

# INTS 391-005

## Introduction to Integrative Studies

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### Course Description

Welcome to Integrative Studies! This learning community is designed to familiarize recent transfer students with the theory and practice of integrative learning as practiced in the School of Integrative Studies. Both the curriculum and the teaching in the Integrative Studies degree program challenge students not only to learn but also to think deeply about what, why, how, and for what purposes you learn. Specifically, this learning community will focus on exploration of your identities and enhancing your civic engagement as a global citizen. This course also emphasizes nurturing lifelong learning and preparing students for their academics and careers. Throughout this course, students will develop oral and written communication skills, critical thinking, and research skills.

**Please note: At any point, throughout the semester, the professor reserves the right to make changes to this syllabus to include, but not limited to, adding, subtracting and modifying assignments for this course.**

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### Learning Outcomes

After students have completed this course, students should be able to:

1. Define elements of the literature review process (picking topic, research, and analysis).
2. Explain the rationale for integrative learning and learning communities.

3. Recognize their own oppressive assumptions and biases, and how these aspects influence our interactions with others.
4. Demonstrate knowledge of social identities and understand how our multiple identities intersect to form complex selves.
5. Apply learning through in-class experiential learning (e.g. case studies, group projects, stakeholder interview, etc.).
6. Analyze how knowledge of our community and ourselves contributes to understanding of our ways of learning about, knowing about, and engaging with our world.
7. Analyze how individuals, groups, and/or institution are influenced by contextual factors.
8. Analyze own value, principle, and motivation in the context of living in a *globalized society*.
9. Evaluate social, cultural, and professional inequalities and the ways in which issues of race, class, gender, and sexual orientation intersect.
10. Develop connections to Mason's resources and larger community resources.
11. Develop a plan to make a difference in the civic life of our communities as a global citizen.
12. Design, revise, and produce written work tailored to diverse audiences.

### **Writing Intensive Course Requirement**

As part of the university's commitment to student writers in all undergraduate programs, at least one upper-division course in each major has been designated as fulfilling the "writing intensive" (WI) requirement. While other courses in the major may require written projects, teachers of the designated WI courses will devote class time to instruction on how to complete assignments successfully, assign and grade a minimum of 3500 words, provide constructive feedback on drafts, and allow revision of at least one graded assignment.

### **Required Books & Technology**

All other course readings will be posted on blackboard as PDF's or links to the appropriate URL. You are expected to have read assigned articles before class and to be prepared to discuss the readings for class.

#### *Required Technology:*

- System Requirements: Windows 7, 8, or 10 or Mac OS 10.9 and up
- Webcam - Either built in to your computer or separate USB webcam
- Earphones with microphone - this eliminates disruptive background noise for you and us
- Strongly recommended: Ethernet connection. Wifi often isn't fast enough and results in poor connection and learning

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### **Attendance**

You are expected to be present (both body *and* mind) at all classes and actively participate in discussion and other activities whether online or in-person. This includes not only speaking, but also listening carefully to others' opinions and experiences with an open mind. You do not need to adopt another's viewpoint, but you do need to extend to them the courtesy of trying to hear what they have to say. The more you can, through your comments and in-class "writing, show that you have carefully

read the assigned material, the higher your participation grade will be. Much of the value you will receive from this course will come from your reactions to course readings and your interactions with your colleagues. Therefore, your attendance and participation is extremely important to the class and your learning process. You are expected to read assigned materials on time, to think about readings critically, and to arrive on time to class and prepared to discuss the day's topics. More than one absence is considered excessive. Please budget your time accordingly with the readings and assignments. If you miss class please ask another member of the class about what you missed, any assignments, etc

### **Inclement weather or other issue**

Occasionally Mason will close due to inclement weather or building problems. Should this occur during a scheduled meeting time, look for an email announcement from the professor with updates on assignment or other requirements. You may be expected to participate in online discussions or other equivalent classroom activities so as not to lose momentum.

### **Format for assignments & Citation Style**

All written assignments must be typed, double spaced, and use 12-point standard font, one-inch margins. All papers should include a title and your name. Accurate spelling, clarity, and correct use of grammar and punctuation are expected and their absence can negatively affect your grade. When citing sources, you also must correctly and consistently use [APA citation style](#).

### **Late Work**

Late assignments will not be accepted. However, once during the semester, students are allowed 1 "Life Happens" submission of no more than 2 days late.

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### **Honor Code and Citing Sources**

When you enrolled in this course you agreed to abide by the university's Honor Code. The Honor Code does not preclude collaborative work, such as informal discussions and studying in communities. Nor does it preclude assigned group work. The Honor Code does require that the work that a student, as an individual, turns in is ultimately the product of his/her own individual synthesis or integration of ideas, and that the work a group turns in is ultimately the product of the group's collective ideas. If you are uncertain of the line between collaboration and cheating, you should see me before turning in an assignment.

You must **always** cite your sources - if you do not, it is plagiarism. Plagiarism means taking someone else's ideas or words and presenting them as your own without proper attribution of the source. You must correctly and consistently use the APA citation style. This includes copying materials directly from the Internet. If you feel uncertain about any aspect of the Honor Code, you should discuss your concerns with me proactively (i.e., before turning in a piece of work).

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### **SIS Commitment to Diversity**

School of Integrative Studies, an intentionally inclusive community, promotes and maintains an equitable and just work and learning environment. We welcome and value individuals and their differences including race, economic status, gender expression and identity, sex, sexual orientation, ethnicity, national origin, first language, religion, age and disability.

- We value our diverse student body and desire to increase the diversity of our faculty and staff.
- We commit to supporting students, faculty and staff who have been the victims of bias and discrimination.
- We promote continuous learning and improvement to create an environment that values diverse points of view and life experiences.
- We believe that faculty, staff and students play a role in creating an environment that engages diverse points of view.
- We believe that by fostering their willingness to hear and learn from a variety of sources and viewpoints, our students will gain competence in communication, critical thinking and global understanding, and become aware of their biases and how they affect their interactions with others and the world.

For more information about SIS's diversity commitment go to:  
<http://integrative.gmu.edu/about/diversity>

### **Religious or Cultural Observances**

Some class times are in close proximity to religious or cultural observances. If a class date or assignment creates a conflict, please let us know in advance so we can make appropriate arrangements.

**Respect and Professionalism:** We are each other's teachers and, as such, it is expected that we treat each other with respect and professionalism at all times even though opinions may differ.

### **Email Policy**

In compliance with a University-wide initiative, GMU faculty and staff can correspond electronically with students only through their official university assigned email accounts. Student emails sent from other types of email accounts will not be answered.

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### **Sexual Misconduct and Interpersonal Violence**

George Mason University is committed to providing a safe learning, living and working environment free from discrimination. The University's environment is meant to be experienced as vibrant and dynamic, and one that includes ample opportunities for exploration of self, identity and independence. Sexual misconduct and incidents of interpersonal violence deeply interrupt that experience, and George Mason University is committed to a campus that is free of these types of incidents in order to promote community well-being and student success.

George Mason University encourages individuals who believe that they have been sexually harassed, assaulted or subjected to sexual misconduct to seek assistance and support. [University Policy 1202 Sexual Harassment and Misconduct](#) speak to the specifics of our process, our resources, and options available to you.

Confidential resources are available on campus at the Student Support and Advocacy Center ([ssac.gmu.edu](http://ssac.gmu.edu)), Counseling and Psychological Services ([caps.gmu.edu](http://caps.gmu.edu)), Student Health Services ([shs.gmu.edu](http://shs.gmu.edu)), and the University Ombudsperson ([ombudsman.gmu.edu](http://ombudsman.gmu.edu)).

All faculty, staff and administrators of the University community (except those noted above) are not

considered confidential resources and are required to report incidents of sexual misconduct to the University Title IX Coordinator. For a full list of resources, support opportunities, and reporting options, contact Dr. Jennifer Hammat, the University Title IX Coordinator at 703-993-8730, [jhammat@gmu.edu](mailto:jhammat@gmu.edu), [diversity.gmu.edu](http://diversity.gmu.edu) or stop by Aquia room 373.

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## STUDENT LEARNING RESOURCES

### Writing Center

Writing is an important component of this learning community and represents one facet of effective communication. You may wish to use the Writing Center to assist you with an assignment. Tutors at the Writing Center can help you brainstorm, structure, and revise your written work. The Writing Center is located in Robinson A 114; 703-993-1200. Website: <https://writingcenter.gmu.edu>

### Office of Disability Services:

The staff members of ODS assist students with learning differences or any other conditions that may impact academic performance. ODS is located in SUB I, Room 2500; 703-993-2474.

### Counseling Services:

CAPS provides a wide range of services to students, faculty, and staff. Services are provided by a staff of professional counseling and clinical psychologists, social workers, and counselors. The Center provides individual and group counseling, and outreach. CAPS is located in SUB I, Room 3129; 703-993-2380. Website: <http://caps.gmu.edu>.

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### Star-Multimedia Lab:

The STAR-Multimedia lab is available to help students with technology needs, such as video, multimedia, desktop publishing, and web skills. The STAR Center is located in Johnson Center, Room 229; 703993-8990. Website: <https://doit.gmu.edu/students/computer-labs/star-lab/>

### Student Support and Advocacy Center:

The Student Support and Advocacy Center is committed to providing an empowering environment for all Mason students to seek support services and to explore healthy life choices. SSAC offers educational programming, one-on-one consultations, and resources in the areas of interpersonal violence, personal wellness, and alcohol and drug use. SSAC assists students encountering barriers to personal success. SSAC is located in SUB I 3200; **703-993-3686. Website: <https://ssac.gmu.edu>**

**Learning Services:** the Learning Services Program offers academic skill-building workshops as well as a tutor referral service. Learning Services is located in SUB I, Room 3129; 703-993-2999. Website: <https://learningservices.gmu.edu>

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## Assignments (Total 1,000 points)

### Participation: 275 points

We are an experiential and community-based learning community and there are important responsibilities that come with participation in this learning community. A quality learning experience in this course occurs through high degree of interaction and exchange of ideas among students and the instructor, class readings, discussion, and personal reflection upon experiences.

- a. Class attendance: The ability to contribute to class discussions with thoughtfulness and with reference to course readings will be heavily weighed in determining final grades. Attend all classes fully prepared and ready to listen and participate, maximizing your opportunities to learn from each other.
- b. Small and large group discussions and activities: Students will work individually, in small groups and large groups to discuss readings, engage in case study analyses, and to bring theory and practice alive through carefully designed activities. Each student is expected to fully participate in small and large group discussions and activities. The quality of engagement in discussions is essential and a major factor in assessing class participation.

### Degree Completion Plan: 25 points

You will create a degree completion plan. Detailed information will be provided in class.

### Resume Building: 25 points

After we invite a career advisor, you will develop your resume and turn it in to me. In addition, you will submit a two-page paper to address experiences and skills that you need to gain while at Mason to meet your academic and career goals.

### Discussion Facilitation: 100 points

During the first class meeting, you will be assigned to collaborative leadership teams. These teams will work together to READ, SUMMARIZE, and PRESENT on key points of the assigned readings.

### “Who I am and Where I am From” Video Essay: 25 points

The purpose of this assignment is to allow the class to become more deeply acquainted and to become more self-aware and comfortable in discussing aspects of the self. Write and then post on Blackboard an essay addressing “Who I am and Where I am From.” The genesis of this assignment comes from a book titled *Where I am From* edited by Borrego and Manning (2007). At the end, offer a paragraph on what you learned from writing this piece. How long should the essay be, you may ask? Certainly genuine and sincere content is more important than length. It should be obvious to me and your peers that you spent time contemplating this topic (300-600 words).

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### Individual Research Paper: 300 points

Throughout this semester, you will write an eight-page research paper. Prompts will be based on readings and class discussions. Although you need to narrow down your research topic, your research topic should be related to the theme of social justice issues (race/ethnicity, gender, class, or sexual orientation), global understanding, or social innovation. Detailed directions for this project will be shared in class and on Blackboard. Below is the breakdown of points:

1. Part A: Research Paper Proposal (25 points)

2. Part B: Research Paper Draft (50 points)
3. Part C: Peer Review (50 points x 2=100 points)
4. Part D: Writing Center Visit (25 points)
5. Part E: Research Paper Final (100 points)

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**Self-Authorship Digital Story: 150 points**

Learning to live a self-authored life means building your own internal foundation and set of commitments. It means thinking for yourself through reasoning and via the integration of: the knowledge of others (scholarship), your own background (tradition), and your personal experiences (praxis of experience and reflection). Ultimately, being a “self-author” means deciding to direct the story of your own life, rather than following the scripts that others write. Integrating other assignments for this course, you will develop a digital story to illustrate how you plan to navigate yourself to accomplish your career and academic goals. Based on your careful and considered reflection, compose a short 400-500–word digital story with at least one song and at least 10 pictures. Detailed directions for this project will be shared in class and on Blackboard.

**Group Panel Discussion: 100 points**

Based on individual research papers, your group will synthesize information that each group member researched his or her own paper to facilitate a panel discussion. Detailed directions for the group project are shared in class and on Blackboard. Below is a breakdown of the points:

1. Part A: Outline for Panel Discussion (10 points)
2. Part B: Panel Discussion (60 points)
3. Part C: Group Evaluation (30 points)

<b>Grading Scale</b>			
<b>A+</b>	975-1000 (97.5-100%)	C+	775-794 (77.5-79%)
<b>A</b>	925-974 (92.5-97%)	C	725-774 (72.5-77%)
<b>A-</b>	895-924 (89.5-92%)	C-	695-724 (69.5-72%)
<b>B+</b>	875-894 (87.5-89%)	D	600-694 (60-69%)
<b>B</b>	825-874 (82.5-87%)	F	Below 600 (below 60%)
<b>B-</b>	795-824 (79.5-82%)		

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