

Principles and Criteria for Integrative Studies

The attached statements are refinements and expansions of documents on Integrative Studies principles discussed previously by the Academic Council. They are incorporated here to illustrate working documents, to be further discussed by relevant faculty groups who will be involved in the review of Integrative Studies courses.

The specific criteria for Integrative Studies courses in the Arts and Humanities have been approved by the CIS/AH Advisory Committee.

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GENERAL PRINCIPLES AND CRITERIA FOR THE INTEGRATIVE STUDIES PROGRAM AT MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY

Integrative Studies at Michigan State University are an essential complement to students' major fields of study. The Integrative Studies Program provides students with a sense of interrelatedness of knowledge, especially the melding of liberal learning with the professional, technical, and specialized knowledge of the major. It enables students to understand, to analyze, and to synthesize data, and to compare social, cultural, economic, political and environmental phenomena in the United States and the world, and across time. It encourages the development of the skills of critical analysis and the use of such multiple modes of inquiry as scientific, artistic, literary, and information technologies. It fosters students' sense of responsibility for a dynamic, democratic society that offers broad opportunities and that requires functioning in an interdependent world.

Michigan State University's Integrative Studies Program is an integral part of the University's education for the students approaching the 21st century. The University offers Integrative Studies in the three knowledge and skills areas of the arts and humanities; the physical and biological sciences; and the social, behavioral and economic sciences; and through transcollegiate course options.

1. The essential thrust of the Integrative Studies Program at Michigan State University is to prepare students for the numerous challenges to solve problems that will confront University graduates in the 21st century. To achieve this goal, the content of Integrative Studies must be so structured that:
 - 1.1 Training in problem-solving skills is a central, as opposed to a peripheral, concern. Such training necessarily includes attention to critical and analytical thinking, to the distinctive modes of inquiry in the disciplines employed, and to the acquisition and refinement of well-considered value positions and ethical judgements.
 - 1.2 Course material underlines and illuminates the interrelatedness of knowledge, both among the areas of liberal learning and between liberal studies and professional/technical specialties.
 - 1.3 It will incorporate emphasis on issues of race and gender and of cultural, national, and international diversity.

2. The Integrative Studies Program will provide students with an exposure to enduring and empowering concepts in the arts and humanities; in the social, behavioral, and economic sciences; and in physical and biological science.
 - 2.1 The courses will introduce students to fundamental ideas and concepts in such a way as to permit the students to pursue these areas of knowledge independently or through additional studies in the disciplines.
 - 2.2 The content and presentation of these courses will enhance the ability of students to extrapolate facts and ideas within the disciplinary areas reflected in the courses and to apply this skill across disciplines and in professional studies.
 - 2.3 The transcollegiate courses will provide opportunities for students to explore the interplay of concepts among the several knowledge areas.