Integrations – Interdisciplinary Connections

I. Description of Purpose and Content
The Interdisciplinary Connections (IC) course is a culminating or capstone experience for LMU students with the purpose of exposing students to the benefits of examining a significant, contemporary problem, question or social issue from the perspectives of two or more apparently disparate academic disciplines or schools of thought and analyzing it in ways that would not be possible through single disciplinary means. The course is designed to generate meaningful discussion and debate.

IC will provide a distinctive LMU experience rooted in the University’s mission with emphasis on “education of the whole person.” Through mature interdisciplinary collaboration, IC seeks to provide a sense of logical and existential connection as well as a sense of coherence among course requirements at all levels of the student’s undergraduate education. IC builds on knowledge, skills, and insight from previous core experiences, majors and minors, and general education both in and outside the classroom. Students at the final stage of their LMU education are able to grasp the relevance of previous coursework to make important connections to course topics and methodologies.

Drawing on cumulative and holistic experiences and the educational maturation process, students will be able to address complex issues from a variety of perspectives intended to foster a lifelong commitment to social justice through engagement, reflection, and action. In particular, it relies on the student's shared exposure to various modes of knowing in the exploration phase of the core to allow students of diverse disciplines to understand and communicate with each other and work collaboratively to engage challenging issues.

Students and faculty will critically assess issues from one of five interdisciplinary categories (1. virtue and justice, 2. culture, art and society, 3. power and privilege, 4. globalization, and 5. science, nature and society) to enable the following learning outcomes.

II. Learning Outcomes
Students in the Interdisciplinary Connections course will:

- Demonstrate the ability to recognize and analyze similarities and differences between at least two disciplinary perspectives or modes of knowing.
- Know discrete characteristics of each discipline.
- Be able to integrate different disciplinary approaches to explain or solve a phenomenon, issue, or problem.
- Value different ways of knowing and thinking about issues and value the use of multiple perspectives and viewpoints to address a given issue.
- Demonstrate an understanding of the core concepts of one of the five interdisciplinary thematic connections.
III. Defining Characteristics

Interdisciplinary Connections courses must address the following requirements:

- Combine at least two disciplinary approaches or modes of knowing to address a mission-based topic capable of generating tension and debate in a primarily seminar format in which team teaching is encouraged.
- Provide significant opportunities to evaluate students on their ability to analyze, synthesize, and apply multiple disciplinary perspectives to the topic via course readings, assignments, activities and class discussion.
- Demonstrate clearly in course syllabi how readings, lectures, discussions, projects and activities define the disciplinary perspectives and how the perspectives are synthesized around a particular issue or set of problems.
- Emphasize a collaborative process which seeks a holistic view of an issue, requires reflection, and results in an attempt to synthesize and/or resolve an issue.
- Require a major research-based project which results in a written paper, an oral presentation, a community-based learning project, or a creative product which reveals a thorough understanding of the topic, research, reflection and resolution leading to a point of view which can be defended vigorously. The project must go through multiple stages of development.
- Address one of the following general categories identified in the Core Document:
  - Virtue and Justice
  - Culture, Art and Society
  - Power and Privilege
  - Globalization
  - Science, Nature and Society