

# Create Your Own Path

## Office of Interdisciplinary Studies

### Fall 2017 Newsletter



#### Fall 2017

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#### Letter from the Director

Welcome to the Fall Semester, Friends of Interdisciplinary Studies at UCF!

As the new director of Interdisciplinary Studies, first let me express what a privilege it is to be at UCF in this program. Although I have only been here since the beginning of August, I've been impressed with the achievements of our students, the dedication of our faculty to learning in and out of the classroom, and the focus of our advisors on helping students find their path – both on campus and in life. In some ways, I feel as if my professional career has been preparing me to work with interdisciplinary studies since my first week as an undergraduate.

I started as a physics major at the University of Southern California in 1986, intending to be a petroleum engineer. I saw a future as a well-paid expatriate, living overseas and retiring early. My plan saw some hiccups, including a D in "Introductory Chemistry" and a C- in "The Physics of Waves and Light." Soon thereafter, I switched to political science, but continued to struggle, dropping a research course, and not being sure of anything in my future. I liked many things, but was not passionate about anything enough to sign my name to a new major. Finally, a course on Korean history, and an encouraging professor, convinced me that history was the right field for me. Even though I went on to earn a Ph.D. in European history, I have many times considered other careers: financial planner, intelligence analyst, corporate trainer, and active duty soldier. Even as a historian, I have not been able to confine myself to one area, finding questions worth asking not just in Spanish history, which is my main specialty, but in the Middle East, women's history, economics, the Holocaust, military history, even in the unfolding of US foreign policy. Finally, as a member of the Army Reserve, I have taken every opportunity to learn new skills, from personnel policies to law enforcement to humanitarian operations. I say all of this to point out not only that changing your trajectory – for example, from a highly structured major to IDS – is perfectly acceptable, and even encouraged. Our hope in IDS is that we will help you have "*This is where I belong!*" moments, both in your courses and in your professional experiences. Certainly since August I've felt IDS is where I belong, and take as a personal obligation the task of helping as many students as possible to feel the same way.

Sincerely, Dr. Wayne H. Bowen

# Interdisciplinary Studies in the News



**Dr. Wayne H. Bowen**

## Introducing our new Director, Dr. Wayne Bowen

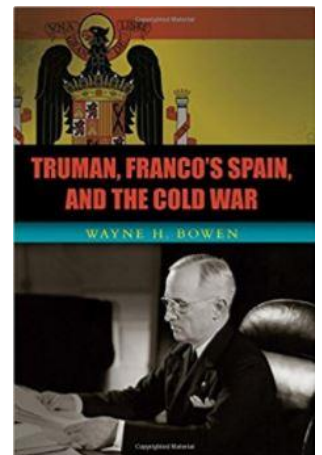
Dr. Wayne Bowen became Director of Interdisciplinary Studies on August 1, 2017. He earned his M.A. and Ph.D. in European History from Northwestern University, a B.A. in History from the University of Southern California, and is also a Professor of History at UCF. He was formerly the Director of University Studies and Chair of the Department of History at Southeast Missouri State University. Dr. Bowen's research has focused on Spanish history, with five published books in this field, and two additional ones on the Middle East. He says that as someone who changed his major from physics to history as an undergraduate, and his career plan from petroleum engineer to historian, he identifies with IDS students seeking to find their own academic and professional paths.

Dr. Bowen is also a Colonel in the US Army Reserve, with completed tours in Bosnia and Iraq.

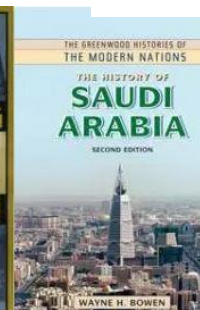
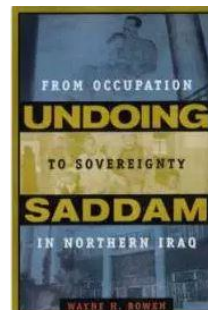
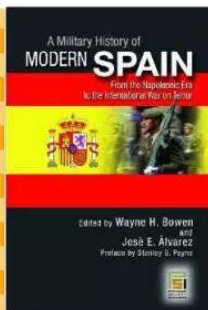
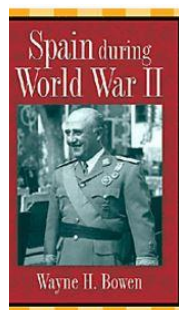
Dr. Bowen's published work includes *Spaniards and Nazi Germany: Collaboration in the New Order* (2000) and *Spain during World War II* (2006), both published by the University of Missouri Press. In addition, he published a co-edited volume *A Military History of Modern Spain* (Praeger, 2007), followed by *Undoing Saddam: From Occupation to Sovereignty in Northern Iraq* (Potomac Books, 2007) and then *History of Saudi Arabia 2nd Ed.* (Greenwood Press, 2014).

Dr. Bowen's interest in Middle Eastern affairs developed during his 2004 tour in Iraq. During that time he served as a civil affairs officer in charge of higher education and antiquities in Nineveh province. His duties in Iraq included the protection of the region's ancient heritage, relics, and historic archeological sites. It was this work that inspired his last two book about this area of the world.

His most recent book, *Truman, Spain, and the Cold War* (2017) was published by the University of Missouri Press. The book provides an understanding of United States policy toward Spain during Franco's authoritarian dictatorship and Harry S. Truman's presidency. The delays in the alliance that eventually developed had profound repercussions in defense and foreign policy at the height of the Cold War. His research for it took place both in the United States, Spain, and through a multinational consortium of scholars funded by the European Union, the Kingdom of Spain, and the Universitat Rovira I Virgili, Tarragona, Catalonia, Spain.



Dr. Bowen's areas of research have focused on modern European and Middle Eastern history. He has published seven books on these areas of research.



Dr. Bowen's door is always open to students who'd like to stop in and talk. His office is located in Classroom Building 1, Suite 302, and his e-mail is [Wayne.Bowen@ucf.edu](mailto:Wayne.Bowen@ucf.edu).



# Interdisciplinary Studies in the Spotlight

*This is the latest addition to a series of short articles featuring Interdisciplinary Studies students and graduates and the way they have created their own path within the program. The three degree tracks and wide variety of course selections allow students to pursue multiple interests.*

Life as an undergraduate at UCF is quite different than life as a deployed Marine infantry soldier. Sergeant Joel Skinner has found a balance between these two roles in his life, however, and graduated with his degree in Interdisciplinary Studies in 2017. With a long list of accomplishments already to his credit, including a private pilot's license, being a recipient of a Naval Achievement Medal and Meritorious Promotion to name just a few, Joel's introductory words in his IDS e-portfolio provide insight to what has motivated him thus far. He wrote that his father taught him to "Do something you enjoy and you'll never work for a living." He said that during his childhood and early adulthood, if he wasn't playing sports, he was working as an ocean rescue lifeguard or working in a friend's woodworking shop. "I learned the importance of leadership, mental and physical endurance, and a genuine pride in what I do for the United States Marine Corps. In everything I do, I always ask myself if I'm enjoying it. More times than not, the answer is "Yes. Funny how that works," he added.



**Joel Skinner UCF IDS '17**



**Sergeant Joel Skinner, IDS graduate 2017**

Joel began at UCF in 2008 as a business major, but took a break and joined the United States Marine Corp. He returned to UCF in the Fall of 2016 to finish his degree and decided that Interdisciplinary Studies was a better fit for him and his aspirations. "IDS was a perfect fit for not only my schedule and location," (which he said required him to take all classes online), "but also the IDS approach to complex problems fits seamlessly into the Marine mindset. Integration of multiple perspectives and disciplines is a concept that I use every day on the job, so it was an obvious choice when selecting this degree."

Joel has taken a full course load that is 100% online, an option that has allowed him to push forward in with his academic work while being deployed. He said he has been forward deployed on his third deployment since the beginning of the year, but that it's all work he enjoys. Upon completion of his degree, he'll submit an Officer Candidate package to the Marine Corp. "I love leading Marines, the lifestyle, and my brothers, so I want to continue

pushing myself. The next logical step to push myself forward is to commission as a Marine Officer." In order to qualify for this, a four-year degree is required. "IDS is a perfect fit for my future in the Marines," Joel said. He cited the program, instructors, and staff at UCF for their understanding of his unique schedule and how those things helped him reach his goals.

"I honestly wouldn't be successful without them!" The advice he has for someone in his type of situation is to "Just go for it. The only thing holding you back is you. All it takes is that initial first step. After that, just keep pushing yourself and never lose sight of your goals!"

*"Just go for it. The only thing holding you back is you."*

*-Joel Skinner, IDS Graduate and Marine Corps Sergeant*

## Got Creativity? A Look at How IDS Shapes Lives

*Christy Teele graduated in December 2016 with a Bachelor of Arts degree in Interdisciplinary Studies. Her two areas of study were Psychology and Humanities with a minor in Human Communication.*

In 2010, Christy Teele left her career of 35 years to spend time with and care for her ailing mother. What she didn't expect was that the time they'd have together would be limited and that she'd lose her mom just a few months later. Christy said that this loss served as a catalyst of sorts, and she decided the time was right to earn the bachelor's degree she had always wanted. "I was determined to make the rest of my life "count," and to not have any regrets later in life," she said. Working on her degree filled the void that her mom's passing had left, and it kept her busy. "I set my goal and was determined to see it through," she recounted. She also admitted that she felt a deep need to prove to herself that she could earn this degree.

When she first heard about Interdisciplinary Studies, she said she knew it was exactly what she wanted. "I love learning and this degree gave me such a wide variety of subjects and experiences that I enjoyed. The idea of using more than one discipline to solve a complex problem reminded me of skills I have needed in my job and in my life." She added that she liked the fact that the degree provided her with more job opportunities to choose from and a more well-rounded academic background. Christy Teele's professional background is in the banking industry, and she currently works in it as Relationship Manager. "I know this degree makes me a more valuable employee and there are opportunities available for me, if and when I want to pursue them."

When asked about her most memorable experiences at UCF, she said that the feeling she got when first reading a new class's course syllabus and schedule is one she'll never forget. She said that it seemed like she wanted to drop out of each class after reading its syllabus because she thought there'd be no way she could do all that was required. "I didn't even know what some of the terms were," she said, and cited the fact that APA and MLA writing styles were just two of many new things she learned and became comfortable with during her time as an undergraduate. The first time she felt this way in a class she said she turned to the student next to her and voiced her concerns. That student gave advice that Christy said stayed with her every time she worried that she wasn't smart enough to complete a course. Her fellow student suggested that she give it a week or two before making any decisions about dropping a course so that she knew she had at least tried. She also told Christy that she wasn't alone with that feeling. "Everyone has those same feelings," Christy said she told her. Christy took this student's advice and ended up staying and earning the highest grade in that class of any of her classes. Remembering that there's a whole semester to complete the work outlined in the syllabus and course schedule helped to keep things in perspective, she said. Christy also cited several memorable interactions with her professors as things that stand out to her. She said she mistook one for a student and was surprised when he went to the front of the room to begin class. She also recalled how another professor asked if she could use one of her writings as an example to her next class as to how to overcome obstacles in life.

*"Don't be afraid to ask for help--- there are many resources available to you."*

-Christy Teele, IDS Graduate

Advice from Christy to other students is to never give up and to never be afraid. "Don't be afraid to ask for help--- there are many resources available to you," she said. When challenges in life come up, she said that she reminds herself that if she could succeed with the hardest courses that she took while earning her degree, then she can do anything. From the loss that motivated her to come to UCF has come a new season of growth and opportunity for this Interdisciplinary Studies graduate---one Christy Teele says she looks forward to with enthusiasm, and with her UCF degree in hand.



**Christy Teele**  
**Bachelor of Arts IDS '16**

# Interdisciplinary Studies Summer '17 Graduates



## Congratulations to ALL of our Summer 2017 Interdisciplinary Studies Graduates!

The Office of Interdisciplinary Studies congratulates the following Interdisciplinary Studies Program Top Graduates on their outstanding academic achievements:

### Summa Cum Laude

B.S. in Interdisciplinary Studies: *Chanelle Stillwagon*

B.S. IDS, Environmental Studies: *Blaire Kleiman*

### Magna Cum Laude

B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies: *Rachel Additon*

### Cum Laude

B.S. Interdisciplinary Studies: *Rice Spencer*  
*Drew Newman*

B.A. Interdisciplinary Studies: *Regina Marchionda*

B.S. IDS Environmental Studies: *Elizabeth Lujan*

## News from the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies

Lots has been happening up in the Interdisciplinary Studies Office in Suite 302 on the third floor of Classroom Building 1! At the end of July, we bid farewell to our Interim Director, **Dr. Claudia Schippert**, and welcomed a new director, **Dr. Wayne H. Bowen**, along with a number of other new team members.

**James Smith** joined us as an advisor from Columbia College in Columbia Missouri, where he was the Director of Recruitment. A native from Georgia, James served in the US Navy for 23 years. In addition to being happily married with five kids, he says he's a big sports fan with Atlanta Falcons, the Braves, and the Hawks as his favorite teams.

Other changes include the change from the title of our IDS Transition Advisors to Scheduling Advisors. We welcome the following Scheduling Advisors to our IDS office staff:

- **Tiffany Mobeck**, IDS Student, Psychology Minor and areas of study in Education and Communication
- **Bianca Krige**, IDS Student, Sociology Minor and areas of study in Commerce and Communication, and whose post-graduation goal includes a career in Human Resources
- **Dannielle Withall**, IDS Student, Business Minor and areas of study in Communication and Behavioral and Social Sciences

At our front desk you'll find IDS students who are our IDS Program Assistant and Receptionist

- **Joanna Hoyt**, Program Assistant, IDS – Women's Studies track with interests that include advocating for women's rights
- **Kendra Williams**, receptionist, IDS major: Sociology Minor and areas of study in Health and Commerce



There is always lots happening in the Office of Interdisciplinary Studies in Classroom Building 1, and we look forward to seeing **you** there soon!

(Pictured left, from left back clockwise: Joanna Hoyt, Program Assistant; Amy van Epps, Advisor; Karen Baxley, Advisor; Miriam Rosario, IDS Office Manager; Luisa Cintron, Advisor; and Iris Rios, IDS Administrative Assistant.)



# Interdisciplinary Studies Dates to Remember

## Fall 2017

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
Oct. 1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	9 Academic Advising	10 Academic Advising	11 Academic Advising	12 Academic Advising	13 Academic Advising	14
15	16 Academic Advising Intent to Graduate opens for Spring '18	17 Academic Advising	18 Spring '18 Academic Advising plus Enrollment Appointment Date & Time on myUCF	19 Academic Advising	20 Academic Advising	21
22	23	24	25	26	27	28
29	30 Registration for Spring '18 begins	31 Meet the Dean Luncheon with IDS Students 11 am-12:30 pm	Nov. 1	2	3	4
5	6 Deadlines for: Grade Forgiveness, Last day to Reinstate Drop for Nonpayment, and Withdrawal	7	8	9	10	11
12	13	14 The Peacemaker film screening at UCF's Main Stage Theater 6 pm Free	15	16	17	18



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Join the **Interdisciplinary Studies Student Society** at its next upcoming meeting: The Society is fifteen members strong and growing! Contact Dr. Sharon Woodill for more information at [Sharon.Woodill@ucf.edu](mailto:Sharon.Woodill@ucf.edu).

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# Interdisciplinary Studies Upcoming Events

***THE PEACEMAKER***, an award-winning film about one man's journey to contribute to peace within the world and within himself. **Nov. 14 at 6 pm in UCF's Main Stage Theater**



## ABOUT

2016 | USA | 90 mins

Documentary

THE PEACEMAKER follows international peacemaker Padraig O'Malley, who helps make peace for others but struggles to find it for himself.

The film takes us from Padraig's isolated life in Cambridge, Massachusetts to some of the most dangerous crisis zones on Earth – from Northern Ireland to Kosovo, Nigeria to Iraq over five years – as he works a peacemaking model based on his recovery from addiction. We meet Padraig in the third act of his life in a race against time to find some kind of salvation for both the world and himself.

The IDS program is sponsoring a screening of the award-winning documentary, [The Peacemaker](#) at 6 pm on November 14, in the Main Stage UCF Theater. View the movie trailer [here](#), and we think you'll agree it's a movie worth making time for. One of our goals in the Interdisciplinary Studies program is to encourage our students to think differently, to become elite perspective takers, and to develop the creative skills to cultivate common ground and build bridges across seemingly impassable terrain.

*The Peacemaker* features the story of Padraig O'Malley, an elite perspective taker and international mediator who has worked in promoting reconciliation in Ireland, South Africa, and other troubled areas. The documentary not only charts his global experiences, but the challenges he faces balancing his own heart and personal struggles. This program is sure to speak to Interdisciplinary Studies students due to the multidisciplinary approach he takes to his diplomacy, as well as the complexities of his own life. We look forward to seeing you at this free presentation at UCF's Main Stage Theater.