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Collaborative Inquiry Experimental Course Option

Collaborative Inquiry courses are **discovery courses**. Instructors invite students from diverse disciplinary backgrounds into the enduring questions or problems that animate their own research, professional, and/or social activist work--complex questions that have no clear, technical, concrete solutions or answers.

Instructors explore with students how a question or problem that seems specific to a single academic discipline or disciplines might be creatively engaged with in collaboration with students from any number of other disciplines and backgrounds. The collaborative and multi-disciplinary spirit of this Core requirement, therefore, comes from **students** and their diverse intellectual backgrounds, rather

than solely from the content provided by the instructor.

A significant number of students will soon need more options for completing Collaborative Inquiry. The Core invites proposals for experimental sections for the 24/25 academic year via the link below. PLEASE NOTE: A complete syllabus is not required to submit an experimental Collaborative Inquiry proposal. The deadline for submission for AY24-25 is February 5, 2024.

CI Experimental Portal

In The Core Classroom: Spotlight on Collaborative Inquiry



Students in Dr. Doug Boin's Collaborative Inquiry class work in together pods to discuss and wrestle with complex ideas in a low stakes environment, both inside and outside of the classroom.

Collaborative Inquiry: "Homer: Between Myth and History"

Dr. Doug Boin's Collaborative Inquiry course stems from his passion for how history informs the present. Dr. Boin, a professor of History and a 2021-22 Core Curricular Innovation Fellow, is accustomed to devising ways to make historical texts accessible to undergraduate students, but designing and teaching a Collaborative Inquiry prompted him to conceptualize teaching in new and exciting ways.

Collaborative Inquiry courses center around complex questions for which there are no ready answers. Dr. Boin's course asks: "Where does Greek identity come from?" Through dissecting historical contexts as they explore the monsters and myths of Homer, students delve into how early communities collaboratively shaped their values. In asking these historical questions, Dr. Boin invites students to grapple with broader questions of self-identification.

Rather than being the sole expert, Dr. Boin assumes the role of a facilitator, guiding students toward the material and structuring classwork to empower them to explore independent and group research questions. Dr. Boin aims to cultivate an environment where students bring their unique perspectives to the conversation, making choices and taking stances based on their backgrounds. The Collaborative Inquiry classroom emerges as an interdisciplinary community where academic rigor meets creativity and flexibility, fostering an inclusive and vibrant learning space.

Our CCI Fellows 2021 - present

The Core Team: New Core Faculty



New Core Faculty

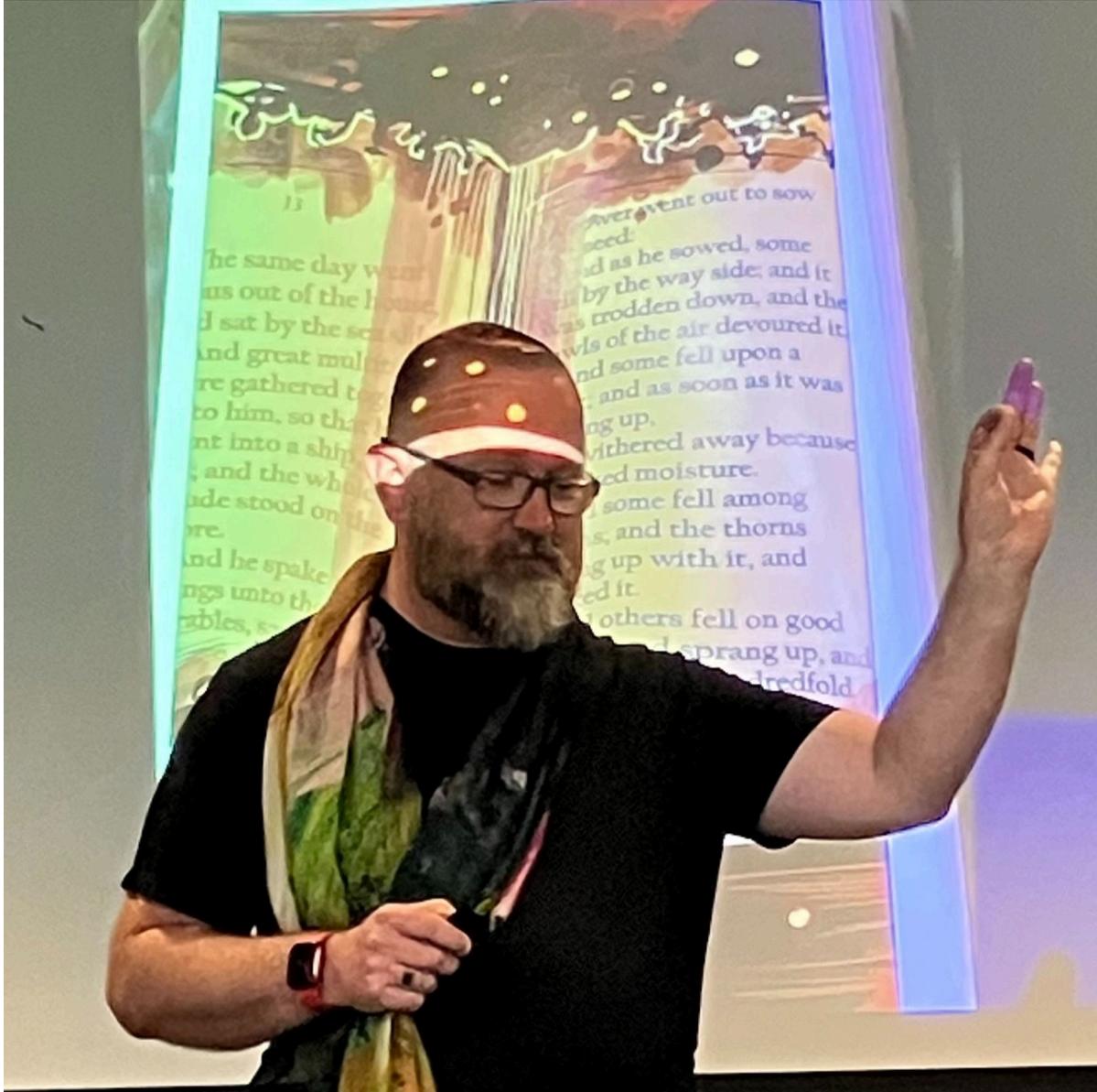
Carolyn O'Laughlin, Ph.D., is an Assistant Professor in the School of Education teaching primarily with the Core. Her background in student affairs lends itself well to teaching first-year students. Dr. O'Laughlin loves asking hard questions and having the opportunity to encourage inquiry within a classroom community. This spring, she plans to teach an Ignite Seminar tentatively named "Owning the Awkward." Dr. O'Laughlin will ask her Ignite students to critically reflect on social and cultural norms regarding awkwardness and consider how they personally identify, experience, and mitigate awkwardness. She also regularly communicates with Ignite faculty.

Mary Maxfield, Ph.D., is a Core post-doctoral fellow in the Women's and Gender Studies department. Their attraction to SLU's Undergraduate Core lies in its interdisciplinary and diversity-focused approach, aligning with their passion for social justice and gender studies. Dr. Maxfield's Ignite Seminar, "Storytelling and Social Justice," encourages students to explore social justice through narratives. Students first analyze existing stories about social justice issues and then develop their own narratives while connecting them to broader social justice themes. Dr. Maxfield finds the Ignite Seminar engaging and interdisciplinary, fostering powerful discussions among a diverse group of students.

Amanda Gray Rendòn, Ph.D., is a Core post-doctoral fellow in Women's and Gender Studies. Her research focuses on medical humanities and the lived-experiences of Latina caregivers and home care workers. Dr. Gray Rendòn teaches a medical humanities-based Ignite Seminar entitled "The Narrative Healing Project." Drawing from her expertise as an oral historian and documentary filmmaker, she designed her course to examine ways in which storytelling can bring healing to individuals and communities. Students also learn oral history methodology, which they then apply in small and large group discussions and in their final project for the semester: a cross-generational, group oral history project with an elder who has lived history that the students have not lived.

Benjamin Davis, Ph.D., is a Core post-doctoral fellow in the African American Studies department. African American Studies is inherently interdisciplinary and international, and in this spirit, Dr. Davis designed his two Ignite Seminars: "Think Again: Practical Lessons in Philosophy" and "What Is a Human Right?" The first delves into the potentially dangerous nature of thinking and encourages deep analysis of short texts to help students manage the complexity of philosophy. The second, informed by Dr. Davis' recent book, "Choose Your Bearing: Edouard Glissant, Human Rights, and Decolonial Ethics," invites students to explore official and unofficial conceptualizations of human rights and to formulate their own perspectives over the course of the semester.

Core Events: *Eloquentia Perfecta* Week In Review





Eloquentia Perfecta Week Recap

Led by Associate Directors of the Core, Dr. Nathaniel Rivers, Dr. Tim Huffman, and Dr. Allen Brizee, Eloquentia Perfecta Week (EP Week) was a five-day series of events that invited the SLU community to engage in thoughtful reflection on diverse modes of communication, including writing, creative expression, speaking, and visual media. This dynamic week, which included a two-day, multimodal creation station at the Clock Tower, a printing press workshop at The Compass Lab, and a keynote lecture featuring Dr. Jonathan Alexander (UC-Irvine), kicked off a year of assessing undergraduate students' proficiency in **Core Learning Outcome 4: All SLU graduates will be able to communicate effectively in writing, speech, and visual media.**

Core Events: Upcoming Core Discussions

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|-------------------|--|
| October 12 | Ignite Faculty Brown Bag Lunch Drop In |
| October 17 | Collaborative Inquiry Round Table Discussion #1 (Virtual) |
| October 18 | Collaborative Inquiry Round Table Discussion #2 (Virtual) |
| October 31 | Collaborative Inquiry Round Table Discussion #3 (Virtual) |

[Zoom Link for Virtual Events](#)

Important Deadlines

Ignite Portal

October 16 **Ignite Portal Closes (Link Below)**

October 16 **Course Proposal Priority Deadline**

November 1 or 2 **Ignite Workshop #1**

December 6 or 7 **Ignite Workshop #2**

January 9 or 10 **Ignite Workshop #3**

[Click here to listen to SLU faculty members discuss ideas for an Ignite Seminar](#)



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