

LIBS 4395 - Liberal Studies Capstone Texas A&M University - Central Texas

Instructor: Charles R. Hamilton, PhD

Office: Online

Phone: (903) 573-5124 (cell)

Email: Please use Canvas *Messages* email for all communications.

Office Hours: Since this is an online course, in person office hours are not possible. However, I will be available through the *Messages* functions of Canvas, located on the course menu, and will respond in 24 hours or less.

Mode of instruction and course access: This course is a 100% online course and uses TAMUCT **Canvas** Learn system. You will use the Canvas username and password communicated to you separately to logon to this system.

Student-instructor interaction: Messages sent through Canvas *Course Email* at any time will be answered within 24 hours, seven days a week. I will also make myself available between the hours of 1:00 p.m. and 2:00 p.m., Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, for quick email response or online chat when requested.

911 Cellular:

Emergency Warning System for Texas A&M University-Central Texas

911Cellular is an emergency notification service that gives Texas A&M University-Central Texas the ability to communicate health and safety emergency information quickly via email, text message, and social media. All students are automatically enrolled in 911Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at [911Cellular](https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management) [https://portal.publicsafetycloud.net/Texas-AM-Central/alert-management] to change where you receive your alerts or to opt out. By staying enrolled in 911Cellular, university officials can quickly pass on safety-related information, regardless of your location.

COURSE INFORMATION

1.0 Course Overview and Description: LIBS 4395 Liberal Studies Capstone. 3 Semester Credit Hours.

This course requires students to integrate and use fundamental concepts learned in previous courses within the students' degree concentrations including research and analysis of real-world phenomena and problems. Students will present written reports on their research, supplemented by appropriate internet and multimedia materials, as well as portfolios documenting their research. This is a writing intensive course for Liberal Studies majors. Prerequisites: [BCIS 1301](#) or [CISK 300](#); [ENGK 309](#); senior standing, approved degree plan for Bachelor of Science in Liberal Studies program.

From the authors of our text: "As students, you face three major obstacles in any entry-level multidisciplinary or interdisciplinary course.... The first is comprehending subject matter that differs markedly from your prior exposure to disciplinary learning and thinking.... The second is that you often bring into the course misperceptions about interdisciplinarity learned from other students or from disciplinary instructors who may have given the impression that such courses and programs are superficial and may not be accepted by prospective employers.... The third obstacle that you face is how to articulate what interdisciplinary studies is." These first chapters in Part 1 of the text help place interdisciplinary studies and interdisciplinarity in perspective -- why it is important, how it works, what it means for the future, and its place in the "real" world. Remember the chapter Objectives and Learning Outcomes, which guide your thinking as you read and study. Go back over the Critical Thinking Questions, Applications, and Exercises to help you remember the information you have studied in LIBS 3300. If you have not used this text before, or, if you have not had LIBS 3300, you need to quickly and thoroughly go through the first nine chapters in order to

get up to speed for this course. We will be concentrating our efforts in research and research writing. Please see the **Instructor's Personal Statement** at the end of this syllabus for more of an overview.

Students are expected to be familiar with the philosophy, definitions, terms, and procedures of Interdisciplinary Studies, especially the last three chapters in our text (10, 11, 12) as a reference, while researching germane journal articles and participating **actively** in online discussions of the assigned readings and other assigned topics. Your final assignment will be to write a summation essay, consisting of a collection of your research, which becomes a discussion of relevant information from chapters and journal articles you have studied throughout the course, along with comparison scenarios of practices you have chosen to highlight, and situations or genres in which they might apply. As we work our way through the semester, you will be asked to write short reflections, summaries, and analyses of specific selections from research you have done on your own. At the end of the semester, these article summaries/analyses will come together, along with other writing elements, to form your formal final research paper. Although this is not a graduate-level course, this is an intensive research-based course, and the rigor is extensive, especially during the last weeks. (*See section 4.0-4.4*) We are going to move very fast, so do not get behind, or you will not only lose points, but you may find that you have to drop the course.

1.1 Student Requirements

- 1.1.1 Examine and then question statements related to interdisciplinarity.
- 1.1.2 Make intelligent observations about the benefits and shortcomings of the material in weekly research readings through both online discussions and in weekly reviews.
- 1.1.3 Collect and evaluate a library of sources concerning interdisciplinary studies issues used in problem-solving situations, and through a variety of genres.

2.0 Course Objectives:

2.1 Student Learning Outcomes

- 2.1.1 Students will be able to differentiate between the common definitions of interdisciplinary studies currently in use.
- 2.1.2 Students will be able to select and highlight interdisciplinary methods they choose as most harmful/useful, based on their personal experience, and research.
- 2.1.3 Students will be able to select the interdisciplinary devices they feel best fit strategic approaches to problem-solving in their field of study.
- 2.1.4 Students will develop the ability to blend forms of study from a variety of disciplines to fit situations where one mode alone may not be sufficient to be affective.

2.2 Competency Goals

- 2.2.1 Students will read and respond, both in essay form, and through written, online discussion, to a variety of interdisciplinary tactics, described in the text, and used for the creation interdisciplinary problem-solving cultures.
- 2.2.2 Students will read and respond, both in essay form, and through written, online discussions, to a variety of interdisciplinary practices, described in journal articles they select, and used in a variety of problem-solving modes and situations.
- 2.2.3 Students will discover, and apply, their personal choices of the "correct" practices necessary for specific scenarios of interdisciplinary problem-solving situations.
- 2.2.4 Students will discover their personal philosophies for use in specific interdisciplinary problem-solving situations, through reading, research, written reviews, and written discussion responses, and record those in essay format.

3.0 Required Reading and Textbook

Repko, Allen F. and Richard (Rick) Szostak. *Interdisciplinary Research*. 3rd ed. SAGE Publications 2017. ISBN: 9781506330488 or LCCN 2016000042

Journal Articles - within the TAMU-CT Library or from their online databases.

Texts are on reserve at the TAMU-CT library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- 4.0 Course Requirements:** Use MLA or APA guidelines on all the writing that you turn in and let me know which one you will be using. **All work must be in Microsoft Word format, and submitted through Canvas—I will not accept emailed assignments or any other format than MS Word.** (Also, as a rule I do not accept late assignments, without prior approval.)
- 4.1 Problem-solving Project:** Since this course is built on personal research, you are required to create a project that is directly related to your course of study or concentration.
- 4.1.1** Within your specific discipline, create a real or hypothetical problem that is complex, and needs to be solved. The authors of our text offer the following research steps in using the “Broad Model” process.
 - 4.1.2** Define the problem or state the research question.
 - 4.1.3** Justify using an interdisciplinary approach.
 - 4.1.4** Identify relevant disciplines.
 - 4.1.5** Conduct a literature search.
 - 4.1.6** Critically analyze the disciplinary insights into the problem and locate the sources of conflict.
 - 4.1.7** Reflect on how the interdisciplinary process has enlarged your understanding of the problem.
- 4.2 Article Reviews:** Each of five weeks throughout the course you will be asked to review two (2) journal articles of your choice, each addressing a different interdisciplinary tactic or practice that correlates with the topic you investigate for the purpose of complex problem-solving. These reviews function as part of your course assessment and **are an integral part of your final research essay.** Review those articles or documents in 500-600 words. For each review, start with an MLA/APA heading, the bibliographic/citation information (MLA or APA style), and a concise summary (roughly 250-300 words) of the articles or documents. In a separate paragraph(s), write evaluative comments (roughly 250-300 words) about the articles or documents. Address the usefulness to you, and its general strengths and weaknesses. The word count is only an average. Feel free to go over the limit, but not under. **Use Microsoft Word format only. (Examples are in Pages Section on the home page.)**
- 4.3 Discussion Participation:** In addition, you are expected to contribute to the course discussion each week. Count on providing at least one substantive original comment each of four (4) weeks about your readings or in response to my prompts. Also included are comments you post as responses to others’ posts. Each week you are required to post responses to at least two of your classmates’ comments. Grades are not assigned to specific posts, but your contributions each week are worth twenty-five (25) points. In addition to the discussion of readings, the discussion provides a forum for other course questions and comments. Please check the Discussion Board often to see what your classmates are asking or commenting on. You might be able to help. Grades for this section will be collected and posted regularly. Discussion is important to any course, and an online course is no different. Each participant’s comments and points of view are essential to gaining knowledge about any subject or topic, and I put quite a bit of weight on active discussion. **Comments should be substantive, and should be made early in the week, so that active discussion can take place. Students making comments in the final minutes or hours of the discussion window will not get full credit for participation/discussion.** (100 points)
- 4.4 Final Essay:** This will be an essay that gives you yet another opportunity to ponder the ideas of how interdisciplinarity fits within the world of the future, and your future career. You will write a summation essay, discussing the practices you have studied throughout the course, comparisons of practices you have chosen to highlight, and problem-solving situations, scenarios, in which they might apply. This is a very substantive assignment, and should reflect your critical insight into interdisciplinary methods that can be applied to fit specific situations. The average length of these papers has been 2500-4000 words, but feel free to go longer if necessary. (300 points)

5.0 Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion

5.1	Grading Rubrics for Reviews, Discussion, and the Final Essay are located in Pages on the Homepage		
5.2	Weekly Article Reviews	5@100	500
5.3	Discussion/Participation	8@25	200
5.4	Final Essay		300
	Total Points Available		1000

6.0 Posting of Grades

Grades for assignments will be posted no later than one (1) week from the due date. Grades for Discussion Participation will be posted the week following the end date for that discussion. *All student grades will be posted in the Canvas Grade book. Students should monitor their grading status through this tool.*

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

- 7.0 This course will use the TAMUCT Instructure Canvas learning management system. Logon to TAMUCT Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]
 Username: Your MyCT username
 (xx123 or everything before the "@" in your MyCT e-mail address)
 Password: Your MyCT password

For this course, you will need reliable and frequent access to a computer and to the Internet. If you do not have frequent and reliable access to a computer with Internet connection, please consider dropping this course or contact me (your email and phone number) to discuss your situation.

Canvas supports the most common operating systems:

PC: Windows 8, Windows 7

Mac: Mac OS X 10.9 (Mavericks), 10.8 (Mountain Lion), and 10.7 (Lion)

NOTE: **Computers using Windows XP, Windows 8 RT and OS X 10.6 or lower are NO longer supported.**

Check browser and computer compatibility by following the "Browser Check" link on the TAMU-CT Canvas logon page. This is a CRITICAL step as these settings are important for when you take an exam or submit an assignment.

Your ability to function within the **Canvas** system will facilitate your success in this course. ***Technology issues are not an excuse for missing a course requirement – make sure your computer is configured correctly and address issues well in advance of deadlines.***

Technology Support

- 7.1 For technological or computer issues, students should contact Help Desk Central. 24 hours a day, 7 days a week:
 Email: helpdesk@tamu.edu
 Phone: (254) 519-5466 Web Chat: <http://hdc.tamu.edu>
When calling for support please let your support technician know you are a TAMUCT student.
 For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

8.0. Complete Course Outline – LIBS - 4395 Summer 2018**Assignment Due Dates & times****Discussions: Initial Post - Thursday, 11:59 p.m.****Response Posts (2) – Sunday, 11:59 p.m.****Journal Reviews: (5 weekly) Sundays, 11:59 p.m. (Final) July 25, 11:59 p.m.**

DATE	Readings	Weekly Assignments
Week 1 June 4-10	Begin Chapters 1-7 Repko Text for Libs Review	Read Syllabus, Begin Reading Introduction & Chapters 1-7 of text Comments & Questions about course requirements and assignments – ask questions. See Journal Review examples in “Pages” on course Homepage. Post Personal introductions & Discussion – What is your concentration?)
Week 2 June 11-17	Concentrate on Chapters 1-7 & Researched Journal Articles	Post how Interdisciplinary Studies can benefit problem-solving in your discipline/concentration & course questions Post comments on text chapters 1&2 & journal findings 1st Journal Summary/Review Due – June 17 @11:59 p.m.
Week 3 June 18-24	Chapters 1-7 & Researched Journal Articles	Post comments on text chapters & journal findings 2nd Journal Summary/Review Due – June 24 @11:59 p.m.
Week 4 June 25 – July 1	Researched Journal Articles	Post comments on text chapters & journal findings 3rd Journal Summary/Review Due – July 1@11:59 p.m.
Week 5 July 2-8	Researched Journal Articles	Post comments on text chapters & journal findings 4th Journal Summary/Review Due – July 8@11:59 p.m.
Week 6 July 9-15	Researched Journal Articles	Post comments on text chapters & journal findings 5th Journal Summary/Review Due – July 15@11:59 p.m.
Week 7 July 16-22	Work on Final Paper	Work on Final Paper & post Final Comments Final Paper Due – July 26@11:59 p.m.
Week 8 July 23-27	Work on Final Paper	Concentration on Final Essay Final comments on discussion. Final Paper Due – July 25@11:59 p.m.

COURSE AND UNIVERSITY PROCEDURES AND POLICIES

9.0 Drop Policy

If you discover that you need to drop this class, you must complete a [Drop Request Form](https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf) [https://www.tamuct.edu/registrar/docs/Drop_Request_Form.pdf].

Professors cannot drop students; this is always the responsibility of the student. The Registrar's Office will provide a deadline on the Academic Calendar for which the form must be completed, signed and returned. Once you return the signed form to the Registrar's Office, you must go into Warrior Web and confirm that you are no longer enrolled. If you still show as enrolled, FOLLOW-UP with the Registrar's Office immediately. You are to attend class until the procedure is complete to avoid penalty for absence. Should you miss the drop deadline or fail to follow the procedure, you will receive an F in the course, which may affect your financial aid and/or VA educational benefits.

10.0 Academic Integrity

Texas A&M University-Central Texas values the integrity of the academic enterprise and strives for the highest standards of academic conduct. A&M-Central Texas expects its students, faculty, and staff to support the adherence to high standards of personal and scholarly conduct to preserve the honor and integrity of the creative community. Academic integrity is defined as a commitment to honesty, trust, fairness, respect, and responsibility. Any deviation by students from this expectation may result in a failing grade for the assignment and potentially a failing grade for the course. Academic misconduct is any act that improperly affects a true and honest evaluation of a student's academic performance and includes, but is not limited to, cheating on an examination or other academic work, plagiarism and improper citation of sources, using another student's work, collusion, and the abuse of resource materials. All academic misconduct concerns will be reported to the university's Office of Student Conduct. Ignorance of the university's standards and expectations is never an excuse to act with a lack of integrity. When in doubt on collaboration, citation, or any issue, please contact your instructor before taking a course of action.

11.0 Academic Accommodations.

At Texas A&M University-Central Texas, we value an inclusive learning environment where every student has an equal chance to succeed and has the right to a barrier-free education. The Department of Access and Inclusion is responsible for ensuring that students with a disability receive equal access to the university's programs, services and activities. If you believe you have a disability requiring reasonable accommodations please contact the Department of Access and Inclusion at (254) 501-5831. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html) web page [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/access-inclusion.html].

Texas A&M University-Central Texas supports students who are pregnant and/or parenting. In accordance with requirements of Title IX and related guidance from US Department of Education's Office of Civil Rights, the Dean of Student Affairs' Office can assist students who are pregnant and/or parenting in seeking accommodations related to pregnancy and/or parenting. Students should seek out assistance as early in the pregnancy as possible. For more information, please visit the [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html) web page [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html]. Students may also contact the institution's Title IX Coordinator. If you would like to read more about these [requirements and guidelines online](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf), please visit the website [http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf].

Title IX of the Education Amendments Act of 1972 prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex and gender—including pregnancy, parenting, and all related conditions. A&M-Central Texas is able to provide flexible and individualized reasonable accommodation to pregnant and parenting students. All pregnant and parenting students should contact

the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University's Title IX Coordinator.

12.0 Tutoring

Tutoring is available to all A&M-Central Texas students, both on-campus and online. Subjects tutored on campus include Accounting, Advanced Math, Biology, Finance, Statistics, Mathematics, and Study Skills. Tutors are available at the Tutoring Center in Warrior Hall, Suite 111.

If you have a question regarding tutor schedules, need to schedule a tutoring session, are interested in becoming a tutor, or have any other question, contact Academic Support Programs at (254) 519-5796, or by emailing Dr.

DeEadra Albert-Green at deeadra.albertgreen@tamuct.edu.

Chat live with a tutor 24/7 for almost any subject from on your computer! Tutor.com is an online tutoring platform that enables A&M-Central Texas students to log in and receive FREE online tutoring and writing support. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

13.0 University Writing Center

Located in 416 Warrior Hall, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10am-4pm Monday-Thursday during the summer with online hours available Monday-Thursday from 6:00-9:00pm. Students may arrange a one-on-one session with a trained and experienced writing tutor by visiting the UWC during normal operating hours (both half-hour and hour sessions are available) or by making an appointment via [WCOnline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) at [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu to schedule an online tutoring session. Tutors are prepared to help writers of all levels and abilities at any stage of the writing process.

While tutors will not write, edit, or grade papers, they will assist students in developing more effective composing practices. By providing a practice audience for students' ideas and writing, our tutors highlight the ways in which they read and interpret students' texts, offering guidance and support throughout the various stages of the writing process. In addition, students may work independently in the UWC by checking out a laptop that runs the Microsoft Office suite and connects to WIFI, or by consulting our resources on writing, including all of the relevant style guides. Whether you need help brainstorming ideas, organizing an essay, proofreading, understanding proper citation practices, or just want a quiet place to work, the University Writing Center is here to help!

If you have any questions about the University Writing Center, please do not hesitate to contact Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu.

14.0 University Library

The University Library provides many services in support of research across campus and at a distance. We offer over 200 electronic databases containing approximately 250,000 eBooks and 82,000 journals, in addition to the 85,000 items in our print collection, which can be mailed to students who live more than 50 miles from campus. Research guides for each subject taught at A&M-Central Texas are available through our website to help students navigate these resources. On campus, the library offers technology including cameras, laptops, microphones, webcams, and digital sound recorders.

Research assistance from a librarian is also available 24 hours a day through our online chat service, and at the reference desk when the library is open. Research sessions can be scheduled for more comprehensive assistance, and may take place on Skype or in-person at the library. Assistance may cover many topics, including how to find articles in peer-reviewed journals, how to cite resources, and how to piece together research for written assignments.

Our 27,000-square-foot facility on the A&M-Central Texas main campus includes student lounges, private study

rooms, group work spaces, computer labs, family areas suitable for all ages, and many other features. Services such as interlibrary loan, TexShare, binding, and laminating are available. The library frequently offers workshops, tours, readings, and other events. For more information, please visit our [Library website](http://tamuct.libguides.com/index) [http://tamuct.libguides.com/index].

15.0 Instructor policies related to absence, grading, etc.

Since this is an online course, students are expected to log on a minimum of five (5) days each week and participate in online discussions by posting a minimum of one original comment, and responding to a minimum of two of their classmates' comments each week. Lack of participation will constitute an absence and reduce your weekly participation grade by a minimum of five points.

16.0 A Note about Sexual Violence at A&M-Central Texas

Sexual violence is a serious safety, social justice, and public health issue. The university offers support for anyone struggling with these issues. University faculty are mandated reporters, so if someone discloses that they were sexually assaulted (or a victim of Domestic/Dating Violence or Stalking) while a student at TAMUCT, faculty members are required to inform the Title IX Office. If you want to discuss any of these issues confidentially, you can do so through Student Counseling (254-501-5955) located on the second floor of Warrior Hall (207L).

Sexual violence can occur on our campus because predators often feel emboldened, and victims often feel silenced or shamed. It is incumbent on ALL of us to find ways to actively create environments that tell predators we don't agree with their behaviors and tell survivors we will support them. Your actions matter. Don't be a bystander; be an agent of change. For additional information on campus policy and resources visit the [Title IX webpage](https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php) [https://www.tamuct.edu/departments/compliance/titleix.php].

17.0 The Operation of the Online Course and Being an Online Student

Participating in an online course requires quite a bit of responsibility on the part of the student (see course calendar). You must log on daily in order to check for messages from the professor or other students, read daily postings on discussion forums, respond to prompts from the professor and other students, and to remain active for attendance purposes. Those students who reserve their comments for the last day the forum is accessible do not get the full impact of the course, and will not receive the full participation grade for the week. Also, simply making a comment in order to satisfy the participation component will not work. Comments should be substantive, insightful, and should generate further discussion. Students who do not keep up with assignments and discussion forums should consider dropping the course. If you do not feel that you are ready for an online course, you can gauge your readiness by taking this assessment for online learning at (<http://tamuct.smartermeasure.com>).

18.0 Instructor's Personal Statement

As our authors state in the Preface of our text, Interdisciplinary Studies is seen by some academics as a lack of direction, or a lack of dedicated study, because of its multi-faceted, non-limiting, approach to problem-solving. Considering this attitude, I can't help but be critical of those professors who try their best to hold on to the past, forgetting that education exists to explore, to gain knowledge, to experiment with new methods, with the purpose of finding better ways of solving the problems of a fast-paced, ever-changing world. Maybe it's the fear of the unknown, or the fear that they are being left behind (not the movie). The point is that Interdisciplinary Studies, and this form of cooperative problem solving, is "real world" methodology, and has been for many years. Academia has just been slow to catch on, and to promote interdisciplinarity. But, here we are, exploring new ground, while learning to listen to, and work with, others from other disciplines, and to respect the idea that there are other perspectives out there that might just open our eyes to better solutions. Welcome to Interdisciplinary Studies. Your choices, from here on out, will be career and life changing.

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