Integration: Linking the Dyads

“Dyads are two linked courses from different disciplines that share a central problematic, field of inquiry, or topical focus.

After completing at least five of the six core Integrative Studies courses, students will enroll in the dyad of their choice. While the foundational courses in the core concentrate on specific curricular threads, the courses in a dyad will ask students to work a broad topic across all five goals. As the culminating experience in the Integrative Studies curriculum, the dyads will encourage students to reflect meaningfully on their present and past learning experiences.”

—Understanding the Dyads, I.S. website

The first wave of faculty members has begun to design courses for the dyad component of the new Integrative Studies curriculum. Their explorations can help all of us begin to think and strategize about design challenges related to I.S. outcomes and to integration, namely, we want to explore how faculty members might develop two independent courses in two different disciplines

1. that together address all five Integrative Studies goals in an integral and meaningful way (while also structuring in an opportunity for final reflection on learning in the program in the ePortfolio), and
2. that are tightly, clearly, and intentionally enough linked with each other—even if separated time—through such means as shared readings, guiding questions, experiences, or assignments that students will experience them as genuinely interconnected.

Questions to ask as you are working on designing or refining your dyad courses:

1. What core concept(s), problematic(s), guiding question(s), or big idea(s) will help to clearly link the courses?

2. In what ways will the course signal the links (syllabus, assignments, themes, etc.)?

3. How will your course keep linkages in the forefront of students’ minds and experiences throughout the courses?

4. What are some ways to approach addressing all five I.S. goals meaningfully between the two courses?

5. Where do you anticipate challenges (of any kind) in designing or implementing the dyad?
Sample approaches explored by faculty members slated to teach in 2012-2013

DYAD 1: Understanding Nature: Ecological and Psychological Perspectives


Core concept:

4 common themes and activities:

1) Zoo experience:
   Students in both courses will visit the Columbus zoo and reflect on the psychological perceptions of nature in cages and learn about the coral reef conservation efforts being made by the aquarium division. Note: this will be paired with a similar activity at the Belize zoo during the optional SYE.

2) Service learning in the 4th grade classroom:
   Otterbein students in both courses will help teach local 4th grade students about reefs and environmental perceptions. Note: this will be paired with teaching 4th graders from Sittee River school in Belize during the SYE.

3) Ohio Attitudes:
   Students in both courses will survey Ohio residents to determine how people view nature based on gender, age, and/or birth place (psychology) and what they understand about overfishing, bleaching, and deforestation in tropical areas (ecology). Note: this will be paired with a similar survey of Belizeans during the January SYE.

4) Non-Profits Protecting Nature:
   We will make contact with a local NGO (hopefully The Nature Conservancy) and view preserving nature from their perspective. We will ask them to let students know how to effectively entice people to donate to conservation, and what conservation endeavors they fund. Note: Many migratory birds from Ohio end up in Belize and the Central Ohio TNC has a close connection with Belize and has helped preserve several areas, which we will visit during the January SYE. (Tropical Nature course) / We will make contact with a local NGO and view preserving nature from their perspective. Students will connect this with research on persuasion and behavior change from psychology. (Experiencing Nature course)
Sample approaches explored by faculty members slated to teach in 2012-2013

DYAD 2: The Self

Chris Kirk, Theater, “Acting: The Source for Character”
Robert Kraft, Psychology, “Regarding the Self: Psychological Perspectives”

Core concept:

The unifying concept of the dyad is that the self is the result of multiple influences, and that these influences can be analyzed from different perspectives in Psychology and explored through the development of character in Theatre.

Common themes and activities:

3 strong themes braided together to create a “through line” (Stanislavski):

1) Students recognize or engage with selves that are other or unfamiliar to them thereby becoming aware of the other and the unfamiliar but also more aware of how they create their own consistent selves

2) Students’ awareness of the experience of the self expands outward, allowing them to re-examine the ways the self is situated in human, natural, and physical worlds

3) Students become aware of the importance of recognizing and questioning assumptions through engaging in continually shifting perspectives
   - Reciprocal visits in week 11 to reinforce thematic connections
   - Explicit emphasis on through line in weeks 1, 7, 11, and 14
   - Revisit themes through each course continually

Sample shared activities:

1) Memory deconstructed
2) Reflections on a Lake
3) Acting Lab: Who Are We? Take One.
4) Acting Lab: Who Are We? Take Two.