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A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's ISD Program Winter/Spring 2019

Meet DePaul's Interdisciplinary Self-Designed Graduate Program

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

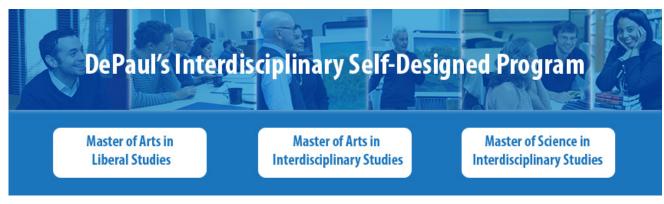
What do students/professors/employers find in our Interdisciplinary Self-Designed Program?

Students enter with an idea of multiple areas they want to study in some connected way. They don't see one particular discipline that encompasses the threads they want to weave. Students ask: Can I combine Women and Gender Studies with Public Policy and Education? Can I combine Minority Studies with Theatre Studies? Can I combine Media/Technology, American Politics and Ethics and the European Union? How about Environmental Science/Modern Languages and Literature? I want to combine Leadership and Urban Studies and Public Policy. Or Documentary Film/Justice and Ethics? Do any of these programs include advanced certificates recognized in particular fields?

Our program helps applicants create individualized graduate programs drawing from almost every area of DePaul's graduate offerings. The ISD application process requires prospective students to create a List of Courses (LOC) and a Statement of Academic Purpose (SAP) drawing from at least 2 or more disciplines in DePaul and demonstrating the logic of how those disciplines interact to create a viable, innovative program. We work with programs and departments throughout the university to make sure our students find the courses they seek. Many courses are open to ISD students as long as any prerequisites are met. In some cases, we create individualized cross-listed seats with existing courses for our students. In the process of our quarterly scheduling to create a selection of cross-listed seats, we work with program and department directors throughout the university who welcome ISD students into these very diverse classes.

As students work through their courses, they build networks with professors and colleagues throughout the university who mentor and support these individualized studies. As they reach their culminating project phase, they have already identified their capstone project advisors, studied the sources they will draw from, and made themselves at home throughout DePaul's rich resources. Some ISD students take advantage of internships, study abroad opportunities, and/or public service projects as they continue their studies.

As students complete their studies, they exit with unique degrees which they can market to specifically targeted audiences, supporting advanced PhD programs, career shifts, and advancement within their established professions. Help is available from Career Planning and Placement to market these specialized degrees. While traditional degrees will always be marketable, we know that many employers and advanced educational institutions look for people who are confident working across disciplines; so when our students present credentials that demonstrate they can combine advanced communication skills with excellent analytical skills and highly honed knowledge of, say, technology, social media, and business skills, they are highly valued.



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Convergence

A publication for students and alumni of DePaul University's ISD Program

Editor and Writer: Susan Jacobs **Design and Production:** Hannah Kaplan

Director's Letter



As I think about what lies ahead for adult learners in the near future I see a job landscape that looks very different from twenty or even ten years ago. In this landscape, even the word "career" takes on a different meaning. The idea of having one job in a specific field that you prepared for in college or graduate school may be the route for some, but many people think of the work world as wide open territory. People

change jobs more often, and may be working in several settings at once. They shift from the corporate to the not-for-profit sectors or vice-versa. They work in Chicago or Bangkok. Challenges certainly exist in this reality, both financial and personal. How can young people or even people in mid-career ready themselves for this landscape?

The word that comes to my mind is "agility," the ability to apply advanced skills in a variety of settings. We know that in the corporate world, prospective employers respond positively to liberal arts graduates who can research, analyze, and write across a variety of issues and fields. But how does this translate into the advantages that an Interdisciplinary Self-Designed Graduate Program can impart to graduate students? In fact, graduate interdisciplinarity is the grown-up, hyper-powered version of the holistic person that an undergraduate liberal arts program is designed to produce.

The agile interdisciplinary thinker/doer has familiarity with multiple communication styles and disciplinary languages which enables them to jump into a variety of settings, figure things out, and become part of a profession. This exactly parallels the way we prepare our students to take courses in a variety of graduate settings. We often hear from professors throughout the disciplines that our students are among the best in the class, because they are highly motivated, self-starting, independent learners. Agility in the classroom translates into agility in career building.

I want to congratulate our recent graduates who built amazingly agile programs. You will meet Anna Bahow and John Moses in this issue of Convergence. Now meet Estella Achinko, who after courses in Women's and Gender Studies and global political issues affecting women, wrote a novel about a young woman from her native Cameroon who gets pulled into a horrific indentured status in the Gulf; Rachel Conrad, who did work in education and multi-cultural communication, wrote about "third culture kids," who because of their parents' multi-national lives end up in secondary schools in unfamiliar cultures; and Shelby Lasaine, who studied public policy and business in order to position himself as an expert resource in environmentally sustainable business practices. Very soon, YuHao Chen, will be going to New York to work in the archives of the New York Public Library and the CUNY Graduate Center for his project on the role of the piano accordion in popular culture. YuHao has already been admitted to the Ph.D. program in ethnomusicology at the University of Pittsburgh. Allison Pittman is currently working on a Practicum, a research project of thesis dimensions to produce a real-world product, in this case, a detailed plan for Intercultural Training, emphasizing strategies applicable to a variety of institutional settings. Melissa Walny has completed a long journey, after leaving the program to begin raising a family and returning to complete her studies. She has delved into a variety of interreligious historical questions, culminating in a wonderful project about the understanding of happiness in classical, Catholic, and Jewish traditions. Congratulations to all!

Warm Regards,

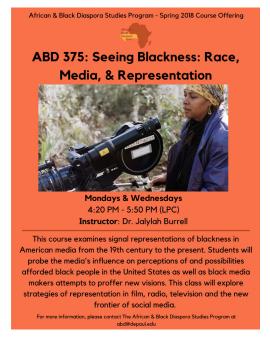
David Gitomer, Ph.D. Director, ISD

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Program News

Our Interdisciplinary Connections Evolve



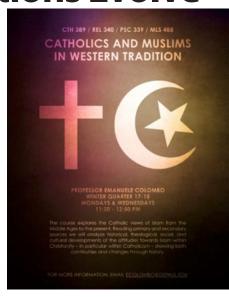


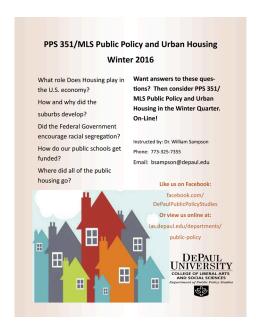
Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

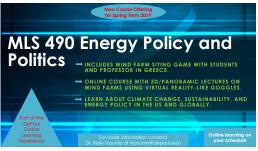
DePaul's graduate ISD students draw from a rich, always evolving selection of courses throughout the disciplines. While each ISD student's program can include courses from multiple dedicated disciplines, interdisciplinarity is already inherent in many courses throughout the university.

ISD cross-lists interdisciplinary courses in LAS representing fascinating connections; many programs offer innovative courses that bring together themes like these past selections: Education and Sociology; Early Queer Art and Activism, the Economy and Urban Housing as Social Symbol; Catholic Attitudes Towards Islam; Health Inequalities and Social Action: Environmental Studies and Art: Race, Media and Representation. In Spring 2019, ISD offers cross-listed courses such as Topics in American Literature: Fiction, Media and Technology (MLS 473/ENG 369); People, Places and Food (MLS 489/SOC 370); Writing Across the Media (MLS 490/WRD 533).

Outside of LAS, students find interdisciplinary courses in programs such as Communication, Digital Media, Business, Environmental Science and Computer Science. Our students learn to become expert navigators throughout the disciplines as they create their uniquely self-designed graduate programs. Increasingly, advanced degree programs and workplaces recognize the value of learners who integrate multiple disciplines of study and practice into their thinking and skillsets. The world is full of connectivity, and ISD students explore those possibilities through DePaul's rigorous and innovative graduate studies.







Anna Bahow, MALS 2018

My undergraduate degree from Miami University in Ohio was in Communica-

tions and Theatre. After a few years of working in the theatre and design industry, I wanted to continue my education. I wanted to have a wider context and understanding of identity and social construction from which to approach my professional and personal life.

I have consistently worked as a theatre director (my avocation) since moving to Chicago and have also worked in the visual design area as a project manager and design consultant for first a commercial textile company and then a small boutique design firm. This work not only utilized my visual acumen but also my theatre experience by examining how spaces are created and how they affect the people who move through them. My goals now are to apply what I have learned

about diversity and inclusivity from my work at DePaul to theatre and to other professional settings.

My mission as an artist and activist is to expand storytelling by promoting inclusive and nuanced depictions of those in Othered groups and by exposing and disrupting stories about race, ethnicity, and identity that perpetuate stereotypes. Storytelling is how all of us understand the world.

I started the MALS Program as an adult student. I was excited about learning. In this first phase, in addition to the interdisciplinary approach, I loved the small classes and interaction with other adult learners. I finished my course work and then became involved in theatre projects, a job change and other commitments. The

challenge was to start up again after this gap. I made an attempt to come back with some thesis ideas in my pocket but writing it seemed too intimidating.



and support the sometimes bumpy road of the adult learner. Fellow thesis writers in the International Studies Department also played an important part in my academic

support community.

In my thesis I explore and analyze systemic racism and the counter narratives that Swedish writer Ionas Hassen Khemiri uses in his play INVASION. I illustrate how Khemiri's work creates a stage, both literally and figuratively, to challenge racism. Entertainment, when inclusive, is one of the most effective tools in combating prejudice and creating empathy and understanding.

I argue that we need diversity in what stories are told and diversity in who is telling the stories-be that in the legal system, media, or in everyday life. >>

Dr. Nast's class MLS 490 on Race, Sex and Difference, which launched my thesis, helped me to think like a student again. It was demanding, exciting and opened

> a path to my next phase of the process. The DePaul University Center for Writing-based Learning was a huge help. It gave me the tools to break down the writing into manageable bits, gave me a timeline, and

was a great way to build accountability.

My larger support group was comprised of my thesis advisor, Dr. Francesca Royster, my committee members, Dr. Heidi Nast and Dr. Shiera Malik, and my mother who was a reader, sounding board and cheerleader. ISD Director Dr. Gitomer and Associate Director Susan Jacobs understand

I am committed to creating a greater voice for diversity for minority groups, women and the differently-abled. I am interested in working with not-for-profits, educational, arts, and cultural institutions. I am exploring writing an article about my work, presenting at conferences and creating a presentation for the Swedish American Museum here in Chicago. I will continue to tell stories in the theatre but I am also eager to see how the work that I have done at DePaul can be applied to facilitate inclusivity in multiple venues throughout the disciplines.

John Moses, IDS 2019

What brought me to DePaul? I grew up in Southern Illinois, near St. Louis. I then lived in San Jose CA. When my mother got sick, I left CA and came back to St. Louis where I cared for her until she passed away. I was down in St. Louis

thinking, well, do I really want to go back to CA or what do I want to do? My sister lived here in Chicago right off of Fullerton, and I said "You know what, let me give Chicago a shot. Let me just go up there and make a kind of fresh start of things." It was just the right point in my life.

One of my first jobs was at the St. Vincent DePaul Center on Halsted St., where I worked as a before/after school teacher in their kids' program. I used to walk to work from Jansen to Halsted, and I would pass through LPC campus and walk down Belden—thinking to myself "Wow, this is a really nice university. I'd like to go to school here sometime." The problem was, I hadn't completed my bachelor's degree yet.

I finished my bachelor's degree through Western Illinois University. Their Board of Governors Program allowed me to take two or three classes and complete my BA in 1999. I applied for State of Illinois' jobs at the Thompson Center and ultimately, I got hired at the Department of Human Services. When I learned that one of the job's benefits included 100% of tuition for graduate school, I jumped at the opportunity.

Because I had taken everything from basket weaving to calculus throughout my BA, and I kept on changing my major, I really didn't know what I wanted to do. I completed my MED at DePaul in 2009 with a license in counseling and continued to work for the State of Illinois. But my career took a different trajectory when I was promoted to become a revenue analyst, which has nothing to do with

counseling. It had more to do with accounting. While working there, I decided to go into public service management so I started my second master's degree in 2012. I took 6 courses in DePaul's Public Service Management Program when I decided I was going to retire.

My trajectory stems from my undergraduate degree where I discovered that my interests were multidisciplinary. I loved all the courses. It's like, "What flavor do you like?" Well, I like them all! >>

> I was tired of government. I wanted to do something different, and I thought it was really a shame that I took these 6 courses and they were not going to add up to anything. I discovered DePaul's Interdisciplinary Self-Designed Program and Dr. Gitomer encouraged me to apply. I had the basis of the ISD degree, needing only 6 more classes to complete a completely self-constructed program. In the winter of 2015, I began my new interdisciplinary journey.

For me, college is not only about taking courses, but it's also about playing frisbee in the quad and taking advantage of the University's physical setting and resources. In graduate school I would always take 1 course at a time, which is a big advantage compared to most graduate students who are taking 2, sometimes 3 courses, plus working. I wanted to really savor each class, though it's very time consuming.

Typically, on a class night, I'll go into the loop around noon and work

in the library. The library has scanners and copy machines, they've got nice quiet rooms with computers, and of course they've got librarians who can answer questions. The Writing Center up on the 16th floor of Lewis is another great resource. I have taken full advantage of all these supports. It's helped me tremendously as an adult student. One staff member steered me from my floppy disk to a flash drive--it's the kind of thing where you don't know what you don't know until someone shows you.

I try to say now "Hey, it's never too late." Whatever you want to do requires that you have a passion in the world. It doesn't really matter where you're at in life, it terms of chronological age, it just matters what you want to do. Do what you need to do and you have to have a lot of patience and a lot of vision. What's the saying? "A journey of a thousand miles starts with a single step?" And that's so very true; just little baby steps. You start getting momentum and then the next thing you know, you're doing your exit course. It goes by like 'that.'



Interviewer: Hannah Kaplan

Professional Organization Opportunities: AGLSP

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In Oct. 2018, ISD Director David Gitomer and Associate Director Susan Jacobs attended the annual AGLSP Conference at ASU, Tempe

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

Our DePaul ISD students often ask where they can build their interdisciplinary academic networks, where they can present their important work, and how they can get published. ISD has been a long standing active member in the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies Program (AGL-SP). Each year, the AGLSP Annual Conference brings together representatives of the 60+ member institutions to share ideas and discuss the latest issues in Graduate Liberal Studies. Each conference features paper presentations and panel discussions, as well as invited speakers with scholarly and professional expertise. DePaul's ISD Program hosted the annual conference in 2013.

Recent conference themes have included 2018's Borders and Migrations, and past conference themes such as Tradition and Transformation: Embracing the Future; Place Matters; Revolutions: Past, Present, and Future; Urban Gateways: Immigration and the Global City; The Crisis of the Book: Worlds of Opportunity, Worlds of Change; and The Transformation of the 21st Century City. Recent venues have included Tempe, Oklahoma City, San Jose, Philadelphia, Chicago, Portland and Saratoga Springs. The result is a rich and diverse sharing of "best of" program practices, student and faculty work, and unique networking opportunities for students and faculty.

2018 keynote speakers included Dr. Neal A. Lester, founder of Project Humanities, which "facilitates conversations across diverse communities that broaden perspectives and builds understanding through talking, listening, and connecting." Later, participants heard a talk and poetry reading by Alberto Rios, Professor at AUW, widely published poet, and currently Arizona Poet Laureate. All speakers addressed facets of the interdisciplinary conference theme of Borders and Migrations, including the arts, law, race, gender, religion, linguistics, education and politics.

The conference "proper" includes student panel discussions moderated by program directors; the panels consist of students presenting their work in concurrent sessions.

We strongly encourage our ISD students to consider proposing papers of their own, and entering these very important and visible conversations. Many of the presenters also submit their work to Confluence, The Journal of Graduate Liberal Studies. www.confluence-aglsp.org/ Interested students should contact our office or check out www.aglsp. org/ directly for more information.

DePaul's ISD Program Establishes Chapter in the National Honor Society of Graduate Liberal Studies

Susan Jacobs, Associate Director

As of Academic Year 2018-2019, ISD officially opens its chapter of the AGLSP National Honor Society of Liberal Studies. ISD Program administrators may nominate qualified students to the Honor Society, which offers its members recognition, benefits and support. For details about the Honor Society and participating institutions, please go to www.aglsp.org/national-honor-society.

The goals of the National Honor Society of Graduate Liberal Studies support our program and students in the following ways:

- To recognize the scholarly achievement of graduate students and scholars in liberal studies programs across the United States and Canada
- To serve as a vehicle for the promotion of liberal studies programming on campuses
- To provide a network of graduate students and scholars in liberal studies nation-wide

The AGLSP Honor Society is open to liberal studies graduates who have met the criteria set by the member institution and the AGLSP Honor Society. The member institution must have an AGLSP approved chapter. The criteria is as stated: Students who have earned a minimum of 3.75 cumulative GPA on a 4.0 scale, have at least 24 credits toward their master's, doctoral degree or 16 credits toward a certificate of advanced graduate study. They will have demonstrated leadership in the classroom and in the greater community, and have been selected, approved and invited to join the Honor Society by their enrolling institution.

Membership Benefits, Recognition and Support:

- Discounted registration fee at annual AGLSP Conference as long as inductee remains a member in good standing
- Access to Confluence, the Journal for the Association of Graduate Liberal Studies programs, which is a members-

- only journal. Members are eligible to submit work for publication
- Wear gold cords at graduation
- Honors indication on degree transcript if the degree-granting institution bestows this recognition. Members may include their membership on their resumes/CVs

Explanation of Individual Dues:

- As an Honor Society Alumna/us member, DePaul's ISD Program will pay the first year national membership fee of \$45. The fee pays for a certificate, one year of national membership, and a subscription to Confluence, the AGLSP online journal.
- After the first year, individual Honor Society members assume the annual membership renewal fee, which is \$25. Individual members are required to be active members and will receive full benefits of membership for one year. Graduates will be listed on the AGLSP website as new members the year they are initially inducted.



Owl in Olive Tree: Associated with Athena, Goddess of Wisdom

Hannah Kaplan: Communications Assistant



In August 2018, Hannah Kaplan joined the ISD program as the new Communications Assistant. Hannah is a senior at DePaul, and will graduate in June with a BFA in Theatre Arts, a BA in English Literature, and a minor in Philosophy.

Hannah aspires to do not-for-profit and social outreach work. In the short-term, she plans to teach English as a second language abroad, and eventually go back to school for human development and social policy.

You can reach her via email at hkaplan@depaul.edu or by phone at 773-325-7840.



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Online Resources: meant to be used

Adult Student Affairs

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ adultstudentservices

Alumni Association alumni.depaul.edu

Alumni Sharing Knowledge (ASK)

ask.depaul.edu

Campus Events events.depaul.edu

The Career Center

careercenter.depaul.edu

Course Catalog

sr.depaul.edu/coursecatalog

Digication

depaul.digication.com/

Financial Aid

depaul.edu/admission-and-aid/

financial-aid

Financial Fitness

financialfitness.depaul.edu

Genius Squad

offices.depaul.edu/informationservices/support/Pages/genius-sqad

LAS Grad Student Services

las.depaul.edu/student-resources/ graduate-student-support/Pages/

default.aspx

Learning Commons

library.depaul.edu/get-help/Pages/

learning-commons.aspx

Library

library.depaul.edu

ISD Blog

www.gradselfdesign.com

Office for Academic Advising Support

oaas.depaul.edu

Productive Student uServices (PLuS)

Steans Center steans.depaul.edu

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/plus

Student Involvement

studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ involvement

Student Legal Services sls.depaul.edu

Student Life

depaul.edu/student-life

Study Abroad

studyabroad.depaul.edu

Technology Training

offices.depaul.edu/is/services/

technology-training

University Counseling Services studentaffairs.depaul.edu/ucs

Via Sapientiae: The Institutional Repository at DePaul University via.library.depaul.edu

Writing Center

condor.depaul.edu/writing/