

**IST 511**  
**INTRODUCTION TO INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES**  
**FALL 2019**  
**MONDAY 4:00 – 4:50**  
**STAG 112**

Professor David Bernell  
Bexell Hall 336  
Phone: 541-737-6281  
Email: david.bernell@oregonstate.edu  
Office Hours: Mon 11:00-2:00 & Wed 11:00-12:00

### **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is designed as a learning community to introduce you to interdisciplinary study and to graduate study in general. We will explore the concept of interdisciplinary study, investigate possible research areas, acclimate to graduate school, form peer groups, and develop your program of study.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

The objectives of this course are to:

- Introduce new MAIS students to the processes and practices of graduate study at OSU
- Build a supportive graduate learning community
- Introduce students to relevant research resources
- Develop an understanding of what interdisciplinary study requires
- Deepen each student's focus of inquiry

### **COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- Participation in Class 25%
- Writing Assignments 25%
- Group Program 25%
- Program of Study 25%

### **CLASS SCHEDULE**

<b>Week</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics</b>	<b>Due</b>
1	September 30	<u>No class meeting</u>	None
2	October 7	Introduction to interdisciplinary studies	None
3	October 14	Discussion on assignment; program of study	Writing assignment 1
4	October 21	Discussion on assignment	Writing assignment 2
5	October 28	Library and media resources	None
6	November 4	Discussion on group work; graduate committees	Group program 1
7	November 11	<u>No class meeting</u>	None
8	November 18	Discussion on group work; thesis or project	Group program 2
9	November 25	Discussion on assignment; program of study	Writing assignment 3
10	December 2	Next steps	Program of study

### **ASSIGNMENTS**

#### **Participation**

Everyone is expected to come to every class meeting and participate in discussions on the readings and topics.

#### **Writing Assignments**

There are three writing assignments to be completed during the term. Each should consist of a 1-2 page (single spaced) writeup. If the assignment is to provide a reading response, be sure to consider the author's main points and how these are supported. Also provide commentary and critique on what you see as the strengths and weaknesses of the reading, and how the reading may be applicable to your studies and research.

**Writing Assignment 1: Reading response due October 14.**

Reading: Allen Repko et al., *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Chapter 1 (On Canvas)

- How does interdisciplinary research differ from what you normally learn and do?
- Why is interdisciplinary research appropriate for what you want to study?
- What problems can you anticipate in what you will eventually study (research, writing, methods, working with faculty from different disciplines, other challenges)?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of the reading, and how may it be applicable to your studies?

**Writing Assignment 2: Response to prompt below due November 4.**

You are to research and write about the different resources available to you to help you complete your thesis or project, and to be a successful graduate student. Consider what is available from your faculty advisors, fields of study (departmental resources), the library, the Graduate School, financial aid and assistantships, writing support, counseling services, Disability Access Services, etc.

**Writing Assignment 3: Reading response due November 25.**

Reading: Allen Repko et al., *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition, Chapter 2. (On Canvas)

- What is a disciplinary perspective?
- What are the different elements of a disciplinary perspective?
- Describe the different elements of the perspectives of the three disciplines you are studying.
- Other points that strike you as interesting

**Group Program**

One of the difficulties with an MAIS degree is the challenge of finding a cohort with whom you can work to help you complete your degree. One goal of this course and its follow-up (IST 512) is to allow you to meet and create working relationships with other MAIS students. Consequently, you will begin forming a group with whom you will work for at least two quarters, and hopefully for the duration of your degree program.

Your group will meet weekly or bi-weekly to chat and get to know each other, and to complete your group program assignments. Your assignments are to discuss the assigned readings and/or topics with your group, and to provide a written summary of your discussion (each reading response/discussion summary should be 1-2 single-spaced pages). You will also submit an update on your group. You also have the option of producing Group Program Assignment 2 as a short video instead of a paper.

**Group Program Assignment 1: Group update and discussion summary due October 21.**

- Provide a response to Repko and Newell, *Case Studies in Interdisciplinary Research*, Chapter 5. This reading does two things at once: It is 1) a study of the issue of suicide terrorism; and 2) a demonstration of the research process I want to introduce regarding how you can carry out interdisciplinary research and writing. Our focus here is on the process the author is using, but it works best to look at the process being used in practice in order to better understand it. To that end, write about the following: What does the interdisciplinary research process entail? Which parts of the process seem most and least challenging to you? Why? How do you expect you can carry out this process in your own research? What will you need to do in order to be successful in this effort?

**Group Program Assignment 2: Group update and discussion summary due November 18.**

- Select a topic or problem that requires (or would benefit from) interdisciplinary research (e.g, immigration, water resource management, climate change). Choose four or five different academic disciplines and determine 1) how someone in each discipline might define the problem (economist, geologist, philosopher, oceanographer, etc.), 2) what research questions might each of them ask to investigate this topic; and 3) how they could conduct their research – this includes consideration of what types of research methods are accepted as valid in each field. This assignment can be submitted as a paper or a video.

### ***Program of Study***

On December 2, you will turn in your draft Program of Study. This program should include all course work and thesis/project credits. We will discuss the Program of Study in class prior to turning this in so you are prepared to complete it. The MAIS Program of Study form can be found at <http://gradschool.oregonstate.edu/forms#program>.

### **STATEMENT REGARDING STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES**

Accommodations for students with disabilities are determined and approved by Disability Access Services (DAS). If you, as a student, believe you are eligible for accommodations but have not obtained approval please contact DAS immediately at 541-737-4098 or at <http://ds.oregonstate.edu>. DAS notifies students and faculty members of approved academic accommodations and coordinates implementation of those accommodations. While not required, students and faculty members are encouraged to discuss details of the implementation of individual accommodations.

### **STUDENT CONDUCT**

Expectations regarding student conduct at OSU apply and may be referenced here: <https://studentlife.oregonstate.edu/studentconduct>.

### **REACH OUT FOR SUCCESS**

University students encounter setbacks from time to time. If you encounter difficulties and need assistance, it's important to reach out. Consider discussing the situation with an instructor or academic advisor. Learn about resources that assist with wellness and academic success at <https://counseling.oregonstate.edu/reach-out-success>. If you are in immediate crisis, please contact the Crisis Text Line by texting OREGON to 741-741 or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255).