

# UNIV 2600 Individualized Study across Academic Disciplines

Fall 2021

Monday and Wednesday 10:10-11:00 am (1 cr)

Oak 235

Instructor: Monica van Beusekom

Pronouns: she/her/hers

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Appointments via <http://nexus.uconn.edu> (under Storrs Campus/Enrichment Programs). All advising meetings through Nexus are via WebEx. If you would like to meet in person, please let me know and we can try to arrange that.

## Introduction

This course serves as a gateway to the Individualized Major Program. It is designed to promote the skills that you will need to create and pursue an interdisciplinary major. During the course of the semester, we will explore the organization of knowledge, examine differences among disciplines, discuss some strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplinary boundaries, and develop an integrated plan of study and statement of purpose.

## Objectives

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Explain several different ways in which academic knowledge can be organized.
- Describe the key characteristics of the disciplines relevant to your major.
- Understand what is meant by the concepts: interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinary.
- Identify strategies for integrating knowledge across disciplines.
- Develop a plan of study and statement of purpose.

## Readings

- Jerome Kagan, "Characterizing the Three Cultures," in *The Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences and the Humanities in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2009), 1-5.
- Matthew Miller and Veronica Boix-Mansilla, "Thinking Across Perspectives and Disciplines," *GoodWork Project Report Series*, No. 27 (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University, 2004).
- Written lectures by the instructors available on HuskyCT.
- Resources on the disciplines available on HuskyCT
- Several TED Talks

## Requirements

### 1. Participation and engagement (15 points)

I expect you to come to class prepared to discuss the materials assigned for that class. In some cases, I will be providing you with reading guides that will suggest to you some of the questions you should keep in mind as you do the reading.

Participation and engagement also includes:

- The peer review process. I expect you to provide insightful and respectful commentary on the work of your colleagues.
- The presentations you will be doing for this class: on the disciplines project and on your major.
- Any small assignments or reflections I assign as preparation for class or as a concluding exercise at the end of class.
- At least two meetings outside of class to discuss your individualized major proposal.

## 2. Disciplines essay (25 points)

The purpose of this assignment is to develop your understanding of two disciplines directly relevant to your major. A detailed assignment with criteria for assessment is available on HuskyCT.

## 3. Individualized Major Proposal: statement of purpose and plan of study: first draft and final version (35 points)

Guidelines for the proposal are available on the IISP website. Additional resources are available on HuskyCT. For the plan of study portion of your proposal, you must use the proposal form that is available on the forms page of the website. You must submit both the first draft and the final version. Both will be graded; the final version will be used in calculating your grade.

## 4. Final essay: Research Question and Interdisciplinary Strategies (25 points)

A detailed assignment with criteria for assessment is available on HuskyCT.

## Overall Evaluation

100-93: A	89-88: B+	79-78: C+	69-68: D+	59-0: F
92-90: A-	87-83: B	77-73: C	67-63: D	
	82-80: B-	72-70: C-	62-60: D-	

## Late Work

You are expected to submit your work on time. I will downgrade late work by a third of a letter grade (A- to B+, for example) for each day it is late. If unforeseen circumstances make it impossible to submit an assignment on time, please let me know before the deadline.

## Academic Integrity

When you use another's ideas or language you must formally acknowledge that debt by signaling it with a standard form of academic citation. Neglecting to do this is a serious breach of academic integrity and may result in failure for the course. Please see the [Student Code](#) for more detailed information.

If you are unsure about when and how to cite sources or are looking for guidance on acceptable summarizing and paraphrasing, please consult the resources on the Writing Center website: <http://writingcenter.uconn.edu/cite-your-sources/>. Also, feel free to consult with me if you have questions.

## Academic Accommodations

The University of Connecticut is committed to protecting the rights of individuals with disabilities and assuring that the learning environment is accessible. If you anticipate or experience physical or academic barriers based on disability or pregnancy, please let me know immediately so that we can discuss

options. Students who require accommodations should contact the Center for Students with Disabilities, Wilbur Cross Building Room 204, [\(860\) 486-2020](tel:8604862020) or <http://csd.uconn.edu/>.

**Other relevant policies** including Policy Against Discrimination, Harassment and Related Interpersonal Violence: <http://provost.uconn.edu/syllabi-references/>

## Course Schedule

### 1. Introduction (Mon. Aug. 30)

Introductions, a review of the syllabus and course objectives.

### 2. Designing an Individualized Major I (Wed. Sept. 1)

What is expected in an individualized major proposal? Focus on the plan of study

#### *Reading:*

- Application Timeline
- Guidelines for the application on the IMJR website

#### *Viewing:*

- Video lecture on the plan of study and the plan of study form

Note: additional resources on HuskyCT under Application Resources

*Due:* Draft list of courses (plan of study form) and course grouping exercise (forms available on HuskyCT) on Wed, Sept. 1 by 11:59 pm.

### ***Labor Day- No Class- Mon. Sept. 6***

### 3. Designing an Individualized Major II (Wed. Sept. 8)

What is expected in an individualized major proposal? Focus on the statement of purpose

#### *Reading:*

- Sample statements of purpose available on the IISP website
- Proposal rubric

#### *Viewing:*

- Video lecture on the statement of purpose

### 4. The Organization of Knowledge I (Mon. Sept. 13)

#### *Reading:*

- Jerome Kagan, "Characterizing the Three Cultures," pp. 1-5.
- Organization of Knowledge lecture on HuskyCT

#### *Watch before class:*

Marla Spivak, "Why Bees Are Disappearing," TED Talk, 2013

*Due:* Reflection on “Where does my major theme fit within the frameworks presented in the ‘Organization of Knowledge?’” Mon. Sept. 13 at 11:59 pm

### **5. Proposal Review** (Wed. Sept. 15)

Peer review of your proposal

*Due:*

- First Draft of Plan of Study *and* Statement of Purpose. Bring a copy to class to share with your peer reviewer. You **must** use the plan of study form available (See Class 2 on HuskyCT)

*To do this week:*

- Revise your proposal (plan of study and statement of purpose) and schedule a meeting with me to discuss it.

### **6. The Organization of Knowledge II** (Mon. Sept. 20)

How is knowledge organized in the modern American university?

*Reading:*

- Research Methods & Methodologies lecture in HuskyCT
- Examples of UConn faculty research taken from *UConn Today* articles

*Due:*

- Draft statement of purpose and plan of study (Sept. 20 at 11:59 pm on HuskyCT).

*Schedule meeting* with me for week of Sept. 20, 27 or Oct. 4 to discuss your draft proposal and discuss advisors

### **7. Disciplines Exploration** (Wed. Sept. 22)

Students will work in groups to prepare their presentations on their assigned discipline

*Reading:*

- Information about the disciplines (See “Disciplines Resources” section in HuskyCT)

### **8. Experiential Learning** (Mon. Sept. 27)

How do internships, study abroad, and undergraduate research fit into the major?

*To do this week:*

- *Required 1<sup>st</sup> meeting* during the week of Sept. 27 or Oct. 4 with me to review proposal and discuss advisors

### **9. Disciplines Presentations** (Wed. Sept. 29)

Groups present their findings on their assigned discipline

*Reading:*

- Information about the disciplines (links are in HuskyCT)

## **10. Disciplines Presentations (Mon. Oct. 4)**

Groups present their findings on their assigned discipline

*To do this week:*

- *Required 1<sup>st</sup> meeting* during the week of Sept. 27 or Oct. 4 with me to review proposal
- Schedule meetings with potential faculty advisors for weeks of Oct. 11, 18 or 25, if you wish to apply to the IMJR Program this semester.

### **Wed. Oct. 6 – No Class**

*Due:*

- Short Essay: Disciplines (**Wed. Oct. 6 at 11:59 pm on Husky CT**)

## **11. Thinking Across Disciplines I (Mon. Oct. 11)**

A discussion of approaches to interdisciplinary work

*Reading:*

- Matthew Miller and Veronica Boix-Mansilla, “Thinking Across Perspectives and Disciplines”

*Viewing:*

- Elizabeth Pisani, “Sex, Drugs and HIV: Let’s Get Rational,” TED Talk
- Gary Slutkin, “Let’s Treat Violence Like a Contagious Disease,” TED Talk

*To do this week:*

- Required 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting with me during the week of Oct. 11 or 18
- Schedule meetings with potential faculty advisors for weeks of Oct. 11, Oct. 18, or Oct. 25 if you wish to apply to the IMJR Program this semester.

## **12. Thinking across Disciplines II (Wed. Oct. 13)**

A case study: Examining the Salem Witchcraft Accusations from different disciplinary perspectives

*Reading:*

- Case study materials on HuskyCT

### **No Class on Oct. 18 and Oct. 20**

- Work on your proposal; meet with faculty advisors.

## **13. Thinking across Disciplines III (Mon. Oct. 25)**

Applying interdisciplinary strategies to a research question in your major

*To do:*

- Preliminary Assignment: Research question & interdisciplinary strategies

*To do this week:*

- Send your electronic application to your advisors no later than Wed. Oct. 27, so that they have at least one week to fill in the recommender/advisor form online

**14. Major Presentations** (Wed. Oct. 27)

Students will present a brief overview of their major

**15. Last class: Major Presentations and Wrap Up** (Mon. Nov. 1)

Students will present a brief overview of their major.

Review of the semester, course evaluations, and discussion of what comes next for individualized majors.

**Final To-Dos**

*Due:*

- Individualized Major Plan of study and statement of purpose: Due **Wed. Nov. 3 at 11:59 pm on HuskyCT**. *This is the version that will be graded for the course.*
- Final Essay: Research Question & Interdisciplinary Strategies: Due **Wed. Nov. 10, at 11:59 pm on HuskyCT**

**APPLICATION DEADLINE FOR IMJR IS Wed. Nov. 3 at 11:59 PM.** If you plan to apply to the program this semester you must submit your completed electronic application for admission using the Quest portal at <http://quest.uconn.edu> by this deadline.