

# EVPP 692/992: INTERDISCIPLINARITY AND CHANGE

Spring 2021

Dr Susan A Crate

M 7:20-9:00pm

ZOOM

Instructor: Susan Crate

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Office Hours: By appointment\*

\*Communication with instructor: I do not have set office hours but rather am available upon request via my GMU email. Please don't hesitate to contact me and I will respond promptly to schedule either a skype or phone chat.

## INTRODUCTION

Creating and conducting collaborative interdisciplinary research is a critical and necessary skill in the context of 21<sup>st</sup> century global change. This course is designed to assist graduate students in navigating their way successfully through the interdisciplinary process, in the context of their research focus as it is at present. There are many ways to approach interdisciplinarity, from initial project development through to the production of research outputs. As Marzano, Carss and Bell observe: 'interdisciplinarity is dynamic, being the integration of 'ways of thinking' as part of the development of a 'way of working'.<sup>1</sup> This course will only 'scratch the surface' of this dynamic and evolving practice but nonetheless, will provide important insights and paradigms for interdisciplinary research.

**Addendum for Online class:** Class sessions, activities and assignments in this course will always use ZOOM web-conferencing software (Blackboard Collaborate / Zoom) available via the Blackboard learning system at <https://mymason.gmu.edu>. **Please note:** Classes will not be video recorded since this is not an online course by my (the instructor's) choice but rather an in-class course that had to go online due to the pandemic.

In addition to the above details of attendance and participation, in this online class, all students are required to:

- be online on either laptop or desktop;
- have their video turned on and to be physically present throughout each class, except when we take breaks;
- have regular, reliable access to a computer with an updated operating system (recommended: Windows 10 or Mac OSX 10.13 or higher) and a stable broadband Internet

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<sup>1</sup> Marzano, M., Carss, D, and Bell, S. 2006. 'Working to Make Interdisciplinarity Work: investing in communication and interpersonal relationships', in *Journal of Agricultural Economics*, 57, (2): 194.

connection (cable modem, DSL, satellite broadband, etc., with a consistent 1.5 Mbps [megabits per second] download speed or higher;

- have a device with a functional camera and microphone.

If you have any specific issues, concerns or considerations that I need to know, please email me to set up a meeting.

## **GRADES AND ASSIGNMENTS**

Your point total is based on:

<b>50%</b>	<b>Attendance &amp; Active Participation</b>
<b>25%</b>	<b>Student-Led</b>
<b>25%</b>	<b>Term-Long Project</b>

**Attendance & Active Participation:** This class is a student-based learning experience. Discussions of readings and themes, and student presentations, make up most of the sessions. You will be graded on your informed participation, and that requires careful, timely preparation and regular attendance. This counts for 50% of your grade because the emphasis is on active participation and exploration of the world of interdisciplinarity based on each students' research focus and interests.

'Participation' is two-fold:

- 1) Attendance is required. Your and your classmates' success depends on everyone's regular attendance and on thorough preparation for and active participation in each class. Since you have registered for this class, I assume you will be able to attend every class. If you have an emergency (which constitutes an excused absence), involving life and death circumstances beyond your control that prevent your attendance, please contact me immediately to discuss your situation. You forfeit **2 points** for every unexcused absence.
- 2) Preparation is required. This course requires a substantial amount of reading. Before coming to class, complete and think critically about that class's readings. Please come to class prepared to participate.

**Student-led presentation/ discussion:** For this assignment you will present a 15-minute talk to share with the class your exploration of interdisciplinarity as it relates to your research focus. Take as innovative and provocative a tack on your materials as you can. Your grade is partly dependent on style. You need to learn to outline talks, find supplemental sources, prepare visual aids, and rehearse to fit the 15-minute time frame. You are also required to facilitate discussion after your 10-15 minute talk. 25% of your grade (see fuller description on blackboard).

**Term-Long Project:** *Interdisciplinary Exploration Paper.* As you will learn over the course of this class, interdisciplinarity is both a necessary aspect of contemporary research efforts and also a complicated process. In this assignment you are tasked to explore interdisciplinarity within the context of your research focus as a graduate student. It begins with an exploratory exercise in the first class and then you work independently and in in-class teams to build upon it, research it, revise and edit, get team feedback, etc. to produce a final culminating presentation and paper. It is called 'exploratory' because you are to imagine what interdisciplinarity looks like for your research and then create the ideal interdisciplinary project. We will spend part of class most days working in partner teams to explore each

other's ideas and to share our own and provide/get feedback. 25% of your grade. (see fuller description on blackboard).

***A Note about the GMU Honor Code***

All GMU students and faculty are responsible for understanding and abiding by the provisions of the GMU Honor Code. For example, substantial paraphrasing of others' work without indicating a direct quote may constitute plagiarism, even if the source document is cited. If you are not familiar with the Honor Code, please take some time to review:

<https://oai.gmu.edu/mason-honor-code/>

**Students with Disabilities:** If you are a student with a disability and you need academic accommodations, please see me and contact the GMU Office of Disability Services (ODS) at 993-2474. All academic accommodations must be arranged through the ODS. Link:

<https://ds.gmu.edu/>

Links to the **University Catalog and the University Policies** website for all other university academic and non-academic policies: University Catalog:

<https://catalog.gmu.edu/>

<https://catalog.gmu.edu/policies/>

**COURSE SCHEDULE**

<i>Date</i>	<i>EVPP 692/991: Topics &amp; Reading Assignments</i>	<i>Due</i>
25-Jan	Introduction to the course and to ourselves Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: Strang*</b>	
1-Feb	Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: Castree et al.*</b>	
8-Feb	Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: Moon &amp; Blackman*</b>	
15Feb	Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: TBD*</b>	
22-Feb	Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: TBD*</b>	
1-Mar	Student-Led Partner Discussions <b>Read: Student-led article &amp; outline**</b>	<b>Student-Led</b> _____
8-Mar	Student-Led Partner Discussions <b>Read: Student-led article &amp; outline**</b>	<b>Student-Led</b> _____

15-Mar	<i>Dr Crate away</i>	<i>Work on interdisciplinary exploration paper</i>
22-Mar	Student-Led Partner Discussions <b>Read: Student-led article &amp; outline**</b>	<b>Student-Led</b> _____
29-Mar	Student-Led Partner Discussions <b>Read: Student-led article &amp; outline**</b>	<b>Student-Led</b> _____
5-Apr	Student-Led Partner Discussions <b>Read: Student-led article &amp; outline**</b>	<b>Student-Led</b> _____
12-Apr	<i>Dr Crate away</i>	<i>Work on interdisciplinary exploration paper</i>
19-Apr	Exploratory exercises as a class and in partners/ small groups <b>Read: TBD*</b>	
26-Apr	<b>PRESENTATIONS</b>	<b>DUE: interdisciplinary exploration paper by noon</b>

Important: Instructor has right to change and modify this syllabus if need arises.

\* posted on Blackboard under 'course content/ assigned articles'

\*\* posted on Blackboard under 'course content/ student-led materials'