University College
Department of Interdisciplinary Studies
Proposal to Create a New Course
(Action Item)

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1.   **Identification of proposed course:**
  1.1   Course prefix (subject area) and number: IDST 390
  1.2   Course title: Applications of Interdisciplinary Studies
  1.3   Abbreviated course title: IDST Applications
  1.4   Credit hours and contact hours: 3 cr. and 3 contact hours
  1.5   Type of course: L – Lecture
  1.6   Prerequisites/corequisites: Junior standing or permission of the instructor.
  1.7   Course catalog listing: Application of Interdisciplinary Studies model to an overarching cultural concern or theme. Students will apply knowledge from different areas of study toward a specified research topic.

2.   **Rationale:**
  2.1   Reason for developing the proposed course:
  This course allows for the direct application of an interdisciplinary approach to learning to a specific cultural topic or theme. Major theories and models of IDST, such as those set forth by academic specialists Julie Thompson-Klein, William Newell and Allen Repko, will provide a foundation for exploring an overarching concept in an interdisciplinary manner. As our students in the BIS degree have diverse scholarly backgrounds and emphasis areas of study, they will learn how to integrate and collaborate in their individual research surrounding one concept. By confronting the same theme via their unique concentrations we will foster a better understanding of what it means to work, study and interact in an interdisciplinary manner.

  The creation of this course is also based upon:
  - Five different versions of this class (varying themes) have been successfully taught under the IDST399 Special Topics designation. We are looking to feature the range of faculty expertise in one permanent course.
  - These earlier Special Topics classes have resulted in a proven increase by students in the types of applied methods (research, writing and project development) utilized when integrating their different emphasis studies.

  Overall, we expect to strengthen the student's learning capacities in multiple applications of interdisciplinary scholarly research at the undergraduate level.

2.2   Projected enrollment in the proposed course:
        20 students per course, per semester, based on the number of students currently
        enrolled in the BIS degree program.

2.3   Relationship of the proposed course to courses now offered by the department:
        This will be a primary elective offered for the BIS degree. Only one other
        optional elective, 399: Special Topics, currently exists.

2.4   Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other departments:
        This course structure is similar to a few seminar and application courses offered
        in other disciplines. These include: AMS 368: Problem Solving Research,
        ANTH436: Applied Anthropology, IDFM321: Professional Ethics and Issues
        Seminar. An interdisciplinary application toward one overarching theme is related
        to classes in other programs. These include: HON 300/301: Honors Colloquium,
        PS331: Politics Outside the Box, and PS400: Selected Topics in American
        Government. The concept of promoting a team of interdisciplinary knowledge
        with a collaborative approach is analogous to: AGRI 450: Rural Health and Safety
        and ICSR301: Seminar in Social Responsibility.

2.5   Relationship of the proposed course to courses offered in other institutions:
        Appalachian State University's Interdisciplinary Studies Program offers an
        IDS3150: Interdisciplinary Praxis where students apply knowledge of integrative
        perspectives under one related theme. Similarly, their two IDS seminars, 3300 and
        3700, are required core courses meant to develop collaborative interdisciplinary
        projects. The University of Southern Mississippi specifically has a course,
        IDS401, entitled Applied Interdisciplinary Studies where students research and
        design a special project as related to a concentration. This course is separate from
        their Special Topics course, IDS490, and a class on Special Problems, IDS 492.
        However, the Applied IDS401 class is the one that must precede their IDS402
        Senior Capstone course.

3.   Discussion of proposed course:
3.1   Course objectives:
        The intent of this course is to synthesize diverse information from each student's
        specialized knowledge and disciplinary tools towards a deeper understanding of
        an overarching concept or theme.
        - The student will gain new insight through collaborative methods of
          integration toward the question at issue or research topic in ways that
          cannot be solved by one area of study.
        - Each individual will learn how interdisciplinary methods synthesize
          multiple perspectives and different backgrounds.
        - As a final learning outcome, the student will demonstrate their
          interdisciplinary awareness of the main issue in a research portfolio or
          critical project.

3.2　Content outline:
　　　The course consists of three sections…
- Section One will address the significant differences between disciplinary and interdisciplinary study as related to the theme. The integrative method of learning will be reinforced in the manner that students conduct and present their research surrounding the topic.
- Section Two allows for the synthesis of ideas generated, research and student interaction through different collaborative projects. As this section progresses, class time consists of discussion, brainstorming and implementation of the various project perimeters.
- The Final or Third Section promotes reflection on the cultural concerns or themes as approached through interdisciplinarity and collaboration. Different resolutions to the multiple projects will be presented in either the student's final research essay or project portfolio.

3.3　Student expectations and requirements:
　　　For each course, the student will be responsible for reading/viewing all of the assigned materials to be able to actively participate in a well-informed manner for all class discussions and presentations. Active participation is directly related to the success of this course (asking questions, appropriate contributions and preparedness for dialogue) and the collaborative research projects. Contingent on the theme or subject, special consideration will be given to expectations as related to the collaborative research projects in order to insure equitable evaluation for each student.

3.4　Tentative texts and course materials:
　　　This is dependent on the professor and specific cultural topic or theme of the course. Use of contemporary materials and interactive related content will be highly encouraged.

　　　For the interdisciplinary model and approach to the subject, each professor is likely to draw from the following:
　　　Moran, Joe. *Interdisciplinarity*. The New Critical Idiom. 2nd ed. London. New York: Routledge, 2010.
　　　Repko, Allen F. *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory*. 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, 2012.

4.　Resources:
4.1　Library resources:
　　　The course requires the use of both the online databases and accessible current WKU library resources for a majority of the secondary resource materials. Students are encouraged to utilize a variety of primary sources for at least one of the projects.

4.2 Computer resources:
Access to a personal or university computer is mandatory. Blackboard and other online research tools are a requirement of the course. Existing university computer access for students is sufficient to complete all course requirements.

5. Budget implications:

5.1 Proposed method of staffing:
Existing IDST personnel. A new department faculty was hired to create/teach this course.

5.2 Special equipment needed:
No equipment, materials or supplies are required for course implementation.

5.3 Expendable materials needed:
Reasonable accommodation covered by department.

5.4 Laboratory materials needed: None.

6. Proposed term for implementation: Fall 2013

7. Dates of prior committee approvals:

Department of Interdisciplinary Studies: _____ 2/7/2013 _____

University College Curriculum Committee _____ 3/7/13 _____

Undergraduate Curriculum Committee _____

University Senate _____

Attachment: Bibliography, Library Resources Form, Course Inventory Form