

LS 200

NICK SOUSANIS@SFSU.EDU

W 9:30 HENSIL HALL 201

(+ZOOM)

STUDENT HOURS M11-12; W12-1

office HUM 581 ZOOM OR by Appt

Self, Place, & Knowing: Intro to Interdisciplinary Inquiry

INTRO TO LIBERAL STUDIES, AMERICAN STUDIES, THE PRACTICE OF INTERDISCIPLINARY INQUIRY, & THE CULMINATION OF THE FIRST-YEAR EXPERIENCE SEQUENCE. PROJECT-BASED FOCUS ON DIFFERENT WAYS OF UNDERSTANDING ONESELF IN RELATIONSHIP THE UNIVERSITY, & SAN FRANCISCO & THE LARGER BAY AREA. EMPHASIS ON EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING THROUGH MAPPING (EXPLORING, NAVIGATING, UNDERSTANDING, & CATALOGING) - AMONG OTHER HANDS-ON ACTIVITIES ALL TO

see you THRIVE as a student and beyond!



SAN FRANCISCO
STATE UNIVERSITY

MATERIALS

SKETCHBOOK &
DRAWING TOOLS

READINGS

R. SOLNIT, M. TAUSSIG,
R. MCGUIRE, A. HOROWITZ,
B. HOOKS, R.W. KIMMERER,
G. DEBORD, T. INGOLD,
T. NAGEL, L. FERLINGHETTI,
& MORE! ALL
INSTRUCTOR-SUPPLIED

LEARNING IS
NOT A SET
PATH.

RATHER,
WE
WILL

MEANDER
TO MAKE
SERENDIPITOUS
DISCOVERIES
AND HAVE FUN
ALONG THE WAY!

WE'LL BE EXPLORING
- A WALK THROUGH
IDEAS AND LITERAL
WALKS WE'LL TAKE
TOGETHER, AS
CLASS WILL MEET
INSIDE AND OUTSIDE.

LIBERAL STUDIES INVOLVES COMING AT IDEAS/PROBLEMS FROM MULTIPLE DISCIPLINES & MODALITIES AS A WAY OF EXPANDING OUR UNDERSTANDING. WE'LL CULTIVATE THIS INTERDISCIPLINARY MINDSET BY STUDYING THE FOLLOWING FROM A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVES:

We'll study:
1: YOU

WHAT SHAPES ME?

WHERE DO I COME FROM?

WHERE MIGHT I GO?

HOW DO I GET THERE?

WHO WAS
HERE?

WHO IS
HERE?

SOCIAL
ISSUES

**3: San Francisco
& Bay Area**

LANDSCAPE

ART

TECH

ARCHITECTURE

TRANSIT

RESOURCES

HISTORY

ENVIRONMENT

**2: Campus/
University**

PROGRAMS

PEOPLE

IDEAS

TRY EVERYTHING AND
SEE WHERE YOUR
CURIOSITY TAKES YOU!

ONGOING ACTIVITIES (65%): IN-CLASS & AT-HOME MAPPING, SKETCHING AND MORE - POSTED TO CANVAS. ASSESSED ENTIRELY ON COMPLETION. EMPHASIS ON INVENTIVENESS, CURIOSITY, EFFORT, AND WILLINGNESS TO DIVE IN AND EXPLORE!

ASSESSMENT

65% ONGOING ACTIVITIES
10% MIDWAY REFLECTION
5% STUDENT HOURS
20% FINAL PROJECT

STUDENT HOURS (5%):
TALK TO ME ABOUT
YOUR IDEAS, PROJECTS
- MUST DO ONCE FOR
FULL CREDIT.

REFLECTIVE PROJECT (10%):
MID-WAY THROUGH TERM, A
CHANCE TO REFLECT ON
SOME OF WHAT WE'VE DONE
SO FAR AND DEVELOP AN
ACTIVITY MORE DEEPLY, FOR
SPECIFIC GRADED FEEDBACK.

FINAL PROJECT (20%): USING DIVERSE APPROACHES & MODALITIES CREATE AN INTERVENTION, A COMMUNITY-BASED WORK, SOMETHING ACTIONABLE, OR YOUR OWN INVENTION THAT IS, MOST IMPORTANTLY, MEANINGFUL TO YOU. WE'LL SEE MANY MODEL PROJECTS OVER THE TERM TO SPARK YOUR OWN EXCURSIONS. TOPIC & FORMAT WILL BE DISCUSSED IN CLASS AND YOU'LL SUBMIT A SHORT PROPOSAL (100-150 WORDS) FOR APPROVAL BEFORE PROCEEDING.

NOTE: NOTHING ABOUT THIS MOMENT IS NORMAL & OUR EXPECTATIONS MUST REFLECT THAT. YOUR HEALTH, YOUR LIVES, NEED TO COME FIRST (AND SHOULD ALWAYS COME FIRST). DEADLINES ARE IMPORTANT, BECAUSE THEY KEEP CONVERSATIONS MOVING, BUT LIFE IS BIGGER, ALWAYS, SO WE'LL BE FLEXIBLE AND WORK IT OUT TOGETHER.

* LET ME KNOW IF YOU DON'T WANT ME TO SHARE ANY OF YOUR IMAGES ON SOCIAL MEDIA. - NS



San Francisco State University: Liberal Studies
LS 200 Self, Place, and Knowing: Introduction to Interdisciplinary Inquiry
Spring 2023

Class Meetings: W 9:30-10:45 Hensil Hall 201 [+ ZOOM]

Instructor: Nick Sousanis sousanis@sfsu.edu Office HUM 581

Student Hours: M 11-12 W 12-1 or by appointment (in-person or Zoom)

A Note about Now: Let me acknowledge to start off, nothing about our current circumstances is normal, and our expectations must reflect that. As understanding as I typically am about deadlines and workload in normal times, I'll be even more so now. Your health, your lives, need to come first (and *should always* come first), and we can work out solutions for whatever is going on (preferably with a good channel of communication). I want to see the work we do together as helpful to what you are experiencing and not an added burden. This doesn't mean we won't work hard and that it won't be challenging, just that it serves you as something meaningful and relevant to find your own ways into it. Deadlines are important, because they allow us to keep the conversation moving and keep learning from one another, but life is bigger, always, and definitely now, so I'll remain flexible and we'll work it out together.

The course will be in person, but we'll continue to take care of each other. At the current moment, that still means masking in indoor spaces, we'll do our best with ventilation/filtration, and if you're sick – please stay home and take care of yourself. I will be streaming the class on zoom and recording it, so even if you can't make it, you can tune in live or watch when you can to access what we did, and all the instructions and resources will be available on Canvas. The key in all of this is to reach out and let me know what's going on and what you need. As a teacher, I see my role as being there *to support you in where you are going*. With that said, on with what we'll do together...

Overview: Introduction to Liberal Studies, American Studies, the practice of interdisciplinary inquiry, and the culmination of the first-year experience sequence. Project-based focus on different ways of understanding oneself in relationship the University, and San Francisco and the larger Bay Area. Emphasis on experiential learning through mapping (exploring, navigating, understanding, and cataloging) – among other hands-on activities all intended to help you thrive as a student and beyond!

Liberal Studies involves coming at ideas/problems from multiple disciplines and multiple modalities as a way of expanding our understanding. We'll cultivate this interdisciplinary mindset by studying the following from a variety of different perspectives:

- You: What shaped you? Where might you go? Aspirational & reflective, influences & dreams
- Campus: Its history, resources, physical environment – natural and built.
- University: Programs, Professors, People who make it a place of ideas to take you places.
- SF/Bay: Who was here before? The city's history & landscape. Who is here now? Art, architecture, transit, tech, social issues – what makes it tick.

The sorts of activities will try to aid in our explorations: Mapping, sketching, sketchnotes, comics-making, walking as discovery, interviews, journaling, student-invented assignments, making of all sorts! We'll be exploring – a walk through ideas and literal walks we'll take together, as class will meet inside and outside. Rather than a set path, this will be a meandering experience in order to make serendipitous discoveries and have fun along the way!

Ongoing Activities (65%): In-class & at-home mapping, sketching and more – posted to canvas along with a brief reflection (100-200 words) on the experience. Assessed entirely on completion. Emphasis on inventiveness, curiosity, effort, and willingness to dive in and explore!

You will submit these regular projects by taking a quick digital photo of the work (cropping the photo if possible), and posting each assignment to Canvas before the start of class on the day it is due. This will serve as a gallery to share with your classmates, as well as a place for us all to respond to your work over the term. And please note, prior drawing experience is neither necessary nor expected!

While I've dreamed up a lot of activities, I welcome suggestions to try from you!

These may ask you to reflect on yourself, to explore campus, to map your neighborhood, or get to know places in San Francisco that are new to you. There are no quizzes, no tests – assessment is primarily about trying everything and seeing where it takes you.

Reflective Project (10%): Mid-way through the term, a chance to reflect on some of what we've done so far and develop an activity more deeply, for specific graded feedback.

Student Hours (5%): You are required to visit with professor during *student hours* [in person or on zoom] or make an appointment for a different time to have a conversation about your work, address any questions you wish to explore. To receive full credit – you must show up at least once. This is an opportunity to talk about your ideas one-on-one with your professor and help me get to know where you are coming from better. Take advantage of it!

Final project (20%): A reflection on your learning that brings together different approaches and modalities, to create something that is, most importantly, meaningful to you – about the university, the city, or even turning inward. It may take the form of an intervention, an actionable project, a community-based work, or something altogether different. Topic and format will be discussed in class and approved in conversation with the instructor. To this end, before you begin the final project, you will be required to submit a formal proposal (100-150 words) outlining your intent and the form the project will take. Input from cohort and review by instructor will shape revisions – upon which student will receive approval to proceed. We'll see many model projects over the term that will likely spark your own excursions...

Required Materials: Since we will regularly be mapping, sketching, and taking notes of some sort, you'll need a sketchbook of some sort and drawing tools of your choice (pen, pencil, brush pen, etc.).

Some of the things you'll READ: Richard McGuire *Here*, Rebecca Solnit excerpts from *Wanderlust* and *Infinite Cities*, Michael Taussig *I Swear I Saw This*, excerpt from "The View from the Oak," Thomas Nagel "What is it like to be a bat?"; Guy Debord "Situationist International", bell hooks "Touching the Earth"; Lawrence Ferlinghetti Dog poem, Robin Wall Kimmerer on learning from Moss, Denis Wood on mapping, excerpt from Tim Ingold's *Making* and *Being Alive*, Historical articles on SFSU and SF, and more. ALL readings will be instructor-supplied and available on Canvas.

Student Learning Outcomes

- To reflect on one's education and future goals and introduce students to the concept of a liberal education and possibilities within the School of Humanities and Liberal Studies
- To familiarize students with the physical, economic, educational, social and cultural resources available on campus
- To facilitate the understanding of what interdisciplinarity is on campus, through engagement with the local intellectual community;
- To exercise critical thinking, creating associations between the local assets, using multiple modes and forms of inquiry;
- To create a shareable community document reflecting on SFSU campus
- To introduce students to community-based participatory (or action) research methodology;

- To engage with integrative learning by interviewing fellow students and community members;
- To learn how to produce a community google map to be shared with the SFSU campus;

Course Outline Our schedule will likely evolve as we explore and generate responses to course material. In addition to key dates below, I will keep you all apprised in class, via email, and Canvas of what's coming. To ensure we remain on the same page, you are expected to check *Canvas* and your **sfsu email** account regularly.

1. W 2/1: You!
2. W 2/8: Mapping
3. W 2/15: Interdisciplinarity
4. W 2/22: Campus 1: History/What Was Here
5. W 3/1: Campus 2: What's Here
6. W 3/8: University 1: Resources
7. W 3/15: University 2: People
 - o Spring Break – no class 3/22
8. W 3/29: SF1: History/What Was Here?
9. W 4/5: SF2: What/Who are Here?
10. W 4/12: SF Explorations
11. W 4/19: SF Explorations
12. W 4/26: SF/Final Project prep
13. W 5/3: SF/Final Project prep
14. W 5/10: SF/Final Project prep
15. W 5/17: TBD

FINAL: W May 24 8:00-10:00am!

Note: I frequently share examples of what we do in class on my educational website/social media. Please let me know if you *do not* want me to share any of your images.

This is a loose ARC of ideas that I have for class – mostly for my own reference, but will give a good sense of what we might do...

- Intro sketchnotes, some simple drawing
- Mapping
 - Map you/map neighborhood
 - Backyard maps/sketches
- IDS
 - IDS Mindset – come at things from different angles. Can look at anything – a flower, a nail (Joyce Faucet – think/pair/share)
- Transit/Commuting – where do we live, how do we get here/around?
 - Drawing as observation
 - Interview each other – edit it, release it
- Campus Walking
 - Walking interviews
- Campus – physical place
 - Go to a place you like, a place you've never been
 - Give a tour – guided, walking tour
 - Resources on campus, buildings, art, services, university programs
 - Go out – and report back
 - What was here?
 - History of SFSU
 - Ethnic studies/student strike (Marti?)
- University – intellectual site
 - interview profs/major – dream field, you know a lot about, you know nothing
 - questions: What do you do? How did you come to this field? What skills do you need for this field? What is a favorite thing about the work you do? What is the future of the field?
- SF/community
 - Public art/murals, unpleasant architecture, transit, playgrounds, storm drains, map: plants, animals, art, architecture, food, peoples, services, occupations, ancestry. Design of the city
 - City visits: JFK Promenade? Haight-Ashbury, Mission Murals, Sutro Tower, ...

Canvas: We will be using Canvas for this class. Those of you unfamiliar with Canvas can find resources and assistance online as well as with the office of Academic Technology. You are automatically enrolled in Canvas for all of your courses registered at SFSU. *Academic Technology* website: <http://at.sfsu.edu>

Canvas log-in page: <https://canvas.sfsu.edu/canvas>

Course Policies

Classroom approach: I consider learning as acquiring the tools to follow one's own curiosity, and thus teaching means providing a framework, establishing an environment for participants to explore and thrive. Rather than being out in front, I see my role as accompanying students on a journey we all make together. As a class, we all come from different backgrounds and offer distinct vantage points – we want to draw on all of them – to expand the possibilities for what we can all learn as we each find our own way.

To that end...

Class participation is essential! We learn in community, gain from each other's perspective. Let's be here, on time, and respect one another's point of view and discover what we can learn together.

Classroom Policies: This is a class that thrives on interaction, improvisational collaboration, so it's best if everyone is in attendance and on time. That said, given the circumstances and in regards to my note at top – our expectations will be different. The main thing is to keep me posted on what's going on if you can't join in regularly – we can work with anything from a point of communication.

Late Assignments: Again, as above, I'd like to see deadlines observed or clear communication about missing them if necessary – conversations grow best when we're working together. But understanding, flexibility, and grace are essential now more than ever – so keep me updated as you can, and we can make it work.

Contact and Feedback: You are encouraged to visit me during student hours or make an appointment to discuss class, raise questions, or just check in. When emailing me, please use your "sfsu.edu" account when possible and put "CMX/LS/HUM 604" and topic in the subject line so I am sure to address it more quickly.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a form of cheating or fraud; it occurs when a student misrepresents the work of another as his or her own. Plagiarism may consist of using the ideas, sentences, paragraphs, or the whole text of another without appropriate acknowledgment, but it also includes employing or allowing another person to write or substantially alter work that a student then submits as his or her own. Any assignment found to be plagiarized will be given an "F" grade. All instances of plagiarism in the College of Liberal & Creative Arts will be reported to the Dean, and may be reported to the University Judicial Affairs Officer for further action.

Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: Students with disabilities who need reasonable accommodations are encouraged to contact the instructor. The Disability Programs and Resource Center (DPRC) is available to facilitate the reasonable accommodations process. The DPRC is located in the Student Service Building and can be reached by telephone (voice/TTY 415-338-2472) or by email dprc@sfsu.edu.

University Policy on Sexual Harassment & Violence: SF State fosters a campus free of sexual violence including sexual harassment, domestic violence, dating violence, stalking, and/or any form of sex or gender discrimination. If you disclose a personal experience as an SF State student, the course instructor is required to notify the Dean of Students. To disclose any such violence confidentially, contact:

The SAFE Place - (415) 338-2208; [SAFE Place website http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/](http://www.sfsu.edu/~safe_plc/)

Counseling and Psychological Services Center - (415) 338-2208; [Counseling and Psychological Services Center website http://psyservs.sfsu.edu](http://psyservs.sfsu.edu)

For more information on your rights and available resources see: [Title IX at SF State http://titleix.sfsu.edu](http://titleix.sfsu.edu)