

# **Interdisciplinary Study and Dharma: An Individualized Major Gateway Course**

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# Interdisciplinary Study and Dharma: Origins

- IMP Network Conference, February 2020: I learned about Gateway Courses
- Planning our Gateway Course—Constraints
  - Two credits
  - Not required for Individualized Majors
  - Open to any student
  - Forest Academy structure

# MIU Forest Academy Structure

- Focus on self development
- Science of consciousness
- Meditation retreat (three days)
- Block system (one course at a time)
- Two weeks, two credit hours

# Interdisciplinary Study and Dharma: Course Structure

- Dharma: that which sustains evolution
- The artist and the scientist
- Interdisciplinary study
- Horizontal and vertical approaches to knowledge
- Self-assessment and goal setting
- Individualized degree plan
- Final presentations
- Meditation retreat

# Homework Assignments

- Reading of the student's choosing
  - Student's interest related to science of consciousness
- Individual activity of the student's choosing
  - Artwork, computer program, business plan, creative writing, senior project, additional reading, ...
- Summary presented to class on the following day

# Dharma: That Which Sustains Evolution

- Dharma: that which sustains evolution
- Progress alone sustains life; safety is in progress
- First duty is to ourself
- Workshop: identify evolution or progress in your life

# Artist and Scientist

- All areas of life express every quality of creative intelligence
- In each area, qualities are expressed more or less
- An artist expresses more creativity
- A scientist expresses more desire to gain knowledge
- Everyone has both tendencies
- Workshop: identify tendencies of artist and scientist in yourself

# Interdisciplinary Study

- ❑ Study of individual disciplines does not develop a fulfilled individual
- ❑ The basis of all knowledge, pure consciousness, must be established for fulfillment
- ❑ The Transcendental Meditation technique gives the experience of pure consciousness
- ❑ Workshop: What different disciplines are you interested in? How does consciousness provide a common basis for them?



# Horizontal and Vertical Approaches to Knowledge

- Horizontal approach to knowledge: more details, more facts
- Vertical approach to knowledge: laws, connections
- Vertical upholds horizontal; both are necessary
- Workshop: identify horizontal and vertical approaches to knowledge in a discipline of interest to you. Why are both important for success in the discipline?

# Self-Assessment and Goal Setting

- Success in life depends on inner development
- Identify your strengths
- What are your goals?
- How do your goals further your personal development?
- How can your strengths help achieve your goals?
- What more preparation do you need to fulfill your goals?

# Individualized Degree Planning

- How can your degree help you fulfill your goals?
- Plan your degree so that it meets MIU's requirements
- Identify options after graduation: graduate degree, career

# Individualized Major at MIU

- Students create a degree proposal that includes:
  - Title of the degree
  - Central Theme
  - Learning Outcomes
  - Course List
  - Content Area Advisor
  - Senior Project Ideas

# Final Presentations

- Each student gives a presentation based on their work in the course
- Students give positive feedback on each presentation

# Meditation Retreat

- Focus on development of consciousness
- Reflection on personal experiences in meditation
- Deeper understanding of personal development
- Opportunity for rest and rejuvenation

# Student Performance

- IM students finish their degree proposals
- Many students refine their standard degree plan
- Many students begin planning their senior project
- Many students begin planning for after graduation
- Overall, students make very productive use of course time

# Next Steps

- I'm quite satisfied with the course
- Refine classroom workshops
- Collect resource materials for students
- Refine retreat content





**Thank you!**

