

Distribution Proposal Examples

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Difference, Power, and Inequity (DPI)

These courses examine difference in terms of power and inequity. Students learn theories, methods, and skills to analyze structures of privilege and inequality. Students confront how such structures intersect with their own experiences.

DPI Example #1:

GOV 2572, *The Politics of Ethnicity: Construction and Mobilization of Ethnic Identity Claims*

- **Describe the course learning goals related to the students' examination of difference, power, and inequity.**
 - The course focuses on a central marker of difference, which is ethnicity. It takes a purposely historical perspective, emphasizing through the cases of Rwanda and Myanmar how the founding experiences of these states placed certain groups in positions of permanent power or exclusion. The goals of the course are to unpack how these hierarchies have had lasting consequences for access to political and economic opportunity and have led to violent conflict in these cases. Students should leave the course able to:
 - Describe how groups are quantified and measured and recognize how this may contribute to their access to power
 - Appreciate how identities may shift over time and space
 - Understand the difference between causal and normative theories about ethnic identity and ethnic relations
 - Consider multiple policy options regarding the resolution of ethnic conflict
 - Determine whether their own position is comparable to groups they are studying
 - Relating to difference, power, and inequity, students should leave the course understanding that while identity may be fluid, perceptions of its immutability create high-stakes games for access to political power. Because this is a comparative course, students will learn how to recognize similar tendencies in different contexts as well as guard against the assumption that the same policies should be applied in every context.

- **What are the principle theories, methods, and skills that your course will prepare students to apply in their analysis of difference, power, and inequity?**
 - This course contains theories about what ethnicity is and how it can ignite conflict. Theories of ethnicity include broadly primordial theories, instrumental theories, and constructivist theories. Theories about ethnic conflict are those that draw on psychology and social identity, those that favor historical and colonial legacies, those that elevate economic

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interests (relative deprivation, resource conflict), those that focus on identity-based inequalities, and those that highlight ethnic entrepreneurs and institutional arrangements (such as electoral rules). My goal for students is that they understand the interplay between the malleability of ethnic identity and perceptions of its rigidity, the latter having very real political and economic consequences for individuals and groups.

- Methodologically, students will learn to identify certain explanations with particular theoretical motivations, and they will learn to test their own beliefs and assumptions against empirical outcomes that they encounter in the case studies.
- In terms of skills, students will learn to engage in strategic reading (gutting an article for its theoretical approach, its argument, and the testing of that argument), qualitative and quantitative research (finding descriptive information about ethnic groups and policies regarding their rights to political participation and cultural expression), synthesis and analysis (articulating differences among theories and cases), and evaluating (adjudicating among theories and proposing policy options).

- **Provide one or two specific examples of the types of assignments (e.g., papers, critiques, debates, discussions, journal writing, community service experience, etc.) students in the course will complete, briefly describing how those assignments will assist in students' acquisition of the terminology, approaches, and skills identified above.**

- The major assignment for the term is a research project, where a student selects a contemporary ethnic conflict, explains its origins and proposes policies for its mitigation. There are four components to the project; three relate to this question. The first component is to describe various ways groups have been measured. Through this deceptively simple exercise, students learn that there are many ways to measure ethnicity – through language, religion, racial categories – and these often take on different salience in different places and at different times. The second is to explore how these groups came to compose the state historically, usually through a colonial encounter. Through this exercise, students see how certain groups were favored because of access to education or employment, resulting in objective differences between groups, as well as how they were viewed differently by colonizers, resulting in subjective differences in perceptions of group worth. These objective and subjective views persisted into independence, leading either to backlash or to simmering resentment. Students must identify within their historical description some elements of various theoretical approaches to ethnic identity. The third aspect of the project is to provide an explanation for the current conflict, drawing on theories of ethnic conflict that we have already explored in class. Students are required in these ways to master the terminology of ethnic identity formation and conflict. They should also glean skills in strategic reading,

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qualitative and quantitative research, synthesis of theories, and analysis of their own case in light of these theories. The evaluation comes in the final assignment, described below.

- **How will students arrive at or reflect on dynamics of difference, power, and inequity that intersect with their own experiences? Provide one or two specific examples of learning activities and/or assignments (e.g., papers, critiques, debates, discussions, journal writing, community service experience, etc.) with which students in the course will engage.**
 - Twice during the term, students are asked formally to make judgments about appropriate policies to reduce ethnic conflict. This is in addition to the many times that they are asked to post discussion threads or comments that often result in engagement with their own lived experience. These two formal assignments ask students directly how to reduce hierarchies among groups. One is in the context of a group debate, where they are assigned a particular theoretical position and must argue it using theoretical and empirical evidence. The other is the final portion of their term research project, a policy memo where they must apply empirical evidence and normative theories to make policy recommendations for reducing ethnic conflict the countries they are researching. In recalling the differential access to power and resources that provided the foundation for social hierarchies in Rwanda and in Myanmar, they will necessarily reflect on how the United States' founding placed certain groups in a position of greater power. As they are making recommendations regarding federalism, preferential policies (e.g. affirmative action), electoral redistricting, and partition, they will need to recall classroom readings and discussions that used the United States as an example or compared it to other countries. No matter the student's background, they will necessarily examine their own position and perspective resulting from their ethnic identity.

DPI Example #2:

GSWS 2320/CINE 2141, *Gender and Sexuality in Teen Cinema*

- **Describe the course learning goals related to the students' examination of difference, power, and inequity.**
 - In this course, students examine representations of gender, sexuality, and queerness in teen cinema from an intersectional perspective that considers other domains of identity such as class, race, ethnicity, and disability. Especially since we are focusing on representations of teen culture, special attention will be given to notions of power and categories of age, and how developmental categories such as childhood and adulthood are used to strip people of agency.

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- **What are the principle theories, methods, and skills that your course will prepare students to apply in their analysis of difference, power, and inequity?**
 - Teen cinema frequently depicts content that might be challenging to some people, including but not limited to death, sexism, racism, homophobia, violence, suicide, sexual assault, and unacceptable forms of social injustice, exploitation, and inequality. These elements are commonly represented in media that explore the intersections of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, disability, and class. Problematic elements are also common in earlier films, which were produced during a time with different sociocultural circumstances. Drawing from areas such as queer theory, intersectional theories, and critical race theory, students will be able to parse out the dynamics of power present in teen cultural productions and use historical context to think critically about the place of teens in our culture and society.

- **Provide one or two specific examples of the types of assignments (e.g., papers, critiques, debates, discussions, journal writing, community service experience, etc.) students in the course will complete, briefly describing how those assignments will assist in students' acquisition of the terminology, approaches, and skills identified above.**
 - In this course, I assign an argumentative scene analysis in which students must examine how a scene within one of the course films mobilizes an argument that connects to matters of gender, sexuality, queerness, or identity. In their examination, students pay attention to how the scene using technical and cinematic elements such as sound, color, lighting, and costuming to frame certain gendered practices, and even more so, how these elements are used to emphasize the power relations present in their selected film.

- **How will students arrive at or reflect on dynamics of difference, power, and inequity that intersect with their own experiences? Provide one or two specific examples of learning activities and/or assignments (e.g., papers, critiques, debates, discussions, journal writing, community service experience, etc.) with which students in the course will engage.**
 - Journals are an important part of this course, and I expect students to regularly craft journal entries where they discuss their personal reactions toward the film and readings, how they affected the student's thinking, and/or even more so, how the teen experiences reflected on the screen compare or mesh with their own past experiences as a teen. This assignment is crucial given that part of the focus of the course is for students to understand the relationship between teen representations and the actual lived experiences of teens--and how teen cinema constantly reinforces unrealistic and problematic approaches toward adolescents and their relationships with others.

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Inquiry in the Natural Sciences (INS)

The main goal of the *Inquiry in the Natural Sciences* requirement is to help students expand their understanding of the natural sciences through practices associated with questioning, measuring, modeling, and explaining the natural world.

INS Example #1:

EOS 2565, *Coastal Oceanography*

- Describe the exercises and experiences you will incorporate that help students understand the natural world and the ways in which scientists explore it
 - The course is focused on (1) the collection of data and observations from research cruises, observational platforms (e.g., the Bowdoin Buoy), and laboratory experiments, (2) the analysis of samples and data sets, (3) the interpretation of the analysis results and (4) the synthesis of the interpretation in the context of published work. Students will read one or more scientific papers on a topic, write a short analysis that consists of an overview of the state of knowledge on the topic and the identification of knowledge gaps. The research review will form the basis for constructing the approach for collecting and analyzing a data set that will address one or more knowledge gaps. The final product will be a short paper which incorporates the literature analysis (now in its second written iteration), a summary of the approach, presentation of results (including graphs and tables), and interpretation of the results. Towards the end of the semester, synthesis will be introduced to link the weekly activities together. For example, one laboratory session will focus on the collection of water samples in different parts of an estuary for analysis of the nutrient concentrations. The analysis will focus on contextualizing the location of water sample collection with respect to estuary circulation. A second lab will focus on learning lab-based auto-analysis for quantifying the concentration and composition of nutrients in the water samples. The write up will include a description of the method, the propagation of error and the results of the analysis. A third lab will focus on accessing an online data set of nutrients in the Gulf of Maine collected over the last 50 years. Students will analyze how their data fit within the large scale, long term nutrient patterns in the Gulf with an eye towards understanding how nutrient concentrations vary over time and space. With these three labs, students learn how to design and implement a field sampling program, how to run a robust laboratory analysis, and how to place their results into a larger oceanographic context. Later in the semester, they will

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return to these results when they analyze the time and space variations in the phytoplankton communities that depend on these nutrients for growth and reproduction.

INS Example #2:

BIOL 1060/ENVS 1060, *Prove it!: The Power of Data to Address Questions You Care About*

- Describe the exercises and experiences you will incorporate that help students understand the natural world and the ways in which scientists explore it
 - In this course we will explore topics at the intersection of ecology and environmental studies: issues such as climate change, biodiversity loss, and pollution impact on ecosystems and human health. This exploration will involve reading about these issues both in primary and secondary literature articles as well as class discussion and writing exercises to delve deeper into these analyses. In particular, students will explore how issues are presented in the media and also examine primary literature articles upon which media articles are based, to determine whether the media is fairly representing the scientific evidence. Through lecture, class discussion, and hands on experience, students will learn about how data is collected on these topics, including the limitations of what we can measure about the natural world and what data is available publicly. In small groups (described more below) students will explore an environmental issue of interest in greater depth, through a combination of background reading and data analysis and interpretation. Students will present their projects to the class at the end of the course, giving students an opportunity to learn about a wider variety of environmental issues and the ways data can be used to ask and answer questions on these topics.

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International Perspectives (IP)

The main goal of the *International Perspectives* requirement is to assist students in developing a critical understanding of the world beyond the United States. IP courses provide students with the tools necessary to analyze non-U.S. cultures, societies, and states (including indigenous societies and sovereign nations within the United States and its territories), either modern or historical.

IP Example #1:

HIST 2884, *Competing Israeli and Palestinian Nationalisms*

- Which non-U.S. perspective(s) will be developed in this course?
 - History of Israeli and Palestinian Nationalism
 - Formation of narrative and the role in conflicts
 - History of the Middle East
 - Primary sources include novels, movies, arts.

- How will students learn to analyze or engage critically with social, cultural, institutional, or political dimensions of societies beyond the U.S.?
 - Historical accounts
 - Reading of primary sources
 - Class discussions of interpretations
 - Written assignments
 - First person essays

IP Example #2:

GSWS 2468/ASNS 2841, *Race, Masculinity, and State Power*

- Which non-U.S. perspective(s) will be developed in this course?
 - To examine state power as masculine, students will read books that examine Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, United States, and Pakistan as case studies. The course will center include a historical component in order to trace the genealogy of the present. This will include examining the articulation of black and brown masculinities as hypersexual, violent, and backward. Materials

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in that context will emerge from how the ‘East’ is imagined by the ‘West.’ Students will complete a final assignment, which will include an analysis of the state practices of any country they choose.

- How will students learn to analyze or engage critically with social, cultural, institutional, or political dimensions of societies beyond the U.S.?
 - Students will read detailed case studies (books) about state practices in Saudi Arabia, Afghanistan, and Pakistan. Moreover, since we are concerned about how War on Terror has both transnational and local manifestations in relation to racializing particular populations, we will also consider how the ‘Taliban’ are imagined in Pakistani discourse. This will include a critique of political statements and advertisements. Students will thus learn how to analyze state self-articulations. Students can then take these skills and apply it to other contexts of their choice for their final papers

IP Example #3:

HIST 2690, *Fascism*

- Which non-U.S. perspective(s) will be developed in this course?
 - This course focuses on the history of fascism in Europe. We will look at Italy and Germany in particular, since this was where fascism actually came to power. But this course will also spend considerable time exploring other national fascisms, in France, Spain, Norway, Hungary, and Romania, for example. Fascism, the course shows, was an international phenomenon, though fascism often looked differently in each national context. In this course, we will try to understand why. In addition, fascist movements, and later states, did occasionally form alliances with one another, seeing themselves as part of a wave. In this course, we therefore think about the possibility of fascist internationalism. If fascism is in large part about advancing the interests of an allegedly superior racial or national group, is fascist internationalism actually a contradiction in terms? Were these cross-border alliances purely pragmatic, or were they backed by genuine ideological unity? Lastly, this course will also explore a few cases of non-European fascism, looking briefly at South America, Japan, and Iran. How did non-European fascism compare? Was this actually fascism, or something else? Using primary sources, we will see what fascists themselves thought about fascism elsewhere. Using secondary sources, we will see what subsequent scholars have argued. One major writing assignment for this course will be to think

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about the translatability of fascism across borders. To what degree does fascism change in different places? At what point does fascism become something else entirely?

- How will students learn to analyze or engage critically with social, cultural, institutional, or political dimensions of societies beyond the U.S.?
 - The primary way that students can engage with non-U.S. perspectives is by reading texts produced by those living outside the United States. While language is always an issue, thankfully many key texts have been translated. In this course, students will read texts from fascists in Italy, Germany, France, Spain, and elsewhere. They will read accounts from those who suffered from fascism, like Jews, Communists, and non-whites. They will read important anti-fascist writers, like Georgi Dimitrov. Students will also read European scholarly reflections on Europe's fascist past. Lastly, given the new wave of far right activity, students will examine texts from the right-wing movements cropping up across Europe today. We will end by comparing this new wave to earlier moments of fascist resurgence.

Mathematical, Computational, or Statistical Reasoning (MCSR)

The main goal of the *Mathematical, Computational, or Statistical Reasoning* requirement is to enable students to use mathematics, statistics, or quantitative methods, models, and techniques to understand the world around them either by learning the general tools of mathematics and statistics or by applying them in a subject area.

MCSR Example #1:

CSCI 2340, *In situ D4: Real-world Database Design, Development, and Deployment*

- How will students interpret and draw appropriate inferences from mathematical, computational, or statistical constructs such as formulas, graphs, tables, and schematics?
 - ER diagrams, maps, graphs, tables, concept maps, and persona diagrams all visualize different types of data collected about people (e.g., behaviors, relationships, environments, etc.). Students

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will be required to model, collect, analyze, synthesize, and interpret a variety of data sources collected as a part of course activities and team assignments.

- How will students represent information, relationships, or data graphically, numerically, or symbolically?
 - *No answer was provided for this question because faculty members requesting an MCSR distribution designation are only asked to answer two of the three questions.*

- How will students model and analyze real-world questions through the use of mathematical, algorithmic, or statistical methods?
 - Students will be required to answer real-world questions while exploring a variety of database types (relational and non-relational) and programming/query languages. This will include developing and analyzing what type of data models are most efficient for different types of data. The data used for this course will be collected from a real-world setting (airport), therefore, design and implementation issues around data storage, transactions, extraction, and retrieval, user accessibility, and security of the information, will be built into the project parameters. Culminating projects will contribute to the demonstration of a user-tested information system that represents the student-collected data from the test bed site.

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Visual and Performing Arts (VPA)

The main goal of the *Visual and Performing Arts* requirement is to help students expand their understanding of artistic expression and judgment through creation, performance, and analysis of artistic work in the areas of dance, film, music, theater, and visual art.

VPA Example #1:

HISP 3110/THTR 3503/LAS 3210, *Hispanic Theater and Performance*

- How will students be involved in the performance or creation of a work of art? Describe specific assignments, activities, or projects.
 - *No answer was provided for this question because faculty members requesting a VPA distribution designation are only asked to answer two of the three questions.*

- How will students be engaged in extended and detailed analysis of artistic work? Please provide an example.
 - Students will read the full text of eight 3-act Spanish plays over the course of the semester, all written in the 16th and 17th centuries. They will produce weekly short commentary about these class readings, and will be required to write two extended essays, each one focusing on a particular play.

- How will students explore the cultural, social, historical, or economic context surrounding artistic expression? Please provide an example.
 - In addition to reading play texts, students will be required to read transcripts of interviews with directors/ set designers/ costume designers for 4-5 contemporary productions and conduct an in-class interview (via Skype) with theater artists working on the plays we examine in class. We also partner with special collections to view and analyze 18th century editions of these plays; the class visits culminating in a short, descriptive essay about one of the manuscripts as a way to better understand the material culture from the period.