International Political Economy: How interdisciplinary is Ray Miller’s new textbook?


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Overview of International Political Economy

International Political Economy: Contrasting World Views is an introduction to the field of international political economy (IPE). It builds on some of the key pre-disciplinary foundational ideas of classical political economy and attempts to present an interdisciplinary perspective to the field. However, it only partially succeeds in its integrative efforts. This review substantiates why this is the case by situating the perspectives discussed in International Political Economy: Contrasting World Views in the larger historical context of the evolution of Modern IPE and examining them in light of the conceptual distinctions between multidisciplinarity, interdisciplinarity, and transdisciplinarity.

Historically, the field today known as IPE originates in the pre-disciplinary field of study that is now known as classical political economy. With disciplinary specialization, the ideas proposed by Adam Smith, David Ricardo, Karl Marx, and those who followed them, came to constitute the modern academic disciplines of economics, political science, and sociology. This specialization in the subject matter by the creation of academic disciplines, with little cross-fertilization of ideas, however, was redressed in the 1980s in response to evidence of thickening relations and growing interdependence in the economies of different countries. In the sub-discipline of international relations (IR) in political science, the dominant Realist approach with its mechanistic logic and focus on security issues could not explain these developments and changes in the world economy. Modern IPE emerged in the United States as a subfield of IR countering Realism and creating space for the study of political economy as a domain distinct from security issues.¹

Those involved in constructing the “new” field of IPE relied on and adopted the ontological methodological individualism of neoclassical economics to produce new insights on cooperation and conflict in the international system. Epistemologically, the American school used the scientific method of positivism, and its scholarship was aimed at mid-range theorizing geared toward identifying empirical patterns by using “sophisticated” statistical and econometric methods. This perspective has been countered by continental approaches, in particular the “British School,” which rejects the methodological individualistic assumptions and eschews the scientific method over broader ethical and normative questions. While both these schools are taken into consideration when referring to IPE, American IPE is dominant or has become hegemonic in scope. According to

¹ Various scholars have been attributed with the founding of IPE and who most influenced the construction of the field in the early years as a subfield of IR. According to Cohen (2008) these “magnificent seven” were from English-speaking nations on both sides of the Atlantic, though Americans outnumbered the rest: Robert Cox, Robert Gilpin, Peter Katzenstein, Robert Keohane, Charles Kindleberger, Stephen Krasner, and Susan Strange.
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Lake (2006), “IPE should be seen as a substantive topic of inquiry, rather than a methodology in which economic models are applied to political phenomena—although scholars are in fact drawn to such methods [my emphasis].” However, critics of the American School see it as theoretically exclusionary since it draws mostly on neoclassical economics and is driven by the dictates of positivism which privileges rigorous quantitative analysis over other ways of knowing. Indeed, IPE as an academic field of study has also recently been called a “true interdiscipline” (Lake, 2006). By this, students of IPE indicate that while IPE began as an interdisciplinary field, integrating insights from political science and economics, in recent years it has become like a discipline—developing its own perspectives, journals, and professional associations. To remedy this, Cohen (2008, p. 2), suggests that in “the construction of IPE, it is not enough to build bridges between economics and politics. Bridges must be built between the field’s disparate schools too.”

International Political Economy: Contrasting World Views

Raymond Miller attempts to do just that in International Political Economy: Contrasting World Views. Miller, an emeritus professor at San Francisco State University and past president of the Association of Integrative Studies (AIS) proposes an integrative approach to IPE for building bridges within different schools of IPE and between different social sciences. Miller defines IPE as an “interdisciplinary social science field of study that investigates, analyzes, and proposes changes in the processes of economic flows and political governance that cross over and/or transcend national boundaries” (p. 2).

IPE: Contrasting World Views is organized around three contending perspectives: free market, multi-centric organizational (MCO), and Marxism. Each perspective or “world view” and its model are discussed in two linked chapters: The first articulates the assumptions and elements of the model, while the second illustrates how the model has been or can be applied to contemporary global events and problems (p. 13).

The first chapter outlines the scope of the field, which the author considers as a “central component of the interdisciplinary field of International Studies” (p. 1). Miller indicates that a new field of knowledge, which came to be known as classical political economy, emerged from those who were writing in response to changes that were taking place in industrializing societies in Europe. Adam Smith is associated with the market model of neoclassical economics, David Ricardo with the organizational power model of institutional political economy, and Karl Marx with his critical model of capitalism and subsequent elaborations. (Miller utilizes these as a starting point for each of the three competing world views.) In Miller’s treatment of the field, IPE does not remain limited nor is it seen as one of the subfields of International Relations; instead it returns to pre-disciplinary perspectives to try to reconstruct an interdisciplinary IPE.

The three perspectives generate insights into some of the foundational issues in IPE: whether markets are on balance productive and an efficient decision-making system; whether this decision-making system is efficient, especially when left unregulated (to its own devices—or that of greedy and unethical profit-oriented market actors); or that essential markets are a tool for exploitation and engender greater inequalities within and among societies. Miller does not take a position on these issues. Instead, these positions emerge in the discussion and application of the three world views.

While IPE: Contrasting World Views is attempting to be an interdisciplinary text, are there also multidisciplinary and transdisciplinary aspects? One of the tasks of this essay is to examine this question using insights from interdisciplinary studies. As Repko (2008) has indicated, often there is confusion in the use of the terms “interdisciplinary” and “multidisciplinary” as they tend to be used synonymously. Or, interdisciplinary efforts are actually multidisciplinary.

I propose that Miller’s “market model” typifies hegemonic multidisciplinarity or at most weak interdisciplinarity; the MCO model is an example of pragmatic and conceptual interdisciplinarity; and the Marxist model is transdisciplinary. However, taken as a whole, IPE Contrasting World Views is multidisciplinary and not truly interdisciplinary.

Is IPE: Contrasting World Views (in its constituent parts or taken as a whole) interdisciplinary, multidisciplinary or transdisciplinary? (continued on page 6)
Transdisciplinary team science:

Breaking new ground or reinventing the wheel?


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Introduction

Interdisciplinary collaboration, or “team science,” is now a hot topic in health science circles. Many crucial discoveries, such as the identification of the coronavirus that triggered the SARS epidemic a few years ago, were made possible not by “lone geniuses” but by collaboration among groups of people with diverse sorts of disciplinary expertise (Surowiecki, 2004, p. 160). Not surprisingly, therefore, organizations like the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Cancer Institute (NCI) have decided to dedicate significant resources to such team science initiatives.

Important questions have arisen, however, in relation to this new interdisciplinary field of “team science”—questions that will likely be familiar to many AIS members. These include how to define the boundaries of the field, what theoretical frameworks to use, how best to support interdisciplinary collaboration, and how to measure success (both in research terms and in practical policy outcomes).

The goal of this “Science of Team Science” supplement is to begin answering these questions and provide the field with “the conceptual coherence of a more established and widely recognized scientific paradigm” (p. 80). On the whole, it offers a very thoughtful and enlightened attempt to come to terms with the complexities of both human health and interdisciplinary collaboration.

However, the supplement is not without some clarification. In this supplement, it refers to large (50-200 person), multi-year, collaborative science initiatives that in most cases are geographically and institutionally dispersed (p. 78). Furthermore, only health science initiatives are discussed in these articles. Since human health is an enormously complex, multi-dimensional phenomenon—which draws upon disciplines as diverse as pharmacology, microbiology, medicine, nutrition, psychology, social work, epidemiology, ecology, and physical, occupational and recreation therapy—this narrowing (continued on page 4)

1 Virtually all of the authors adhere to Rosenfield’s (1992) definitions of multidisciplinary (disciplines coming together for a broader perspective), interdisciplinary (the above plus some integration of the disciplinary perspectives), and transdisciplinary (the development of “shared conceptual and methodological frameworks that not only integrate but transcend their respective disciplinary perspectives” (p. 79).

This delineation of terms differs somewhat from those found in AIS publications and many other sources. More commonly, the term interdisciplinary encompasses both integration and the emergence of transcendent perspectives. The term transdisciplinary, on the other hand, is typically used (by Europeans) to refer either to “a principle for a unity of knowledge beyond disciplines” or interdisciplinary approaches to “real world” problems involving multiple stakeholders, which require not only intellectual integration but also the political negotiation of conflicting interests (Newell, AIS Listserve communication, April 13, 2008; Wikipedia, 2008, http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Transdisciplinarity).
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of focus does not in any way limit
the importance and relevance of the
supplement.

Systems Perspectives

Systems perspectives, and more
recently complex systems perspectives,
are becoming influential in many
interdisciplinary fields. Health science
research is no exception. A number
of authors in the current supplement
write about the importance of viewing
individuals’ health issues from
wider, more complex and ecological
perspectives.

In “The Social Determinants of Cancer,”
for instance, Hiatt and Breen highlight
the need for a transdisciplinary,
multi-level approach to cancer research and
care—one that addresses not only the
biological nature of cancer and clinical
interventions, but also crucial behavioral,
social and environmental factors.

This “socioecologic” or “cells-to-
society” approach (p. 141) is shared
by Marbry et al. who describe current
research directions at the Office of
Behavioral and Social Sciences Research
(OBSSR). Some of their quite interesting
illustrations include graphical models of
the causes, diagnoses and treatments of
diabetes and the manner in which social
and environmental factors.

More explicitly oriented by complexity
science, Leischow et al. depict both
diseases and health care systems’
responses to them (including team
science initiatives) as complex, dynamic,
multifactoral, non-linear systems.
Traditional scientific disciplines’
knowledge “silos” are useful, they
write; but to truly address these complex
issues, one must take a transdisciplinary
approach that sees the silos as part of a
larger system (p. 197).

Unfortunately, these authors make very
little use of existing literature linking
interdisciplinarity with systems thinking
and complexity science. Both the AIS’s
Issues in Integrative Studies—most
notably the 2001 issue devoted to
complexity—and health care-related
publications connected to the Plexus
Institute (www.plexusinstitute.org)
have been theorizing this link for many
years. As a result of this omission, the
authors are forced to “re-invent the
wheel,” theoretically speaking, and their
speculations in this area are relatively
tentative and limited.

Conditions for Effective Collaboration

Getting people to work together
synergistically is always difficult.
Interdisciplinary collaboration presents
additional hurdles, in the form of the
epistemological and political tensions
that often exist between disciplines and
disciplinarians. A number of authors in
the supplement take on the topic of how
to support inter- and transdisciplinary
collaboration, as well as related
questions such as the special challenges
of leadership in these contexts.

Kessel and Rosenfield’s article, “Toward
Transdisciplinary Research: Historical
and Contemporary Perspectives,”
begins with a brief and interesting
history of transdisciplinary team health
science. The authors then identify
factors that either facilitate or constrain
collaboration, based on lessons
learned from successful programs in
the developed and developing world.
Factors that facilitate collaboration
include having complex problems to
work on, a common language, trust
and respect, institutional support, and
adequate communication technologies.
Constraining factors include power
differences, limited resources, and the
lack of integrative research frameworks
and practical “how-to” models (p. 230).

Few previous studies have been done on
collaboration within the specific area of
transdisciplinary team science. Stokols
et al. therefore draw upon research
from management, social psychology,
and several other related areas in order
to propose an ecological “typology”
of influences on transdisciplinary
collaboration. This typology embraces
a variety of levels: intrapersonal,
interpersonal, organizational,
technological, sociopolitical, and
physical environment. Interpersonal
factors, to provide one concrete
illustration, include team members’
diversity of views and flexibility as well
as the need for regular communication
and the development of shared goals (p.
109).

Gray’s article, “Enhancing
Transdisciplinary Research Through
Collaborative Leadership,” focuses on
how leadership can enable team science
and the special challenges leaders face in
transdisciplinary research. Based mostly
on a review of leadership literature, the
author identifies three crucial types of
leadership tasks: cognitive tasks (related
to vision, building conceptual bridges,
and so on), structural tasks (including
the need for information exchange,
conflict management, and making sure
that everyone is heard), and processual
tasks (for example, building trust and
establishing ground rules) (pp. 125-127).

While these and several other articles
contribute to discussion surrounding
the issue of nurturing trans- and
interdisciplinary collaboration, they too,
I submit, fail to recognize significant
bodies of literature that have addressed
these issues before. The personal
and interpersonal characteristics
associated with successful collaboration
have been a frequently discussed
topic in theoretical literature on
interdisciplinarity ever since Petrie’s
(1976) classic article “Do You See
What I See? The Epistemology of
Interdisciplinary Enquiry.” Guidelines
offered in AIS-linked publications
for drawing upon and integrating
disciplinary perspectives—often referred
to as “steps in the interdisciplinary
process”—also address this issue, for
example, through processes such as role
negotiation and finding common ground.
In the health care field specifically, *The Journal of Interprofessional Care* publishes many insightful articles every year concerning the conditions for successful collaboration. Not surprisingly, these articles stress many of the same things, including trust, respect, regular communication, the negotiation of conflicts, institutional support, and the importance of integrative frameworks.

No doubt large scale transdisciplinary team science initiatives have some unique characteristics. But that did not stop some of the authors from borrowing heavily, for example, from management literature. Once again, therefore, the supplement claims to be exploring “new territory” that is neither as new nor as unoccupied as the authors assume.

**Issues of Methodology, Evaluation and Measurement**

Team health science research is doubly complex. In the first place, it studies dynamic, multidimensional health-related systems (from “cells to societies”) with innumerable variables. In the second, its large-scale, transdisciplinary teams are faced with the necessity of negotiating among multiple paradigmatic perspectives and varied measures of success. Issues of methodology, evaluation and measurement therefore merit careful consideration.

The authors in this supplement do indeed give this topic careful and detailed consideration. However, they do so primarily from a quantitative and modernist perspective. There seems to be a pervasive assumption that the study of interdisciplinary teamwork is a science—in the traditional sense—and that teams of researchers and their products can be understood and supportively engineered with the same sort of predictability, precision, and generalizability of other phenomena studied by natural and health scientists (chemical reactions, molecular structures, and so on). Perhaps this approach reflects the disciplinary background of the authors.

The concluding article, for instance, stresses the importance of building “a strong science base that can be synthesized and generalized” (p. 249). Similarly, In “Measuring Collaboration and Transdisciplinary Integration in Team Science,” Masse et al. discuss their development of “psychometrically valid” evaluations for teamwork. This includes three scales to assess collaborative processes (satisfaction with the collaboration, impact of collaboration, trust and respect) and one scale to assess transdisciplinary integration.

Hall et al.’s article also addresses the complexities of collaboration and integration. They introduce and test new scale-based measures for assessing both collaborative readiness and near term markers of collaborative process. The former focuses, for example, on team members’ prior collaborative experience and their perceptions of available resources. The latter is more concerned with factors such as equality, trust, and regular communication.

Holmes et al. shift the focus from the complexity of team collaboration to the complexity of the health systems these teams study. Based on research conducted by the Centers for Population Health and Health Disparities (CPHHD) program, the authors highlight the challenges involved in researching and measuring multifaceted topics like health disparities (that is, gaps in the quality of health and health care across economic, social, racial, and cultural groups).

These challenges include collecting and comparing data from many different sites, methods for dealing with interactions between multiple levels, and the need for explanatory theoretical frameworks (pp. 186-190). Optimistically, they note that “[e]ach of these challenges represents an opportunity for transdisciplinary science to evolve” (p. 191).

The AIS’s own Julie Klein, not surprisingly, takes a less modernist, less narrowly scientific approach than many of the above authors. In “Evaluation of Interdisciplinary and Transdisciplinary Research: A Literature Review,” she suggests “seven generic principles of evaluation” for team science. These principles emphasize variability of goals, methodological pluralism, the negotiation of epistemic differences, the difficulty of separating cognitive, social, and contextual aspects of collaboration, and the need to adjust evaluative criteria as research evolves and unpredictable outcomes emerge.

In effect, Klein uses transdisciplinary science researchers’ own literature to complicate and challenge the idea of any sort of linear, simple or settled evaluation procedure:

…interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary research process and evaluation are grounded in the philosophy of constructivism. Appropriate evaluation is made, not given. It evolves through a dialogue of conventional and expanded indicators of quality…a single-best or universal method…would be antithetical to the multidimensionality and context-specific nature of interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary work. (pp. 122-123)

The other authors’ aspirations for strong scientific foundations, general agreement, and universally applicable methods for the field of transdisciplinary team science may therefore be difficult or impossible to achieve.

**Final Thoughts**

This supplement clearly offers a

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compendious and intelligent attempt to address the wide range of complex issues associated with transdisciplinary team science research. Indeed, a few very interesting articles have not yet been discussed in this review.

These include Nash’s article on transdisciplinary training for individual scientists and Hesse’s technology-oriented article on the mutually supportive relationship between “cyber-infrastructures,” systems perspectives and team science. Another fascinating article is Emmons et al.’s discussion of the role of transdisciplinary teams in creating highly effective health communication programs—thus facilitating the dissemination and translation of health care research. The most compelling of these programs were two award-winning websites, “Your Disease Risk” (http://www.yourdiseaserisk.wustl.edu) and “Cancer Control PLANET” (http://cancercontrolplanet.cancer.gov).

As we have seen, though, the supplement is not without its problems. These include the assumption that interdisciplinary teamwork can be exhaustively understood in traditional scientific terms and a failure to take into account relevant literature from communities such as the AIS and interprofessional health care practitioners.

To these I will add one final criticism. The authors’ impressive scientific sophistication seems in many cases to be counterbalanced by a political naivety—or at least a failure to take into account the wider political ramifications of their research. Tensions between departments and disciplines are acknowledged in the supplement, but the potential of inter- and transdisciplinary research to threaten the political status quo is not.

For instance, several of the authors assert that socioeconomic factors like income disparities have deep health consequences and that national policymakers ought to take this into account. This assertion is not politically innocuous or “neutral”; it leads one inescapably towards discussions of wealth redistribution. And any suggestions along those lines would face more than just academic opposition. Indeed, they would almost certainly draw the ire of entrenched economic interests—not to mention accusations of socialism. The authors’ omission of such political issues may point to a need to make the study of team science even more transdisciplinary and include social scientists in future conversations.

References


Humanities & Family Conference in Chicago

The Humanities and the Family Conference will be presented by the Institute for the Humanities at the University of Illinois at Chicago March 13-14, 2009.

The conference will explore the contributions of the disciplines of the Humanities to debating and constructing ideas and representations of the family. Based on the premise that conceptions of the family are wide-ranging and continually transforming, the conference will ask what constitutes a family, examining this question from the perspective of history, literature, law, and ethics. Topics considered will include inheritance, marriage, work, religious and utopian communities, violence, children, the relation of the family to the community, the nation, and the state, and changing conceptions of genders and sexualities.

The conference is free and open to the public, but registration is required. For more information, go to http://www.uic.edu/depts/huminst/conferences.shtml or contact Linda Vavra Associate Director, Institute for the Humanities, 701 South Morgan, MC 206, University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago, IL 60607-7040; 312-996-6354 or lvavra@uic.edu.

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Repko (2008) points out that both multidisciplinarity and interdisciplinarity seek to overcome disciplinary monism, but in different ways. Multidisciplinarity limits its activity to appreciating different disciplinary perspectives, applying perspectives from different disciplines to complex problems. They do not take a further step of “integrating and synthesizing” the insights of each discipline to create a new way of thinking about the complex problem that also takes into account the other perspective(s). Simply put, a multidisciplinary approach does not undertake the task of integration. An interdisciplinary study also examines the contested terrain—problems or questions that are the focus of several disciplines. More importantly, in addition to focusing on the contested space between two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge, an interdisciplinary reconsilces disciplinary perspectives through the process of integration to produce specific insights about a multi-faceted or complex problem. I quote here the definition of interdisciplinary research by the National Academy of Sciences, National Academy of Engineering, and the Institute of Medicine (2005), which is cited by Repko:
Interdisciplinary research (IDR) is a mode of research by teams or individuals that integrates information, data, techniques, tools, perspectives, concepts, and/or theories from two or more disciplines or bodies of specialized knowledge to advance fundamental understanding or to solve problems whose solutions are beyond the scope of a single discipline or area of research practice. (p. 39)

Thus, both multidisciplinary and interdisciplinary studies focus on the contested space between different disciplines or fields of study. However, interdisciplinarity breaks from disciplinary theories, concepts, and methods by selecting those that are appropriate to a problem and integrates perspectives from different disciplines and fields of study to produce new insights. Finally, transdisciplinarity has been defined in Repko (2008, p. 15) as, “the application of theories, concepts, or methods across disciplines and sectors of society by including stakeholders in the public and private domains with the intent of developing an overarching synthesis [my emphasis].”

Interdisciplinary, Multidisciplinary, or Transdisciplinary? Contrasting Free Market, Multi-centric Organizational (MCO), and Marxism

Miller begins by fleshing out the “market model” as a simplified construction derived from neoclassical economics. Within IPE, this perspective is associated with the American School and as earlier indicated has generated much debate about its disproportionate influence on the field. From the perspective of critics, the “politics” in IPE has been co-opted by a narrow utilitarian perspective of neoclassical economics. Thus one could argue that the market model indicates hegemonic cross-disciplinarity—the co-optation of one disciplinary perspective (neoclassical economics) over another.

The MCO perspective integrates two schools of thought—institutionalism and neo-Ricardianism and serves as a counterpoint to the Market Model. This model is Miller’s innovation, a way to synthesize the insights of various scholars (for example, Ricardo, Sraffa, Polanyi, Veblen, and in particular inspired by John Kenneth Galbraith) into a holistic framework (or world view) that generates new insights on how things work in the political economy (which in this case is a capitalist political economy). The MCO model meets all the integrationist criteria of interdisciplinarity, converting the “fruit salad into a smoothie” (quoted in Repko, 2008).

In the classical Marxist model Miller discusses Marx’s scholarship, which is pre-disciplinary and foundational for social science disciplines. But as Miller notes, “the scope of his [Marx’s] work went far beyond the boundaries of today’s specialized academic disciplines. Marx’s transcendent analyses and theoretical frameworks are applicable to many fields, certainly to all of the social sciences, but even to the arts and sciences” (p. 174). Here, we see that Miller considers Marx and the Marxist model to be “transdisciplinary.” Lattuca, cited by Repko, states that transdisciplinarity is “the application of theories and concepts or methods across disciplines with the intent of developing an overarching synthesis” (Lattuca, 2001, p. 83, quoted in Repko, p. 15). In other words, Miller’s Marxist model is transdisciplinary because its theories, concepts, and methods are not borrowed from one or more disciplines (since classical Marxism is pre-disciplinary) and applied to a specific problem, but rather applies principles of historical

4 One of shortcomings of the textbook is its emphasis on dated theories of classical Liberalism and classical Marxism. The framework would be topical and of greater interest to future generations of students who would be interested in critical and problem-solving theories if it had included more recent innovations in Neoliberal Institutional theories and Neo-Marxist critical theories. or dialectical materialism and a labor theory of value to critique industrial capitalism.

Taken as a whole, IPE: Contrasting World Views utilizes different perspectives, concepts, and theories to understand a complex problem (the market economy) and an intellectual question (how to make sense of capitalist markets). Each model is first outlined conceptually and applied in specific domains to outline and solve problems. From our understanding of the distinctions between interdisciplinarity and multidisciplinarity, IPE: Contrasting World Views is more “multidisciplinary” than “interdisciplinary.” In the concluding chapter, Miller restates and summarizes the assumptions of the models and leaves the task of integration unfinished. The three perspectives are applied to different problem areas, but not integrated to generate new insights that otherwise are not possible. IPE: Contrasting World Views thus proposes an integrative approach to IPE, but it does not fully succeed in making the text truly interdisciplinary.

Miller has left these tasks of integration for faculty and students, allowing IPE: Contrasting World Views to be an optic through which to explore and test their own world views on political economy. They can select the market model and be disciplinary, juxtapose the three models and be multidisciplinary, or attempt to be interdisciplinary by synthesizing the insights from all three models to propose a new way of understanding how the political economy works.

References


CALL FOR PROPOSALS
31st Annual Association for Integrative Studies Conference
October 8-11, 2009
Hosted by the University of Alabama

Creativity and Play Across the Disciplines

“Creativity and Play Across the Disciplines” is the theme of the 31st annual conference of the Association for Integrative Studies, which will be hosted by the University of Alabama October 8-11, 2009, in Tuscaloosa, Alabama.

Proposals are welcome for presentations in multiple formats, including, but not limited to, roundtable discussions, integrated panels, single papers, and performances that address issues such as:

- Creativity as Core Educational Value – creativity as assessment outcome; arts participation and general education; creative capacity as distinct intelligence; creativity and empathy; creativity as introduction to diversity; creativity and the integrative learning process; creativity and interdisciplinarity; leadership and the arts; the arts in the non-arts classroom; creativity and professionalism.
- Creativity and Collaboration – building innovative campus collaborations amongst artists and engineers, scientists, designers, and others; creativity as a paradigm to bridge the “divisions” of humanities, natural and social sciences; interdisciplinary research on creativity; creativity, entrepreneurship and career development; invention, innovation, and economic growth.
- Creativity as a Means of Integrating Campus and Community Economies – community/campus arts partnerships; confronting deficiencies in K-12 arts education; supporting students as arts entrepreneurs; creativity and community renewal; creativity and the knowledge economy; culture as an economic base.

Proposals (250 words) should be sent to AISconference@bama.ua.edu by March 15, 2009, and the conference committee expects to respond to proposal writers by May 15, 2009.