

PRESENTATION METHODS AND GOALS

The central idea of the presentations for this course is to give you opportunities to practice interdisciplinary thinking and expression. As such, the presentation should be interdisciplinary. Essentially, this means that you should try to use multiple presentation strategies and modalities. These might include (but are certainly not limited to) any of the following:

- Storytelling
- Poetry
- Music (playing)
- Drumming
- Singing
- Dance
- Movement
- Sport
- Ritual
- Film (showing)
- Film making
- Photography
- Web content
- Craft work
- Art making
- Individual reflection
- Meditation

- Health practices
- Creative process (any type)
- Group communication
- Cultural practices
- Nature experiences

Whenever possible (and workable), try to mix together multiple modalities into a single presentation. For example, you might ask the group to do some individual reflection using the modality of poetry, then create a series of movements based on the poetry, then work in small groups to talk about and share the process. Many configurations are possible. The trick is to choose an activity that you enjoy, then find a way to apply it to the content (suggested presentation topics are listed below). Please do not create your presentations using only written and/or spoken materials. In other words, don't just stand up at the front of the class and talk about the presentation topic. Utilize the energy of the group. Remember that in interdisciplinary work divergences are valued as unique opportunities. So, feel free to experiment with activities and modalities that may not seem, on the surface, to be related to the topic at hand but which might, upon experiment, yield surprising connections and results. Be playful. Allow yourself to laugh at yourself, to be embarrassed, to engage with the process in novel and interesting ways.

In interdisciplinary work, riddles and puzzles are highly prized. Accordingly, the presentations should (ideally) not be complete explanations or presentations of material. Feel free to play with challenging exercises, with impossible scenarios, and other conundra. One way to think about this is to consider insoluble riddles, such as the one in *Alice in Wonderland*: Why is a raven like a writing desk?

“Have you guessed the riddle yet?” the Hatter said,
turning to Alice again.

“No, I give it up,” Alice replied. “What’s the answer?”

“I haven’t the slightest idea,” said the Hatter.

“Nor I,” said the March Hare.

Alice sighed wearily. “I think you might do something better with the time,” she said, “than wasting it in asking riddles that have no answers.”

The best interdisciplinary topics offer more questions than answers. They, are essentially, gateways into the mysterious—which, as Einstein will tell you, is an important place to be:

The most beautiful thing we can experience is the mysterious. It is the source of all true art and science.

Suggested Topics for Interdisciplinary Presentations

- Akhenaten and the invention of monotheism
- Albrecht Durer and alchemy
- Aristotle’s book of comedy
- Bill Evans and the Peace Piece
- Buckminster Fuller and the geodesic
- Chenrizi and the politics of China
- Chuang Tzu and the butterfly
- Coleridge and the person from Porlock
- Csikszentmihalyi and the flow experience
- David Bohm’s Implicate Order
- Darwin, the bassoon, and the sundew
- Eugen Herrigel and the practice of archery
- Francis Yates and the *Art of Memory*

- Freud, Jung, and the “bosh” incident
- Fulcanelli and *Mysteries of the Cathedrals*
- Giordano Bruno and the Hermetic tradition
- Godel’s uncertainty principle
- Hanna Arendt at Nuremberg
- Henri Rousseau in the jungle
- Howard Carter and “wonderful things”
- Jacob Bronowski at Auschwitz
- Jacob Bronowski, Nagasaki, and *Science and Human Values*
- Jan Tschichold and the Nazis
- John Cage on the subway with the *I Ching*
- Kepler’s *Somnium*
- Mary Shelley and the genesis of *Frankenstein*
- Newton’s *Principia*
- Nikola Tesla and universal energy
- Philip K. Dick, VALIS, and 2-3-74
- Picasso, Guernica, and Expo 1937
- R.D. Laing and madness as reality
- Ramanujan’s notebooks
- Richard Feynman and the invention of quantum mechanics
- Schwaller de Lubicz at Karnak
- Simone Weil and leading from desire

- St. Exupery flying into the desert
- The Reimann Hypothesis
- The Voynich Manuscript
- The visions of Hildegard of Bingen
- Thoth's legacy
- Walter Benajmin and the Angel of History
- Wendell Berry going *Into the Woods*
- Wilhelm Reich's Cloudbuster
- William Blake's *Marriage of Heaven and Hell*