

Course Syllabus

Texas A&M University-Central Texas

LIBS 4395 - 120 Liberal Studies Capstone – Spring 2021

Instructor: Charles R. Hamilton, Ph.D.

Office: Online - c.hamilton@tamuct.edu

Phone: (903) 573-5124 (cell) (email or text first for appointment)

Email: Please use CANVAS email above for all online communications.

Office Hours: Since this is an online course, in-person office hours are not possible. However, I will be available through CANVAS email, located above, and will respond in 24 hours or less.

Mode of instruction and course access: This course is a 100% online course and uses the TAMUCT Canvas Learning Management System: [<https://tamuct.instructure.com>]

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 1:30 p.m. and 3:00 p.m., Monday through Friday for quick email responses 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 911 Cellular through their myCT email account.

Connect at 911Cellular [<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

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 CIS 3300; ENGL 3309; 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 are." These first chapters 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 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 the introductory Interdisciplinary Studies course. If you have not had the introductory course, quickly and thoroughly go through the first two chapters in order to get up to speed for this course. We will be concentrating our efforts on 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 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 summative 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 the 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. Do not get behind, or you will not only lose points, but you may find that you have to drop the course.

Student Requirements

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

Course Objectives:

Student Learning Outcomes

1. Students will be able to differentiate between the common definitions of interdisciplinary studies currently in use and use these studies to conduct research for written reflections in their chosen topic.
2. Students will be able to select and highlight, through online discussions, interdisciplinary methods they choose as most harmful/useful, based on their personal experience, and research.

3. Students will be able to select the interdisciplinary devices they feel best fit strategic approaches to problem-solving through essays in their field of study.
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 effective and reflect those studies through written essays.

Competency Goals

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 of interdisciplinary problem-solving cultures.
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.
3. Students will discover, and apply, their personal choices of the "correct" practices necessary for specific scenarios of interdisciplinary problem-solving situations.
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.

Required Reading and Textbook

Repko, Allen F., and Richard (Rick) Szostak. *Interdisciplinary Research*. 4th ed. SAGE Publications 2021. ISBN: 9781544398600
Journal Articles - within the TAMU-CT Library or from their online databases.
Texts are on reserve at the TAMU-CT library.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Course Requirements: (Use MLA or APA guidelines on all the writing that you turn in. 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.)

Problem-solving Project (Complex Problem): Since this course is built on personal research, you are required to create a project (complex problem) that is directly related to your course of study or concentration.

1. Within your specific discipline, create a real or hypothetical problem that is complex, has not been solved in your main discipline, and needs perspective from other disciplines to be solved. The authors of our text offer the following research steps in using the “Broad Model” process.
2. Define the problem or state the research question.
3. Justify using an interdisciplinary approach.
4. Identify relevant disciplines.
5. Conduct a literature search.

6. Critically analyze the disciplinary insights into the problem and locate their sources of conflict.
7. Reflect on how the interdisciplinary process has enlarged your understanding of the problem.

Article Reviews: Each week, throughout the course, you will be asked to read chapters from the text and two journal articles of your choice, each addressing a different interdisciplinary tactic or practice that correlates with those you are investigating for the purpose of complex problem-solving. Chapter information will be explored weekly in discussion boards, and reviews will be written from the journal articles you read. These article reviews function as part of your course assessment and are an integral part of your final research essay. Review each of those articles or documents in 500-600 words and submit them pasted together as one upload. For each first review, start with a heading, review number, the bibliographic/citation information (MLA or APA style), and a concise summary (roughly 250-300 words) of each article or document. In a separate paragraph(s), write evaluative comments (roughly 250-300 words) about each article or document. Address their usefulness to you in solving your complex problem, and their 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. These weekly journal review assignments are worth one hundred (100) points. (Examples are on the home page in the Pages section of the menu.)

Discussion Participation: As mentioned above, you are expected to contribute to the course discussion each week. Count on providing at least one substantive original comment each of ten (10) weeks about your readings or in response to my prompts. Also included are comments you post as responses to the posts of others. Each week you are required to post responses to at least two of your classmates' comments, referring to them by name. Grades are not assigned to specific posts, but your contributions each week, after the first three weeks, are worth fifty (50) points for each of the next 10 weeks. In addition to the discussion of readings, also provided is a forum for other course questions and comments. Please check the open discussions 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 in an online course even more so, since we no ability for face-to-face classroom conversation. 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.

You will see on the course schedule that I also mention "Common Interest Groups." A common interest group might be made up of students who are researching similar problems or questions, or students whose main concentration is the same or similar – i.e. science, biology & chemistry, or psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, or math, physics and engineering, etc. Feel free to set up common interest discussion instead of posting to the entire class. (*See below)

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.

Final Essay: This is a **summative 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 such as yours. The average length of these papers has been 5000 words, but feel free to go longer if necessary.

Examples of all are available on the CANVAS homepage in the Pages section of the course menu. The final essay is worth 300 points. Feel free to combine all useful prior journal reviews and your comparisons as the body of your paper, along with an introduction, a statement of your thesis and research problem/question and finishing with a summative conclusion in which you discuss answers you have found to your problem/question and a final analysis of how using Interdisciplinary techniques was/is important to your research, and any real-world applications you have discovered. This essay is a requirement for passing the course.

Grading Criteria Rubric and Conversion

Weekly Article Reviews 10@100	1000
Weekly Discussion/Participation 10@50	500
Final Essay	300
Total Points Available	1800

Posting of Grades

Grades for assignments will be posted one (1) week from the due date. Grades for Discussion Participation will also be posted every week. All student grades will be posted on the Canvas Grade book. Students should monitor their grading status through this tool.

TECHNOLOGY REQUIREMENTS AND SUPPORT

Technology Requirements

This course will use the A&M-Central Texas Instructure Canvas learning management system. We strongly recommend the latest versions of Chrome or Firefox browsers. Canvas no longer supports any version of Internet Explorer.

Logon to A&M-Central Texas Canvas [<https://tamuct.instructure.com/>] or access Canvas through the TAMUCT Online link in myCT [<https://tamuct.onecampus.com/>]. You will log in through our Microsoft portal.

Username: Your MyCT email address. Password: Your MyCT password

Canvas Support

Use the Canvas Help link, located at the bottom of the left-hand menu, for issues with Canvas. You can select “Chat with Canvas Support,” submit a support request through “Report a Problem,” or call the Canvas support line: 1-844-757-0953.

For issues related to course content and requirements, contact your instructor.

Other Technology Support

For log-in problems, 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): [http://hdc.tamu.edu]

Please let the support technician know you are an A&M-Central Texas student.

Complete Course Outline - LIBS 4395 Spring 2021

Week 1: 1/19-24

Read Syllabus, **Begin Reading Introduction & Chapter 1 of text**
Week 1 Discussion - Self-introductions, Course Questions,
Comments & Questions about course requirements and
assignments – ask questions

Week 2: 1/25-31

Chapter 2

Begin to Develop Complex Problem for Project

- Identify Common Interests/Concentrations, introduce yourselves
- Initiate Common Interest/Connection – Optional *(See Below)
- Post comments on Chapter Readings to groups
- Post any course questions on the open discussion
- See examples from other universities for help in developing a Complex Research Problem/Question

Week 3: 2/1-7

Chapter 3

Work on Developing Complex Problem

- Post comments on Chapter Readings and complex research problem/question by **2/4 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- Email me with questions about the complexity of the problem
- Initiate research on the major project

Week 4: 2/8-14 Weekly Grading Begins for Discussions & Journal Reviews

Chapter 4

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post initial comments on text chapter & journal findings by **2/11 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 1st Journal Summary/Review **Due – 2/14 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 5: 2/15-21

Chapter 5

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post initial comments on text chapters & journal findings by **2/18 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 2nd Journal Summary **Due – 2/21 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 6: 2/22-28

Chapter 6

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post Initial comments on text chapters & journal findings by **2/25 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 3rd Journal Summary **Due – 2/28 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 7: 3/1-7

Chapter 7

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post initial comments on text chapters & journal findings by **3/4 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- **4th Journal Summary Due – 3/7 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 8: 3/8-14

Chapter 8

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post initial comments on text chapters & journal findings by **3/11 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 5th Journal Summary **Due – 3/14 @ 11:59 p.m.**

SPRING BREAK -- 3/15-21

Week 9: 3/22-28

Chapter 9

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post initial comments on text chapter & journal findings by **3/25 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 6th Journal Summary **Due – 3/28 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 10: 3/29-4/4

Chapter 10

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post comments on text chapter & journal findings by **4/1 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 7th Journal Summary **Due – 4/4 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 11: 4/5-11

Chapter 11

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post comments on text chapter, research, and conclusions by **4/8 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 8th Journal Summary **Due - 4/11 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 12: 4/12-18

Chapter 12

Review 2 Journal Articles

- Post comments on text chapter, research, and conclusions by **4/15 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 9th Journal Summary **Due - 4/18 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 13: 4/19-25

Chapter 13

Begin to focus on Elements of Final Project

- Post comments on text chapter, paper completion, and conclusions by **4/22 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- 10th Journal Summary **Due - 4/25 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 14: 4/26-5/2

Focus on Elements of Final Essay

- Post comments on research, essay completion, and conclusions
 - Concentration on Final Essay
 - Post comments on the structure of the class: improvements, satisfaction, assignments, etc. These really help me with improvements for the next class.
- **Final Essay – Due – 5/11 @ 11:59 p.m.**

Week 15: 5/3-9

- **Final Essay – Due – 5/11 @ 11:59 p.m.**
- Post comments on completion and conclusions
- Post any comments on the structure of the class: improvements, satisfaction, assignments, etc. These help me with improvements for the next class

Week 16: 5/10-14

Final Essay Due Tuesday – Final Assignment!

Continue to post comments on the structure of the class: improvements, satisfaction, assignments, etc. These help me with improvements for the next class.

Last Class Day - 5/14

(A common interest group might be made up of students who are researching similar problems or questions, or students whose main concentration is the same or similar – i.e. science, biology & chemistry, or psychology, sociology, and cultural studies, or math, physics, and engineering, etc. Feel free to set up discussion groups made up of common interests instead of posting to the entire class.)*

UNIVERSITY RESOURCES, PROCEDURES, AND GUIDELINES

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].

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 penalties 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.

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, working with others in an unauthorized manner, 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 referred 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.

For more [information regarding the Student Conduct process](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html), [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/student-conduct.html].

If you know of potential honor violations by other students, you may [submit a report](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=0), [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=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 Office 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 Office of Access and Inclusion, WH-212; or call (254) 501-5836. Any information you provide is private and confidential and will be treated as such.

For more information please visit our [Access & Inclusion](https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717) Canvas page (log-in required) [https://tamuct.instructure.com/courses/717]

Important information for Pregnant and/or Parenting Students

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 the 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 [Student Affairs](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/index.html) [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](http://www2.ed.gov/about/offices/list/ocr/docs/pregnancy.pdf) online, 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 Associate Dean in the Division of Student Affairs at (254) 501-5909 to seek out assistance. Students may also contact the University’s Title IX Coordinator.

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. Tutor.com tutoring **will not offer writing support** beginning August 1, 2019, but will continue to offer other tutoring support.

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) 501-5836, visit the Office of Student Success at 212F Warrior Hall, or by emailing studentsuccess@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 online tutoring support at no additional cost. This tool provides tutoring in over 40 subject areas. Access Tutor.com through Canvas.

University Writing Center

Located in Warrior Hall 416, the University Writing Center (UWC) at Texas A&M University-Central Texas (TAMUCT) is a free workspace open to all TAMUCT students from 10:00 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday thru Thursday with satellite hours in the University Library Monday thru Thursday from 6:00-9:00 p.m. This semester, the UWC is also offering online-only hours from 12:00-3:00 p.m. on Saturdays.

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 UWC is here to help!

Students may arrange a one-to-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 [WCOonline](https://tamuct.mywconline.com/) [https://tamuct.mywconline.com/]. In addition, you can email Dr. Bruce Bowles Jr. at bruce.bowles@tamuct.edu if you have any questions about the UWC and/or need any assistance with scheduling.

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 workspaces, 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].

OPTIONAL POLICY STATEMENTS

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].

Behavioral Intervention

Texas A&M University-Central Texas cares about the safety, health, and well-being of its students, faculty, staff, and community. If you are aware of individuals for whom you have a concern, who are exhibiting concerning behaviors, or individuals causing a significant disruption to our community, please make a referral to the Behavioral Intervention Team. Referring your concern shows you care. You can complete the [referral](https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2) online [https://cm.maxient.com/reportingform.php?TAMUCentralTexas&layout_id=2].

Anonymous referrals are accepted. Please see the [Behavioral Intervention Team](https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/bat.html) website for more information [https://www.tamuct.edu/student-affairs/bat.html]. If a person's behavior poses an imminent threat to you or another, contact 911 or A&M-Central Texas University Police at 254-501-5800.

OTHER POLICIES

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.

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>).

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.

Copyright Notice

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