**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 January 29, 2021**

**Submitted by** Susan Phillip

**Department(s) Hospitality Management**

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

1. Identify the course type and title:  
     
   X An existing course LIB/ARCH 2205, Learning Places (Special Topics)  
     
   🞎 A new course \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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

1. Provide a course description

This special topics course offers an interdisciplinary approach to investigating our built environment using a case study focused on a specific place each semester. This course combines physical examination with information research and data collection using methodologies developed in multiple disciplines. Students from a variety of departments engage in on-site exploration and in-depth research of a location in New York City.

1. How many credits will the course comprise? 3 How many hours? \_\_\_4\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_
2. What prerequisite(s) would students need to complete before registering for the course? Co-requisite(s)?

ENG1101 and One Flexible Core

1. Explain briefly why this is an interdisciplinary course.

For over 150 years, waterfront industries built Brooklyn’s and New York City's economies, created fortunes and provided working-class jobs to citizens and immigrants. The local, national, and global forces contributing to Brooklyn’s industrial decline, had economic, social, and cultural impacts that lasted decades.  The people who made their homes in these once-neglected and disinvested neighborhoods are again subject to forces beyond their control – gentrification and real estate development that are threatening their lives and livelihoods. Many of our City Tech students live in these neighborhoods and are directly impacted by these changes.

Studying these forces of change, to eventually find solutions to them, require a multidisciplinary approach, just as the problems themselves are not in disciplinary silos. Addressing these problems will involve an understanding of the historical, economic, social, political, environmental, and urban planning dynamics.

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 the decline of Brooklyn’s waterfront industries, their economic and social

impacts, and their current transformation due to gentrification, reals estate development and

rezoning. A central question is how are the current forces of gentrification, real estate development and rezoning, parallel and their impacts similar to those caused by Brooklyn’s industrial decline? Students will integrate knowledge from in-situ observation, primary and secondary sources, and various media and work independently and collaboratively to understanding the economic, governmental and social forces behind gentrification, and possible mitigating solutions. Place-based learning experiences and research to complete the virtual walking tour will develop critical thinking, communication, and collaborative working skills. Furthermore, they will learn the value of having diverse perspectives and equally important, what happens when some groups are not allowed to present their perspectives.

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**

Students will conduct research on the decline and current transformation of formerly industrial neighborhoods using a variety of interdisciplinary methods, including observation and interviews, archival maps, and other primary resources. Working independently and as teams, students will draw and integrate their findings in reflections and in the virtual tour projects.

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

The issues involved are interdisciplinary problems and must necessarily be address in an interdisciplinary manner.

🞎 Comprehend factors inherent in complex problems

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| Students will have place-based learning experience, review primary and secondary sources, peer-reviewed articles, archival maps, government documents, websites and current periodicals and media coverage and engage with persons in communities which are studied in the course.   * formulate a research question that reflects their understanding of the past and current issues facing formerly industrial waterfronts * create a virtual tour in response to their research |

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

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🞎 Recognize varied perspectives

**🞎** Gain comfort with complexity and uncertainty

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🞎 Think critically, communicate effectively, and work collaboratively

Students will evaluate their sources for the annotated bibliography of the final project. All assignments will require students to make critical judgments about the relevance of their sources to support their research question.

🞎 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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| Using the City’s rich cultural and historic assets and a variety of interdisciplinary resources, students gain **knowledge** and **think critically** about how certain public symbols can convey messages of power. Students integrate information from interdisciplinary sources and make observations during place-based learning experiences that integrate their personal insights and perspectives. |

1. Which department would house this course[[3]](#footnote-3)? The Library
2. Would all sections of the course be interdisciplinary? 🞎 Yes
   1. Would the course be cross-listed in two or more departments? 🞎 Yes

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* 1. How will the course be team-taught[[4]](#footnote-4)? 🞎 Co-taught **🞎X** 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: \_\_%  
       
     Please attach the evaluation framework used to assess the interdisciplinarity of the course.[[6]](#footnote-6)
  2. What strategies/resources would be implemented to facilitate students’ ability to make connections across the respective academic disciplines?

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1. Would the course be designated as:

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

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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)