USF CORE INTEGRATIVE COURSES: OVERVIEW

Enduring Questions / Transformative Texts

This course invites students to explore foundational human questions that have shaped societies and cultures across time and place through the lens of transformative texts—literature, philosophy, theology, and art. The theme of each course may vary, but all engage with key works that address enduring questions such as justice, freedom, truth, identity, and the nature of a good life. Students will analyze these texts critically, considering their historical context and lasting impact. The course is interdisciplinary, integrating perspectives from philosophy, literature, theology, history, the arts, and possibly science. It emphasizes a global focus, encouraging students to explore how these ideas have resonated and evolved across different cultures and time periods. Additionally, the course emphasizes the development of communication skills, encouraging students to express complex ideas effectively across various modes—written, verbal, and visual.

Golden Gateway: City as Classroom

Students participate in an interdisciplinary course that uses the local setting (San Francisco Bay Area or Sacramento) as a learning environment. Blending experiential learning, research, or creative projects with classroom preparation and reflection, students engage in fieldwork, partnerships with local organizations, and/or project-based learning. Example course themes could include environmental justice, technology and society, public health, or urban inequality.

Wicked Problems / Solutions Labs

Making use of the knowledge and competencies students have developed at USF, these interdisciplinary, applied problem-solving courses challenge students to analyze and respond to real-world issues through research, innovation, and creative expression. Students work in teams to analyze and propose innovative, evidence-based solutions to “wicked problems”—issues that are multifaceted, interconnected, and resistant to easy answers. The “solutions lab” format encourages students to engage in research, ideation, and collaborative problem-solving, culminating in a team-based project that presents a viable solution or response. The final project may take different forms–a policy proposal, a technological prototype, a community initiative, or another creative solution. By the end of the course, students have honed their ability to work collaboratively in diverse teams and develop real-world solutions to pressing problems.