

# Center for Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities Michigan State University

This document is intended for faculty preparing to offer IAH courses. The first part sets IAH courses in the context of MSU's Integrative Studies approach to general education and explains the criteria and expectations for IAH courses; the second part outlines the review process for new IAH course offerings.

Integrative Studies is Michigan State University's unique approach to liberal general education, offering a core curriculum that complements specialized work by students in their majors. Integrative Studies courses integrate multiple ways of knowing and models of inquiry and introduce students to important ways of thinking in the three core knowledge areas: the Arts and Humanities, the Biological and Physical Sciences, and the Social, Behavioral, and Economic Sciences. They assist students early during their study to develop as more critical thinkers. They also encourage appreciation of our humanity and creativity, human cultural diversity, the power of knowledge, and our responsibilities for ourselves and for our world. (Academic Programs, p.49)

Michigan State University's Integrative Studies general education program is offered through three Centers for Integrative Studies that focus respectively on integrative arts and humanities, integrative general science, and integrative social science. Despite the division of the general education program into these three centers housed within different colleges, the centers share broad common goals for student learning and processes for approving new courses, and each center has an articulated set of expectations for what constitutes an integrative studies course within its area of study.

MSU students fulfill their Integrative Studies requirement by completing two four-credit IAH courses, two four-credit ISS courses, a three-credit ISB course, a three-credit ISP course, and a two-credit ISB or ISP lab. General education requirements also include writing and mathematics.

## **What are the Academic Goals of Integrative Studies?**

### **As a group, IAH, ISS, and ISB/ISP courses help students to:**

- Become more familiar with the ways of knowing in the arts and humanities, the biological and physical sciences, and the social sciences.
- Develop a range of intellectual abilities, including critical thinking, logical argument, appropriate uses of evidence, and interpretation of varied kinds of information (quantitative, qualitative, text, image).
- Become more knowledgeable about other times, places, and cultures as well as key ideas and issues in human experience.

- Learn more about the role of scientific method in developing a more objective understanding of the natural and social worlds.
- Appreciate the role of knowledge and of values and ethics in understanding human behavior and solving social problems.
- Recognize responsibilities and opportunities associated with citizenship in a democratic society and an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world.

## **Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities**

Students take two IAH courses—an “A” or first course and a “B” or second course. “A” courses are numbered 201-210, and one of these courses is prerequisite for a “B” course. “B” courses are numbered 211 and above. Occasionally confusion arises because in addition to the basic “A” and “B” (or first and second) distinction, related “B” courses are identified by a combination of numerals and a letter. Thus, for example, the 211 series includes IAH 211A, Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations: Africa; IAH 211B, Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations: Asia; IAH 211C, Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations: The Americas; etc.

### **Goals of Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities**

Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities at MSU seeks to assist students to become more familiar with ways of knowing in the arts and humanities and to be more knowledgeable and capable in a range of intellectual and expressive abilities. IAH courses encourage students to engage critically with their own society, history, and culture(s); they also encourage students to learn more about the history and culture of other societies. They focus on key ideas and issues in human experience; encourage appreciation of the roles of knowledge and values in shaping and understanding human behavior; emphasize the responsibilities and opportunities of democratic citizenship; highlight the value of the creative arts of literature, theater, music, and arts; and alert us to important issues that occur among peoples in an increasingly interconnected, interdependent world.

*[We ask that this paragraph be included and foregrounded on syllabi for all IAH courses.]*

### **What are the Principles and Criteria for All IAH Courses?**

- Each course poses an important question or problem for the arts and humanities that clearly shapes the organization of the course, and the course draws on materials or perspectives from multiple disciplines in addressing the question or problem.
- Each course is self-standing and not intended as a disciplinary gateway or introductory course for a major nor should it be framed as a general education course with a single disciplinary focus (e.g., music or art appreciation or introduction to literature).

- Course materials are situated historically.
- Each course includes in its organization and materials the cultural diversity of the world in which we live.
- Texts used in each course reflect the diversity of human experience, across both temporal and racial, ethnic, gender, class, and geographic boundaries.
- Each course employs a range of significant texts (defined broadly to include creative literature, non-fiction, historical documents, the visual arts, music, dance, theater, architecture, and the artifacts of material culture), preferably drawing on at least three different kinds of texts.
- Texts selected for courses emphasize primary materials over secondary materials such as traditional textbooks and book-length scholarly works.
- Each course includes an emphasis on student writing.

### **What distinguishes IAH “A” Courses and IAH “B” Courses?**

- **Variation in breadth**  
IAH “A” courses (201-210) are expected to have a certain breadth in subject matter and theme and some historical range. This breadth and range is in contrast with “B” courses (211 and above), which are somewhat more specialized, focusing in somewhat more depth on a specific subject matter, era, or culture. Thus, for example, IAH 201 “The United States and the World” and IAH 203 “Latin American and the World” are “A” courses, while an IAH 211C “Area Studies and Multicultural Civilizations: The Americas” offered with a focus on Mexico is a “B” course. IAH 208 “Music and Culture” is an “A” course and IAH 241A “Creative Arts and Humanities: Music and Society in the Modern World” offered with a focus on Reggae, Rastafari, and Dub Poetry is a “B” course.
- **Variation in thematic focus**  
IAH “A” courses raise questions or themes that can “travel” i.e., can inform additional study in general education, the major, and beyond. For instance, what is America’s role in the world? what is globalization? what are the human questions regarding technology? IAH “B” courses raise questions or themes that are appropriate to the course title and specialized focus but may or may not “travel.”
- **Variation in expectations for writing**  
IAH “A” courses include significant emphasis on writing, with opportunity for workshop or revision and feedback. In other words, “A” courses provide students a significant opportunity for writing and feedback, followed by more writing and feedback. By contrast, while IAH “B” courses include significant emphasis on writing and feedback, they offer less emphasis on feedback than “A” courses, especially if students are given more sustained writing

projects. One might distinguish here between writing for breadth and writing for depth, e.g., “B” courses may involve research papers at the course’s end.

## **What is the Process for Review of New IAH Courses?**

Whenever a faculty member teaches any IAH course for the first time, he or she is expected to submit a proposal for review by the CISAH Advisory Committee, a group composed of representatives from all departments with teaching responsibilities in CISAH. Following discussion of the course proposals, the CISAH director will communicate with the faculty member about the committee’s response, including queries, suggestions.

A proposal for a new focus for an existing course consists of a syllabus that will be reviewed and commented on by members of the CISAH Advisory Committee during the academic year. CISAH will forward these comments and suggestions –if needed-- to the instructor.

Syllabi that do not meet the basic guidelines and expectations for IAH courses shall be resubmitted to the Director in a timely manner and prior to the start date of the course.

Faculty wishing to propose a new course must consult with the CISAH director early in the planning process.

## **Recommendations and Academic Expectations for new IAH courses**

- The proposed course should state clearly its goals as well as its focus, integrative character, and its central question(s) and its scope to UG students. Course description and course objectives should include an explanation of the core questions(s) or problem(s) the course addresses and their significance and of how the course texts contribute to the consideration of the issue and students’ understanding
- The proposed syllabus should indicate how the course meets the principles and criteria for IAH courses (include the *Goals of Integrative Studies*, page 2 of these guidelines)
- Faculty should consider identifying which of the goals of Integrative Studies the faculty member will seek to assess in the course and the major course assignment they will use to assess student learning outcomes.
- For courses taught with TA-led sections, the course syllabus should state what responsibilities TAs will have during the semester, keeping in mind GEU contract stipulations that TAs are to work no more than 20 hours per week, averaged across the appointment period.
- For courses taught as part of an MSU study abroad program, the course proposal should explain how the course takes advantage of the study abroad location for educational purposes (e.g., on-site learning) and indicate how the course meets the contact hour requirement for four academic credits (56 hours).

- Faculty teaching an IAH course in Study Abroad Programs must submit an updated version of the syllabus prior to the start of the program. If the course syllabus has not been updated, CISAH will ask for resubmission prior to scheduling the course for enrollment.

(Updated and approved by the CISAH Advisory Committee on 05/02/2008)

## What should the syllabus include?

*(Note: most of the following are also required by the University Code of Teaching Responsibility -- <http://www.hr.msu.edu/HRsite/Documents/Faculty/Handbooks/Faculty/Instruction/v-codeofteaching.htm>. Useful suggestions about syllabi are also available from the university ombudsman at <http://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/>.)*

*We strongly recommend that faculty preparing a course proposal consult the Ombudsman's website especially for expectations about precision in absence policy and academic integrity.*

- Statement of "Goals of Integrative Studies in Arts and Humanities" (see p. 2 above)
- Introduction to or description of the course for students
- Instructional objectives/student learning goals (These frame the IAH goals relevant to the course, preferably as a clearly identified list.)
- Grading criteria and methods used to determine final grades, including criteria for evaluating participation if it contributes to the final course grade
- For courses with TAs, a statement about their role and the contribution of discussion sections to students' final grades
- Absence policy for both lectures and discussion sections
- Brief paragraphs of description for each major assignment
- Statement about academic integrity (See suggestions on Ombudsman's website.)
- Schedule of readings and assignments (Please include unit headings and class topics, not simply titles of assigned work.)
- Date and time of the final examination as scheduled by the registrar (See <http://www.reg.msu.edu/ROIInfo/Calendar/FinalExam.asp>.)

## Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes

Assessment of Integrative Studies goals for student learning occurs at the level of individual courses. Course faculty use as the basis for assessment such course assignments as papers, examination questions or portfolios and from them develop evidence of students' progress toward integrative studies learning outcomes. Below are examples of statements of student learning outcomes that translate the academic goals of integrative studies (p.1) into course-specific learning goals that can be assessed. These examples are adapted from IAH "A" courses taught in fall 2005.

- Students will be able to describe the way that fields of knowledge ("majors") are

constructed by asking certain kinds of questions and using specific and limited theories and methods to try to answer those questions.

- Students will be able to identify important ethical issues related to self, society, and technology and to discuss them in a thoughtful, informed, and respectful manner.
- Students will be able to write clearly and cogently in different formats in response to prompts, using textual evidence to advance sophisticated arguments about one or more written and visual texts.
- Students will be expected to attain a basic understanding of culture(s) with attention to historical, social, and ethical differences in order to promote knowledge, understanding, and respect for the relative values of others.
- Students should, by the end of the course, have a better idea of the ways the United States is a part of the world and the ways US history and politics intersect with those of other cultures and nations.

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