

# INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

Interdisciplinary Studies provides a framework for supporting innovative, boundary-crossing inquiry among students and faculty across campus. To this end, Interdisciplinary Studies coordinates the efforts of existing multidisciplinary programs and provides guidance and support as new programs are envisioned and established. Currently, IDST provides 9 interdisciplinary stand-alone minors.

## Programs & Missions

### American Indian Studies

The mission of the American Indian Studies minor is to provide students with an understanding of the cultural, historical, political, and social contexts and processes of native communities and individuals primarily within the United States, and to introduce students to perspectives and techniques of applying academic knowledge to problem-solving and service to native groups.

### Classical Studies

Classical Studies was accepted by the Board of Trustees as of Fall 2008. Assessment plans have not yet been created for this program. The Classical Studies minor focuses on the language, literature, history, philosophy, religion, art, and culture of Ancient Greece and Ancient Rome. The Classical Studies minor provides a program for those students who are interested in career paths that are informed by a sophisticated understanding of ancient cultures.

### Gender Studies

1. Content. Students will be able to study the extent to which gender and gender relations are socially influenced. Students will examine the ways in which conceptions of masculinity and femininity directly impact social and political institutions and practices, cultural expressions (such as art, communication, media, literature, music, and film), law, education, business, scientific inquiry, interpersonal relations, sexuality and family.

2. Interdisciplinarity. As an interdisciplinary program, the Gender Studies minor broadens students' understanding of their chosen major while facilitating the recognition of gender dynamics in their own lives. Students will be able to examine gender from multiple academic perspectives through the development of critical reading, writing and discussion skills.

### American Studies

The American Studies program takes an interdisciplinary approach to the study of American cultures. Through examination of historical, religious and literary texts, political institutions, popular culture, film, art, and the physical landscape, students will explore how Americans create meaning in their lives and make sense of the world in which they live. By encouraging students to approach the knowledge and skills they are mastering as part of their major from the perspective of other disciplines, American Studies courses foster deeper critical thinking and broader contextualization. Thus an American Studies minor offers students a strong complement to a wide variety of majors.

### Deaf Studies

To prepare students with the knowledge and skills they need to do some or all of the following (as determined by their chosen field):

- (1) find meaningful employment for themselves;
- (2) function in private or public workplaces that serve Deaf consumers/citizens.
- (3) increase general awareness and understanding of the Deaf-World among those with whom they interact;
- (4) interpret in a professional manner and increase the level of professionalism within the field.
- (5) gain acceptance to graduate school to pursue further study within their discipline.
- (6) increase the opportunities for Utah's Deaf citizens to obtain meaningful employment.

### Peace and Justice Studies

1. Content: Students will gain a broad understanding of the history of theorizations justifying mass organized violence and of theories of peace. Theories of morality regarding war, peacemaking, and justice will be understood. Theories of justice will also be understood. Practical application in the field, and in legal, diplomatic, political, economic, and business institutions; and in NGOs, will be understood. The history of peacemaking and conflict resolution strategies will be understood. The history of institutional, political, and economic changes (e.g., the development of human rights theorization, discourse, and application in law and international policy) will be understood. Students will understand basic traditions, research methodologies, and literatures related to all the above.

2. Interdisciplinarity: Students will understand above in relation to various academic disciplines and vocations, for example: political science, sociology, philosophy, English literature, law, psychology, history, the humanities and arts, and natural sciences.

### Cinema Studies

1. Content. Students should have a broad knowledge of primary and secondary cinematic texts from the United States and around the world. They should understand the basic concepts of film studies (film as text, theoretical frameworks, contexts—gender, ideology and identity—, culture, history and reception), be able to apply specific theoretical paradigms to individual films and express effectively, in oral and written contexts, their own analyses.

2. History. Students should have a broad understanding of the history of cinema from the early years to the present (invention, early years, silent era, development of sound, Hollywood studio system, other cinemas before 1945, postwar era, contemporary cinema, and cinema in the electronic age).

3. Interdisciplinarity. Students should have a broad understanding of how cinema studies articulates with other areas and disciplines of study.

### Environmental Studies

(1) History. Students should have a broad understanding of the history of notions of the human relationship to nonhuman nature from ancient Greek antiquity to the present within the Western (Occidental) intellectual tradition.

(2) Content. Students should have a broad knowledge of ecological relationships between human beings with other biota and the inanimate environment. Students should have an understanding of how the natural sciences, including the physical and life sciences, the humanities, and the social sciences, contribute to an understanding of ways in which human activity impacts the structure and function of ecological systems, from local to global scales. Additionally, students should be able to assess current environmental public policy issues in terms of Environmental Studies.

(3) Interdisciplinarity. Students should have a broad understanding of how the natural sciences, the social sciences, economics, and the humanities integrate within the framework of Environmental Studies.

### Religious Studies

The mission of the American Indian Studies minor is to provide students with an understanding of the cultural, historical, political, and social contexts and processes of native communities and individuals primarily within the United States, and to introduce students to perspectives and techniques of applying academic knowledge to problem-solving and service to native groups.

## Assessment Practices

Assessment plans vary for each of the interdisciplinary programs.

Some of our assessment practices include:

- External review of student papers written during capstone course
- Exit interviews with program committees
- Service learning projects with student's reflections in journal form
- Comprehensive tests administered during capstone exam

## Findings

Assessment plans were drafted for most IDST programs as of Fall 2008.

We will not have any data to report until Spring 2009.