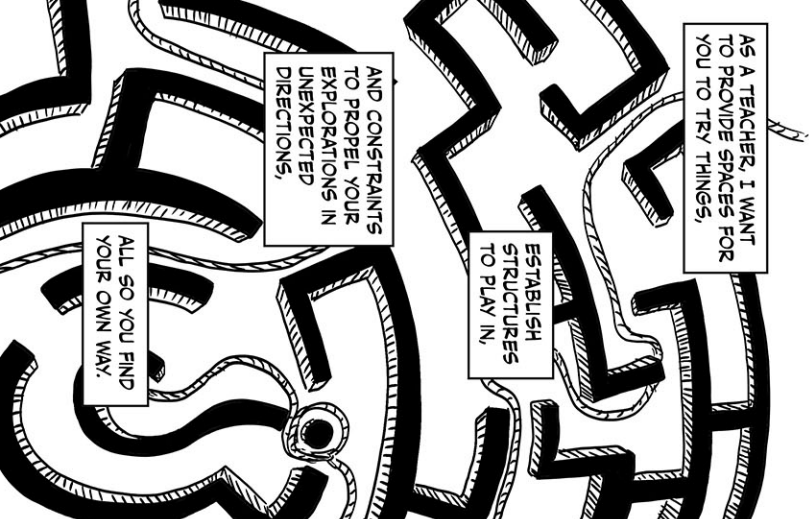




YOU OWN YOUR OWN LEARNING

**LIBERAL STUDIES SENIOR SEMINAR**  
**CATALOG DESCRIPTION: "INTERDISCIPLINARY**  
**THEORY, RESEARCH & PRACTICE.**  
**EXAMINATION OF KEY QUESTIONS &**  
**COMPLEX PROBLEMS FROM MULTIPLE**  
**PERSPECTIVES THROUGH THE PREPARATION**  
**OF A SUBSTANTIAL PIECE OF WORK."**

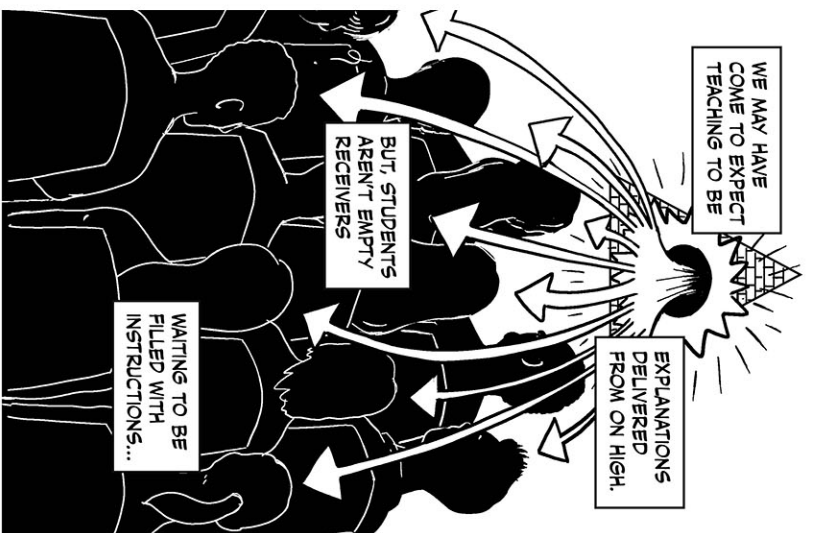


AS A TEACHER, I WANT TO PROVIDE SPACES FOR YOU TO TRY THINGS,

ESTABLISH STRUCTURES TO PLAY IN,

AND CONSTRAINTS TO PROPEL YOUR EXPLORATIONS IN UNEXPECTED DIRECTIONS,

ALL SO YOU FIND YOUR OWN WAY.

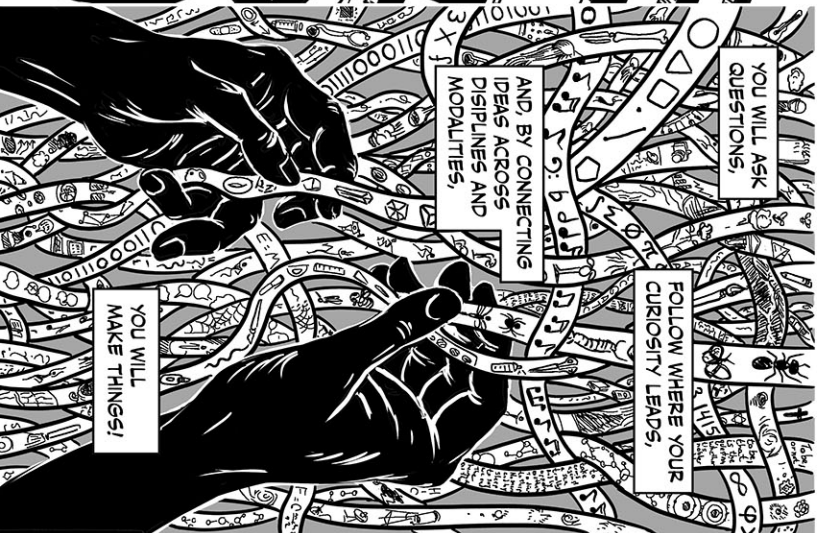


WE MAY HAVE COME TO EXPECT TEACHING TO BE

EXPLANATIONS DELIVERED FROM ON HIGH.

BUT STUDENTS AREN'T EMPTY RECEIVERS

WAITING TO BE FILLED WITH INSTRUCTIONS...

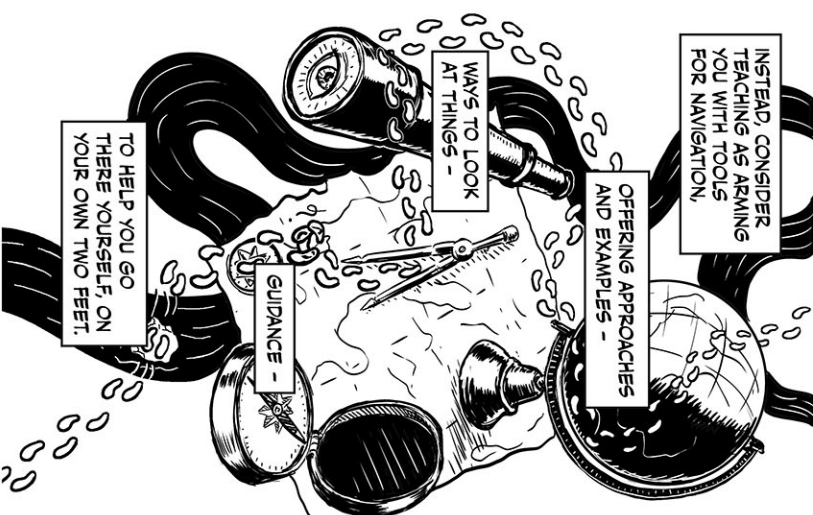


YOU WILL ASK QUESTIONS,

FOLLOW WHERE YOUR CURIOSITY LEADS,

AND, BY CONNECTING IDEAS ACROSS DISCIPLINES AND MODALITIES,

YOU WILL MAKE THINGS!



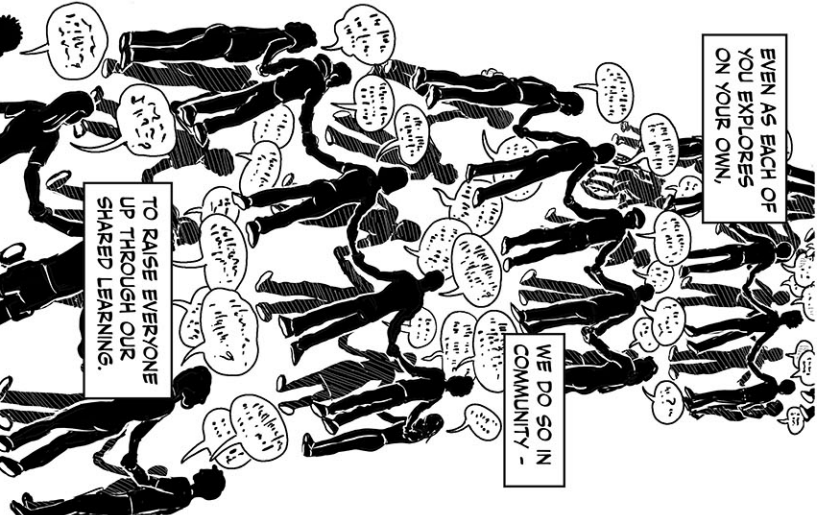
INSTEAD, CONSIDER TEACHING AS ARMING YOU WITH TOOLS FOR NAVIGATION.

OFFERING APPROACHES AND EXAMPLES -

WAYS TO LOOK AT THINGS -

GUIDANCE -

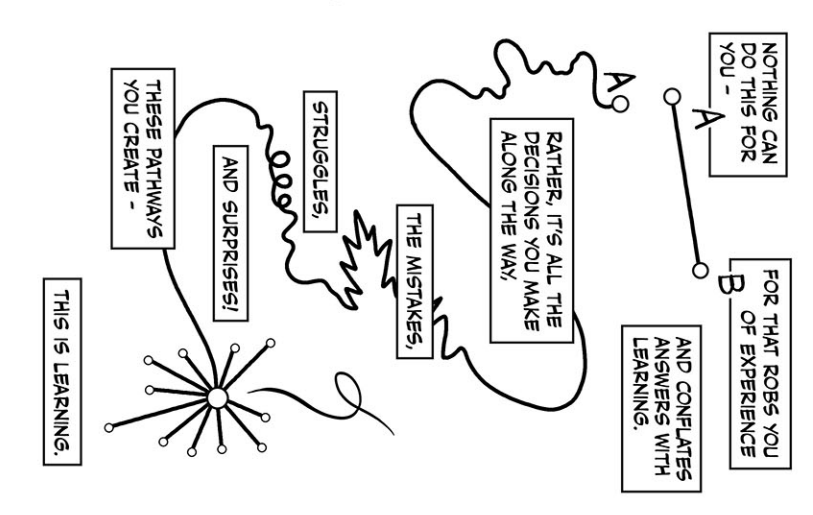
TO HELP YOU GO THERE YOURSELF, ON YOUR OWN TWO FEET.



EVEN AS EACH OF YOU EXPLORES ON YOUR OWN,

WE DO SO IN COMMUNITY -

TO RAISE EVERYONE UP THROUGH OUR SHARED LEARNING.



NOTHING CAN DO THIS FOR YOU -

FOR THAT ROBS YOU OF EXPERIENCE

AND CONFLATES ANSWERS WITH LEARNING.

RATHER, IT'S ALL THE DECISIONS YOU MAKE ALONG THE WAY.

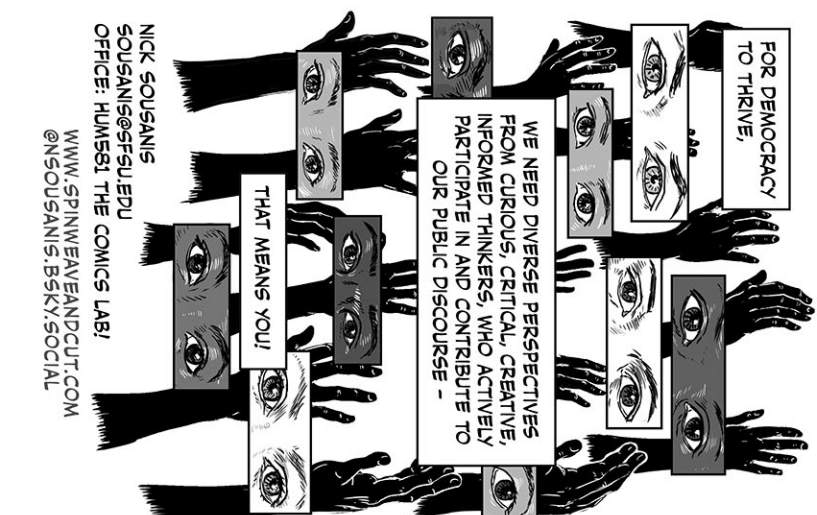
THE MISTAKES.

STRUGGLES,

AND SURPRISES!

THESE PATHWAYS YOU CREATE -

THIS IS LEARNING.



FOR DEMOCRACY TO THRIVE,

WE NEED DIVERSE PERSPECTIVES FROM CURIOUS, CRITICAL, CREATIVE, INFORMED THINKERS, WHO ACTIVELY PARTICIPATE IN AND CONTRIBUTE TO OUR PUBLIC DISCOURSE -

THAT MEANS YOU.



San Francisco State University: Liberal Studies  
LS 690 Liberal Studies Senior Seminar  
Fall 2025

Class Meetings: M 4-6:45 HUM 121 [+ ZOOM]

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

Student Hours: M 12:30-1:30; W 9:45-10:45 or by appointment (in-person or Zoom)

Prerequisites: Restricted to senior standing and LS 300GW

**A Note about Now:** Let me acknowledge to start off, current circumstances aren't quite normal, and our expectations must reflect that. As understanding as I typically am about deadlines and workload, I'm even more so now. Your health, your lives *should always* come first, and we can work out solutions for whatever is going on (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 to continue to take care of each other may mean masking in indoor spaces, and we'll do our best with ventilation/filtration. 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...

**Catalog Description:** Interdisciplinary theory, research and practice. Examination of key questions and complex problems from multiple perspectives through the preparation of a substantial piece of work.

**Philosophical Theme:** *You Own Your Own Learning*

**Overview:** The focus for this class will be to better understand what learning means, and for you to ultimately *own your own learning* and have sustainable habits for learning across your lifetime. To get at this, we'll read thinkers on teaching/learning, create responses to them in a variety of ways and formats as we prompt questions to further our own explorations. We'll draw on your own experiences with learning, and you will teach us all things along the way. Regular small activities will be the backbone of the class – we'll make things as a way to play in a variety of modalities and discover new ways to express our thinking. This all builds to you developing an integrative and multimodal capstone research project.

**Course Teaching/Learning Philosophy (Mini-Comic summary):** We may have come to expect teaching to be explanations delivered from on high. But, students aren't empty receivers waiting to be filled with instructions... Instead, consider teaching as arming you with tools for navigation, offering approaches and examples – ways to look at things – guidance – to help you go yourself, on your own two feet.

Nothing can do this for you – for that robs you of experience and conflates answers with learning. Rather, it's all the decisions you make along the way, the mistakes, struggles, and surprises! These pathways you create – this is learning. As a teacher, I want to provide spaces for you to try things, establish structures to play in, and constraints to propel your explorations in unexpected directions, all so you find your own way.

You will ask questions, follow where your curiosity leads, and, by connecting ideas across disciplines and modalities, you will make things! Even as each of you explores on your own, we do so in community – to raise everyone up through our shared learning. For democracy to thrive, we need diverse perspectives from

curious, critical, creative, informed thinkers, who actively participate in and contribute to our public discourse – that means you!

**Liberal Studies** involves coming at ideas/problems from multiple disciplines and multiple modalities as a way of expanding our understanding. Our activities will further explore and cultivate this interdisciplinary mindset.

#### **Course Objectives:**

- To reflect on one's education and experience in the Liberal Studies program and how this interdisciplinary skill set helps you approach complex problems;
- To evaluate, compare, and critique scholarly works on the praxis of interdisciplinarity;
- To analyze complex issues or problems from multiple perspectives by integrating knowledge from multiple fields and/or disciplines;
- To create a substantive piece of work that draws upon a number of scholarly or professional sources in an interdisciplinary and potentially multimodal fashion.

#### **Assessment:**

**60% Ongoing Activities** – in-class and out (entirely assessed on completion!)

**5% Student Hours** – come see me!

**10% Reflection on Learning** – middle term project

**25% Final Project** – integrative, multimodal capstone

**Ongoing Activities (60%):** In-class & at-home activities and exercises: reading responses/questions, drawings, making of all sorts – posted to Canvas along with brief reflections on the experience. Assessed entirely on completion. Try things – be curious and be willing to dive in, and you will get a lot out of them. You will submit these regular projects to Canvas before the start of the class on the day it is due – either directly into Canvas or require taking a quick digital photo of the work (cropping the photo if possible), and posting as an image (or perhaps video or sound file). 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, when we draw and do things like that – prior drawing experience is neither necessary nor expected! The course has no quizzes or tests – assessment for these activities is primarily about trying everything and seeing where it takes you. **The sorts of activities** include: sketchnotes; drawings; cutouts; mapping; questions; intellectual autobiography; short presentations; interviews (with classmates, friends, professors, family or with someone in a prospective field); journaling; multimodal creations (visual, audio, video, ...); interdisciplinary activities; student-invented assignments; making of all sorts!

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

**Student Hours (5%):** You are required to visit with the 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!

**Reflection on Learning (10%):** Mid-way through the term, a more involved activity in which you develop your own creative response to reflect on what learning means, for specific graded feedback.

**Final Project/Capstone (25%):** The course all builds to you developing an integrative and multimodal capstone project that excites you! This will be a significant scholarly/creative work in which you bring together different approaches and modalities to explore your subject. It may look like a more standard research paper – but it needn't. You are encouraged (and the whole semester will set this up) to play with

different forms of meaning-making (visual, audio, etc.) to create your work, which may also take the form of an actionable project, a community-based work, or something altogether different. All our activities and explorations along the way are intended to spark ideas for this larger excursion and to help you think about and develop both your subject and particular format – both which must be agreed upon through a conversation with your instructor. To this end, before you begin the final project, you will be required to submit a brief formal proposal (100-150 words) outlining your intent and the form the project will take. Let's view this project as an opportunity to bring your interests as a thinker and modes of expression to deeply explore your thinking and show off your learning in rich and rewarding ways.

**Readings:** likely articles, chapters, excerpts – all instructor-supplied and available on Canvas!

- Eleanor Duckworth *The having of wonderful ideas*
- Paul Lockhart *A Mathematician's Lament*
- Jacques Ranciere *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*
- Paulo Freire *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*
- Maxine Greene *The Dialectic of Freedom*
- Bell Hooks *Teaching to Transgress*
- Tim Ingold *Making*
- Kyla Wazana Tompkins - how to ask questions
- Tanya Augsburger, Bill Newell, Simeon Dreyfuss on Interdisciplinarity
- Alt-scholarship overview: A.D. Carson, Julia Molinari, ...

**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 regularly 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.

Schedule:

- Monday August 25, class begins
- Monday September 1 – NO CLASS – Labor Day
- Monday November 24 – NO CLASS – Thanksgiving Week
- Monday December 8, Final Regular Class period
- Monday December 15 – Final Exam Period/PROJECT SHARING! 4-6:45

**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.

**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.

**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 "LS 690" 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:** I welcome the opportunity to support students with disabilities in my classroom. 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](mailto: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)