



INST 499 Directed Study Syllabus

Course Title: Directed Studies in Interdisciplinary Studies

Instructor Name: Rebecca Warren

Student Name: _____ **ID#** _____

Course Code: INST 499 ____ A (0.5) ____ B (1.0) ____ C (1.5) ____ D (2.0)

Course Description:

An opportunity to do advanced study of a special topic of particular interest to a student. Students work with a member of faculty. Students must apply in advance to the Director of Interdisciplinary Studies. Enrollment in this course is restricted to those presenting exceptional circumstances. No more than one INST 499 course may be applied to the degree.

Course Requirements:

Student will complete one or more of the assignments as noted below (each option worth 0.5 credits, % for each assignment is listed). Full project descriptions on the next page.

_____ **Book Review** ____ *pages*

Book(s) chosen: _____ Approved: ____

_____ **Social Issue Analysis** ____ *pages*

Issue(s) chosen: _____ Approved: ____

_____ **Video/Film Review** ____ *pages*

Film(s) chosen: _____ Approved: ____

_____ **Volunteering** ____ *hours*

Organization: _____ Approved: ____

_____ **Choose Your Own** (*attach a separate page with project description*)

Due Date for Assignment(s): _____

IS Assignment Descriptions (each option below is worth 0.5 credits as listed)

Option 1—Book Review

Read a book from the book list on the “Directed Study Assignment Options” form or select your own (must be approved in advance). Prepare a 5- to 6-page paper that answers the following questions:

- Which elements of root/stem/leaves did you find in this book? (You may not find all.)
- What is the background of the issue? What did you learn in your reading that gave you a more nuanced understanding?
- How is this problem being addressed in creative ways that cross boundaries of disciplines?
- How is it possible to live in hope, even in the face of this issue?

Option 2—Social Issue Analysis

Read the essay “Life’s BIG questions” by Gideon Strauss. Then choose a social issue that you care deeply about and discuss how different groups taking action on this issue are answering the question “What is to be done?” You should explain which solutions you find the most compelling and why. Your 5- 6-page paper should show that you have a thorough background understanding of the issue, and should demonstrate that you have explored a minimum of three groups (political parties, non-profits, advocacy organizations, etc) and how they approach the issue. Your analysis should consider which “big question” is at stake in how society has dealt with this issue and what might guide future action. Include a list of your research sources with your paper (including Internet sources).

Option 3—Video/Film Review

Watch the video “Ten Rules for Life” by Jean Vanier (available on YouTube). Watch one of the movies listed on the “Directed Study Assignment Options” form. Write a 5- to 6-page reflective paper in which you consider which of Vanier’s “rules” (or their opposite) are operating in the film in various characters, and what the consequences (for good or bad) are of that in the story.

Option 4—Volunteering

For this option, you will read the essay “Life’s BIG questions” by Gideon Strauss and then spend at least 4 hours with a local non-profit organization. You will write a 500-word reflection in which you discuss the following questions:

- What organization did you volunteer for and what did you do?
- Which of the “big questions” in the essay by Strauss did you see addressed in the organization or the people it works with?
- How does the organization demonstrate a hopeful response to this issue?

Organization chosen must be approved in advance. You should attached the completed “Volunteering Form” along with your assignment.

Option 5—Choose Your Own

Suggest your own project. For this option, you will read the essay “Life’s BIG questions” by Gideon Strauss and connect it to whatever topic (or experience) you will choose. You must get approval of your proposal from the IS Director BEFORE you enroll in 499 and attach a project description to this form.