

Introduction to Interdisciplinary Inquiry CSUS 802

Fall 2020

Monday 3:00-5:50pm

Via Zoom and D2L

Final Exam Mon December 14, 3-6pm

Instructor

Kimberly Chung
Department of Community Sustainability
317 Natural Resources Building

Phone: (517) 337-7541 (home)
Office hours: by appointment
Email: kchung@msu.edu

1. MSU course catalog description

Interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research design. Community engagement as related to research and inquiry. Practical skills of inquiry.

2. Course description

The purpose of this course is to introduce students to the elements of interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary research design and to provide them with practical guidance on how to begin a research proposal. To make this process relevant to all our graduate students, including those who will engage in research for practical purposes, we frame the research process as one of *inquiry* broadly. This approach reflects a practice of systematic, inquiry that involves multiple aspects of boundary crossing, including integrating various disciplinary perspectives as well as learning how to conduct work that crosses between academic and practice communities. This broader framing encompasses multi, inter-, and transdisciplinary approaches, as well as less academic forms of inquiry such as evaluation and action research.

Part I. The course begins with an introduction on the basics of the inquiry process, explains how the process is different when it is an interdisciplinary process, and highlights concerns that arise when working in an engaged setting. Selected examples of published works will demonstrate the diverse genres of inquiry that are represented in CSUS (e.g., hypothesis testing, emergent designs, alternative paradigm inquiry) and will illustrate the diversity of criteria that shape their ultimate design. These examples will serve as guideposts and common touchstones for the class so that shared understandings about the nature of interdisciplinary work can be developed. These concepts are put into practice with hands-on, small-step assignments as students begin to think about their own project of inquiry, a project prospectus.

Part II. In the second half of the course we guide students through the practical steps of developing a research prospectus, including developing a problem statement, researching sources and interpreting the literature, constructing a problem-focused literature review, developing and revising research questions, and the process of peer review and support. This set of assignments is meant to break the process down into small defined steps and to guide the student in how to create the beginnings of a research prospectus. Assignments will allow for an iterative process of development and will illustrate how boundary crossing occurs as part of this process.

At the end of the semester students will present their proposed research questions and the motivation for this research provided by their project prospectus. The prospectus will focus on identifying a knowledge gap from their review of the literature as well as appropriate inquiry questions. Students will receive feedback from departmental colleagues at this public symposium. This process is meant to prepare them to either 1) enter the proposal writing course (CSUS 805) 2) and/or more advanced methods coursework in the spring.

In sum, the course aims to create a learning space that is relevant to all students, regardless of the degree program they have chosen. MS-B students will likely focus on professional applications of research or inquiry, while the others will focus on conventional academic research. Regardless of the career they pursue after graduation, all students will benefit from understanding how principles of inquiry are applied and how they can be made useful for practice.

3. Course Learning Outcomes

- An introduction to interdisciplinary principles in *research design* and how these concepts can be applied to conventional academic as well as practical, non-academic questions of importance using inquiry and engagement;
- The *development of practical skills* that prepare students to *develop a proposal for interdisciplinary inquiry*, to be addressed in the 1 credit-proposal writing seminar offered in spring.

Specific Learning Outcomes: (at the end of the course, students should be able to)

1. Define and differentiate the terms: research, inquiry, multi-, inter-, transdisciplinary research and inquiry.
2. Apply critical thinking and reading skills as consumers of research
3. Compare and contrast different genres of research/inquiry and explain fundamental differences in goals, underlying assumptions, and eventual study design (e.g. emergent designs, designs that include participatory processes, hypothesis-testing designs; designs that combine emergent and hypothesis-testing designs);
4. Differentiate validity criteria for diverse forms of inquiry and explain relationship to ultimate design of study and underlying paradigm.

5. Define epistemology, methodology, and method and explain the practical implications of different choices of each.
6. Utilize information technologies to locate appropriate sources of information.
7. Critically assess the quality of published references within the literature
8. Develop a problem statement
9. Identify current gaps in the literature or practice, including the purpose, need, or motivation for a given piece of research/professional work.
10. Develop a short, problem-focused project prospectus
11. Formulate research questions & research goals that are aligned with a problem statement and a brief problem-focused project prospectus
12. Demonstrate an iterative process of revising the problem statement, project prospectus and research questions.
13. Demonstrate knowledge of procedures related to IRB protocol development and human subject testing, and appreciate why those procedures are important and meet requirements for the responsible conduct of research certification.
14. Be familiar with and follow appropriate rules of authorship (as indicated by the university or a given publication outlet).
15. Know what plagiarism is and how to avoid it.

4. Course Format

The course is structured as a seminar and (as we speak) is being altered to an online setting. This was not our first choice, but it is the most practical given the current situation. I will do my best to keep the original emphasis on discussion and active practice with various skills.

We will therefore meet synchronously each week at 3pm, but for less time on Zoom. The current plan is to hold class at the appointed hour, for ~1-2 hours each week with a 15 minute break in between. The rest of the class time the time will be provided on D2L and can be accessed asynchronously during the week, with a regular schedule of assignments to be submitted each week.

The pandemic this year means that fall semester is not turning out the way that any of us planned. Therefore, my plan is to do this together. I encourage you to consider yourself a partner in this process and if there is a better way to do things, please feel free to suggest it. I am more than happy to make adjustments that can improve our learning experience.

Finally, collegiality is important. Each of us should feel free to raise questions, share research experiences and disagreements, bring interesting or sticky issues to class, or make suggestions about how we do things. The course is about interdisciplinarity and it is expected that there will be diversity in disciplinary backgrounds and epistemological beliefs. As such, it is important that we cultivate a culture of open-mindedness in the class.

Zoom links to class: <https://msu.zoom.us/j/93641448074>; **Passcode: Interdisc**

5. Required Readings

Most of the required readings will be posted on the course D2L site. However, due to copyright issues students may want to rent or purchase the textbook from which many of the readings are derived. We will read the most from Repko and Szostak. 2021. *Interdisciplinary Research*, Fourth Edition. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications. Book rental is \$20.56 on Amazon.

Aside from this book I also recommended a very nice book that provides practical tips on how to write in the academic style. We will draw on this work for our Friday assignments; the instructions will be given directly in the assignment so it is not necessary to purchase it. The book is very useful, however, and is a good investment for graduate school. If you do want it, I'd suggest purchasing it instead of renting it. Graff, G and Brikenstein C. *They Say. I Say*. 4th Edition. 2018. New York: W.W. Norton and Company.

6. Assignments and Evaluation

The course requires gradual work each week with a gradual accumulation of points. 30% of the final grade is earned through steady, weekly work; another 30% for work on completing and reviewing a draft of the final paper; and 40% for the final product, your project prospectus and oral presentation.

Weekly assignments (due Sunday) and project assignments (due Fri)	30%
First draft project prospectus	20%
Peer review	10%
Final project prospectus	30%
<u>Presentation of project prospectus and research questions</u>	<u>10%</u>
Total	100%

6.1. Weekly Main and Project Assignments

The weekly and project assignments count for 30% of the final grade. Each assignment will have equal value.

Each week there will be a set of required readings and an associated assignment that will be completed by Sunday 5pm each week. The purpose of these assignments is to make our synchronous interactions on Monday more lively and better informed. There is no question that synchronous meetings are of higher quality if we have engaged with the material before our time together. These assignments will be called "**main or Sunday assignments.**" They will always be available the Weds before class on D2L and will be due on Sunday at 5pm, and will be posted to D2L.

Aside from these weekly assignments we will also have “**project of Friday assignments**” which will be due on specific Fridays. The purpose of these assignments is to encourage small, sequential steps toward your final project, including a literature review on a topic of interest for your own research or Plan B project. These assignments will be posted to D2L and will be assigned and discussed in class well in advance of their due dates.

Part of this project will be to conduct literature searches to explore what is known and unknown about your problem of interest. Our department is lucky to be assigned a very helpful partner in the MSU library system. Suzi Teghtmeyer is a research librarian at MSU and will work with us during the semester to help us complete searches and know about other resources provided by the library. After October 1 each of us will have an opportunity to make an appointment and meet with Suzi 1:1 for a search consultation. Suzi is available via email at teghtmey@msu.edu. We will also be learning a citation management program of your choice during the semester and making entries into it as part of our gradual work toward the prospectus.

Towards the end of the semester, we have reserved time during at least 2 classes in November for “workshop time” in which students may bring in questions they have on their project prospectus projects.

6.1. First Draft Project Prospectus & Peer Review

We will develop a first draft of our final project, the project prospectus, and will submit it for peer review. The purpose of this assignment is to practice an iterative process of revising our written work and to practice giving and receiving critique on our work. Following this students will have time to revise their prospectus before they are due. The draft prospectus will be worth 20% of the final grade and the peer review 10%.

6.2. Completed Project Prospectus & Oral Presentation

The final project prospectus will be the final product of the class and will be shared orally with the CSUS community at the end of the semester. They are worth 30% and 10% respectively, and combined comprise 40% of the final grade.

7. Course Schedule

See reading list for weekly assigned readings

Week	Date	Topic	Sunday or Main Assignments due <i>before</i> weekly class	Friday Project due <i>after</i> weekly class
1	Sept 2	Introduction Technology check What is research?	None	F1: Appointment with advisor
2	Sept 7	Multi/Inter/Transdisciplinary Research	*Due Tues Sept 8	F2: Reflection on Norris lecture due Sept 11
3	Sept 14	Purposes of research: Research vs. Inquiry	*Due Sun Sept 13	F3: Topic of interest due Sept 18
4	Sept 21	Genres of Research 1	Due Sun Sept 20	F4: Advisor meeting report
5	Sept 28	Genres of Research 2	Due Sun Sept 27	F5: Citation management training class, entries F6: They Say/I Say
	Oct 1	Paper 1 due CSUS 800		Sign up Suzi consultations
6	Oct 5	Epistemology	Due Sun Oct 4	F7: Problem/Question of interest
7	Oct 12	Validity/Research Quality	Due Sun Sept 11	F8: 2 nd Project Meeting Report
8	Oct 19	Overview of Interdisc Process	Due Sun Oct 18	F9: Revised Topic/Question
9	Oct 26	Anatomy of Problem-Focused Project prospectus	Due Sun Oct 25	4 articles reviewed/entered
10	Nov 2	What is a Research Problem? Problem Statements	Due Sun Nov 1	4 articles reviewed/entered Problem statement
11	Nov 9	Making an argument interdisciplinary 1	Due Sun Nov 8	4 articles reviewed/entered Peer review
12	Nov 16	Making an argument 2	Due Sun Nov 15	Draft Prospectus due Nov 20
13	Nov 23	RCR training	*Due Weds Nov 25	
14	Nov 30	RCR discussion	Due Sun Nov 29	
15	Dec 7	Presentations/workshop	Presentations Mon Dec 7	Peer review
Finals	Dec 14	Presentations/workshop	Presentations Mon Dec 14	Peer review

*denotes change in pattern

8. Course Policies

Class attendance. Students are expected to attend class and to be on time. Absences will be noted. If you are sick, please stay home and get well. However, please notify the instructor beforehand for anticipated absences or as soon as possible for unexpected absences. If you miss class it is your responsibility to obtain lecture notes from fellow students and check D2L for upcoming assignments.

Class conduct. It's important that we are all "present" while we are in class. I therefore ask that we refrain from using devices during class that may take us away from the work we are doing together. Of course you can use a computer or device to take notes, but please no texting, social media, or web surfing while we are together in class.

Readings. Be ready to discuss them in depth in class. The readings are chosen carefully to give you background information about the different data collection and analysis techniques and are helpful resources when carrying out your own weekly assignments.

Late assignments. It is important to stay on top of the workload in this class. In order to help you stay on track, late assignments should be okayed with me.

Grading – I allow students to resubmit any research exercise one time if they wish to improve their grade, or to obtain comments on an improved effort. The only rules are 1) you should turn in your new version with changes highlighted so it is easy for me to see them; 2) attach the "old" assignment; and 3) submit the "re-do" before the next research exercise is due. The latter helps to reinforce learning that will be applied to the next steps.

Use of Desire to Learn (D2L) – All readings and detailed guidelines for weekly and Friday assignments will be posted on D2L. Additionally, completed assignments should be posted on D2L by the assigned date. Posting your assignments online allows other colleagues in the class to view them and learn from each other's work.

Accommodations – If you need accommodations in this class related to a disability or religious holidays, please make an appointment with me to discuss as soon as possible.

Michigan State University is committed to providing equal opportunity for participation in all programs, services and activities. Requests for accommodations by persons with disabilities may be made by contacting the Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities at 517-884-RCPD or on the web at rcpd.msu.edu. Once your eligibility for an accommodation has been determined, you will be issued a Verified Individual Services Accommodation ("VISA") form. Please email this form to me during the second week of class and/or two weeks prior to the accommodation date (test, project, etc.). Requests received after this date may not be honored.

Citations and References-- All sources of information, data, facts, or ideas presented in written work should be cited, and a list of all cited references should be provided. The APA format should be used for any in-text citations and reference lists when you rely on information from other sources for writing homework assignments. A good reference site for APA style, including a tool for automatically formatting in APA, can be found at <https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/560/01/>. Also, you can automatically format in APA using a reference manager software like Zotero, Mendeley or Endnote, and you can download citations in APA style from Google Scholar.

Academic Integrity – [Article 2.III.B.2](#) of the SRR states: “The student shares with the faculty the responsibility for maintaining the integrity of scholarship, grades, and professional standards.” In addition, (insert name of unit offering course) adheres to the policies on academic honesty specified in General Student Regulation 1.0, [Protection of Scholarship and Grades](#); the all-University Policy on [Integrity of Scholarship and Grades](#); and [Ordinance 17.00](#), Examinations.

Therefore, unless authorized by your instructor, you are expected to complete all course assignments, including main assignments, Friday assignments, papers, peer reviews, and final papers and presentations yourself. You are expected to develop original work for this course; therefore, you may not submit course work you completed for another course to satisfy the requirements for this course. Also, you are not authorized to use the www.allmsu.com Web site to complete any course work in this course. Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade in the course or on the assignment.

Faculty are required to report all instances in which a penalty grade is given for academic dishonesty. Students reported for academic dishonesty are required to take an online course about the integrity of scholarship and grades. A hold will be placed on the student's account until such time as the student completes the course.

Students who violate MSU regulations on Protection of Scholarship and Grades will receive a failing grade on the affected assignment. A second violation will result in a failing grade for the course. Note that all submitted work will be processed through Turnitin.com via the D2L site.

Instances of plagiarism constitute academic dishonesty and will result in a grade of zero for the assignment in which plagiarism occurs. See <https://www.msu.edu/unit/ombud/academic-integrity/plagiarism-policy.html> for a definition and discussion of plagiarism.

Spartan Code of Honor: *“As a Spartan, I will strive to uphold values of the highest ethical standard. I will practice honesty in my work, foster honesty in my peers, and take pride in knowing that honor is worth more than grades. I will carry these values beyond my time as a*

student at Michigan State University, continuing the endeavor to build personal integrity in all that I do.”

You can find more about the Spartan Code of Honor at <https://www.deanofstudents.msu.edu/academic-integrity>.

Diversity Equity and Inclusiveness Diversity, Equity and Inclusion are important, interdependent components of everyday life in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources (CANR) and are critical to our pursuit of academic excellence. Our aim is to foster a culture where every member of CANR feels valued, supported and inspired to achieve individual and common goals with an uncommon will. This includes providing opportunity and access for all people across differences of race, age, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, gender identity, gender expression, religion, national origin, migratory status, disability / abilities, political affiliation, veteran status and socioeconomic background. (See the full CANR statement: <https://www.canr.msu.edu/news/canr-statement-on-diversity-equity-and-inclusion>)

Michigan State University is committed to ensuring that the **bereavement process** of a student who loses a family member during a semester does not put the student at an academic disadvantage in their classes. If something comes up during the semester that impedes your ability to get your work done on schedule, please alert me and I will help you figure out a schedule that works for you. Beyond this, if needed you may complete the “Grief Absence Request” web form (found at <https://www.reg.msu.edu/sitemap.aspx?Group=7> under Student resources - Forms). I will work with you to make appropriate accommodations so that you are not penalized due to a verified grief absence.

If you find yourself having trouble with readings, feel free to contact the instructor for a consultation, but also consider making use of the MSU Learning Resource Center: <https://nssc.msu.edu>. Many students who are accustomed to scanning webpages need to develop better reading skills and the Learning Resource Center can help.

General College and University Policies

All other general college and university policies applicable to this course are available at <https://www.canr.msu.edu/academics/courses/policies>. Please review these policies. Topics covered in these general policies include:

- Students with disabilities, Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities (RCPD) and accommodations
- Student rights under the family educational rights and privacy act (FERPA)
 - Student release authorization form
- Religious holiday policies
- Grief absence policies
- Students in distress policies

- MSU student athlete policies
- Course add-drop policies
- Honors options
- Course Management system policies
- Final exam policy and attendance
- Grade dispute policies
- Academic honesty and integrity, plagiarism, and disciplinary procedures
- Disruptive behavior
- Harassment and discrimination policies
- RVSM University reporting protocols
- Limits to confidentiality
- Social media policy
- Web accessibility policies
- MSU Code of Teaching Responsibility
- SIRS
- Commercialization of lecture notes
- University Learning Goals