**INTS 4301-002: INTERDISCIPLINARY RESEARCH PROCESS**

**Fall 2013**

Instructor: Professor David Arditi

Meets T/TH 5:30-6:50pm University Hall 25

contact information

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| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Phone | 817-272-1388 | Email | darditi@uta.edu |
| Office | University Hall Room 514 | WebPage | Course content on Blackboard and Library Electronic Reserve  |
| Office Hours | Tuesdays and Thursdays 1pm-2pmand by appointment |

# Description of Course Content

Students in this course apply interdisciplinary methods to understand a complex research problem. The goals are to understand how professional researchers produce knowledge in their fields and to improve on disciplinary knowledge by seeking an integrated understanding.

As a class, we will spend the first part of the course discussing a set of readings that illustrate disciplinary, interdisciplinary, and non-disciplinary research, problem formation, and the evaluation of evidence.

The written products of this course will be a series of short assignments that prepare students to define a research problem, identify relevant disciplinary literatures, and evaluate scholarly research. In-class quizzes and assignments will monitor reading and comprehension of the assigned texts and reward attendance and participation. Finally, students will produce a proposal for an interdisciplinary research problem to be pursued in the INTS 4391 capstone course.

## Student Learning Outcomes for Course

Students will demonstrate the ability to

* Move from personal or common-sense understanding toward academic investigation and analysis
* Understand and demonstrate the four characteristics of quality interdisciplinary work: Purposefulness, Grounding, Critical Awareness, and Integration[[1]](#footnote-1)
* Define a complex research problem and express a motive for understanding it
* Identify and follow the steps of a research process to investigate that problem
* Assess the differences and similarities among research insights relevant to the problem (the extent to which they conflict with or complement each other, conflicts within and between disciplines)
* Use scholarly ideas with proper citation and without plagiarizing

## Textbook and Other Course Materials Requirements

Books for purchase:

* Repko, A. (2008). *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Readings illustrating conflicts between scholarly and popular perspectives

* Perlmutter, D. D. (2011, February 20). Why politicians should be more like professors. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Why-Politicians-Should-Be-More/126429/>
* Marx, G. (2010, May). Embrace the wonk . *Columbia Journalism Review*. Retrieved August 18, 2011, from http://www.cjr.org/feature/embrace\_the\_wonk\_1.php?page=all
* Beam, C. (n.d.). The only politics article you’ll ever have to read: What if political scientists covered the news? *Slate*. Retrieved August 18, 2011, from <http://www.slate.com/id/2256068/>
* Gabler, N. (2011, August 13). The Elusive Big Idea. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/08/14/opinion/sunday/the-elusive-big-idea.html>

Readings illustrating disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches to problems

* Henig, R. M. (2010, August 18). What Is It About 20-Somethings? *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/08/22/magazine/22Adulthood-t.html?_r=1&hp=&pagewanted=all>
* Shea, C. (2011, June 12). Rule Breaker. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/The-Biology-of-Ethics/127789/>
* Krugman, P. (2010, April 5). Building a Green Economy. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2010/04/11/magazine/11Economy-t.html>
* Markus, H. R., & Conner, A. (2011). The Culture Cycle. *Edge.org*. Retrieved January 11, 2012, from <http://edge.org/response-detail/1627/what-scientific-concept-would-improve-everybodys-cognitive-toolkit>
* Asma, S. T. (2011, October 30). Gauging Gender. *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. Retrieved from <http://chronicle.com/article/Gauging-Gender/129538/>
* Anderson, J. (2011, February 11). Adam Smith, Marriage Counselor. *The New York Times*. Retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2011/02/13/fashion/13Cultural.html>

Course Requirements

A grade of “C” in INTS 2301 is required to enroll in INTS 4301.

This course assumes that the student has developed the following skills in INTS 2301 and related coursework:

* The ability to write at the college level.
	+ Knowledge of how to comply with academic honesty regulations, cite sources, and avoid plagiarism
* Understanding of the definition of interdisciplinary studies and how it relates to and differs from disciplinary knowledge production.
	+ Awareness of the benefits of interdisciplinary learning, thinking, and producing new knowledge
	+ Familiarity with the concept of disciplinary perspective, the defining elements of disciplines, and the intellectual practices of major disciplines and applied fields

Grading Policy

The student’s grade for the course will be earned through demonstrating progressive mastery of the steps of the interdisciplinary research process and related academic skills and practices that will be necessary to pass the capstone course. The grade of “C” that is required to move on to INTS 4391 reflects that the student has demonstrated the minimum skills and abilities needed to pass the capstone course. Individual assignments will be graded according to that standard.

The following scale will be applied to both individual assignments and to the course grade as a whole:

**A= 90-100** points. An “A” reflects consistent excellence in the course, strong initiative, and the student’s commitment to their own learning and success.

**B=80-89** points. A “B” reflects work that is consistently above the minimum.

**C=70-79** points. A “C” reflects minimum proficiency in the main objectives of the course needed to proceed to INTS 4391.

**D=60-69** points. A “D” reflects the fact that a student has not mastered material essential for success in INTS 4391 or has not given the instructor a sufficient basis for judgment because of unexcused failure to complete course work.

**F=<60** points. A failing grade will typically reflect missed assignments, academic honesty violations, and/or a lack of engagement with the course.

Grading rubrics will be made available for each assignment and will be posted in electronic form on the Blackboard page for each assignment. Students should consider the rubrics as guidelines for the expectations of the assignment and be aware that their grade will depend on fulfilling the criteria set forward in the rubric.

The student’s grade for the course will be based on the following:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Individual** | **Value** |
| Object Assignment | 20 |
| Research Problem Statement  | 20 |
| Comparison of scholarly sources  | 10 |
| Annotated Bibliography and Integrative Model | 20 |
| Proposal for INTS 4391 | 20 |
| In-Class Quizzes on readings, in-class participation exercises, attendance | 10 |
| **Total**  | **100** |

**Late Work Policy**

This course moves sequentially to build research skills; work cannot be made up late without compromising the research process. Therefore late work is strongly discouraged:

* All due dates on the syllabus are firm and are defined to the minute.
* **Written Assignments may be turned in up to one day after the due date with an automatic 10 point penalty**. Late assignments reduce your margin for error to pass the course.
	+ **Some assignments, as noted on the assignment, may not be turned in late**
	+ **After one day from the due date, assignments will not be accepted.**
* **Exceptions may be made when students present documentation of an unforeseeable, significant, and unavoidable situation that prevented their completion of the assignment on time.**

**The Instructor reserves the right to modify assignments with due notice.**

Attendance Policy

Attendance at class meetings is vital to student success and attendance at every session is the default expectation for the course. This expectation will be backed up with in-class quizzes and assignments that will be given only in class. However, if you prefer to text, chat, email, sleep during class this will negatively impact your participation/attendance grade.

## Drop Policy

**The last Day to Drop is October 30.** Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. **Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance**. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://wweb.uta.edu/ses/fao>).

Academic Dishonesty

**Academic Integrity:** students enrolled in this course are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

*I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington’s tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence.*

*I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.*

Instructors may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System *Regents’ Rule* 50101, §2.2, suspected violations of university’s standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student’s suspension or expulsion from the University.

Student Support Services Available:

UT Arlington provides a variety of resources and programs designed to help students develop academic skills, deal with personal situations, and better understand concepts and information related to their courses. Resources include tutoring, major-based learning centers, developmental education, advising and mentoring, personal counseling, and federally funded programs. For individualized referrals, students may visit the reception desk at University College (Ransom Hall), call the Maverick Resource Hotline at 817-272-6107, send a message to resources@uta.edu, or view the information at [www.uta.edu/resources](http://www.uta.edu/resources).

Americans with Disabilities Act

The University of Texas at Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including the *Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)*. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of that disability. Any student requiring an accommodation for this course must provide the instructor with official documentation in the form of a letter certified by the staff in the Office for Students with Disabilities, University Hall 102. Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at [www.uta.edu/disability](http://www.uta.edu/disability) or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

E-Culture Policy

The University of Texas at Arlington has adopted the university email address as an official means of communication with students. Through the use of email, UTA is able to provide students with relevant and timely information, designed to facilitate student success. In particular, important information concerning registration, financial aid, payment of bills, and graduation may be sent to students through email.

Students are responsible for checking their UTA email regularly, and the instructor will not be responsible for missed messages sent to UTA email accounts.

Student Feedback Survey

At the end of each term, students will be asked to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS) about the course and how it was taught. Instructions on how to access the SFS system will be sent directly to students through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. UT Arlington’s effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback data is required by state law; student participation in the SFS program is voluntary.

Emergency Exit Procedures

Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit, which is located as discussed in class. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist handicapped individuals.

**COURSE CALENDAR—Fall 2013**

\*Note – Reading assignments should be done by the day that they are listed on the syllabus

8/22 Thursday

* Introduction:
	+ Why Research? Why Interdisciplinarity?
	+ Review of syllabus, course expectations and design

8/27 Tuesday

* “How to Read a Book v. 4.0” on electronic reserve, or direct download pdf file at [pne.people.si.umich.edu/PDF/howtoread.pdf](file:///C%3A%5CUsers%5CDave%5CAppData%5CLocal%5CTemp%5CTemp1_ConnorSyllabus4301Sp12EDIT3-28.docx.zip%5Cpne.people.si.umich.edu%5CPDF%5Chowtoread.pdf)
* Plagiarism - <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/services/instruction/learningmodules/plagiarism/avoid.html>

8/29 Thursday

* Thinking Critically
	+ Stuart Hall – “Encoding, Decoding,” Blackboard

9/3 Tuesday

* Description
	+ Clifford Geertz – “Thick Description,” Blackboard
* Object Assignment

9/5 Thursday

* Object Centered Analysis
	+ "Object as Image: The Italian Scooter Cycle" Dick Hebdige, chapter 4 of *Hiding in the Light: One Images and Things*
* Class discussion of objects

9/10 Tuesday

* Research Problems
	+ Repko
		- Beginning the Research Process (p.69-76)
		- STEP 1 of Interdisciplinary Research Process (p.76-84)
* Object Outline Due

9/12 Thursday

* Repko, STEP 2 (p.84-89)
* Rough Draft of Object Description Due

9/17 Tuesday

* Ideas vs. Information, Research vs. Common Sense
	+ Perlmutter, Politicians should be more like professors
	+ Marx, Embrace the wonk
	+ Beam, The only politics article you’ll ever have to read
	+ Gabler, The Elusive Big Idea.

9/19 Thursday

* Topics and Questions
* Chapter 3 “From Topics to Questions”, The Craft of Research, Blackboard
* Chapter 4, “From Questions to Problems” The Craft of Research, Blackboard
* **Object Assignment Due at beginning of class**

9/24 Tuesday

* Michel Foucault – “The Archaeology of Knowledge”
	+ <http://www2.cddc.vt.edu/marxists/reference/subject/philosophy/works/fr/foucault.htm>

9/26 Thursday

* Discussion of Problem Statement Assignment
* Repko, Read STEP 3 (Chapter 5)

10/1 Tuesday

* Repko, sections dealing with STEP 5 (Chapter 7)

10/3 Thursday

* Discuss what makes a good research question
* Schutt p.32-35 (Blackboard)
* **Draft of Part 1 to Problem Statement Assignment due in class**

10/3 Thursday

* Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches: Groups formed to prepare for Monday’s presentations
* Topical Readings:
	+ Krugman, Building a green economy
	+ Shea, Rule breaker

10/8 Tuesday

* Disciplinary and Interdisciplinary Approaches: Groups formed to prepare for Monday’s presentations, continued
* Topical Readings
	+ Markus and Conner, The culture cycle
	+ Asma, Gauging Gender
	+ Anderson, Adam Smith, marriage counselor

10/10 Thursday

* **Draft of Part 2 to Problem Statement Assignment due in class**

10/15 Tuesday

* Research Librarian Consultation: Focusing a Literature Search
	+ **Class meets in Library Classroom B20**
* Evaluating Scholarly sources: Conflicts of ideas, methods, assumptions, and evidence.
* Reading: Repko, STEP 4 (Chapter 6)

10/17 Thursday

* Discuss Scholarly Source Assignment
* **Problem Statement Due**

 10/22 Tuesday

* Marshall and Rossman – Chapter 2

10/24 Thursday

* Qualitative vs. Quantitative Research Methods
	+ Creswell – Research Method – Chapter 1 (Blackboard)
	+ Schutt – p.32-35 (Blackboard)

10/29 Tuesday

* Methods – Textual Analysis
* **Scholarly Source Assignment Due**
* Wed 10/30 - LAST DAY TO DROP

10/31 Thursday

* Methods – Surveys
	+ Schutt – Chapter7
* Discuss Annotated Bibliography Assignment

11/5 Tuesday

* Methods – Historical and Comparative Methods
	+ Schutt – Chapter 9

11/7 Thursday

* Individual Meetings on Proposal. Electronic signup sheet will be circulated for 10-minute time slots. Attendance will count strongly toward class participation. This will be your opportunity to get solid feedback from me on your proposal.

11/12 Tuesday

* Individual Meetings on Proposal. Electronic signup sheet will be circulated for 10-minute time slots. Attendance will count strongly toward class participation. This will be your opportunity to get solid feedback from me on your proposal.

11/14 Thursday

* Individual Meetings on Proposal. Electronic signup sheet will be circulated for 10-minute time slots. Attendance will count strongly toward class participation. This will be your opportunity to get solid feedback from me on your proposal.
* **Annotated Bibliography Due**

11/19 Tuesday

* Repko, Review Chapter 9 and read STEP 7 (Chapter 10)
* Discuss Proposal Assignment

11/21 Thursday

* Henig: What is it about 20-somethings?
* Integrative Models: Human Development vs. GDP (an example of conflicting assumptions among economists about what indicators are the best to gauge economic performance)
* <http://www.measureofamerica.org/human-development/>

11/26 Tuesday

* Repko, STEP 8 (Chapter 11)
* Repko, Chapter 12

11/28 Thursday

* NO CLASS THANKSGIVING

12/3 Tuesday Last Day of Class

* Big Picture – Review

**Tuesday December 10 from 5:30-8pm – Final Exam**

**Proposal due by end of exam time.**

“*As the instructor for this course, I reserve the right to adjust this schedule in any way that serves the educational needs of the students enrolled in this course.” –David Arditi*

1. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)