## Integration

Importance and Role of Integration: We also talk a lot about both of this term, embedding it in various General Education course/seminar criteria. Throughout a student's General Educational pursuits, she or him will be presented with an array of multiple and diverse perspectives and worldviews, along with distinct and differing methodological and epistemological specializations, such as those brought to bear in our ISEM 101 Integrative Seminar with the application of the multiple and inter-disciplines of the humanities and sciences. And in addition, as in any academic endeavor there can also develop a disconnection and schism between a student's academic pursuits and her or his social and personal life as engaged outside the classroom, in co-curricular activities. It is thus especially important that in the Integrative Seminar (ISEM 101), Great Issues seminar (ISEM 301) and Senior Experience that the student also acquire skills in *integration* and *interdisciplinary cohesion*. Out of the potential chaos and contradictions of diversity can arise a larger inclusive unity, as well as ability to better think and act critically and creatively, and, in turn, problem solve.

As the various proposals for ISEM 101, ISEM 301 and Senior Experience come forward, we will be open to varied ways within which integration of multiple disciplines and of the student's experiences with the UI learning outcomes can occur. Whatever way is proposed the proposal should articulate the means and mechanism of the integration, and not simply assume it will occur, as if through osmosis. Integration is a deliberate educational act. Most forms of integration include both **thinking divergently** and **thinking convergently**.

I don't believe integration represents one discipline predominating over another, in its application and resulting interpretation of a given issue or topic. Nor should integration represent a simple synthesis or amalgamation, a sort of blending of divergent disciplinarily approaches into one approach (given the disciplinary integrity and value of each discipline).

One integrative model to consider is entitled, "Sailing the Five C's" – compartmentalization, contextualization, competency, connection and civic engagement. It is an integrative process that entails:

- Compartmentalization acknowledging and distinguishing the epistemological and methodological differentiation of differing disciplinary tools, e.g., knowing the difference between the humanities and social sciences; the theory, analytical methods, and interpretive standards of these different disciplines are more or less equally valued and employed.
- Contextualization distinguishing our human diverse and differential cultural, historical, intellectual and social environments, as well as the differential components and levels within any given natural environment. And within the rich diversity in the human and natural condition begin to identify and distinguish the many different issues, dilemmas and challenges that are to be addressed. Contextualize the issue.

- Competency in knowing the distinct epistemological and methodological tools, and when and in what specific contexts and situations to apply those tools. Different tools for different purposes.
- Connection in applying the multiple disciplinary tools to differentiated contexts to make
  connections, to see the "bigger picture," to address issues, to make interpretations and/or
  analysis; the specific question or problem addressed can by understood and interpreted from
  the differing disciplines, often leading to shared integrated understandings and interpretations,
  as well as to the possibility of new questions being asked.
- *Civic Engagement* entails taking on civic responsibility and applying these interdisciplinary tools to solve problems and effect positive change in the lives of others.

We seek to develop and utilize a most adaptive approach to integrating multiple disciplines and diverse perspectives, and in so doing, attempt to address life's challenges. Critical and creative thinking as well as problem solving all depend on your ability to both **think divergently** – compartmentalizing and seeing the rich diversity and multiplicity in the human experience and natural environments – as well as to **think convergently** – integrating and connecting that rich diversity in new and novel ways.

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