New York City College of Technology
Interdisciplinary Committee
Existing Course Review Form

DATE: November 25, 2013

REVIEWER: Jean Kubeck, Sean MacDonald, Laina Karthikeyan

COURSE TITLE & NUMBER: ENG 1773 Weird Science: Interpreting and Redefining Humanity

CREDIT HOURS: 3 credit hours

PREREQUISITES: CUNY proficiency in Math & ENG 1101

COURSE IS: X Existing ❑ New ❑ In development

PROPOSED COURSE DESIGNATION: X College Option X elective X Capstone ❑ other:

DEPARTMENT HOUSED IN: English

PROPOSED STRUCTURE (e.g., co-taught, guest lecture, LC, other): Lecture-discussion; guest lecturers from within City Tech from several disciplines/departments. Guest Lectures – 60%.

CREDIT DISTRIBUTION (if co-taught): n/a

CATALOG DESCRIPTION: this writing-intensive interdisciplinary course will allow students to explore the literature of shifting and expanding definitions of humanity and post-humanity from the perspectives of the natural and social sciences, technology, and engineering, incorporating digital media.

STRENGTHS:
The course introduces students to a broad literature across a number of disciplines that addresses the question of what it means to be human. Students are exposed to a multi-disciplinary perspective on this question through the presentations and discussions with guest lecturers ranging from the natural and social sciences, technology, and engineering; through the course, students are introduced to the language of many disciplines and these disciplines' approaches to addressing this central question.

The course seeks to engage students in developing an understanding of the connections between the perspectives of the various disciplines in exploring the central question/theme of the course; Through this inquiry, students acquire a knowledge of the methods of inquiry of several disciplines and apply these in a final course project (paper), case studies, group projects, literature reviews, development of an annotated bibliography and through interaction/discussions with guest lecturers; the course encourages students to become flexible and critical thinkers.

Approximately 60% of the course is taught by guest lecturers from other disciplines across the college. The course clearly exemplifies interdisciplinarity. Rubrics have been developed for all assignments. Scaffolding of assignments leads to a well-developed final paper.

WEAKNESSES: Due to one its strengths (approximately 60% of the course is comprised of guest lectures), it would be very difficult to offer more than a few sections a semester.

DESCRIBE & EVALUATE HOW COURSE MEETS INTERDISCIPLINARY CRITERIA?

This course clearly illustrates interdisciplinarity. Guest lecturers from across several disciplines and across the three schools at City Tech introduce students to a spectrum of literature in the social and natural sciences, technology, and engineering through an interdisciplinary exploration of a central question: What does it mean to be human? It also involves students in course assignments and projects in which they directly apply the interdisciplinary perspectives and methods of analysis introduced in the course in their written assignments and other course projects. The guest lecturers present their perspectives on the question that informs the theme of the course. Course goals introduce students to and engage students in developing an understanding of the ideas and connections between the natural and social sciences, technology, and engineering. The course curriculum takes students through this multitude of perspectives on the course theme, encouraging them to think critically and to engage in exchange/discussion with guest lecturers each week. The group assignments appear to further encourage students to questions and engage with the course theme. Overall, the design and concept of the course encourages critical thinking, oral and written communication and collaborative work.

This course also focuses on a question that cannot be fully addressed through a single discipline: What does it mean to be human? The course aims to fulfill the following LOs: 1. Purposefully connect and integrate across discipline knowledge and skills to solve problems; 2. Synthesize and transfer knowledge across disciplinary boundaries; 5. Recognize varied perspectives; 6. Gain comfort with complexity and uncertainty; 7. Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively. The proposer's rationales for each of these LOs was well presented and supported with information in the syllabus and sample assignments. The syllabus and assignments clearly illustrate interdisciplinarity. The syllabus lists out each week along with the guest lecturer, discipline, and title of the presentation. The assignments, for example the annotated bibliography) are designed to reflect interdisciplinarity by their very structure as noted by the proposer. The course also clearly addresses the General Education learning goals for CityTech.

DESCRIBE & EVALUATE THE INTERDISCIPLINARY STRUCTURE?

The course has an interdisciplinary theme: What does it mean to be human? The course is comprised of a balance of 60% guest lectures drawn from members of CityTech and 40% from instructor of record, well above the criteria set forth by the committee. Professor Lansiquot has invited experts in a diverse range of specialties to present their perspectives on the question of what it means to be human, and employing a variety of contexts in which students engage with the material, including participation in group projects, concept mapping, case studies, literature reviews and a final course research paper.

RECOMMENDATION: recommend!