

---

# Interdisciplinary Fast Blast

Matthew Cheney  
Robin DeRosa

OPENCoLab

OPEN LEARNING & TEACHING COLLABORATIVE

PLYMOUTH STATE UNIVERSITY



—

# This is orientation.





**Discipline:** A concentrated and bounded academic field of study. *The fruits.*

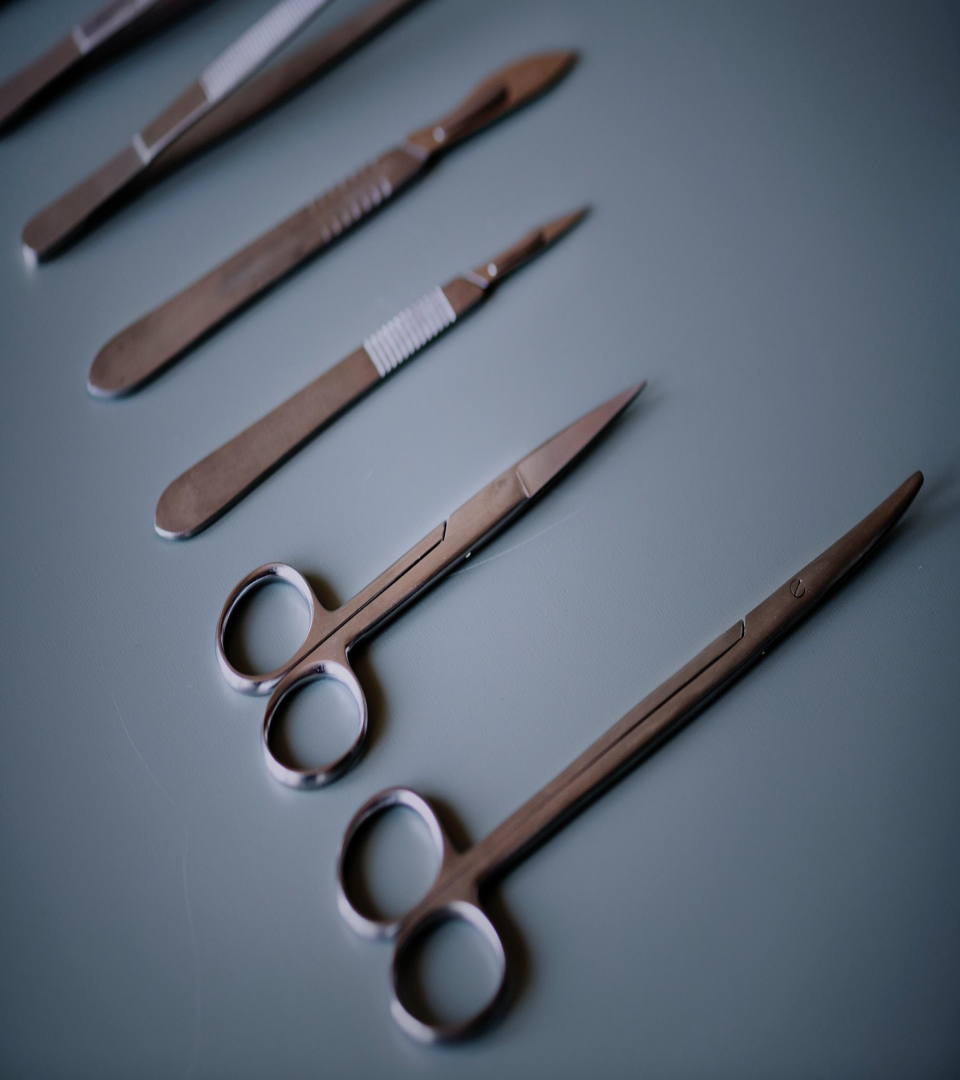
**Interdisciplinarity:** Incorporates several fields of study to allow collaboration among diverse disciplines to broaden education, to gain understanding, to create new concepts and approaches, and/or to problem solve.

*The fruit smoothie*

**Multidisciplinarity:** Drawing on information and methods from two or more disciplines. Distinct from “interdisciplinary” in that it generally does not imply integrating the fields together into a new field or approach.

*The fruit bowl.*

---



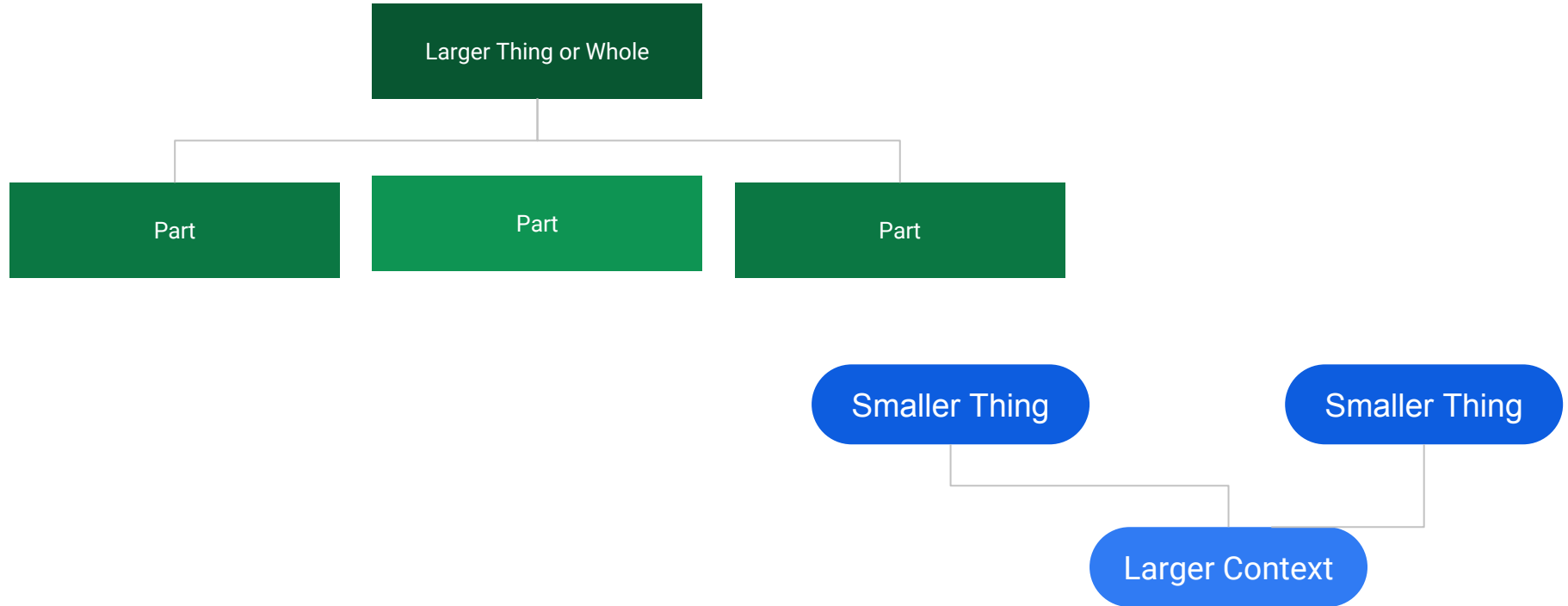
*Transdisciplinarity:*  
transcends disciplines or academia

*Instrumental Interdisciplinarity:*  
targets problems solving

*Critical Interdisciplinarity:*  
targets the critique or shift of the  
way we organize knowledge

---

# DOING Interdisciplinarity: Systems Thinking and Contextualization







**Disciplines have**

***Content***

***Methods***

***Epistemologies***

# THE NEW EDUCATION



HOW TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE UNIVERSITY  
TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A WORLD IN FLUX  
**CATHY N. DAVIDSON**

You free faculty not by insisting they give up the standards of their traditional discipline in order to accept the standards of someone else's. Rather, you reward them and their students for constantly rethinking options, trying new programs, acting inventively and boldly, collaboratively and synthetically.

Cathy N. Davidson

---

# THE NEW EDUCATION



HOW TO REVOLUTIONIZE THE UNIVERSITY  
TO PREPARE STUDENTS FOR A WORLD IN FLUX  
**CATHY N. DAVIDSON**

The major in a traditional discipline no longer maps to the complex ways students encounter the world or the jobs and careers of the present and the future, and so we must champion relevant interdisciplinary projects, missions, programs, and goals, across departments and silos of knowledge and expertise.

---

Cathy N. Davidson





## Parallel Challenges for Higher Ed & Interdisciplinarity

- adjunctification of teaching labor and the deprofessionalization of faculty;
- rising tuition costs and student debt;
- narrow prioritizing of STEM and reductive skills training;
- corporatization of the university;
- steering between extremes of technophobia and technophilia.

~ Cathy N. Davidson & Julie Klein

(<https://www.hastac.org/blogs/molly-mann/2018/01/05/boundary-work-and-digital-humanities-interview-julie-thompson-klein>)

BREADTH V. DEPTH

VULGAR INTERDISCIPLINARITY

STRUCTURAL CHALLENGES + COSTS  
P+T, TEAM-TEACHING, ASSESSMENT

The common denominator in models and strategies is moving beyond narrow skills training to help students navigate their futures by understanding the complexity of the world they live in, coping with change by learning how to learn, steering between extremes, and cultivating a new literacy grounded in skills of deep and critical thinking, communication and collaboration, and cross-cultural understanding.

[This] does not mean jettisoning everything but keeping what works well while shedding inherited features by “unbundling” and “rebundling” practices.

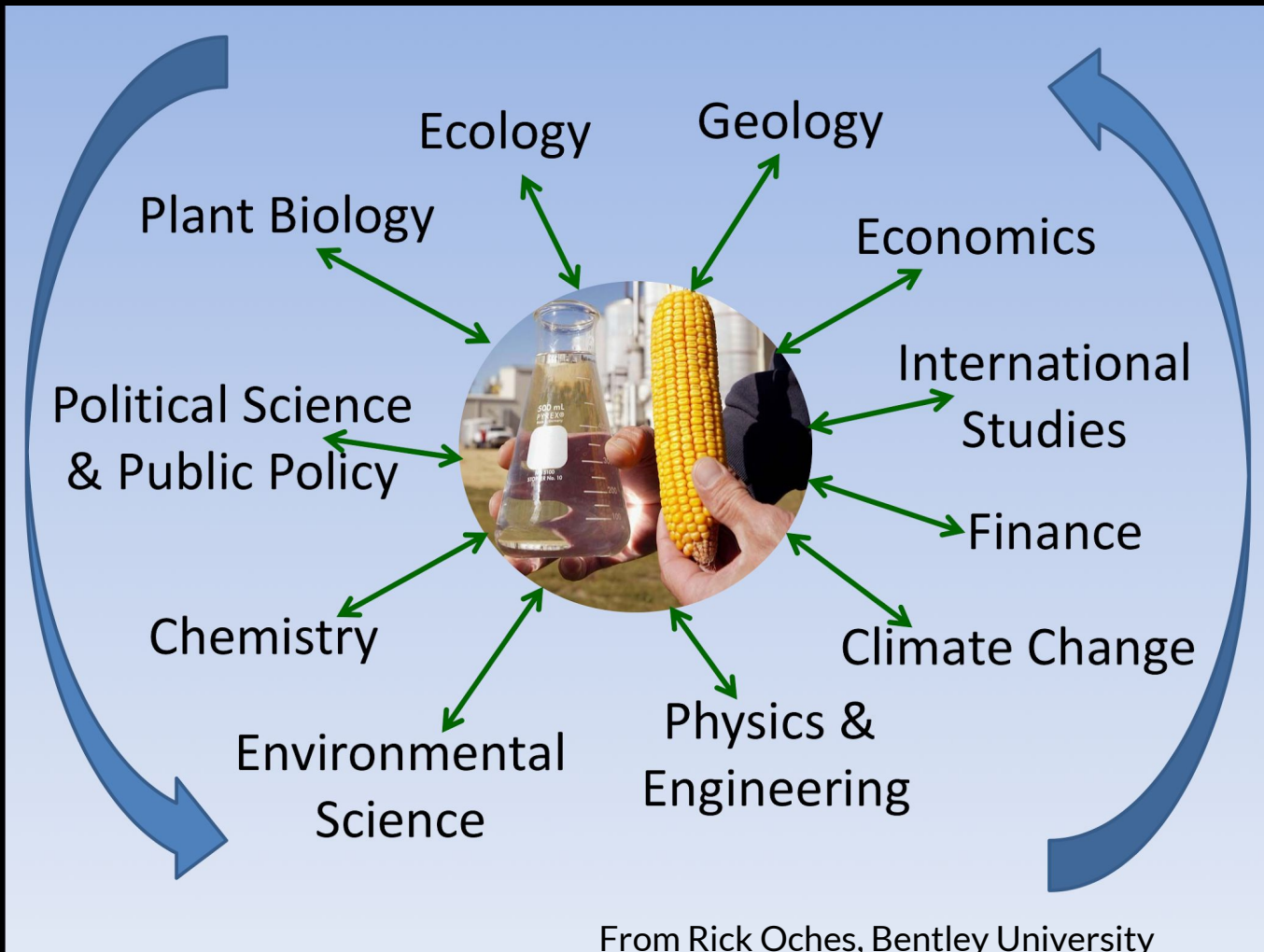
~Julie Klein



---

# Linked & Federated Course Structures

- cohorts of students taking multiple coordinated courses.
- same semester or in sequence.
- different instructors who may be from different departments.
- topical or thematic approach.
- syllabi between the courses may be fully integrated or separate.
- linked courses tend to incorporate at least once major integrative assignment between the courses.
- students are intended to transfer and utilize information and themes learned in the core course to the related courses.
- instructors may collaboratively design assignments.
- course work can be either assessed by both instructors to ensure the course outcomes are being addressed or done by each faculty independently based on the assignment topic.



From Rick Oches, Bentley University



# ***Will Corn Ethanol Fuel U.S. Energy Needs?***

## ***A Multidisciplinary Exploration of a Complex Problem***

Created by faculty members of Bentley University



### Participating Courses:

Principles of Geology  
Environmental Chemistry  
Green Biology/Ecology  
Science of Sustainability

American Government  
Macroeconomics  
Natural Resource Policy  
How Things Work

**University/XU/TU**

**Cluster/XC/TC**

**Program/XP/TP**

**Course/XC/TC**

**Assignment/XA/TA**



# At a Glance: INTERDISCIPLINARY STUDIES

## *how an idea becomes a major*

**Minimum credits necessary to graduate: 120**

51-53 credits total for the major

**No Directions courses can be in the contract**

- must cohere around a title
- 24 credits must be upper level (3000+)
- one course must be QRCO (cannot be your Math Foundations)

### **Two Required courses:**

IP2225: Intro to IDS (3 credits) (TECO)

IP4425: Senior Seminar (3 credits) (INCO, WRCO)

**Up to two courses may be shared between a major & minor**

---

## IDS → Clusters



- **Project titles matter.** Clear, specific titles help us focus and communicate our work to a wider audience. Vague titles become obstacles to our work.
  - Instead of either breadth or depth, we can strive for **both breadth and depth.**
  - **Let requirements give shape to creativity.** Too many requirements stifle, too few may lead to vagueness and stasis.
  - **Allow change and flexibility.** In IDS, contract changes are relatively easy because we recognize that students will develop during their journey.
-

# ePort

all IDS students have a digital home for their work

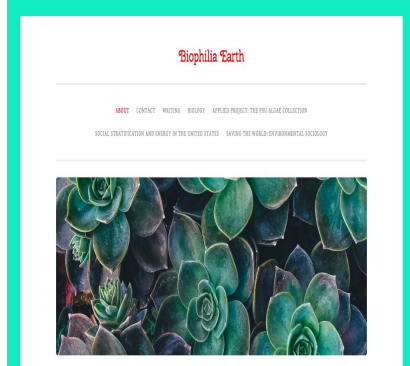
## Creating Your ePort

### **Assignment**

You will build your own website either via Plymouth Create or another tool of your choice, which we will use as an e-portfolio and workshop space for ideas throughout the course. We call it an *ePort* because it is more than a portfolio: it is portable, a port of call, and maybe even a port in a storm. You can control the privacy settings on your ePort, which we will discuss in class, but if you prefer to work in an inherently private setting, please see me to discuss it and you can use Mahara, Moodle, or another tool. (Because this course earns you a TECO credit, you can't avoid learning the technologies, but we can talk.) CREDIT: satisfactory ePort site with basic functions as described in checklist.



# sample ePorts



Rebecca Rand

Environmental Sociology '19



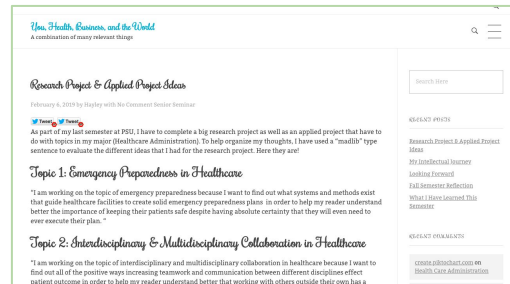
Maya I.

Ethnochoreographic Studio Management '19



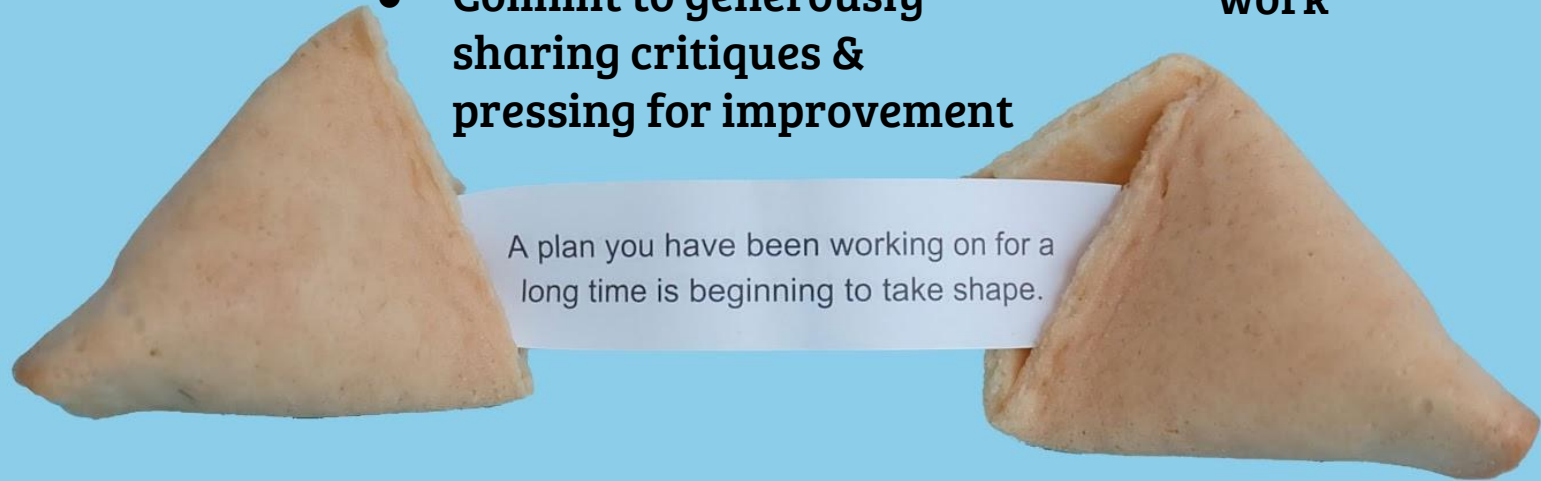
Ben Pyke

Music Physics '20



Hayley DeSousa Healthcare Administration, '19

- Commit to university-level cohesion around cluster pedagogy
- Commit to using a common language (not as your *only* language!)
- Commit to being open to additional interdisciplinary possibilities in your teaching
- Commit to generously sharing critiques & pressing for improvement
- Identify interdisciplinary projects & pedagogies in your teaching and scholarship
  - Align language in that work to PSU language
  - Inform the CoLab of this work



***Participate in the CPLC!***

---

# CLUSTER PEDAGOGY LEARNING COMMUNITY

## Three Tracks

- Main Track
  - Exam Week Sessions
  - June 4 & July 30 Sessions
  - University Days Session
  - Year-long Program
- TWP Track
  - Plus June 4 & July 30 Extensions
- Open Ed Track
  - Plus May 28-30 ATI
  - Plus January 2020 Event

*Alignment*

*Development*

*Collaboration*

*Support*

*Cohesion*

---

Name	Your PSU Email Username	Description of Clustery Thing: What/When/Update	PSU Collaborators	Disciplines Involved	Add codes: Interdisc (I) Multidisc (M) Transdisc (T) Instrumental (INT) Critical (C) Linked (L) Federated (F)	Level: Assignment (A) Course (C) Program (P) Cluster (CLUS) University (U) Regional (R) National (N) International (I)
Robin DeRosa	rderosa	In 2017, I worked with a group of faculty members to consider a pre-approved track in Expressive Arts for the IDS major. We created a great template using current research on grad school admissions to Art Therapy programs. Though the pre-approved track was ultimately not approved by the Art faculty, it's been a popular template for students to use in designing programs, and it has helped a number of PSU IDS graduates gain admission to grad school programs in Art Therapy. It also kicked off the use of templates in IDS, and we now store many of them for students to use as they consider the programs they want to design. Much market possibility in pursuing Expressive Arts, but more broadly we should think about how these templates could function more officially within a structured customized program like IDS (or in cluster majors or something).	Herzig, Ritchie, Lonergan, Kilb, Zehr, Yahr, Swift	Psychology, Art	I, M	P

---

<http://bit.ly/interdiscFB>

