**General Education Course Inclusion Proposal**

**INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

*This proposal form is intended for departments proposing a course for inclusion in the Northern Michigan University General Education Program. Courses in a component satisfy both the Critical Thinking and the component learning outcomes. Departments should complete this form and submit it electronically through the General Education SHARE site.*

**Course Name and Number: AD 270 - Social Stuctures and Concepts**

**Home Department: Art & Design**

**Department Chair Name and Contact Information** (phone, email): **Daric Christian**. x2194. dachrist@nmu.edu.   
 *Chair of Curriculum, School of Art & Design*: **Stephan Larson**. x1488. stlarson@nmu.edu.

**Expected frequency of Offering of the course** (e.g. every semester, every fall): every semester (excluding summer)

**Official Course Status**: Has this course been approved by CUP and Senate? YES IN PROGRESS

*Courses that have not yet been approved by CUP must be submitted to CUP prior to review by GEC. Note that GEC is able to review courses that are in the process of approval; however, inclusion in the General Education Program is dependent upon Senate and Academic Affairs approval of the course into the overall curriculum.*

**Overview of course** (please attach a current syllabus as well): *Please limit the overview to two pages (not including the syllabus)*

A. Overview of the course content

This course is a comparative study of cultural products and cultural production, specifically, art and design. What is the purpose of ‘art,’ why do we create, and what are the motivations for people to create are the applied concepts of the course – students understanding their own motivations in creative endeavors across a spectrum of modes. Examination of various theories of visual representation, both historical and contemporary, serves as the basis for the study of products/production. An emphasis of the course is the understanding of the relationship of art and the artist to mass culture as a means of contextualizing a student’s current and future work.

B. Explain why this course satisfies the Component specified and significantly addresses both learning outcomes

**Critical Thinking** and **Integrative Thinking** are core components of AD 270. In coming to an understanding of the social structures of art/design, students are required to repeatedly re-assess their understanding of the cultural production of art/design (critical thinking). The *Evidence* dimension is addressed through the presentation of broad, often contradictory, theories regarding the role of the artist/designer in contemporary society and requiring students to contemplate their own roles. In determining how a student views their role(s), a level of research must be completed and the quality of sources must be a consideration throughout the research process. The *Integrate* dimension is addressed through the same process. In determining how a student views their role(s), the research draws from an array of sources – philosophers, cultural critics, historians and art historians, economists, and psychologists. The *Evaluate* dimension is addressed through review of art/design in the context of cultural production – what factors come into play when art/design is determined to be *good*? A portion of that determination could be described as “established principles and guidelines” but a portion also falls into the nebulous world of “taste.”

Understanding the relationship between the larger society and the individual artist/designer is an ongoing discussion. The *Connections to Experience* dimension is addressed in the synthesis of the influences of multiple disciplines: the various disciplines of art/design, history, philosophy, psychology, economics, and cultural studies. Students will create works of art and design with meaning and since *meaning* is often dependent on context, students are required to integrate an understanding of academic and practical frameworks – does the impact of a painting made in reaction to World War I still resonate with a contemporary audience? If so, why? And if not, why not? And given that, does the same evaluation apply to *any* work? The *Transfer* dimension is addressed in the creation of art/design for uses that are either atypical for the students or have yet to be explored by the students. For example, students may create a sculpture that is derived from *play* or create a design that is intended to *heal.* Skills, methodologies, knowledge, and critical awareness must be employed to create in a fashion that is frequently outside of a student’s area of familiarity. This process also addresses the *Integrated Communication* dimension – the specific form that a sculpture can take could vary dramatically (large, small, concrete, metal, Styrofoam, abstract, narrative, etc.) and the form must be chosen to support the intent.

Cultivation of self-criticism is one part of the goals of the course. Are a student’s ideas and intentions in the work they create profound or trivial? Universal or personal? And while there is not explicit judgment of the ideas and intentions themselves, critical thinking comes to bear in determination as to whether those ideas and intentions are actually communicated to an audience. In the cultivation of self-criticism and understanding one’s role(s) as an artist/designer in today’s society, artistic research (again) becomes a vital tool. While much of art/design is in the creating, research also aids in the creation of art that is informed, contemporary, and avoids “re-inventing the wheel.” Research into the history of a media or method, research into the artists and designers that use or have used certain ideas or concepts, and research into the interplay between the ideas and techniques all provide valuable insight for students struggling to find their place within the realm of art and design (integrative thinking).

C. Describe the target audience (level, student groups, etc.)   
The target audience is sophomore and junior-level art/design majors, sophomore and junior-level art history majors, and art/design minors. As there are several pre-requisites for the course, it is unlikely (though not impossible) that a student without an art/design major or minor would enroll in the course.

D. Give information on other roles this course may serve (e.g. University Requirement, required for a major(s), etc.)

AD 270 is required for all art/design majors and all art history majors. It serves as an elective for art/design minors.

E. Provide any other information that may be relevant to the review of the course by GEC

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
CRITICAL THINKING**

*Attainment of the CRITICAL THINKING Learning Outcome is required for courses in this component. There are several dimensions to this learning outcome. Please complete the following Plan for Assessment with information regarding course assignments (type, frequency, importance) that will be used by the department to assess the attainment of students in each of the dimensions of the learning outcome. Type refers to the types of assignments used for assessment such as written work, presentations, etc. Frequency refers to the number of assignments included such as a single paper or multiple papers. Importance refers to the relative emphasis or weight of the assignment to the entire course. For each dimension, please specify the expected success rate for students completing the course that meet the proficiency level and explain your reasoning. Please refer to the Critical Thinking Rubric for more information on student performance/proficiency in this area. Note that courses are expected to meaningfully address all dimensions of the learning outcome.*

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Evidence** | Assesses quality of information that may be integrated into an argument | Assessment will be completed with blog/journal/writing assignments. Students must research artists – the history, influences, conceptual threads, relationships to the greater cultural world of art/design, and how the artist fits within the frameworks described throughout the course. The writing, in part, is an evaluation of how well the artist or artwork functions within those frameworks. As part of this research, the sources of information and quality of the sources must be considered as support (or contradiction, if appropriate) to the themes discussed in class: artistic roles, creativity, copyright and originality, semiotics, tradition, audience, agency, methodology, ethics, spectatorship. Part of the research will be directly related to course lectures/discussions while other portions of the research will be independent of the class meetings. Approximately 25% of the assignment evaluation will specifically relate to the dimension and will contribute to approximately 5% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. This number is based on the long duration of the research project, which should result in a higher level of analysis of the relevant information and the relevant sources. |
| **Integrate** | Integrates insight and or reasoning with existing understanding to reach informed conclusions and/or understanding | Assessment will be completed with various written assignments and tests/quizzes. A recurring tenant in AD270 is the questioning of a principle, theory, or belief as such questioning is vital to understanding the context of an artwork/design. Repeatedly challenging the expected answer leads students to contribute their own insight and logic to a situation. For example, a lecture/presentation on the virtues of copyright and its relationship to the contemporary artist/designer can be immediately followed by a discussion about the legal and creative problems with copyright. With the professor supporting both stances, the students must arrive at their own conclusions using the information provided and their own insight/understanding. Writings, tests, and quizzes will include open ending questions that have, potentially, no entirely correct answer but instead are answered through support of an argument: “Does current copyright law help or hinder the artist?” Approximately 30% of the relevant assessment method (writing, test, or quiz) will specifically relate to the dimension and will contribute approximately 12% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. With the assessment methods coming after periods of extended discussion and evaluation, integration will already be occurring on some level prior to the actual assessment. |
| **Evaluate** | Evaluates information, ideas, and activities according to established principles and guidelines | Assessment will be completed with a written assignment pertaining to the evaluation and classification of a student’s own work. Much of the course content is a direct review of “established principles and guidelines” within the fields of art/design. Students must develop a statement/writing in which they evaluate and re-assess their own work in light of the functions of art/design. Such a statement requires a critical evaluation of the work under discussion and a thorough understanding of the relevant principles and guidelines. One level of the evaluation is technical: media and processes. One level of the evaluation is visual: color, shape, brightness, direction, size, overall design. And one level (the largest) of the evaluation is conceptual roles: to decorate, record, heal, play, influence, use, describe, inform, entertain, revere, and transform. Approximately 50% of the assignment will specifically relate to the dimension and will contribute to approximately 10% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. As an evaluation of the student’s own work, there is an intrinsic investment by the student in the evaluation process that has historically produced high success rates for the dimension. |

**PLAN FOR LEARNING OUTCOMES  
INTEGRATIVE THINKING**

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| **DIMENSION** | **WHAT IS BEING ASSESSED** | **PLAN FOR ASSESSMENT** |
| **Connections to Experience**  *OR* | Connects academic knowledge to experiences | The creation of art/design requires a constant connection between academic knowledge and experiences – the *experience* is the hands-on creation of art/design. Assessment will be completed with projects involving the creation of new art/design. Academic discourse pertaining to various concepts such as semiotics, agency, ethics, spectatorship, and aesthetics are expected to be integrated into the work produced during the semester. For example, a project specifying the production of a series of artworks that can be reproduced for $1 will require students to synthesize knowledge of economics, audience, and taste in the applied act of making the art/design. Approximately 25% of the relevant projects will specifically relate to the dimension and contribute approximately 10% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. The connection between academic knowledge and experience is a common goal in all art/design studio and foundation courses and as such, all students will have a level of familiarity with the process. |
| **Connections to Discipline** | Makes connections across disciplines |  |
| **Transfer** | Adapts and applies skills, abilities, theories, or methodologies gained in one situation to new situations | Assessment will be completed with projects involving the creation of new art/design. In coming to an understanding of the various roles of art/design within our culture, students will create one (or more) works that explores a role of art/design that is atypical for a given student’s emphasis. For example, a student with a painting concentration may create a painting that is intended to elucidate *play* from the observer or assist in some form of *healing.* Skills and abilities learned in various areas will be applied, by definition, to new situations and contexts. Approximately 50% of the assignment will specifically relate to the dimension and will contribute to approximately 10% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. An ideological cornerstone for the School of Art & Design is the adaptability of an artist/designer to new concepts and situations. This is introduced in courses that are pre-requisites to AD270 and students will therefore have some level of experience with the process, resulting in a relatively high success rate. |
| **Integrated Communication** | Communicates complex concepts by choosing appropriate content and form | Assessment will be completed with projects involving the creation of art/design, frequently a final project. Some project criteria overlap with the *transfer* dimension but extend the premise to choosing a form for the communication. Continuing the previous example of the creation of a painting with the intent to elucidate play, the form of the painting may be traditional in format, such as a 3’ x 4’ stretched canvas hung on the wall or, more likely, it would take on a form that is more directly related to the concept of play -- extending the painting off of the wall surface into a three-dimensional form; small canvases that are intended to be moved and re-arranged; nesting paint between layers of plastic to encourage touching of a malleable surface. As the broad concepts (such as play, heal, influence, etc.) are often quite complex and subtle in nuance, the interpretation and form chosen by the student is a significant portion of the project criteria. Projects will often involve the creation of a work of art/design but may also include some form of writing from a formal paper to a blog. Approximately 50% of the relevant assignments will specifically relate to the dimension and will contribute to approximately 18% of the student’s semester grade.  The anticipated success rate is 70% of students at the Proficient or Exceeds Proficiency level. The duration of projects, the level of intermediate evaluation, and as the projects benefit from skills and concepts that are introduced in pre-requisite courses to AD270, the success rate is relatively high. |





