

## **Collaborative Teaching Programs in Place at the University of Michigan**

The following provides a few examples of collaborative teaching programs currently in place at UM. For more information, please contact Crisca Bierwert, Assistant Director of CRLT at [crisca@umich.edu](mailto:crisca@umich.edu).

### **1) Collaborative Courses**

These are courses where faculty with related expertise co-plan and co-teach large courses or small ones. Some of these courses, like Introduction to Gay and Lesbian Studies, started with the assistance of CRLT's Interdisciplinary Faculty Associates (IFA) funding. Others, like 300- and 400-level special topics courses, are co-taught by two faculty members who may change the course focus each time they teach together. Still others are part of a core curriculum where collaboration is central, and the roles of instructor and observer are intrinsic to teaching practice (as in some Dance courses).

#### **Example: Origins of Nazism**

Origins of Nazism is a large lecture course that is a regular offering cross-listed in History and German, with one professor representing History and the other Germanic language and literature. The conceptualization of the course is based on the interdisciplinary idea that political and social history is more comprehensively taught and learned alongside studies of culture and ideology, and vice-versa. The course is taught by the same two faculty members on a regular basis; at times, another faculty member has stepped in for one of these two. The course was conceived, initiated, and sustained by the faculty interested (rather than being prompted by administrative goals). It attracts more than 300 students each Winter. The faculty bring complementary expertise to the course design, supply and refresh course content and materials on a regular basis, co-plan the syllabus, divide the lecturing, and work together to coordinate the GSIs.

### **2) Integrated Lecture Courses**

These are large classes in which the curriculum is planned and coordinated by a single faculty leader who is responsible for the course. Typically, the course is organized around a complex, multifaceted topic; and it draws on theories and methods from many disciplines. Multiple faculty members from different disciplines lecture in the course, and they may provide readings and other assignments.

#### **Example: Global Change**

Global Change is an interdisciplinary program of team-taught courses for first- and second-year undergraduates, which focuses on global change from physical and human perspectives, utilizing science and social science education. The course was started by faculty with common interests in the problem that realized many disciplines were needed to understand the issues. It is now part of the Program in the Environment and is cross-listed in six departments.

Currently, three courses are offered, each taught by teams of four faculty. Courses are topic focused, and connections across the disciplines made regularly, so that students may not think of viewpoints as coming from one particular discipline or another. Each course is led by a course director, who is the instructor of record. Other faculty receive some course credit for the amount they teach. The team leader is at all classes; and this instructor coordinates modules, exam writing, GSI work and mentoring, and student feedback. Assessments and evaluations of courses occur during and after each term.

### **3) Related Courses That Can Meet Together**

Faculty teaching related topics in otherwise separate courses can schedule those courses to meet at the same time, in different classrooms, in order to occasionally meet together. These meetings are typically for the two groups of students to discuss their different perspectives.

Another option is for one or more courses to include in their schedule a “lab” time, when the courses can all meet together. LS&A’s First-year Interest Groups (FIGs) have worked like this, with faculty teaching related courses in First Year Seminars bringing their classes together several times during a term.

The following course is still in the planning stages. An engineering faculty member proposes an introductory course in Computer Games that would be taught in multiple sections, each section emphasizing a different aspect of the subject. One section might emphasize the visualization and artificial intelligence aspects of computer games, another section might emphasize the narrative and artistic presentation of computer games, another might emphasize the impacts of computer games on the attitudes and behaviors of the people who play them. These sections would meet separately most days of the week but then would come together for joint lectures or computer lab activities one or two days per week.

### **4) Intergenerational Apprentice Models**

Some courses generate expertise that students can pass along to other students. Although some of the following examples are not particularly interdisciplinary, they illustrate kinds of collaboration that have worked effectively at U-M. Activities can range from seminar discussions to group work, and from background research to published articles.

#### **Example: IGR dialogues courses**

The program on Inter-Group Relations (IGR) is a joint effort of the Division of Student Affairs & LSA. Its courses are based in Psychology, but also cross-listed in Sociology. In IGR, teams of faculty teach courses modeling facilitation of dialogue on complex and controversial issues. The students who have learned these skills then facilitate discussions of other students on dialogues of social and intellectual concern.

**Example: Chemistry Department**

Through the Chemical Sciences at the Interface of Education (CSIE) program, the department instructs undergraduate students in teaching and learning processes, in addition to their work in chemistry. For example, in Honors Organic Chemistry, since 1994, a team of eight junior & senior undergraduates have designed supplemental instruction for 160 of the 1200 students enrolled in Chem 210 & 215. Students work in groups to “publish” literature-based assignments, and teaching materials, that are subject to critique and peer review.

**5) Learning Communities**

Learning communities at Michigan are small groups, often self-selected, of students and faculty members who work together with a set of common intellectual interests and who interact inside and outside of their classrooms. Residential programs are located in a University Residence Hall and require students to live in the hall where the program is housed. Residentially-based learning communities all have in-house academic advisors, a library, a computing site, and a staff of live-in residential staff. Non-residential programs have no residential requirement and are located at different sites on campus. These programs offer a range of support services that vary from peer advisors to mentors to faculty instructors.

**Residential Program Example: Health Sciences Scholars Program (HSSP)**

The HSSP is dedicated to providing support to first-year undergraduate students interested in exploring opportunities in the health sciences and professions. HSSP students take a one-year core course; observe faculty and clinicians in their various practices; meet faculty, advisors, and students from UM’s health schools at co-curricular events; and participate in community service, multicultural, and wellness events.