

## **ADVANCED INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR**

July 1, 2016

(Edited to include **IV AIS and Major**  
December 1, 2023)

### **I. Short Description**

The Advanced Integrative Seminar builds upon the work of the First Year Seminar and fosters advanced skills in Christian liberal arts learning. These courses focus on a complex topic that requires integrative perspectives and may encourage interdisciplinary work while modeling a sophisticated approach to the integration of faith and learning. Students will be expected to read, discuss, and write with rigor and increased maturity. They should demonstrate increasing independence and resourcefulness in the development of informed and committed Christian responses to the content and questions of each seminar's topic.

### **II. Advanced Integrative Seminar Learning Outcomes and Interpretation**

#### **A. Students will be able to....**

1. demonstrate increasing maturity in their ability to show how the Christian faith informs and is informed by their understanding of a complex issue
2. exhibit research skills involving different forms of inquiry, investigation and analysis in order to address the course topic

#### **B. Expansion and interpretation of the outcome statements**

All Advanced Integrative Seminars will carry at minimum one Thematic Core tag with the option of carrying up to two Thematic Core tags. Faculty may petition the Curriculum Committee to offer an Advanced Integrative Seminar with no Thematic Core tags, but approval of such courses will be the exception given the needs of our students to enroll in Advanced Integrative Seminar courses with multiple tags in order to graduate in a timely fashion. Advanced Integrative Seminar courses that carry Thematic Core tags will be prioritized for funding to enable team-teaching.

1. Outcome #1: Students will be able to demonstrate increasing maturity in their ability to show how the Christian faith informs and is informed by a complex issue

As part of the developmental Share Core sequence, the Advanced Integrative Seminar is the place where students will begin to show independence and increasing resourcefulness in the integration of faith and learning (relative to the First Year Seminar). These courses are expected to approach the integration of faith and learning with more sophistication than typical theme courses and should ask more of the students themselves. As students integrate theology with the course topic, they should go beyond a merely personal, subjective response and should demonstrate depth of engagement that similarly goes beyond appreciation or understanding of the sophisticated approaches to faith and learning modeled by the course instructor. Rather the goal is for students independently to see the topic through a theological lens, drawing on both Scripture and other theological sources, so that they can articulate their own understanding of an appropriate Christian approach or response.

Because the Christ at the Core curriculum has made the integration of faith and learning a central component, most theme areas have specific faith and learning outcomes already specified. (The two themes that do not have an explicit outcome related to faith and learning, AAQR and SP, nonetheless include the integration of Christian thought and practice as an essential part of the

course.) In such cases, this outcome for the Advanced Integrative Seminar is expected to overlap with the related outcome for a given theme area and need not be assessed separately. Faculty should be mindful, however, of the higher expectations for student independence required for successful completion of that outcome for an Advanced Integrative Seminar and use assessment instruments that are capable of measuring student achievement at this level.

2. Outcome #2: Students will be able to exhibit research skills involving different forms of inquiry, investigation and analysis in order to address the course topic

This outcome emphasizes a central aspect of liberal arts learning: demonstrating the interconnected nature of all disciplinary knowledge. Julie Thompson Klein explains, “Ancient ideas of unified science, general knowledge, synthesis, and integration... remain powerful warrants for interdisciplinary thought... liberal education” (1996: 8). **Interdisciplinarity** is often confused with **multidisciplinarity**, which juxtaposes disciplinary perspectives without integrating them or exploring their intersections. **Interdisciplinarity** requires a careful comparative analysis of the distinctive ways of knowing represented by two or more disciplines, exploring similarities, differences, tensions, or synergies to gain a more comprehensive perspective on a topic. **Integrative** learning may benefit or lead to interdisciplinary work, but it is not necessarily the same mode of thinking. Thompson Klein’s definition of integrative learning clarifies this distinction: “[integrative learning] is an umbrella term for structures, strategies, and activities that bridge numerous divides, such as . . . general education and major, introductory and advanced levels, experiences inside and outside the classroom, theory and practice, disciplines and fields” (2005: 8).

Since Advanced Integrative Seminar courses address a complex topic that requires integrative perspectives and assignments, the course content will promote and prompt students to pursue interdisciplinary thinking and research but not all Advanced Integrative Seminars must be interdisciplinary in design. Some Advanced Integrative Seminar courses will be better suited to multi-disciplinary or integrative approaches. An Advanced Integrative Seminar course is not required to use two or more disciplinary methods or forms of primary research. A successful course may draw upon multiple disciplinary findings and conclusions of another field (without use of the field’s method) in order to facilitate integrative thinking and grapple with a complex topic.

To “exhibit research skills” for the purpose of the course is to be understood rather capaciously, including the full range of meanings attached by the different disciplines to the notion of “research.” To *exhibit* the skills associated with research in the different disciplines is to understand how those disciplines develop and test knowledge-claims and then employ them in some manner to answer a research question associated with the course topic. Fulfilling this outcome does not require that students engage in primary research in multiple disciplines. Students are encouraged to undertake interdisciplinary research that involves content from two or more disciplines as they conduct a research project for their Advanced Integrative Seminar.

Advanced Integrative Seminars also provide an opportunity for students to engage in “collaborative” work. Courses may meet this requirement via a wide range of experiences, ranging from group research projects to joint reviews of individual work.

As part of those research skills, students in the Advanced Integrative Seminar will build on the information literacy skills introduced in the First-Year Seminar, providing students with opportunities to further develop and apply their learning through rigorous research, reading, and writing. Instructors will assign several online modules, prepared by the library, to be completed

outside of class time. Library faculty members are available to support instructors as needed or desired.

### **III. Guidelines**

#### **A. Expanded course description**

The Advanced Integrative Seminar builds on the First Year Seminar, helping students who are near the mid-point of their time at Wheaton to engage a particular topic or question from an integrative perspective. “Advanced” does not refer to advanced work in a specific discipline, but instead refers to the developmental nature of this seminar and the advanced integrative thinking it requires. The Advanced Integrative Seminar is “advanced” in what it asks of students in relation to what they learned in their First Year Seminar. This course stretches students to engage in more rigorous reading and writing, while integrating Christian faith with the seminar’s topic. This may include an interdisciplinary approach in light of two or more distinct disciplinary perspectives, frames of reference, or methodologies. The goal of the Advanced Integrative Seminar is to show how integrative thinking and studying the liberal arts may illuminate the topic or question more fully. Team-taught Advanced Integrative Seminars are encouraged, and the goal to foster more interdisciplinary work through this course would be enhanced by bringing faculty from different disciplines together in the classroom. Department chairs and deans will work closely with faculty members to put forward rigorous courses that have integrity in each discipline represented in the course proposal.

As seminars, discussion and other forms of student-centered learning should be the norm for Advanced Integrative Seminars. Integration of faith and learning should be challenging, building on the work of the First Year Seminar with greater depth.

Students are required to have completed the First Year Seminar prior to taking an Advanced Integrative Seminar, and it is expected that students will take their Advanced Integrative Seminar during either their sophomore or junior year. Initially, students will be allowed to take only one AIS in their time at Wheaton. No AIS may count toward students’ credit requirements for their major, though students may enroll in any AIS section, including those taught by faculty in the student’s major department(s). AIS courses may not have mandatory curricular pre-requisites, but may require competencies integral to the purposes of the course (such as language reading abilities for a course requiring readings in that language, or quantitative skills for a course requiring data analysis).

#### **B. Connection between area outcomes (Part I above) and the 12 overall program goals of Christ at the Core (see p. 8-9 of the Proposal).**

This course directly advances the following Christ at the Core program outcomes:

1. Learning Outcome #1 connects with Christ at the Core Wisdom Learning Goal 2.
2. Learning Outcome #2 connects with Christ at the Core Holistic Learning Goal 2 and Wisdom Learning Goal 4.

#### **C. Explanation, with examples, of what types of data will count as evidence for achievement of the stated outcomes**

ADVANCED INTEGRATIVE SEMINAR OUTCOMES Students will be able to...	MEASUREMENT As evidenced by...
1. demonstrate increasing maturity in their ability to show how the Christian faith informs and is informed by their understanding of a complex issue	a. final project (described below) that demonstrates a theologically informed approach to the topic, as measured by the assessment rubric.
2. exhibit research skills involving different forms of inquiry, investigation and analysis in order to address the course topic	a. Students will complete a final research paper or project. (See rubric under III.D General Advice)  b. Students must successfully complete the information literacy online modules as a requirement of this course. Understanding is assessed within the modules on a pass/fail basis and demonstrated in a paper or other project that meets other course outcomes, as evidenced by an item on the grading rubric.

#### **D. General Advice**

The rubric below should serve as a general guide for Advanced Integrative Seminar instructors as they design their course and develop an assignment for students to complete as demonstration of their achievement of learning outcome #2, “Students will be able to exhibit research skills involving different forms of inquiry, investigation, and analysis in order to address the course topic.”

The Shared Core Subcommittee of the Curriculum Committee will consult with Advanced Integrative Seminar instructors and review the usefulness of this rubric as appropriate.

#### **Provisional Advanced Integrative Seminar Evaluation Rubric Interdisciplinary Research and Integrative Demonstration**

Does the student...	1 Unacceptable	2 Acceptable	3 Good	4 Exceptional	Score
Frame the problem addressed in the project in a manner that invites an integrative approach?	No evidence of disciplinary perspectives employed.	Two or more relevant disciplinary perspectives employed, but in a superficial or unclear way.	Two or more relevant disciplinary perspectives employed in a connected and purposeful way.	Two or more relevant disciplinary perspectives employed in a connected, purposeful, insightful way.	
Employ a genre of writing that is effective in communicating with the intended audience?	Little sense of an academic genre being used; a poor sense of intended audience.	An academic genre is discernible but with multiple violations (tone, organization, references); limited sense of audience.	An academic genre is clear and generally adhered to, with a clear sense of audience.	An academic genre is clear and consistently adhered to, with effective innovation; clear sense of audience.	
Use disciplinary knowledge accurately and effectively (e.g., concepts, theories, findings, examples)?	A disciplinary knowledge base is not discernable.	A disciplinary knowledge base is discernable, but in a superficial or mechanical way.	A disciplinary knowledge base is evident, with concepts and theories credibly presented.	A disciplinary knowledge base is evident, with concepts and theories credibly presented, with sophistication.	
Demonstrate an integrative strategy or approach that works?	Connections are unclear and there is not an obvious sign of integration.	Connections may be valid across disciplinary perspectives, but without sufficient coherence or interrelation.	Connections are clear across disciplinary perspectives, with sufficient coherence and interrelation.	Connections are very clear across disciplinary perspectives, with effective coherence and interrelation.	
Draw conclusions that have been advanced by the integration of disciplinary views?	Connections across different disciplinary lines are unrelated to the conclusions drawn.	Connections across different disciplinary lines are minimally related to the conclusions drawn.	Connections across different disciplinary lines are related to the conclusions drawn.	Connections across different disciplinary lines are solidly related to the conclusions drawn.	

Show awareness of the benefits and limitations that come from academic disciplines?	No awareness is shown.	Some awareness is shown.	Sufficient awareness is shown.	Supreme awareness is shown.	
Exhibit self-reflection in relation to the ideas presented in the project?	Ideas are presented at face value, without sufficient reflection.	Ideas are presented at face value, with minimal reflection.	Ideas are presented with nuance and sufficient reflection.	Ideas are presented with critical awareness and obvious reflection.	
Demonstrate a theologically-informed approach to the topic?	No evidence of theological approach	Some awareness of theological approach. Minimal connection between Christian faith and the topic	Evidence of understanding of relevant theological concerns, with connections made to the topic	High degree of theological understanding, with nuanced reflection on interrelation of Christian faith and the subject matter	
Demonstrate the ability to use resources appropriate to the project?	Resources are of poor quality, and not relevant to the project. No evidence that resources contributed to the project. No attribution is given.	Resources are of moderate quality and only somewhat relevant to the project. Resources have minimally contributed to the project, or are poorly integrated. Attribution is largely absent.	Some resources are high quality, most are relevant to the project. Resources are integrated into the project, but not always well. Attribution is given, but is inconsistent.	High quality resources are used that are highly relevant to the project. Resources are well-integrated, and proper attribution is accurately given	

#### IV. AIS and Major approval criteria

Courses receiving the AIS tag and counting towards major requirements must be:

1. At the 300 level and meet the Learning Outcomes for AIS courses.
2. Accessible to non-majors and not include requirements or prerequisites other than CORE 101.
3. A non-required elective for the major, allowing students the option of taking a different AIS course to fulfill the CATC requirement if they so choose (since students may only take one AIS course).
4. Have at least one tag, preferably two (following the practice of existing AIS courses).