

Ann Chrapkiewicz

[annrenee@msu.edu](mailto:annrenee@msu.edu)

Department of Anthropology

College of Social Science

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**Project Abstract/Proposal**

### *Integrating Experience into (Inter)Disciplinarity: A Reading Group Experiment*

At this year's symposium, I will give an oral and visual presentation (using powerpoint) focusing on my past year's work with IIT. It will be organized around two main facets of my Intellectual Application Projects: 1) the conceptual motivations underlying my course designs during my two years as an IIT fellow, and 2) students' reflections on their own learning in the six-week reading group I led during Spring Semester 2013. In the first part, focusing on my course designs, I will briefly introduce the pedagogical goals of my full-semester interdisciplinary syllabus titled, "Food, Health, and the Body: Experience and Politics." I will then show how I derived the short syllabus for a 6-week, non-credit reading group from the full-semester interdisciplinary syllabus. As my conceptualization of interdisciplinarity has evolved over the course of my participation in IIT, so shifted the ways in which I envisioned both my goals for teaching and the types of learning experiences I valued. As part of this talk I will trace the evolution of my thinking and how it influenced the syllabi at a few key stages.

Two themes which emerged and evolved for me over the course of two fellowship years were the interdisciplinary/integrative distinction, and the focus on interdisciplinary habits of mind versus a focus on (inter)disciplinary content. My location and priorities vis-à-vis these themes ultimately shaped my goals for the SS 2013 reading group titled, "Politics, Media, Experience: Health and the Body in Context." Part of my experiment in running this reading group was to see to what extent I could encourage students to incorporate their own experiential knowledge, spontaneous analysis of media images, and "extra-disciplinary" understanding into an academic context.

Using my teaching notes and students' self-assessments of their own learning, I will reflect on the ways in which my pedagogical goals aligned (or did not align) with the students' learning processes and outcomes. Over the course of the reading group: Did students note an increased valuation of their own experiential knowledge? Did they feel they were better able to connect academic themes and concepts with media images they found? Did this reading group enrich or improve their overall academic experience at James Madison College, and if so, how? I will conclude by noting potential future directions for integrative reading group experiences in a residential college setting, particularly with an eye to the possibility of incorporating experiential-and-image-based discussion into undergraduate curriculum.