Interdisciplinary Courses

The function of an interdisciplinary course is to move beyond disciplinary boundaries to a "new" understanding of a theme or topic. In other words, an interdisciplinary course will encourage students not only to see the relationships between the disciplines but to pull out of these relationships an understanding of the subject that no one discipline offers. In essence, an interdisciplinary course is one that seeks to develop a more "holistic" approach to learning in which the emphasis is less on how two or more disciplines cooperate in approaching and understanding a common theme and more on how the theme itself binds and unifies the disciplines. The difference is important in that the intellectual goal of a truly interdisciplinary course is to universalize and unify knowledge and learning, rather than to particularize or differentiate it.

IDS 100
Uncertainty and the Creation of Knowledge

This course will present at least four disciplinary approaches to the topic of uncertainty and its role in creating, maintaining, and challenging epistemological systems. The class will address uncertainty as a dynamic element that destabilizes the comforts accorded by certain, circumscribed, defined, and determinate truths instrumental to the construction of reality as approached by religion, philosophy, history, and science. The course will introduce students to the critical thinking skills that transcend disciplinary boundaries and circumscribed limits to established scientific, historical, religious, and philosophical truths.

EVS 101
Introduction to Environmental Issues

This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary nature of environmental concentrations. Three components are addressed. First, students are familiarized with the present quality of the environment from a natural science perspective. Second, the causes of environmental problems are discussed and analyzed. Third, students are exposed to the political and socioeconomic aspects of environmental problems. Throughout the course, and integrated approach to addressing and solving environmental problems will be emphasized.

IDS 180
Philosophy, Culture, and History Study Abroad Course

This interim or summer course introduces students to the history, culture and philosophy of a particular country or region. The course integrates intensive studies (through various lectures and reading assignments, including primary and secondary texts, as well as writing assignments about the texts and their historical and cultural contexts) and experiential learning (through organized visits to museums and sites of cultural and historical significance, walking tours of sites and neighborhoods, explorations of cultural artifacts, and experiences of cultural activities, events, or situations). The class will be taught and accompanied by at least two faculty members from different disciplines, whose specializations are directly related to the study and teaching of culture, history, and philosophy. Students will be assigned preparatory readings before the interim or summer class. The course will have different focal themes and titles, relative to the specific country, region, or time period whose history, culture, and philosophy is under study.
IDS 205
Perspectives on Geography: Physical, Human and Environmental Geography

This course will expose students to the importance of a geographic perspective in understanding the human condition. Geography is a very broad discipline. Human geography examines and explains human accommodations to place while physical geography assess the driving forces and spatial distribution of earth-surface and atmospheric phenomena. This course will consist of the following three components: physical geography, human geography, and the overlap or interface between the physical and human realms, generally referred to as environmental geography. Comparisons will be made between traditional and modern systems as a way of understanding variations in how people perceive and organize their territory. Major topics associated with the subfields of geography will be introduced while exploring the impacts of environment, culture and location on human affairs.

IDS 206
Food and Culture

The focus of this course is on what humans eat and why. We will explore both the biological and cultural reasons for human food choice. As omnivores we evolved into a species that is not only capable of but also needs to eat a wide variety of foods. Culturally, we have developed certain desires for particular foods over others and have identified ourselves based on the foods we eat; this has even produced differences in food choices based on social status. Finally, new food production and processing capabilities of the modern industrial world have thrown open the floodgates and has allowed us to both overeat and overspecialize in certain food types. This course will examine the extremely complex interplay of all these forces on the foods we eat and the resulting health and ecological effects. (Cross-listed as ANT 206).

IDS 208
Music Criticism: Writing about Music

Writing about Music provides students with the skills necessary to write literacy reviews and reports on contemporary musical performances, both live and recorded. Musical genres will include “Classical”, pop/ rock, jazz, urban and world music since 1900. For each genre, historical and theoretical perspective will be presented and analyzed using listening examples and lecture. Following the musical analysis, examples of music reviews will be provided, and specific guided writing prompts will allow students to provide their own summary and subsequent ‘review’ of the music assigned. Guided prompts will include prospective audience, type of publication, circulation, cost, and space limitations.

IDS 210
Musical Connections/Philosophical Reflections

An interdisciplinary course designed for students who are interested in exploring philosophical perspectives on music history. After a brief introduction to ancient and medieval themes this course will focus on highlights of the baroque, classical, romantic, late nineteenth and early twentieth-century music (emphasizing Bach, Mozart and Beethoven) and their parallels with philosophical thought, such as rationalism and enlightenment ideals, and to a lesser extent, with scientific and artistic developments. Among the specific themes, this course will study the influence of Pythagorean thought on music, vocal versus instrumental music, the idea of absolute versus program music, and the intellect versus emotions in music. Classes will include lectures and
discussions, audios and videos. General Studies Interdisciplinary Studies credit or General Studies Arts credit

**IDS 212**  
*Introduction to Educational Theatre*

This is an introductory course to Educational Theatre. Its purpose is to introduce students to the possibility of utilizing theatre as a tool for teaching. The students will learn to adapt the material for use in community centers, schools, hospitals, homes and other locations. The course is designed for teachers at all grade levels but is not limited to education concentrators. The course provides experiences in acting, writing and using theatre games as a possible technique.

**IDS 214**  
*Women in the Arts*

This course will provide an historical overview of the contributions of women in music and the visual arts in Western civilization. It will examine the social and political framework in which these women lived and worked, and how this impacted the documentation of their achievements. Issues of gender and the arts will also be discussed. This course will include a field trip to the National Museum or Women in the Arts. General Studies Interdisciplinary or Fine Arts credit.

**IDS 215**  
*Community and Family*

This course is designed for early childhood certification candidates (Pre-K to Grade 4) to prepare them to be effective communicators. It will cover topics related to the family, the school and the community. Collaboratively taught by the Sociology and Education Departments, its emphasis will be on cross-cultural family issues facing teachers in their classroom, processes through which teachers and families' partner with each other to address children's problems, and processes through which teachers can link families to resources in the community to help in child development and family security issues. A portion of the course will focus on developing communication skills for the teacher to use when dealing with parents who are having difficulty dealing with the teacher, the school, and the school's environment. GENERAL STUDIES CONNECTIONS-HUMANITIES

**IDS 218**  
*Putting It Together: American Musical Theatre*

This course explores the world of the American Musical Theatre (1866 – Present) from the vantage point of hindsight. We will trace the history of the symbiotic relationship between lyricists, composers, choreographers, writers, directors, performers, and producers alongside the works they created in order to measure the collaborative process inside the public product. Special attention will be focused on the vocabulary utilized by these artists, the change in trends/styles instigated by the most visionary artists, and the current clues predicting the future of this dynamic art form. General Studies Fine Arts credit

**IDS 220**  
*Mad Men and Wild Men: Men in Transition*

This course seeks to explore how men’s visions of identity, relationships, and society are undergoing significant redefinition, to critically assess the various men’s visions,
and to address some potential outcomes from these struggles. Through the disciplines of Psychology and Literature, serious questions will be posed so that the students can help to reformulate new answers for self and society.

**IDS 221**
**Problems in American Culture**
This course is designed to explore stated problems of the American past using the insights and materials of literature and history. The course focuses on particular chronological periods with identification problems—the great depression, the radical ’60s, or continuing trends like the American dream.

**IDS 223**
**Feminism**
This course explores the contemporary women’s movement in its historical, philosophical, and political contexts. Ideas about the oppression of women and possible social remedies for it come together into tendencies categorized as liberal, radical, and social feminist. Taking these categories as our conceptual framework, the course explores the antecedents of each in the 19th and early 20th century movements, including questions of paid labor, family sexuality, and political participation. The course considers different approaches to the specific issues arising from several broad areas: abortion, pornography, compensation for work of comparable worth, electoral politics, and so forth. The course also includes readings, lectures, and discussions regarding anthropological, social, political, and psychological explanations of the position of women in Western and non-Western societies. The following feminist theories are studied: liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic, existential, and postmodern. Special topics include body integrity and reproductive rights, abortion, the medical-industrial complex and its impact on women, and special issues regarding women of color.

**IDS 225**
**Introduction to Latin American Studies**
This course introduces students to the many aspects of that region of the world known as Latin America. The course is interdisciplinary in nature in order to give students a more complete and unified picture of how the many aspects of cultural, economic, social, and political life in Latin America come together to explain what is generally meant by the phrases "Latin America" and "Latin American." The course explores native civilizations, historical evolution, political systems and institutions, cultural and artistic movements, social structures, regional economic/development issues, and many other topics such as drug trafficking, the environment, and gender studies.

**IDS 227**
**Materialism and the Life of the Spirit**
In an age of globalization and the marketing of consciousness, it is important to explore the spiritual and psychological repercussions of those shifts in focus. Also, how can either sacred texts or psychological paradigms assist the individual in the face of these new demands on the spirit and the self? The course will seek to present both the challenges and the possible responses to the present era. Through texts and films from both disciplines, the instructors will attempt to engage the students in conversation about issues that impact their lives in an immediate and profound way. The works of engaged writers will be used to lead and highlight the discussions. Finally, it is our intention to include a contemplative experiential component to the course. Whether
meditating on the Psalms or the poetry of Nelly Sachs or the essays of Albert Camus, the process of the inward journey is the same.

**IDS 239**  
**Universal Genesis**

This course is an examination of events in the universe leading to the development of life on the planet earth, which is a new area of study, termed prebiotic evolution. It will deal with current ideas concerning such events as the origin of the universe; the origin of the elements; the life and death of stars; the origin of planets; the chemical composition and history of the earth; and the chemical evolution of life with its biochemical and physical syntax. The relation of these events to cultural and religious views also will be aired.

**IDS 240**  
**Revolutionary Printmaking**

This class is designed to provide an historical overview of political printmaking in Latin America. More specifically, we will be focusing on the graphic art surrounding the Mexican Revolution, the Cuban revolution, and 20th century Brazilian folhetos. We will examine the social and political framework in which these artists lived and worked as we explore traditional relief and intaglio processes. As a studio course, we will meet five hours per week. General Studies IDS and Fine Arts credit and Latin American Studies Concentration Credit. Also, this course may substitute for ART 114 Printmaking for Art Concentrators.

**IDS 242**  
**Leadership: Causes, Consequences, and Context**

This course explores the concept of leadership styles and decision-making processes in theory and in historical context. Studying the role of leaders’ behaviors, their relationship to followers and opponents, and the implementation of their decisions, the course provides illustrations of these events through readings, films, lectures, and discussions. The contrast between political and organizational decision-making is highlighted. The course also examines historical failures in leadership and the reasons why bad decisions are made by otherwise informed and/or intelligent decision-makers. General Studies Connections.

**IDS 248**  
**Knights in Shining Armor and Damsels in Distress: Films about the Middle Ages**

The physical applications of analytic and numerical methods are studied in such topics as differential equations, Fourier series, Laplace transforms, matrices, complex numbers and vectors. Robin and Marian, King Arthur, Monty Python and The Holy Grail—these and other cinematic representations of the European Middle Ages will be studied in this class, which will include a close focus on Italian medieval culture (Pasolini). In addition to studying historical and literary foundations of these films, students will investigate the conventions of the genre and how these conventions have changed or been subverted over time. The class will investigate how medieval society is portrayed and how medieval worlds are constructed on film; it will also investigate how, while ostensibly depicting a world long past, such films simultaneously address and reflect the demographics, the present-day concerns, and the expectations of the contemporary audiences for whom the films are made. General Studies Connections Humanities Global.

**IDS 252**
Aesthetic Rebels of the 20th and 21st Centuries in Film and Art

The aim of this course is to introduce students to the various avant-garde tendencies in the visual arts from the early 20th century to the present. The course will focus on the aesthetic and cultural developments in painting, sculpture, film, video, and photography. In addition to regular lectures and class discussions, the course features slide presentation, screening, visits by artists-in-residence, and visiting film/video artists. There is also a trip to the Museum of Modern Art (NYC).

IDS 255
Mathematics in Chemistry and Physics

The physical applications of analytic and numerical methods are studied in such topics as differential equations, Fourier series, Laplace transforms, matrices, complex numbers and vectors.

IDS 260
Latin American Environmental Issues

The course addresses environmental topics as they pertain to Latin America and the Caribbean Islands. Specific topics include deforestation, agriculture, biodiversity, wetland loss, coral reef degradation, urbanization, ecotourism, community-based conservation, and others. These topics will be explored from scientific, historical, cultural, and sociological perspectives. Emphasis will be placed on merging Latin American and Caribbean culture with environmental perception, management, and policy.

IDS 265
Ecological Psychology

The objectives of this course are: to understand the psychological origin and scope of current environmental problems and how they relate to our values, attitudes and behaviors; to study human experiences and behavior in its environmental, political and spiritual context; to question the human institutions and values that lead to environmental problems; and to explore the role of humans within the larger ecosystem.

IDS 273
Globalization

Globalization represents one of the most important forces shaping our world today – while some argue that it brings people closer together, others view it as a source of fragmentations and destruction. This course explores the economic, political and social impacts of globalization on our world. Students will analyze globalization in historical, economic, political and cultural contexts. The topics in this course will be examined from a range of perspectives, and students will be encouraged to draw their own conclusions on the positive and negative impacts of globalization.

IDS 275
Service Learning in the Dominican Republic

This interim course provides Albright College students a first-hand opportunity to study the Spanish-speaking nation of the Dominican Republic from an interdisciplinary perspective. Following three two-hour seminars held during the fall semester preceding the January Interim, students will travel to Samana, Dominican Republic for three weeks to study language and culture. Students may choose to receive IDS, Spanish, LAS, or Psychology. Students who wish to receive credit in Psychology may do so by selecting projects in the discipline in consultation with a faculty member in the field.
Students enrolled in this course will observe and experience a cultural system distinct from their own in order to understand the complexity of this system as well as the complexity of their own cultural system. They will also have a better understanding of how human behavior influences and is influenced by perceptions of cultural “norms.” Students will improve in all four areas of second language competency: listening, speaking, reading, and writing.

To accomplish the aforementioned goals, students will live with Dominicans families in the small town of Samana. They will examine the social dynamics of this community beginning in the family unit. They will observe and experience daily life in the community and contribute to the community through a variety of service learning projects. Students will also travel to other areas of the island and participate in a number of college organized excursions.

**IDS 280**  
**Martinique Studies**

This interim course will introduce students to the people and lands of the French speaking, Caribbean island of Martinique through an intensive and structured visit to the island. After reading and assessing a series of preparatory articles in early January the class will fly to Martinique where they will be guided by accompanying faculty to a series of activities that will enlighten them to many aspects of Martinique life. These undertakings will include lectures at the university, fieldtrips to various parts of the island and a variety of directed events, which will encourage them to participate in many facets of Martinique culture.

**IDS 284**  
**The Vietnam War Era in History and Literature**

This course will examine the social, political, cultural, and literary history of the United States during the Vietnam War Era (1945-1975). The class employs an interdisciplinary approach, emphasizing both the chronological history as well as the cultural and literary style that emerged from the era. International and domestic events like the 1954 Geneva Accords, the Tonkin Gulf Resolution, McCarthyism, and the rise of the Counter Culture will be considered alongside explorations of literary movements like the Beats, the Black Arts, Psychedelia, and feminism, to give students a deeper appreciation of the linkages between international and domestic politics and culture, and history and the arts more generally. Several novels, poems, short stories and essays related to the war in Vietnam will be read to give students an appreciation of the changing views of the war over the period. **General Studies IDS Credit**

**IDS 285**  
**The Human Animal**

What are humans and how did we get to be the way we are? How do we live? What makes us act the way we do? Are we moral? How do we effect other species and the world around us? These are the questions we shall investigate in this course, and to answer them we will take an interdisciplinary approach drawing on the disciplines from both the natural (biology, ecology) and social (anthropology, sociology) sciences to provide insights into the heart and soul of the human species. After examining the process of natural selection we will explore how it forged modern Homo sapiens over the last 5 million years. We will then look at the finished product both in terms of our mental and physical characteristics. We shall complete this investigation by examining how we (humans) tend to interact with other species and our surrounding environment.
It is hoped that many of the complexities and confusion about who we are will become more clear as we develop an understanding of both our capabilities as well as our limitations. Overall, students should gain a more complete comprehension of who they are as a member of the human species. (Cross-listed as ANT 285).

IDS 289
Japanese Philosophy/Religion and Business

This study abroad course in Japan is intended to explore the influences of traditional Japanese philosophy and religion on the ways in which business is conducted in the contemporary Japanese workplace. By studying the philosophical foundations of Shinto (The Way of Power), and Bushido (The Way of the Samurai), two indigenous systems of thought along with the foreign traditions imported from China, Butsudo (The Way of the Buddha) and Jukyo (Confucianism) we will find important and useful indicators for better understanding the inter-workings of Japanese business practices. During the "economic miracle" experienced in post war Japan between 1945 and 1990, their economy arose from the devastation of a major military defeat to the global prominence of becoming the second largest economy in the entire world. Companies like Sony, Mitsubishi, Honda and Toyota were setting the standards for industrial excellence. During the 1980s many American companies were attempting to emulate Japanese business practices in order achieve the kinds of efficiency and technological innovation that had become so much associated with their east Asian rivals. But it was not only adopted business practices that led to the economic miracle, this emergence was grounded in the Japanese ethos, or character of the people, a deeply embedded recognition of group identity, hierarchal placement, and self sacrifice for the good of the company. These qualities of character, so natural to the Japanese, could not be simply adopted by Americans attending weekend business seminars, for they depended so greatly on centuries of formation in a world of Shinto, Bushido, Butsudo and Jukyo. However, these very same foundations of the Japanese ethos, so essential to the economic miracle, were also the primary forces that led to the military build-up that culminated in the Pacific War. In addition, not only did they contribute greatly to an economic boom, but also had much influence on a protracted economic recession that lasted from 1990 to 2003. Studying both the complex benefits and drawbacks of these traditional influences on the Japanese business world will be the main goal of our course.

IDS 291
Space Program

This course will provide you with an overview of the history of the space program. While our focus will be on the American spatial experience, we shall frame this effort in the context of the global interest in space. Topics will include the astronomical pioneers of the turn of the century, the popular fascination with the moon, the German rocket program up to and during World War II, the moon race, the European path to space, and space business. Topics for debate will include the value of human space exploration, and the financial burdens of space science.

IDS 292
The Atomic Age

This course offers an examination of the atomic age through three prisms: historical, political and cultural. Through the reading of primary documents and secondary texts, we will look at the circumstances in physics and international affairs that prompted the development of high energy weaponry. We shall also look at the impact of the bomb
on international relations. We will consider examples of nuclear diplomacy, including the Cuban Missile Crisis, and their implications for the control of the spread of nuclear weapons. We will also treat the European and American peace movements of the 1970s and 1980s. Finally, we shall consider the cultural impact of the bomb through a selection of cinematic pieces, and discuss memory and historical representation of the bomb, and the reawakening of its ghost through the threat of nuclear terrorism. As this is an honors course, substantial reading will be assigned. Grades will be based on two in-class exams, an independently chosen research paper, class presentations, participation, and debate.

IDS298
Field Study in Peru
This course introduces students to the basics of field studies within the Anthropological and Ecological disciplines. The study culminates in student projects focused on a Communal Reserve in the Amazon region in Peru. Specific topics include techniques in biological surveys with emphasis on cataloging species diversity, habitat assessment, quantifying human influence, and evaluating efficacy of wildlife management techniques. Anthropological/Sociological methods include survey and demographic data collection, interviewing, direct observation and participant observation followed by methods of assessment including both qualitative and quantitative analysis. Students will be required to propose and conduct group projects during a 10-day field component in Peru.

IDS 299
The Politics of Global Health
This course is designed to offer an introduction to major issues in public health by analyzing these issues from national and global perspectives. A review of case studies and theoretical approaches will help illustrate the challenges - and solutions - involved in addressing diseases and illnesses in the 21st century. This course will give special attention to the relationship of health to globalization, poverty, identity, and conflict.

IDS 303
Sex Roles
This course considers gender roles in relation to race, class, and culture. It draws upon Psychology, Literature, Sociology, Economics, Art and History. The course considers male and female socialization, homosexuality and transgendering, violence against women, women’s work and finances and the ways men and boys embody particular ideologies of manhood. The ways in which differentials of race and class affect gender is an important dimension of this course. The materials for this course include articles, literature, film and guest speakers. We consider issues relevant to sex roles in the United States and globally. Students can count this course towards a Psychology major and towards a co-concentration in Women's Studies. GENERAL STUDIES CONNECTIONS

IDS 305
Psychology and the Law
In this course the student examines the application of psychology to the legal system. Although psychology and the law might seem to be very different enterprises, both seek to understand and predict human behavior. Drawing from social, cognitive, developmental, clinical, and biological psychology, we will examine how psychology helps us understand the law. Some topics will be public attitudes toward the law, police
behavior, eyewitness testimony, and jury deliberations. We will also examine activities of psychologists in the legal system, including testimony on the mental competency of defendants, assistance with jury selection, witness and evidence preparations for trials, and the use of research findings to lobby for legal reform.

**IDS 323**  
**Women/Men: Debating the Differences**  
Men and women continue to occupy different or asymmetrical positions in society. In this course we will study various feminist explanations for this situation, and we will look at the way feminist theories and more traditional masculinist world views challenge each other. Specifically we will examine liberal, Marxist, radical, psychoanalytic, existential and postmodern theories and the remedies proposed by each. We will also address a number of specific issues including pornography, compensation for work of comparable worth, health issues, gender and communication, spirituality and ecofeminism, and the question of commonality and difference among women and men.

**IDS 325**  
**Latin American Perspectives**  
The course will begin with a study of some of the basic premises about Latin America. Then, using these ideas, a particular question or problem will be examined in each of the following areas: Latin American history; political science; economics; anthropology; art; and literature. Along with the readings, other cultural events will be incorporated into the course, including films and slides.

**IDS 330**  
**Modern Mexico**  
This course will take an in-depth look at Mexico from an interdisciplinary perspective over the course of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The course will examine multiple aspects of Mexico’s evolution in the political, historical, social, and economic realms. Specific topics examined in the class will include Mexico’s Independence, the U.S. War with Mexico, the Mexican Revolution of 1910, Mexico’s Current Political System, U.S.-Mexican Relations, the NAFTA, and Mexico’s current transition towards democracy.