

Integrated Studies Program at ESG

With the Integrated Studies Program effectively gone, a group of former ISP students and instructors in the Experimental Study Group want to continue the ideals and goals of ISP as a seminar or class within ESG. Specifically, we want to use some of the materials and resources developed for ISP for a 9 unit HASS class next spring.

1 Structure

ISP was divided into a series of three to four sections or “modules”, each of which concentrated on a particular large technological topic in cultural context. The Integrated Studies Class in ESG (ESG-ISP) will use most of two previously developed modules for depth and parts of four others for variety. The class will start with a four week module on Samurai Swords and Blacksmithing, followed by smaller units on Cooking, Clocks, Andean Weaving, and Lowell, and end with a four week module on the Automobiles and Engines.

Like ISP, ESG-ISP will combine discussions of anthropology, history, and society with hands-on projects that tie theory and practice together. These discussions will center around such themes as the interaction between technology and culture and the difference between “skill” knowledge and “craft” knowledge.

Each module will include labs meant to create deeper understanding of the topics discussed.

2 Syllabus

This is organized as a sequence of class times. Each class time has associated readings and discussion.

1. **The Samurai Sword** (4 weeks)

Lab: 3 sessions in the MIT forge on self-selected projects.

- (a) Introduction to Japan
- (b) Video: The Making of a Katana
- (c) The Samurai’s Cultural Origins
- (d) Bushido and Samurai Codes
- (e) Zen and the Samurai

- (f) Civil War and Unification
 - (g) Giving Up the Gun
 - (h) The Tokugawa State
2. **Chinese Cooking and Food** (1 week)
- Lab: Chinese Cooking
- (a) The Context of Chinese Food
 - (b) The Interplay between Chinese Food and Culture
3. **John Harrison and Clocks** (1 week)
- Lab: Taking apart clocks
- (a) Harrison and the Longitude Problem
 - (b) Clock Design Issues and Engineering
4. **Andean Weaving** (2 weeks)
- Lab: Quipu-Making and Information
- Lab: Weaving (back-strap loom)
- (a) Purvian Textiles and Culture
 - (b) Quipus
 - (c) Peruvian Textile Techniques
 - (d) Textiles and their Functions
5. **Lowell and the Industrial Revolution** (1 week)
- Lab: Trip to Lowell
- (a) Industrial Revolution in Lowell
 - (b) Rise of the Mill Girls
6. **Automobiles and Engines** (4 weeks)
- Lab: Taking apart and rebuilding engines
- (a) Early History of the Automobile
 - (b) Engine Design and Engineering
 - (c) Suburbanization
 - (d) American Rites of Passage
 - (e) Car Stories
 - (f) Fast Food and American Culture
 - (g) Scientific Thinking, Zen, and Motorcycles
 - (h) Cultural Change and Progress

3 Requirements

The 9 units for this class will be divided as follows:

- Meeting Times - 4 hours per week, divided into two 1 hour meetings and one 2 hour meeting
- Reading - 3 hours per week, or about 60 pages per week
- Writing - 2 hours per week, or a total of about 13 pages

The one hour class meetings will normally be used for discussion and the two hour meeting for lab, however these may be switched around as convenient. The two hour meeting time will be between the one hour meetings during the week.

The reading will be about 30 pages per class meeting.

The writing will be split up into one 6-7 page paper, one 3-4 page paper, and a series of evaluation topic questions which will help us track students' reading. The papers will largely be on topics of the students' choice. The topic questions will ask for short answers (1-2 paragraphs) which require information from the readings, and will be administered (as take-home assignments) every week or two.

Grading breakdown:

- Participation - 40%
- Short Paper - 10%
- Long Paper - 30%
- Topic Questions - 20%

4 Funding

The following estimates are based on a 10 person class (which is near our upper enrollment limit).

This class will require pay for one undergraduate instructor (Amilio Aviles), plus the following costs for labs:

Blacksmithing:

Toby Bashaw will be running the forge sessions for \$700.

Chinese cooking:

Approximately \$120 for ingredients.

Clocks Workshop:

Approximately \$80 for clocks.

Andean Weaving:

Approximately \$100 for materials for both labs.

Weekly food:

An important part of ISP was the weekly lunch they provided. We would like to continue this tradition. It will cost approximately \$600.

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