

Interconnected Comps Seminar

IDSC 398

What is it?

The Interconnected Comps Seminary is an opportunity for students from different departments to work on a project in small (2-5 students) groups. Why would this be helpful? Well, take a topic like the current migrant crisis in Europe: who is qualified to say anything comprehensive (let alone comprehensible!) about it? After all, you'd need to know about economics, history, religion, local cultures, languages, political science, and more. And, in fact, an appreciation of how these different topics are entangled with one another could be crucial to understanding the whole.

There are many topics of similar complexity, where issues of culture (language, religion, etc.) may intersect in complex ways with, for example, science and policy. Such topics could include infectious diseases (think of Ebola and Zika), global warming, terrorism. These topics are far too vast for any group to tackle, but in IDSC 398, each group defines a specific aspect of their issue, and they work together to address it.

In short, the idea is to allow students to do in-depth work in their specialized discipline at the same time that these efforts come together in some integrated product (such as a panel presentation). This model seeks to blend specialization and breadth. Interdisciplinarity will reside less in the individual and more in the so-called team. Moreover, students will learn to communicate the particulars of their discipline to students in other disciplines—an important skill for advanced academic and professional work.

Wait A Minute... Does This Replace Regular Comps?

No. It enriches them. You do comps as your department defines them (although some departments allow modifications to their normal model to accommodate this seminar). In addition, in this seminar we'll help you work out a project that interlocks with the subject your team has chosen. Your team-based product may be a panel discussion about your theme.

What Do I Get From It?

Aside from an exciting interdisciplinary experience, students get three to six credits (IDSC 398), spread across the three terms of the year in which you are comps-ing.

Who Can Participate?

Any student who is comps-ing! Ideally you would contact us with an idea for a team and an idea for a project, but we can also engage in some matchmaking if you are looking to join a team.

How do I find a group?

Some students form their group before approaching us. Others let us know they'd like to participate in IDSC 398, and we work as matchmakers to bring interested parties together.

How do I learn more?

It's easy! The best first step is to attend one of the information sessions held during spring term. Here's the schedule:

- **Thursday, April 21, from 12:00 to 1:00 (location: LDC 104)**
- **Thursday, April 28, from 12:00 to 1:00 (location: Sayles-Hill 251)**

You should also consider coming to the presentations for this year's ISDC comps work.

These will take place:

- **Wednesday, April 27, from 5:00 to 6:30 (food provided!), in the Gould Library Athenaeum.**

And you can always reach out to the seminar leaders ((ideally in the spring term before the year you do your comps):

- Scott Carpenter, French & Francophone Studies (scarpent@carleton.edu)
- Stacy Beckwith, Middle Eastern Studies (sbeckwit@carleton.edu)
- Trish Ferrett, Chemistry (tferrett@carleton.edu)