasonable resolution. When disagreements regarding this policy arise, decisions can be appealed to the Department Chair/School Director, College/School Dean, and/or the Faculty Senate Academic Standards Committee.

For purposes of definition, extracurricular activities may include, but are not limited to academic recruitment activities, competitive intercollegiate athletics, fine arts activities, liberal arts competitions, science and engineering competitions, and any other event or activity sanctioned by a College/School Dean, and/or by the Executive Vice President and Provost.

**Rebelmail**

Rebelmail is UNLV’s official email system for students and by University policy, instructors and staff should only send emails to students’ Rebelmail accounts. Rebelmail is one of the primary ways in which students receive official University communications, information about deadlines, major Campus events, and announcements. All UNLV students receive a Rebelmail account after they have been admitted to the University. Sending emails within WebCampus-Canvas is also acceptable.

**Tutoring and Coaching**

The Academic Success Center (ASC), at the Claude I. Howard Building, provides tutoring, academic success coaching, and other academic assistance for all UNLV undergraduate students. For information regarding tutoring subjects, tutoring times, and other ASC programs and services, please visit the [ASC website](https://www.unlv.edu/asc), or call 702-895-3177. The ASC is located across from the Student Services Complex (SSC). Academic success coaching is located on the second floor of SSC A, Room 254. Drop-in tutoring is located on the second floor of the Lied Library, and on the second floor of the College of Engineering building (TBE A 207).
UNLV Writing Center

One-on-one or small group assistance with writing is available free of charge to UNLV students at the Writing Center, located in the Central Desert Complex, Building 3, Room 301 (CDC 3–301). Walk-in consultations are sometimes available, but students with appointments receive priority assistance. Students may make appointments in person or by calling the Center, telephone 702-895-3908. Students are requested to bring to their appointments their Rebel ID Card, a copy of the instructions for their assignment, and two copies of any writing they have completed on their assignment.

Diversity Statement

As an institution of higher learning, UNLV represents a rich diversity of human beings among its faculty, staff, and students, and is committed to aspiring to maintain a Campus environment that values that diversity. Accordingly, the University supports understanding and appreciation of all members of its community, regardless of race, sex, age, color, national origin, ethnicity, creed, religion, disability, sexual orientation, gender, gender identity, marital status, pregnancy, genetic information, veteran status, or political affiliation. Please see University Statements and Compliance.

A successful learning experience requires mutual respect and trust between the students and the instructor. Accordingly, the instructor asks that students be willing to listen to one another’s points of view, acknowledging that there may be disagreements, keep discussion and comments on topic, and use first person, positive language when expressing their perspectives.