**New York City College of Technology  
Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Criteria for an Interdisciplinary Course**

1. **Interdisciplinary Studies Definition**

Interdisciplinary studies involve two or more academic disciplines or fields of study organized around synthesizing distinct perspectives, knowledge, and skills. Interdisciplinary study focuses on questions, problems, and topics too complex or too broad for a single discipline or field to encompass adequately; such studies thrive on drawing connections between seemingly exclusive domains. Usually theme-based, interdisciplinary courses intentionally address issues that require meaningful engagement of multiple academic disciplines. Pedagogical strategies focus on, but are not limited to, inquiry or problem-based learning.

Although many academic disciplines, such as African American Studies and Engineering, are inherently interdisciplinary, to be considered an interdisciplinary course at City Tech the course must be team-taught[[1]](#footnote-1) by more than one faculty member from two or more departments[[2]](#footnote-2) in the College. An interdisciplinary course, by definition, has an interdisciplinary theme as its nucleus. In its essence, such a course brings the analytic methods of two or more academic disciplines to bear on a specific problem or question. Thus, a course in Music History is not likely to be considered interdisciplinary, but a course in Music History from an economist’s perspective might very well lead to such a course. The application of different methods and concepts is the key to assessing whether a course is or is not interdisciplinary. The term interdisciplinary is occasionally used to identify individual projects or assignments, but these, though possibly commendable, fall short in the necessary scope for learning experiences that demand in-depth exposure to the methodologies of distinct intellectual disciplines, and the creative application of these methodologies to specific problems.

Studies show that interdisciplinary courses improve student learning (Elrod & Roth, 2012; Klein, 2010; Lattuca, 2001; Lattuca, Voigt, & Fath, 2004; Project Kaleidoscope, 2011). To foster interdisciplinary learning, the Interdisciplinary Committee has identified goals and outcomes that students taking interdisciplinary courses should be able to achieve.

**Learning Outcomes of Interdisciplinary Courses**

Students will be able to:

* Purposefully connect and integrate across-discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems
* Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries
* Comprehend factors inherent in complex problems
* Apply integrative thinking to problem-solving in ethically and socially responsible ways
* Recognize varied perspectives
* Gain comfort with complexity and uncertainty
* Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively
* Become flexible thinkers

**New York City College of Technology**

**Interdisciplinary Committee**

**Application for Interdisciplinary Course Designation**

**Date: March 1, 2017**

**Submitted by** Javiela Evangelista

**Department(s) African American Studies**

1. **Proposal to Offer an Interdisciplinary Course**

1. Identify the course type and title:  
     
   🞈 An existing course AFR 2402 The Heritage of Imperialism  
     
   🞎 A new course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

🞎 A course under development \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

1. Provide a course description \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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| This course offers an examination of the thought, structure, operation and results of imperialism in human history generally, and in the 19th/20th centuries in particular. European/American imperialism in the non-white areas of the world: the role of the Industrial Revolution; the imposition of Western European institutions on indigenous peoples of Africa, Asia, North/South America; colonialism; attempts by these people to reestablish autonomous sociological and cultural systems. |

1. How many credits will the course comprise? 3 How many hours? 3
2. What prerequisite(s) would students need to complete before registering for the course? Co-requisite(s)?

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| CUNY Proficiency in Reading and Writing  ENG 1101  One AFR course |

1. Explain briefly why this is an interdisciplinary course.

Students will engage in critical inquiry, research, and analysis concerning imperialism as related to people of African descent on a global scale, by use of material and methods from African American Studies, which is an interdisciplinary department. As such, this course will explore the thought, structure, operation and results of imperialism through the lens of a combination of the following disciplines: anthropology, literature, history, art, legal studies, informational technology, geography, communications/media and health and human services and hospitality.

1. What is the proposed theme of the course? What complex central problem or question will it address? What disciplinary methods will be evoked and applied?

The theme of the course is examining the thought, structure, operation and results of imperialism for African descendants in consideration of various points of view. The central problem of the course addresses how race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, migration, capitalism and labor, the state and militarism, and ideals of expansion and expulsion are related to the historical and contemporary development of various African diasporic societies and hence the heritage of imperialism within the African diaspora. The disciplinary methods evoked and applied include ethnographic research, geographical mapping, interpreting legal documents and understanding literary devices.

1. Which general learning outcomes of an interdisciplinary course does this course address?   
   Please explain how the course will fulfill the bolded mandatory learning outcome below. In addition, select and explain at least three additional outcomes.

🞈 **Purposefully connect and integrate across-discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems**

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| In order to better understand and solve problems of imperial continuity, students will analyze the relationships between specific historical events and contemporary trends, occurrences and knowledge. Students will also map connections between regional and diasporic social movements and processes, and understand the linkages between the geography of central points of discussion concerning the heritage of imperialism as it relates to the African diaspora. |

🞈 **Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries**

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| The final research paper and group presentation will require students to synthesize findings across disciplines. For example, students will analyze historiographical sources and understand the contributions of primary and secondary sources and archival research (and how these sources may work to eradicate or contribute to inequities), while also evaluating ethnographic texts from Anthropology and Sociology in order to understand ethnographic methodology and value the contributions of people whose perspectives may not be privileged in other mediums. Students will learn to use concepts in disciplines including, history, anthropology, art, political economy, legal studies, literature and geography as analytical tools of the heritage of imperialism. |

🞈 Comprehend factors inherent in complex problems

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| Informal (low stakes) and formal (high stakes) writing exercises and assignments will enable students to analyze how race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, migration, capitalism and labor, the state and militarism, and ideals of expansion and expulsion are related to the historical and contemporary development of various African diasporic societies and hence the heritage of imperialism within the African diaspora. In class discussions, students will analyze and discuss the central role that race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexual orientation and language have played and continue to play in imperial pursuits and also in resistance against imperialism. For example, students will discuss and investigate topics such as, race and gender as social constructs, racialized and patriarchal formations of nation and empire, cultural evolutions and syncretism as modes of subsistence, resistance and resilience within larger conversations of political economy and geography. |

🞈 Apply integrative thinking to problem solving in ethically and socially responsible ways

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| Students will critically engage with and respond to how the heritage of imperialism manifests in a variety of spaces including academia. By studying and engaging networks such as Decolonize this Space and Black Lives Matter with guest lecturers, students will gain a greater understanding of the value and utility of social responsibility, civic engagement and scholarship for the public. |

🞈 Recognize varied perspectives

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| Students will analyze contemporary connections to imperialism for African descendants in consideration of various points of view. For example, students will learn that contemporary continuities of imperialism may manifest in communities that are economically and politically marginalized, as well as privileged communities. Likewise, students will understand the legacy of imperialism as not solely oppressive, but also resistive. Students will analyze historiographical sources and understand the contributions of primary and secondary sources and archival research (and how these sources may work to eradicate or contribute to inequities). Students will also evaluate ethnographic texts from anthropology and sociology, not only to in to understand ethnographic methodology, but to value the contributions of people whose perspectives may not be privileged in other mediums. |

🞎 Gain comfort with complexity and uncertainty

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🞎 Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively

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🞎 Become flexible thinkers

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🞎 Other

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**General Education Learning Goals for City Tech Students**

* **Knowledge:** Develop knowledge from a range of disciplinary perspectives, and hone the ability to deepen and continue learning.
* **Skills:** Acquire and use the tools needed for communication, inquiry, creativity, analysis, and productive work.
* **Integration**: Work productively within and across disciplines.
* **Values, Ethics, and Relationships**: Understand and apply values, ethics, and diverse   
  perspectives in personal, professional, civic, and cultural/global domains.

1. How does this course address the general education learning goals for City Tech students?

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| To build knowledge, students will engage in critical inquiry, research, and analysis concerning imperialism as related to people of African descent on a global scale, by use of material and methods from African American Studies and other disciplines. To build analytical research and writing skills, students will learn to analyze material from different disciplines, devise research strategies and methodology and develop critical arguments about contemporary issues that are historically grounded. In consideration of values, ethics, and relationships, students will explore citizenship, human rights, civic engagement, social responsibility and scholarship for the public.  Guest lectures, class discussions, quizzes and exams, a presentation, informal and formal writing assignments, and a research paper will enable students to implement the above general education goals. |

1. Which department would house this course[[3]](#footnote-3)? African American Studies Department  
   Would all sections of the course be interdisciplinary? 🞈 No 🞎 Yes
   1. Would the course be cross-listed in two or more departments? 🞈 No 🞎 Yes   
      Explain.

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* 1. How will the course be team-taught[[4]](#footnote-4)? 🞎 Co-taught 🞈 Guest lecturers 🞎 Learning community  
       
     If co-taught, what is the proposed workload hour distribution? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
     🞎 Shared credits 🞎 Trading credits   
     If guest lecturers, for what approximate percentage of the course? 🞎 Minimum 20%[[5]](#footnote-5) 🞈other: 40%  
       
     Please attach the evaluation framework used to assess the interdisciplinarity of the course.[[6]](#footnote-6)

Please see the attached Evaluation Framework for Interdisciplinarity and the attached syllabus which documents scheduled guest lecturers from a range of disciplines.

* 1. What strategies/resources would be implemented to facilitate students’ ability to make connections across the respective academic disciplines?

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| Strategies: Guest Lecturers, Presentations, Discussions, Exams, Research |
| Resources: Open Lab, Blackboard, OERs |

1. Would the course be designated as:

🞈 a College Option requirement[[7]](#footnote-7)? 🞈 an elective? 🞈 a Capstone course[[8]](#footnote-8)? 🞎 other? Explain.

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| Common Core Application submitted for World Cultures & Global Issues Designation  Capstone Application in development |

1. See “Application for Interdisciplinary Course Designation” question 9b for team-teaching options. [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. Exceptions are made for Departments that provide a home for multiple disciplines, such as Humanities and Social Science. [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. An interdisciplinary course for the College Option requirement may be housed in a department that is not liberal arts. [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
4. Attach evidence of consultation with all affected departments. [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
5. While an interdisciplinary course must be team-taught, there is no formal percentage requirement, but this minimum is a guideline. [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
6. In the case that a course is equally taught, include proposed plans for faculty classroom observation and student evaluation of teaching. [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
7. To qualify for the College Option, such a course must also meet the New York State definition of a liberal arts and sciences course.  
   <http://www.highered.nysed.gov/ocue/lrp/liberalarts.htm> [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
8. A course proposed as a Capstone course must be separately approved by the Capstone Experience Committee. [↑](#footnote-ref-8)