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IDS 101- Doing what comes naturally

By Paige Hogan

When a freshman realizes that he is faced with the requirement of taking Interdisciplinary Studies 101 (IDS), it can be a little bit startling - to say the least. In fact, the mere length of the name makes quite an impression. However, this year's freshmen could breathe a sigh of relief as all of them had already had the course's perfect reference source-themselves.

The theme for this year's IDS class is "Self A Part". It focuses on the extremely complex nature of the self, highlighting its ability to be a part, and yet separate, from its surroundings. According to the course's syllabus, "The course is designed to allow us to use several ways of knowing

about and examining the self (ourselves) in many contexts: observations of nature; close readings of significant literature; field investigation of social issues; artistic creativity; keeping a personal journal and preparing a family history."

The most unusual aspect of the course is the second section entitled "In the Forest", which the classes are now beginning. Along with its principle literary work, Faulkner's *The Bear*, this section also includes various projects in the Guilford woods.

The woods project originally began as an IDS 401 class known as "Environmental Systems Planning". However, as a result of a corresponding need, both for someone to continue the project as well as for a natural context in

which "self" exploration could occur, the woods project was incorporated into the IDS 101 class.

While the course has inspired a variety of responses from students, professors are still tentative in their opinions. Their general consensus seems to be that, as they are only three weeks into teaching the course, "it is too early to judge its success". Nevertheless, many share the sentiments of Claire Morse, who said, "I'm having a good time teaching it."

The personal nature of the course is one of its principle aspects. The students are able to learn something about themselves as well as experience being a part of a working group. As a result, according to professor Martha Cooley the

present IDS class is much more actively involved in the course than others have been in the past.

The professors also consider journals, kept by students, to be an important part of the class. They provide what Charles Almy calls a "shake down", an introduction to in-depth analysis of the relations between their activities and reading material.

The students who were interviewed offered an even blend of both positive and negative comments. The most frequent favorable responses dealt with the opportunity to actually become involved in a hands-on manner and to be able to study ideas which they could actually apply to themselves. Amy Montgomery summed up the general positive feeling by

saying, "I'm finding that everything we do really does relate to myself."

Some students, however, voiced contrary opinions on these same issues. They feel that the activities are inadequate for conveying the theme of the course. Another derogatory comment frequently uttered by the IDS 101 students is directed at what they thought to be a vague relation between the woods project and the central theme of the course. The professors, however, feel that understanding of the section will come with further study and reading of its literature.



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