Seminar on Interdisciplinarity in Higher Education (ED 771)
Wednesdays 9:00 - 12:00 pm
Room SEB 2310

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Professor
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OFFICE HOURS: By appointment

Overview of the Course:

Course Objectives:
The primary goal of this course is to enhance your understanding of the practice of interdisciplinarity in higher education. We will explore how interdisciplinarity has been defined, its relationship to disciplinarity, theories and philosophies of interdisciplinarity, interdisciplinary curricula and research approaches, how higher education policies, practices, and structures facilitate or impede interdisciplinarity, and the current status of interdisciplinarity in higher education.

The course includes readings and discussions designed to familiarize you with the philosophical and theoretical discourses on interdisciplinarity. Academic disciplines are, at least for some scholars, a component of interdisciplinarity. Our first sets of readings will ground our discussions of disciplinarity and interdisciplinarity for the rest of the course. A key goal in these early discussions will be to understand how definitions and theories of interdisciplinarity have developed over and where scholars still agree and disagree. Throughout the course, we will think critically about these definitional issues, their implications, and possible solutions or, at least, defensible positions.

Having established this tentative grounding, we’ll move on to class sessions focused on the processes and practices of interdisciplinarity in research and in undergraduate and graduate education. We will also consider how academic cultures and structures (at the disciplinary and institutional levels) influence the conduct of interdisciplinarity and those who engage in interdisciplinary research and teaching. Our readings for a given week may focus on a particular perspective – administrative, faculty, or student – but all of our sessions will require that we think about what we are reading from a variety of perspectives so that we begin to understand the state of interdisciplinarity in the higher education landscape.
TEXTS AND REQUIRED READINGS:

Required Texts:


Additional Readings:
CTools course website; occasional websites

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

Class Participation: This is a discussion-based seminar that presumes students have a foundational knowledge of higher education in the United States, specifically the history, organizational structures, and culture of colleges and universities in the U.S.

Our seminar discussions provide the opportunity to raise questions, clarify understandings, learn new perspectives, challenge ideas and opinions constructively, and consider how ideas can be translated into practice in different higher education settings. The seminar setting will be successful to the extent that we all engage in careful and critical assessment of the arguments, practices, and/or ideas presented in the texts we read as well as the ideas presented in class.

Class participation will be 30% of your final grade. A rubric that explains the grading criteria will be posted on CTools (see Assessment Rubric Folder: Class Participation Rubric). Since much or our learning will occur in class as we discuss and clarify the ideas we have read each week, attendance is critical and absences are discouraged unless unavoidable.

Class Facilitation: In addition to participating in individual class sessions, each member of the seminar will take responsibility for working with me to facilitate one class session. Choose a session that covers a topic that is of particular interest to you. You’ll need to read the materials assigned for that class session well in advance so that we can meet to plan the facilitation (framing key questions for discussion and developing an instructional strategy). Please make an appointment with me at least one week in advance of the class meeting that you will facilitate so we can discuss some options and decide on an approach. The facilitation will contribute 15% to your final grade.

Class Presentation of Seminar Paper: The benefit of a small seminar is that we can share information on seminar papers as they progress and just before they are completed. To this
end, we’ll schedule two “formal” opportunities for you report on your seminar paper (we can also have some impromptu in-class discussions as needed).

1. **Report on Seminar Paper Progress:** On March 7 and 14, we will reserve time for class discussions of seminar papers. (Note: On the day you present, you will hand in an Annotated Bibliography and Critical Review – see descriptions below). Before you select a topic, schedule a meeting with me to discuss your ideas. **Please schedule your half-hour meeting by February 15** – the sooner, the better!

2. **Report on Final Paper:** On April 4 and 11, we’ll reserve some class time for presentations of final papers. Given the small enrollment of the seminar, you’ll probably have about 30 minutes for presentation and discussion. Your goal is to share key findings, questions, and challenges. Having been introduced to the topic earlier in the course, your colleagues will want to understand what you learned and why what you learned was important. They will also want to think about some next steps that could take your work further.

**Two Written Assignments:**

**Seminar Paper:** The major assignment for this course is a seminar paper on a topic of your choosing. If you are uncertain about your topic, it’s better to meet earlier, rather than later, so we can talk about your interests and get you started on a plan to identifying a topic. **Your seminar paper should run between 25 and 40 double-spaced pages (not including references) and will constitute 40% of your final grade.** A **hard copy** of your paper is due on Friday, April 16. A rubric for the seminar paper will be posted on CTools.

**Critical Review and Annotated Bibliography:** In preparation for the seminar paper, you have an interim assignment due on either March 7 or 14 (depending on when you choose to present your progress report). This interim written assignment has two parts: 1) a preliminary annotated bibliography and 2) a critical review of one or two of these key sources.

1. **Preliminary annotated bibliography.** This assignment is designed to help you make early progress on your seminar paper. You will add to this list of references as you complete your paper, but before your presentation, you must identify and review a set of 5 – 10 key resources for the paper. Your annotations should indicate why each article, chapter or book in your bibliography is important for your seminar paper. In your annotations, be specific about how each resource will contribute to your thinking, argument, and/or final paper.

2. **Critical review:** In addition to the annotated bibliography, you will provide a critical review of one or two of the key resources you’ve identified and listed. First provide a brief summary of the argument in the article or chapter and then your response/review of the ideas or claims made.
The Annotated Bibliography and Critical Review (combined) are worth 15% of your course grade. A rubric for the review and annotations will be posted on Angel early in the semester.

Written assignments should conform to APA (American Psychological Association) style for citations and references. Please submit assignments in paper form and also upload them to CTools using the Assignment tabs as well.

**DUE DATES:**
Assignments are due on the dates posted in this syllabus. If you have a pressing commitment, you must negotiate an alternative date with me in advance of the due date. Late assignments will not be accepted without prior consultation. Deferred/Incomplete grades for the course will be awarded under extraordinary circumstances; you must discuss the need for a deferred grade with me in advance. Due dates for deferred projects will be determined through discussion.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Percent of Final Grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Class participation</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>30%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Meeting to discuss seminar paper topic and plan</td>
<td>By February 15</td>
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<tr>
<td>Facilitation of class session</td>
<td>By Arrangement</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Critical review &amp; preliminary annotated bibliography</td>
<td>March 7 or 14</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Class Presentation of seminar paper progress</td>
<td>March 7 or 14</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seminar paper</td>
<td>Friday, April 16</td>
<td>40%</td>
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**EVALUATION CRITERIA:**
In general, written assignments will be evaluated using the following criteria:

- demonstration of complex understanding of subject, indicated by quality of research, analysis, argumentation, and elaboration of important ideas;
- knowledgeable and effective use of relevant literature to support claims;
- organization (logical progression of ideas and arguments);
- clear and engaging writing;
- balanced and critical discussion of ideas or arguments; and
- compelling conclusions supported by strong rationales.

An assessment rubric that specifies additional evaluation criteria will be posted on the Angel course website for each assignment in advance of the due date.
**Grading Scale:** The scale used for determining final course grades will be:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>3.6 - 4.0</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>3.3 - 3.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>2.9 - 3.29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>2.5 - 2.89</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>2.0 - 2.49</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>1.1 - 1.99</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0 - 1.0</td>
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**Academic Integrity:**
All students are expected to comply with the Rackham Graduate School Policy on Academic Integrity (http://www.rackham.umich.edu/policies/academic_and_professional_integrity/state_ment_on_academic_integrity/). Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, falsifying or fabricating information, plagiarizing the work of others, facilitating or failing to report acts of academic dishonesty by others, submitting work done by another as your own, submitting work done for another purpose to fulfill the requirements of a course, or tampering with the academic work of other students. If you are unsure what constitutes a violation of academic integrity, please talk with me!

**Special Accommodations:**
Students with disabilities that affect their ability to participate fully in the course or who require special accommodations are encouraged to speak with me as soon as possible so that appropriate arrangements can be made.

If, during the course of the term, circumstances interfere with your ability to fully participate in the class, please see me so that we can determine how best to help you.

**Topics and Reading Assignments by Class Session**

**Week 1: January 4**  Introduction

**Week 2: January 11**  Defining and Conceptualization: Disciplinarity as Counterpoint

**Required Text(s)**
Turner, S. (2000). What are disciplines and how is interdisciplinarity different? In P. Weingart & N. Stehr (Eds.), *Practising Interdisciplinarity* (pp. 46-65). Toronto: University of Toronto Press.

*Continued on next page*
Week 3: January 18  Defining and Conceptualizing: Interdisciplinarity, Multidisciplinarity, and Transdisciplinarity

**Required Text(s)**

**CTools:**


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**Week 4: January 25  Forms of Interdisciplinary Scholarship: Borrowing, Blurring, Theory**

**Required Texts:**


**Choose Two chapters to read:**
Moran, Interdisciplinary English (pp. 19-49)
Moran, Literature into culture (pp. 50 - 81)
Moran, Texts in history (pp. 114 - 147)
Moran, Science, space, and nature (pp. 148 - 181)

**CTools:**


Week 5: February 1  Interdisciplinary Imperatives

**Required Texts**


**On CTools**


Howard, J. (2011, September 11). Citation by Citation, New Maps Chart Hot Research and Scholarship’s Hidden Terrain. *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

For those interested in reading more on modernism and postmodernism


Week 6: February 8  Interdisciplinarity Cognition

**Required Text:**


**On CTools:**


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**Week 7: February 15**

**Interdisciplinary Curricula**

**EXAMPLES:**

Interdisciplinary program websites to be assigned.

**On CTools:**


*Continued on next page*
Recommended for students without a background in Higher Education curriculum


Week 8 February 22 Interdisciplinary Teaching

On CTools:


FEBRUARY 29 BREAK WEEK

Week 9: March 7 Interdisciplinary Learning

Seminar Paper Discussions


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 9: March 14</th>
<th>Interdisciplinary Graduate Education</th>
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Seminar Paper Discussions

**Required Text(s)**


**CTools:**


**Week 10: March 21  Interdisciplinarity and Faculty Work**

**Required Text(s)**

**On CTools:**


**Week 11: March 28  Organizational Challenges**

**Required Text(s)**

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On CTools:


Week 12: April 4 Getting there: Strategy, policy and evaluation

Paper Presentations

Required Text(s)


On Ctools:


Continued in next page

**For students interested in policy as a field of study:**

**Week 13: April 11  The Interdisciplinary Present and Future**

*Paper Presentations*

**Required Text:**

**On CTools:**
