



**SelfDesign**

**SELFDISIGN GRADUATE INSTITUTE**

Learner Handbook and Catalog

2017

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**SELFDISIGNINSTITUTE.ORG**

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## Welcome Message from the President

*“SelfDesign is centered on the understanding that we as human beings have the capacity to author our own lives from a place of resourcefulness, creativity, and possibility. At every step in the life cycle from early childhood to elderhood, we can lead and design our own learning through spirals of discovery, introspection, integration, and expression.”*

This is the central insight that guides our work at the SelfDesign Graduate Institute.

If your own knowing and/or feeling resonates with this insight, we invite you to join us on a path of learning that will enhance and expand your knowledge, deepen and enliven your wisdom, open your heart even more, and develop your skills.

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute is a unique learning community, where both the learners and the faculty are committed to the integrity and capacity of each human being to design her/his own learning—and life. We hold those commitments deeply, because we believe that the more that human beings can discover and enact their own life designs and purposes, the more they will be able to contribute to the creation of a peaceful, sustainable global society on this planet.

David Marshak  
*President*

**The SelfDesign Graduate Institute is authorized by the Washington Student Achievement Council and meets the requirements and minimum educational standards established for degree-granting institutions under the Degree-Granting Institutions Act. This authorization is subject to periodic review and authorizes the SelfDesign Graduate Institute to offer specific degree programs. The Council may be contacted for a list of currently authorized programs. Authorization by the Council does not carry with it an endorsement by the Council of the institution or its programs. Any person desiring information about the requirements of the act or the applicability of those requirements to the institution may contact the Council at PO Box 43430, Olympia WA 98504-3430.**

## Mission and Objectives Statement

SelfDesign is centered on the understanding that we as human beings have the capacity to author our own lives from a place of resourcefulness, creativity, and possibility. At every step in the life cycle from early childhood to elderhood, we can lead and design our own learning through spirals of discovery, introspection, integration, and expression.

SelfDesign as an understanding of human potential leads to SelfDesign as a learner-directed, enthusiasm-based educational methodology, based on curiosity, wonder, joy, and integrity. SelfDesign promotes authentic self-discovery and respect for the rights of all learners, young and old, to assume responsibility for their own learning paths.

While SelfDesign begins with the individual, it is also centered on the understanding that human beings live within webs of living systems: family; community; ethnic, religious, and national groups; humanity; ecological niche, bioregion, and planet. So both as a philosophical stance and as an educational methodology, SelfDesign focuses on the individual in the context her/his identity within all of these living systems.

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute offers graduate programs that engage its learners in learning about SelfDesign both as a philosophical stance and as an educational methodology while employing the values and methods of SelfDesign. The intent of these programs is to prepare learners to act effectively in societies throughout the world to facilitate and foster SelfDesign programs and experiences—and many other kinds of learning experiences and programs aligned in values with SelfDesign—for people of all ages in a variety of settings, including mediated-and-networked homeschooling, schools, colleges, communities, and various adult learning contexts.

The fundamental belief within SelfDesign is that the more that human beings can discover and enact their own life designs and purposes, the more they will be able to contribute to the creation of a peaceful, sustainable global society on this planet.

Given this mission, our objectives include the following:

- To nurture our learners as they gain greater access both to their inner knowing and their insight about how they want to selfdesign their Master of Arts program and their lives;
- To provide each learner with an ecology of foundational insights, understandings, and skills through our Core courses, with a focus on SelfDesign, epistemology, ontology, systems concepts, and learning in community;
- To engage our learners in rigorous and challenging academic work that supports the learning plans they have selfdesigned and to provide careful mentoring through this process;
- To engage our learners deeply as whole persons—body, heart, mind, and soul—as they selfdesign and engage in their M.A. program; and

- To support our learners as they use the knowledge, wisdom, and tools they gain in their M.A. program to make a positive difference in their world.

## **Programs of Study**

### **Master of Arts in SelfDesign**

Learners who complete the *Master of Arts in SelfDesign* will gain a complex and systemic understanding of the principles and tools of SelfDesign, including Self-Authorship, Co-Inspiration, the SelfDesign Life Spiral, the SelfDesign Four Aspects and Four Transitions, and the SelfDesign CognoSphere, Life Mandala, Paragon, and Life Matrix. Learners will have developed initial mastery in the application of all of these tools to their own personal SelfDesign process, and they will have employed this initial mastery in the service of their own adult development. They will also have gained initial mastery in the use of the various SelfDesign insights and tools for the purpose of facilitating the SelfDesign process in others, with a focus on children, adolescents, and/or adults.

### **A Low Residency Model**

All SelfDesign MA Programs employ a “low residency workshop” model in which each of the first two academic years begins with an 8-day residency workshop during which the faculty mentors and learners meet in daily sessions in person. Following the residency, faculty mentors employ synchronous electronic media to meet with each class as a whole on a regular schedule. Faculty mentors and learners employ both synchronous and asynchronous electronic media to meet with and/or communicate with individuals and small groups in classes and directed studies.

All learners are expected to participate in and complete two residencies, ordinarily one at the start of the program and the other in the second year. Under extraordinary circumstances a learner may apply to the Dean to delay the second residency to a later date.

### **Degree Completion Requirements**

The degree comprises 36 semester credits, including four Core SelfDesign courses (12 credits), any combination of elective courses and directed studies totalling 18 or 21 credits, and a 3- or 6-credit thesis or project. A semester is 15 weeks of classes, including one “reading week” at the start and one “reflection and self-assessment week” at the end.

### **Course Details**

#### **SelfDesign Core Courses**

##### **SD 500 SelfDesign: Principles and Praxis (3 credits) *1<sup>st</sup> Year Residency***

Significant paradigm shifts require deep shifts in perspective - in philosophical assumptions. SelfDesigning begins with epistemological shifts in thinking about who and what we are as human beings. Based in experience and rediscovery, learners will explore unique models and maps of neurological territory for their implications for new understandings about human learning and lifelong maturation. Derived from therapeutic praxis, SelfDesign investigates languaging methodologies for optimum transformation of the human experience. SelfDesigning praxis is relational and is a comprehensive working model for individuals, families and communities for living in a globally ecological and sustainable world

Learners in this course begin with an exploration of the three intellectual traditions that have informed the development of SelfDesign: holistic education, developmental and humanistic psychology, and systems theory related to autopoiesis. Through Performative Inquiry involving a combination of discussion, experiential art, forest walks, improvisational drama, LifeSpiral events and reflective journaling, participants explore our human capacities for directing our own unfoldment at every age from birth on, that is, our capacity for designing self. Participants then explore SelfDesigning praxis through models such as LifePhases, LifeSpiral, SDGI Mandala and Learning Plans to begin to develop understanding and skills that will empower them to employ these models as tools in their life and work.

**SD 501 Modes of Inquiry (3 credits) *First Year Fall Semester***

We know in our heads, our hearts, our bellies, our dreams; through emotions and ideas and insights and intuitions and premonitions and visions and body sensations. With each of these aspects of our being, we inquire, both consciously and unconsciously.

Epistemology is the investigation of knowing how we know. When we explore how we know, we stand in meta-position to our own knowing, that is, as a witness to our knowing. This witness stance offers a location of consciousness from which we can observe both our selves and the world more accurately and more fully.

Knowing how we know matters because our knowing often guides our behavior. And our knowing is often informed by our inquiry.

In this course we explore four modes of inquiry through which we can know:

1. the evolution of human consciousness as a species and its relationship to the evolution of the consciousness of each human from birth to adulthood
2. the qualities and dynamics of story as an epistemological vehicle
3. the four quadrant model of knowledge developed by Ken Wilber: including the Individual Interior, the Collective Interior, the Individual Exterior, and the Collective Exterior.
4. the heart as a vehicle for knowing

Contemporary modernist society claims that knowledge derived from empirical science is either the only or the most valid form of knowledge available to humans. From an integral perspective, we know that this knowledge claim is false and that it is an artifact of modernist scientism.

Different realms of human experience offer different kinds of knowledge, each of which can hold validity in its own realm of human experience.

It is essential that people working within the field of SelfDesign and post-modern education understand these distinctions, so they can address the influence of modernist reductionist knowledge claims, assess a variety of knowledge claims effectively, and inquire and develop knowledge in ways that are appropriate for the realm in which they are inquiring.



**SD 502 Epistemological Foundations of Learning (3 credits) First Year Winter Semester**

Learning involves developing adequate conduct in any domain of knowledge. Learning also evokes an expansion of intelligence and wisdom. To nurture deep, self-perpetuating learning, this course explores both *epistemology* (how we know what we know: understanding the origin, nature and limits of knowledge) and *ontology* (the nature of human existence, and as part of that, the nature of learning.) Learners examine the biological roots of life, cognition, language, and emotions, and they investigate how these are conserved and altered in evolutionary and cultural lineages. The course entails explanations, exercises, and conversations as well as individual reflections, all coherent with an epistemological framework that is recursive in explaining itself as well as explaining other related frameworks.

**SD 503 Living in a Learning Community (3 credits) 2<sup>nd</sup> Year Residency**

Each learners in this course facilitates the learning of the entire cohort and faculty by engaging the community in topics and activities chosen by the learner. In this way each learner shares her/his learning from the first year of the program and has an opportunity to engage colleagues in the trajectory of his/her M.A. program. The faculty mentors also share their own learning edges in the same manner.

**Directed Studies (available for selection)**

**SD 504 Directed Studies (I)** (three credits)

**SD 505 Directed Studies (II)** (three credits)

**SD 506 Directed Studies (III)** (three credits)

**SD 508 Directed Studies (III)** (three credits)

**SD 509 Directed Studies (III)** (three credits)

Learners will self-design each Directed Study, with the supervision of a faculty member, and then will conduct the study in dialogue with the same faculty member. The faculty member will assess the learner's enactment and completion of the study.

**SD 600 Master's Thesis or Project in Self Design (3 credits)**

The Master's Thesis is an activity of significant original research and a substantial written thesis. The project option requires a significant project and a substantial documentation of the project.

**SD 601** for 6-credit thesis or project (3 credits)

**Elective courses from the following list. NOTE: All electives offered by the Institute are open to all Institute learners.**

**SD 510 Evolutionary Aesthetics: Education, Imagination and Social Transformation (3 credits) (Burgess)**

Learners in this course explore evolutionary aesthetics: education as a living process, creativity as a learning process, and social transformation as an evolutionary process. They inquire into and consider the importance of creativity in education, of education in social transformation, and of aesthetic beauty in life, nature, the arts and sciences, health and healing, creativity, culture, and evolution.

**SD 511 The Art and Architecture of Consciousness (3 credits) (Burgess)**

Learners in this course explore the patterns and dynamics of relationship reflected in the foundational processes of life and the deep structures of consciousness. They investigate and reflect on the ways these dynamics embody the essence and beauty that simultaneously describe the most basic and most complex of living systems, from fundamental patterns embodied by the natural world to social networks, sacred structures, psyche and soma, the subtle body, and processes of consciousness.

**SD 512 Ecosystems of Education (3 credits) (Sutton)**

Education, like all other aspects of life, functions as an ecosystem with each aspect impacting all others. This is true whether we attend to it or not; the only issue is whether we work consciously with it so the child's whole experience is in service of our educational goals and we all have a sustainable and healthy experience.

In this course learners explore the Enki Education Web, the underlying structure of the Enki ecosystem, as a tool to look at educational ecosystems in general. Each week students engage in short exercises at home that give them a personal experience of the particular "web thread" or principle in focus as well as specific reading on the topic. These "web threads" or principles include environment; rhythms; unity and diversity; body, heart, and mind; developmental mirror; activity of learning; teacher health; adult models; essential energy; family and community; and wisdom and vitality. In class we debrief this "field application" and reflect on the web principle from the vantage point of direct experience. In this way, the learners each have their own personal experience of each of the principles, which they then bring together in a collaboratively designed final project.

**SD 513 The Neurobiological Foundations of Learning (3 credits) (Staff)**

How does learning actually occur in humans? The growing knowledge from the neuro- and cognitive sciences provides a rich and universal framework to better understand the needs of our children and teens, including cognitive development as well as emotional and motivational systems of the brain. The goal of this course is to provide a foundation in the basic functions (anatomy, physiology and pharmacology) of the brain as they relate to human development and the neurobiology of learning. With this knowledge educators will have universal frameworks and developmental guidelines to understand the principles of learning as they apply to all children and youth. The final project will focus on learners' personal research interests about learning and the brain.

**SD 514 The Psychology of the Evolution of Consciousness (3 credits) (Marshak)**

Learners in this course explore the Spiral Dynamics model in depth, with a focus on the work of Graves, Beck, Wilber, Gebser, McIntosh, and Houston. They then apply this model to enhancing their understanding of several phenomena at issue in the work of post-modern and integral education, including the development or unfoldment of children and teens, the structure and culture of learning environments, and the power relations between learners and adults in post-modern and integral learning environments. Learners also explore Mead's conceptual framework in terms of post-figurative, co-figurative, and pre-figurative cultures, and they will consider the implications of this framework for post-modern education.

**SD 515 SelfDesign and Its Historical Antecedents (3 credits) (Marshak)**

Learners in this course explore the historical antecedents of SelfDesign and their relationship to SelfDesign. The course considers the 19<sup>th</sup> century transcendentalists (Emerson, Alcott), the early 20<sup>th</sup> century spiritual evolutionists (Aurobindo, Steiner, Inayat Khan, Krishnamurti, and later, Montessori), and the “free school” movement from A. S. Neill to Sudbury Valley. Learners examine each of these prior paradigms of human development/unfoldment and will explore their similarities and dissimilarities with SelfDesign.

**SD 518 SelfDesign and Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP) (3 credits) (Staff)**

Much of the methodology of SelfDesign has evolved from the insights of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP). Learners in this course gain an understanding of and initial skills in basic NLP insights and techniques, with a focus on the strategies of excellence and languaging skills. The course focuses on practical applications—theory, example, practice, and discussion of each technique—and on how the techniques all fit together as a comprehensive set of tools to support mentoring and guiding in the praxis of consulting to learning.

**SD 519 A SelfDesigning Path (3 credits) (Meyer)**

Using a 13-part multimedia online workshop designed for parents and other adults, learners in this course explore key elements of SelfDesign, focusing on how the elements weave together to create a unique environment supporting learning through loving interaction. Exploration of personal beliefs, values, and family and cultural norms will engage the learners in articulating and clarifying their current values, beliefs, and practices about learning. Personal reflection through journaling will be combined with facilitated group interaction and discussion of the basic SelfDesign elements, leading to each participant's discovery or confirmation of authentic, present-focused life position. The course is offered as foundational for consulting work using the SelfDesign philosophy and methodology for learning and living.

**SD 520 Being Real in a Virtual World (3 credits) (Meyer)**

Communication is a key factor for successful navigation and outcomes for the internet-based educator. How can we effectively communicate with people we may see only intermittently, or may never meet, and whose response to our communications cannot be measured through our traditional auditory or visual methods? Learners in this course explore the use of languaging techniques that override the efficient or distant tone virtual connection often creates, moving instead toward communication that develops, deepens, and enriches the relational qualities of our professional work. The course emphasizes both key concepts and regular practice of new and enhanced communication skills.

**SD 521 The Art of Deep Listening: Creating Meaningful Relationship as a Consultant (3 credits) (Meyer)**

Successful consulting occurs through the creation of some form of relationship, primarily unidirectional but including elements of inter-personal connection. A key to excellence lies in developing our ability to listen deeply to the other, putting aside our assumptions or pre-conceived conclusions and continually finding a space of openness and curiosity. Our skills as authentic listeners are magnified when we hone our ability to listen beyond the spoken words of the other to find the essence of the message. Learners in this course will explore techniques that

take us ‘beyond words’ and assist us in bringing forth the core needs and desires of those with whom we consult in a respectful, whole-hearted manner.

**SD 522 Spirituality and the Developing Child: Recognizing and Nourishing the Spiritual Capacities of Children (3 credits) (B. Luvmour)**

Children of all ages have natural spiritual capacities. Critical issues that every adult faces are: 1) how to recognize the spiritual capacities of children as they grow and 2) how to support optimal development of children’s spirituality. When these natural capacities are nourished, children’s spiritual awareness unfolds naturally and in harmony with their social and physical environment. Learners in this course explore these issues, including the spiritual capacities of each stage in children’s development and how these capacities can be nourished by adults, and how children perceive love, truth, and the unknown. This course deepens learners’ appreciation of spirituality and stimulate new ideas for optimal well-being in children and families.

**SD 523 Children and Social Justice (3 credits) (B. Luvmour)**

Social justice and sustainable relationships provide the cornerstone of respect, integrity, connection, and relationship. Through the whole-child developmental approach of Natural Learning Relationships, we insure the healthy personal and communal development of our children and teens. There is no more important and powerful way to create social justice in our communities than by helping our children and teens to become healthy, engaged, compassionate, and fulfilled adults. Learners in this course explore the following topics as they relate to individual development and social justice: developing rightful place in which everything and everyone belongs; grasping of the connection between boundaries and personal strength; emotional development—trust in self, people, nature, and their mutual, reciprocal relatedness; interpersonal relationships—ecology, justice, and fairness; teen development—self directed choice essential to democracy; ideals and social mores; power, freedom/responsibility, and the right to choose; and the development of reason—meaning and social justice, interconnection and well-being, systems creation, discernment, and intentionality.

**SD 524 Positive Development in Children: Applications for Academic Excellence; Resolving Conflict, and Promoting Social Justice (3 credits) (J. and B. Luvmour)**

Learners in this course delve deeply into how children organize their world at different ages of their lives. Based on the principle that capacities are innate and development occurs in relationship, learners examine evidence-based practices to understand the kinds of relationships that bring forth optimal well-being in children. These relationships create powerful opportunities to heal dysfunction, support academic excellence, and improve social relationships. Learners will give specific attention to the following topics: successful character development; supporting well-being in the child, especially within the school setting; optimal communication with children in each stage of development; descriptions of the special qualities, nature, and characteristics of each stage of development; identification of developmental malnourishments; identification of difficult times for the child and how to remedy these in various social settings; and the development of meaning within each stage of development.

**SD 525 Rites of Passage in Our Times: Understanding and Applying Rites of Passage in Education (3 credits) (J. and B. Luvmour)**

Rites of passage have historically been very prominent in cultures. In our times, many people feel there are only vestiges left that are more a celebration than a true passage (i.e.,

confirmations, Bar Mitzvahs, graduations). This loss is a catastrophe for humanity. When carefully and correctly executed, rites of passage can be a response to the lack of meaning and purpose that pervades the post-modern world. Done well, rites of passage create opportunity to touch the very depths of human possibility, including the emergence of greater self-knowledge. To reintroduce rites of passage into contemporary life, practitioners and researchers have turned to anthropological studies, direct contact with traditional cultures, distillations of transpersonal psychology, and their own common sense and intuition.

Learners in this course explore the purpose and meaning of rites of passage; the relevance of rites of passage for children, education, families, social justice, and community and social well-being; the nature of liminal experience, why it is important, and how to create it; the relationship between rites of passage and child and adolescent development; the reciprocal growth and development of each person involved in rites of passage, including teachers, family members, and elders; and how to structure and lead rites of passage.

### **SD 526 Adult Development (3 credits) (J. Luvmour)**

Adult development involves systematic, qualitative changes in consciousness, human abilities, and behaviors as a result of interactions between internal and external environments. Learners in this course examine constancy and change in ways of knowing self and the world (social, cognitive, emotional, and physical development across ages and stages). Learners will explore the literature on developmentally related change in perspective-taking, meaning-making, self-knowledge, action theory, and transformational learning.

Learners focus on the following questions:

What is the relationship between development and learning style? Are personalities learned or inborn?

How does learning occur in the context of the family and the community?

How can our families and communities collaborate with our schools to support learning?

What form transforms in learning?

### **SD 527 Mutual Development between Parent and Child (3 credits) (J. Luvmour)**

Humans develop in relationship, and children bring change. Everyone accepts that the adult influences the child, but few realize how much the child influences change in the parent. Learners in this course focus on how nurturing development in the child can lead to the emergence of new meaning, self-knowledge, and wisdom in the parent. This course focuses on the dynamics of multi-directional development in transactions between the parents and their children and draws upon original research conducted by the faculty mentor.

### **SD 528: Our Learning Ecology (3 credits) (Maser)**

Each person has a unique way of constructing their worldview as they grow, reflecting relational dynamics among diverse genetic, cultural and epigenetic influences. This can be considered akin to a learning ecology. In this course learners explore new concepts of brain development, intelligence and competency and how new insights of who we "really are," fundamentally, can apply to ourselves and others. Perspectives for consideration will be personal as well as educational and also that of parent or caregiver to children and youth. Learners in this course also develop new understandings of learning and nurturing learning in others with the help of specific applications, including Brain Gain, Think Up!, Multiple Intelligences (Neurodiversity),

insights from energy psychology, biology, HeartMath, spirituality, gaming, play and play therapy!

**SD 530 Child and Adolescent Development (3 credits) (J. Luvmour)**

An overview of developmental theories including underlying paradigm assumptions, history, context, comparison of theories, differences between approaches (e.g., pathology vs well-being), and the antecedents to the holistic view of development.

*Natural Learning Relationships*—emergent developmental contextual view of whole-child development in optimal well-being. Development in relationship: emergent systems, contextual influences, developmental contextualism. How does perception (of self and world) change throughout childhood? What is optimal well-being for the child in each stage of childhood? How do children organize their world at different ages of their lives? Based on the principle that *capacities are innate but development occurs in relationship*, this section examines the kinds of relationships that bring forth optimal well-being in children. Using *Natural Learning Relationships* whole-child developmental model we will explore how humans are dynamic systems with a biological unfolding in a constant feedback loop with the environment.

Applications of developmental understanding to positive communication, community relationships, education, academic excellence, and family relationships.

Contributions of children to school, community and social well-being; how to recognize and support these contributions; the effect of such support on the children

**SD 531 The Hermeneutics of Humor (3 credits) (Decker)**

Learners use comic tools to explore the links between how we interpret human experience, understand that experience and act in consequence. This is only appropriate since the word “hermeneutics” is derived from the Greek god Hermes, the messenger (hence the concern for language and meaning) – and the trickster. Our first step is to challenge the certainties, the givens, the “answers” – a task that has historically been the work of clowns, fools and tricksters. Borrowing their topsy-turvy perspective we can strengthen the funny bone and release the comic spirit, readying ourselves to face contraries with courage instead of certainty, becoming *comic heroes*.

“Comic heroes ... are thus exemplars of a special human freedom and flexibility – which, after all, is the real genius of the race. ... it has been the task of clowns and fools and comic heroes to remind us of our intrinsic freedom and flexibility.” (Hyers, 1981, p. 122)

**SD 532 SelfDesigning: Creating and Realizing the Field of Infinite Possibilities (3 credits) (Letourneau)**

We are in nature and nature is in us. We are neurologically programmed to learn together and from each other and to exist, connect, and thrive in human communities. How can we know ourselves deeply and connect and contribute to our communities in meaningful ways? Starting with no-thing at the center of the SelfDesign Mandala, learners explore SelfDesign's unique ontology and epistemology and learn how to create and open the field of infinite possibilities, both within themselves and in the context of their own communities.

Building on cognitive science U Theory by Senge and Scharmer, Varela's gestures in enhancing awareness, and Block's structure of belonging in communities, learners explore SelfDesign's unique embodiment of sensing, presencing, and realizing through conversation, multimedia expression, SelfDesign models, improvisation, and art. Using powerful questions and finding their personal call-to-service in their own communities, learners examine themselves and their communities as living systems and explore how we can re-imagine and transform fragmented communities, including virtual communities, into powerful and harmonious sources of ongoing connection.

**SD 534: Catalytic Memes: The Transformative Power of the 'New Story.'** (3 credits) (Taylor)

Our shared belief in a consensual reality is in fact created by a collective 'story' that gives common meaning to experience. Humans are story-makers, and we are responsible for the stories we create. This is good news! In this course learners examine several case studies to assess the impact and implications of a specific meme on its supporting culture. The 'new story' becomes the next 'old story,' and yet we are accountable for the enduring unintended consequences of our actions. What happens when stories contradict each other? What is the role of belief and certitude? Does the introjection of a non-linear possibility, a 'new story,' require direct experience? Possible case studies for exploration in the course are these: Big Bang, Consciousness, and Evolution; The Calculus of Sustainability, Impermanence, and Intra-dependant Origination; System Overload: Anthropogenic Climate Change, Ecocide, Cultural Violence, Social Injustice, Ebola, and Mutually Assured Destruction; and Armageddon: The End of Progress and Growth.

**SD 535: Design with Nature** (3 credits) (Taylor)

Nature-based design is an approach to innovation that seeks sustainable solutions to human challenges by emulating nature's time-tested patterns and strategies. The goal is to create products, processes, and policies—new ways of living—that are well-adapted to life on earth over the long haul. The core idea is that nature has already solved many of the problems we are grappling with. Animals, plants, and microbes are the consummate engineers. After billions of years of research and development, failures are fossils, and what surrounds us is the secret to survival.

Learners in this course explore nature-based design through an investigation of the following: biomimicry; biophilia; reconnecting—healing the body/mind split; natural learning; buildings and processes; terra-forming and geo-engineering; landscape restoration vs. the human-made landscape; and artificial life.

**SD 536: Towards a New Story of Eldership, Dying, and Death** (3 credits) (Taylor)

We all will die eventually. What are the human stories, thoughts, and personal beliefs regarding the unavoidable outcome of living? What does contextual culture, spiritual practice, and post-modern science have to say about dying and death? Can we be 'OK' with our personal relationship to spirituality, dying, and death itself?

Learners in this course explore the following: Ways of Experience: what do we know for sure; Preparing: the Expected Unknown; The Life Spiral—Who am I, when did I become ‘me’ and what is it that dies; Completion and the ‘Good Death;’ The Art of Losing: Grief, Praise, Mourning and Letting Go; Ancestors and the Departed; What Dreams May Come: the Life Between Lives; and Cultural Cross-currents and the Variety of Human Experience.

**SD 537: Explorations in Collective Intelligence: Learning Communities and Creative Non-linear Possibility (3 credits) (Taylor)**

Learners in this course will engage, with the faculty mentor, in an experientially based research exploration into the role of collective intelligence in the ‘self-designed’ learning community. As a community of practice, learners will first survey the literature on learning cohorts, organizations, and collective intelligence in order to create a synoptic overview of current practice and experience. At the same time each learner will make individual observations from within our community of practice. The specifics of this process will be self-designed collectively by the class. Learners and the mentor will explore this question: how does the group’s collective intelligence best support the class to become self-observant while collectively exploring these issues in light of a desired outcome that depends on every member to creatively participate and grow in the context of a mutually agreed upon joint conclusion?

**SD 538: Awareness through the Body (3 credits) MacLeod**

Learners explore the fundamentals of Awareness Through the Body (ATB) through reading, personal experience, and bringing what has been learned into a setting beyond the classroom. Readings are primarily from the book Awareness Through the Body by Aloka Marti and Joan Sala. Personal explorations of basic components of ATB take place initially through directed activities during scheduled class times. Learners deepen and extend these initial explorations through continued personal practice, reflection on that practice, and, for most, teaching, using, leading, and/or sharing ATB activities with children or adults and reporting on the results of that sharing. In lieu of using ATB with children or adults, learners may chose to write a research paper, create a video, or do some other creative project on some aspect of ATB.

By the conclusion of the course learners understand the goal and principles of ATB, have gained a sense of what makes an activity or exploration helpful towards fulfilling the goals of ATB, and have a feeling for how ATB serves a personal or professional purpose.

**SD 539: Appreciative Inquiry Foundations Course (3 credits) Leckie**

Appreciative Inquiry (AI) is recognized worldwide as a revolutionary process for high engagement positive change. In this Appreciative Inquiry foundations course, learners will discover how AI has been successfully used for organizational culture change, strategic planning, and community development. Learners will explore the theory and principles of AI as well as its research base. Learners will gain a deep and thorough grounding in AI practices and engage in an initial experience of conducting an appreciative inquiry, including crafting and conducting appreciative interviews, making meaning of narrative data, envisioning and enacting positive futures, drafting provocative propositions, and supporting innovation teams. By the end of the course, learners will have a focused plan for using AI to create positive change in their organization or community.



**SD 540: Adult Development and Accessing Wisdom with Children (3 credits) J. Luvmour**  
Humans develop in relationship and children bring change. Everyone accepts that the adult influences the child but few realize how much the child influences change in the adult.

This course is a focus on how nurturing development in the child leads to the emergence of new meaning and self-knowledge in the adult. A concentration in the dynamics of bi-directional development in transactions between the adult and child, we explore how adults resolve difficult developmental tasks from their own childhoods as a result of actively supplying the developmental imperatives of the child.

This course delves deeply into the difference between change and transformation (epistemological change). Based on the principle that capacities are innate and development occurs in relationship, we will examine the kinds of relationships that bring forth optimal well-being in children and transformation in adults.

## **Master of Arts in Self Design, with a Concentration in Post-Modern Schools and Integral Learning: Founding, Leading, Teaching**

Learners who complete the *Master of Arts in SelfDesign, with a Concentration in Post-Modern Schools and Integral Learning: Founding, Leading, Teaching* will gain an understanding of the history of schooling, of modernist and post-modern education, and of the qualities and varieties of post-modern schools. They will also explore the relationship between integral consciousness and human learning and consider what social forms can promote integral learning.

Learners will gain a complex understanding of the requirements and demands of school founding, school leadership, and school teaching. They will engage in and complete one of four alternate Master's projects: (1) develop a plan for a post-modern school and begin to create it; (2) envision an integral learning form and begin to create it; (3) demonstrate their effective preparation to teach in a post-modern school; or (4) engage in significant original research in post-modern education or integral learning and complete a substantial written thesis.

Learners will also gain a complex and systemic understanding of the principles and tools of SelfDesign, including Self-Authorship, Co-Inspiration, the SelfDesign Life Spiral, the SelfDesign Four Aspects and Four Transitions, and the SelfDesign CognoSphere, Life Mandala, Paragon, and Life Matrix. Learners will have developed initial mastery in the application of all of these tools to their own personal SelfDesign process, and they will have employed this initial mastery in the service of their own adult development. They will also have gained initial mastery in the use of the various SelfDesign insights and tools for the purpose of facilitating the SelfDesign process in others, with a focus on children, adolescents, and/or adults.

### **Degree Completion Requirements**

The degree comprises 36 semester credits, including four Core SelfDesign (12 credits), three Required Post-Modern Schools courses (9 credits), three elective courses and/or Directed Studies (9 or 12 credits), and a 3- or 6-credit thesis or project. A semester is 15 weeks of classes, including one "reading week" at the start and one "reflection and self-assessment week" at the end. At least 3 credits, either in a Directed Study or as part of the thesis or project, must be an internship experience in an existing post-modern school.

### **Course Details**

#### **SelfDesign Core Courses**

**SD 500 SelfDesign: Principles and Praxis** (3 credits) *1<sup>st</sup> Year Residency*

**SD 501 Modes of Inquiry** (3 credits) *First Year Fall Semester*

**SD 502 Epistemological Foundations of Learning** (3 credits) *First Year Winter Semester*

**SD 503 Living in a Learning Community** (3 credits) *2<sup>nd</sup> Year Residency*

## **Post-Modern Schools Required Courses**

### **PM 500 History of Schooling through Analysis of Consciousness and the Qualities of Post-Modern Schools (3 credits)**

Learners explore pre-modern, modern, and post-modern forms of education and how each of these forms corresponds with a particular kind of consciousness, as described by the Spiral Dynamics model (Clare Graves, Don Beck et al) and by Jean Gebser. They examine the dominant elements in the modernist school paradigm and consider how these elements control public education in the United States and Canada today. Then learners investigate the paradigm of post-modern education in terms of its consciousness and qualities and will explore its various forms, including Montessori, Waldorf, Sudbury-Valley/free/democratic schools, Enki, SelfDesign, progressive, and others. They also explore a holistic curriculum, including intuition, the mind-body system, subject and community connections, and earth and soul connections.

### **PM 501 Envisioning and Founding a Post-Modern School (3 credits)**

Learners in this course explore post-modern consciousness and values and consider how these can be expressed through the structure and culture of a post-modern school. They articulate their own personal vision of post-modern schooling and develop key documents that will help to define their school-to-be: mission statement, statement of philosophy re the process of human development, the process of learning, and the role of curriculum, pedagogy, teachers, and so on.

Learners then explore the elements required to found a post-modern school: the nature of its ownership and governance; the role of its leadership; facilities and resources; legal requirements in the state of operation; recruitment of families and learners; hiring of staff; and start-up of operations and likely initial challenges.

### **PM 502 Leading and Sustaining a Successful Post-Modern School (3 credits)**

Learners in this course explore the predictable challenges likely in leading and sustaining a post-modern school. The course focuses on issues of school administration and management; the school's identity in its community; professional development of adults working in the school; recruitment of families and learners; tuition and fund raising issues; engagement of community partners and allies; parental engagement in the life of the school; and crisis management.

### **SD 504-506, 508-509 Directed Studies (3 credits) (available for selection)**

### **PM 600 Master's Project/Thesis in Post-Modern Education (3 credits)**

The Master's Project/Thesis is one the following: (1) develop a plan for a post-modern school and begin to create it, with substantial documentation; (2) envision an integral learning form and begin to create it, with substantial documentation; (3) demonstrate the learner's effective preparation to teach in a post-modern school; or (4) engage in significant original research in post-modern education or integral learning and complete a substantial written thesis.

Also **PM 601** for 6-credit thesis or project.

**Elective courses from the following list. NOTE: All electives offered by the Institute are open to all Institute learners.**

**PM 510 Starting and Sustaining a Democratic School (3 credits) (Mercogliano)**

In this course learners gain a preparation both to establish a democratic school and to navigate through the inevitable rough patches in the road as the school works to create a positive culture and a sustainable financial foundation. Part I of the course clarifies and deepens the learners' understanding of the democratic education model and helps the learners to craft a coherent vision of the school they wish to found. A key component is the learner's own development, both individually *and* in the context of others, because it is imperative that the leader of a school that truly fosters children's growth first fully embrace one's own growth. Part II addresses the nuts and bolts of starting a school: securing funding, finding the right location, recruiting students and staff, establishing core procedures, building partnerships with families and the surrounding community, etc. It also addresses issues of sustainability: fiscal stability, community maintenance and conflict resolution, staff development and turnover, and the creation of school rituals and traditions.

**PM 511 Course: Post-Modern Independent School Start-Up (3 credits) (Smith)**

Learners in this course explore the necessary steps to develop and implement a successful independent, post-modern school. The course begins with an exploration of school vision and then examine how the key components of educational start-ups—Vision, Community, Board, Team, Funding—interact to provide focus and means towards the creation of a new educational program. Learners also investigate the pertinent legal requirements: incorporating of a non-profit educational corporation, obtaining non-profit status from the IRS, and meeting state requirements for an independent school. Learners document their own vision, explore strategies for team-building, and learn about the inevitable challenges arising from school finance.

**PM 512 Leading and Sustaining an Independent Post-Modern High School (3 credits) (Kirkpatrick)**

Learners in this course explore the complex ecology of leadership and sustenance required to lead a creative, successful independent post-modern high school. Topics for exploration and consideration will include the following: faculty hiring, development, and supervision; board relationships; program structuring and curriculum development; program assessment; student recruitment and retention; fundraising; school facilities; and creating and leading a school culture and community that learns, evolves, and innovates.

**PM 513 The Joys and Sorrows of Leading a Post-Modern School (3 credits) (Freedman)**

Learners in this course explore many aspects of starting and sustaining a post-modern school through first-hand accounts. Learners read and reflect on school leaders' narratives regarding their experiences. They observe and speak with school leaders about their work. Particular emphasis will be placed on the visionary qualities of school leaders and the extreme highs and lows associated with the responsibilities and opportunities of leading a school community towards a unique post-modern vision.

**PM 519 Integral Education: Theory and Practice (3 credits) (Smith)**

In this course learners explore the theoretical framework and the practical components of an Integral Education program founded on the teachings of Sri Aurobindo. The course focuses on “the principles of true teaching” and “Free Progress education.” Given these conceptual

contexts, learners consider the relationships between theory and practice, the teacher and the student, and teaching and learning. Learners investigate several examples of Integral Education schools. Learners explore how to incorporate Integral Education concepts and methods into their own practice so they can implement meaningful, learner-centered program components in their own school.

**PM 520 Adolescence as an Evolutionary Stage for Humanity (3 credits) (Marshak)**

Learners in this course explore the theory that adolescence is a radically new developmental stage that has emerged only in the past hundred years, even though *homo sapiens sapiens*, modern humans, first appeared nearly 200,000 years ago.

Learners investigate the invention of the concept of adolescence, the social and cultural developments that allowed adolescence to emerge as a distinct stage of human development, and the developmental attributes of adolescent identity and experience as we know these today. They also study adolescent/youth culture as it has developed since 1910, the potential of adolescence in furthering the evolution of our species, and what might be the social and cultural values, norms, and forms that would allow adolescents to truly flourish and to manifest their capacity for perception and conception as described by Margaret Mead in her notion of a prefigurative, evolutionary culture.

**PM 522 Integrated Leadership for a Just and Sustainable World (3 credits) (Berg)**

Leadership is more than a title. Opportunities abound for leadership in everyday life, in our occupations, and in our learning environments in ordinary and extraordinary situations. Often we are expected to act within a very limited spectrum that falls within the dominant society's definitions and beliefs about leadership. A different set of ideas and beliefs about leadership is possible and necessary for a just sustainable world: authentic leadership.

In this course learners explore paths to holistic, integrated, and authentic leadership. Learners will experience techniques for holistic and authentic leadership that integrate several philosophies, including authentic, contextual, holistic and values-based leadership, with their authentic self. Learners will explore leadership examples and theories from cultures all over the world (i.e. aboriginal, Chinese Philosophy, First Nations, Taoist, transformational, and tribal) and their own lives. The course emphasizes exploration and practice of an integrated leadership model for learning environments and for a more just, sustainable world.

**PM 523 Holistic Health for Adolescents—an Ecological View: Empowering Youth through Understanding (3 credits) (Berg)**

The current health care and health crisis in many parts of the world has an immediate impact on adolescents. Often the targets of advertising that promotes unhealthy, unrealistic, and damaging views of health, adolescents have a right to be aware of how they are impacted by the societal and ecological systems in which they live. Introducing adolescents to a systems approach to their own health magnifies the power they have to understand and define their own well-being and that of the ecologies in which they live.

In this course learners explore the dynamics of ecological systems and how an ecological view of adolescent health leads to empowerment and lasting change. Learners also explore Western and

Non-Western philosophies of health (i.e. allopathic (Western) medicine, Ayurveda, Herbalism, Integrative Medicine, Naturopathic Medicine, and traditional Chinese Medicine) as these relate to an ecological view. The emphasis is on techniques and lessons to empower adolescents to take charge of their health and the health of the ecologies in which they live.

**PM 524 Poetry Reading and Writing: The Reconnected Body, Heart, and Mind (3 credits) (Soter)**

Learners in this course will engage in reading and writing poetry, understanding how poetry connects us through its kinesthetic qualities, and working with poetry in ways that move us to new spaces and places. Learners explore the ways that poetry acts as a wonderful resource for connecting with others as well as connecting self to life in all its forms.

**PM 525 Language as a Field of Energy in Education, Media, and Medical Settings (3 credits) (Soter)**

Learners explore language as an energy-field, as a vibrational field that reflects thought as well as influences it. Unexamined language use is like Dewey's unreflective thought, yet language can be changed to ultimately influence thought. Learners examine language as a resonant field with powerful implications for social, political, and personal transformation.

**PM 526 Language as a Field of Energy for Self-Growth (3 credits) (Soter)**

Learners explore language as an energy-field, as a vibrational field with implications for self-growth. Learners undertake self-study of personal linguistic habits and patterns as well as those within their families and social networks. Language patterns become habitual and inadvertently lead to assumptions that we are uttering absolute truths that remain unexamined via the language used to convey them. Learners examine their own linguistic habits as windows to mental and emotional habits and then use language to create new linguistic, mental, and emotional patterns of behavior for self-growth.

**PM 527: Making Learning Visible: Documentation and the Infant, Toddler, and Preschool Municipality Schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy (3 credits) (Iorio)**

Learners read and discuss the history and pedagogies of the infant, toddler, and preschool municipality schools in Reggio Emilia, Italy. This course focuses on the practice of documentation where teachers record theories, actions, conversations, memories, and experiences of children in order to build curriculum. Learners actively engage with documentation by practicing deep listening and observing of children, building documentation panels, and developing teacher responses.

**PM 528: Child-Adult Conversations as Aesthetic Experiences (3 credits) (Iorio)**

What happens when teachers consider their conversation with children as aesthetic experiences? The course examines a working theory where child-adult conversations are framed through aesthetic experience research. Learners study theories regarding aesthetic experience, consider the roles of power and relationships within these conversations, review conversation data, and further develop theories about child-adult conversations.

**PM 529: Rethinking Early Childhood Education (3 credits) Iorio**

Often early childhood is equated with traditional conceptions of practices like thematic units, circle time, and calendar, never trusting children as capable to think beyond simplistic concepts

or consider complex theories. This course focuses on early childhood practices founded in social justice, furthering curiosity and empathy, engaging in advocacy and activism, and developing an awareness of the local and global communities.

**PM 530: Educating the Whole Child (3 credits) (Rudge)**

This course engages learners in examining the philosophical foundations of holistic education and the pedagogical practices of schools and individual teachers that follow a holistic orientation to education. Learners critically examine holistic pedagogical approaches, reflect upon competitive views of pedagogy, and explore curricular possibilities for implementing an educational approach to teaching the whole child.

**PM 531: Mindful and Relational Teaching: Educating for a Culture of Peace (3 credits) (Rudge)**

This course deepens learners' awareness of how they interact with others as well as expands their feelings of compassion, kindness, and love, so that they can comprehend human nature in an open and inclusive manner. Learners engage in contemplative and self-reflective practices as well as inquiry-based learning. Learners develop and carry out a compassionate action research project in which they will apply what they have learned in the course.

**PM 532 Exploring The Deep Structure of Pedagogy (3 credits) (Simpson)**

Learners in this course engage in an introspective journey of our understanding of the notion of pedagogy and how pedagogy informs the teacher-student/learner relationship. Pedagogy is defined in various ways from the Greek origin of the word, which translates "to walk beside the child" to the more recent Webster's definition, "the art of teaching."

Most of us come to this work as educators because we have a disposition to teach. But what do we mean by "teach" and how do we define ourselves as "teachers?" We examine the notion of pedagogy from the perspective of several foundational education pioneers, including Locke, Rousseau, Dewey, Kohlberg, Vygotsky, and Gagne. We identify our personal definition of pedagogy and how our understanding defines our relationship with our learners. We examine common archetypes of teachers as well as the spiritual component to teaching.

**PM 533 Disability and Self-Determination (3 credits) (Simpson)**

Learners in this course explore the construction of the concept of disability in relation to education in their own society, drawing from the literature which defines disability as being constructed personally, medically and/or socioculturally. For example, McDermott and Varenne explain that Learning Disability is not something we would recognize on our own; rather "it takes institutional collusion to validate our flaws against cultural norms." We examine the research on the success of learning environments (home, school, community) that support self-determination and self-empowerment in contrast to learning environments that create learned helplessness. We examine the work of Agran, Wehmeyer, Deci and Ryan and others who have done extensive research in disability and self-determination to determine and identify best practices for learner autonomy and support for teachers and mentors working with students labeled as disabled.

**PM 534 Emergent Teaching: Educating for Creativity, Significance, and Transformation (3 credits) (Crowell)**

Learners in this this course engage in a journey toward *responsive learning*, where knowledge becomes connected to who we are as human beings—not just intellectual capacities but our capacity for altruistic concern, selfless service, collaborative action, and creative wisdom.

The sciences of complexity, chaos, and cognitive constructive theory share some common assumptions that include an emphasis on holistic relationships, dynamical change, and emerging patterns of organization. These themes are particularly relevant to discussions that deal with teaching the whole person, new understandings of process, project-based learning, transformative learning, incorporating story and narrative, and building community in the classroom.

There is a resonance with wisdom traditions that have informed human history for millennia and remain with us as guides and reminders of our innate wisdom. Learners in this course explore some of the key foundational principles of emergent systems, with an emphasis on the importance of connectedness, relatedness, dynamic change and process in the context of teaching and learning. This is not merely a scientific or abstract study, but rather a narrative inquiry into creative emergence and transformation based on stories and experience. The course highlights how the development of community as an open, adaptive, self-organizing system can enhance learning. Our exploration expands the notion of context to include issues outside the classroom and inside the person. The course also addresses the holistic, embodied nature of the learning process and the importance of the arts in constructing meaning.

**PM 535 Earth Charter Pedagogy: A Values-Based Approach to Sustainable Well-Being, Ecological Integrity, and Social Justice (3 credits) (Crowell)**

Learners in this course gain an introduction to the vision and substance of the Earth Charter (EC) and how it can be incorporated into schools and classrooms as a foundation for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD). The course focuses on content and pedagogy, as well as the creation of an EC culture where students experience the values and ethical dimensions of sustainability. The Earth Charter provides a transformative force and offers an essential foundation for sustainability. Perhaps the most inclusive international document in history, it was created “...to promote the transition to sustainable ways of living and a global society founded on a shared ethical framework that includes respect and care for the community of life, ecological integrity, universal human rights, respect for diversity, economic justice, democracy and a culture of peace.”

This course is about more than sustainable development. We will look holistically at what it means for an individual or a community of learners to act from a place of understanding, compassion, and love; to understand nature from a perspective of biophilia, deep connection, and as one source of our identity; to work in local and global communities to create an inclusive society that is pluralistic and just; and to open up spaces for democratic participation based on non-violence and open-hearted peace. The assumptions of interconnection and universal responsibility are applied to multiple contexts and the flourishing and thriving of the human spirit are applied to an exploration of well-being, service, and spiritual wisdom.



**PM 536 Holistic Education: An Integrative Paradigm for Learning, Knowing, and Being (3 credits) (Crowell)**

In the field of holistic health there are six interactive elements identified that contribute to the well-being and health of an individual. They include the mental, emotional, social, physical, environmental, and spiritual conditions of life. These elements have been affirmed within the mainstream medical community even though they are not universally applied. If we explore the current research in the neurosciences, cognitive theory, social-psychology, and learning it is clear that these categories can be applied to education. Importantly, these holistic elements are not isolated but are continually interacting together to create an integrative view of a living organism.

This vision is part of a paradigmatic change leading not to just an alternative cultural narrative, but to a new way of living and being. Holistic Education represents not just another way of teaching, and it is not just an extension of progressive education models. It is a fundamentally alternative perception of the world and within that perception comes the challenge to think, act, and live differently.

Learners in this course will explore this new mapping of reality from the implications of enactive and embodied processes of learning to new research methodologies to new understandings of curriculum, schooling, and organizations.

**PM 537 Creating School Culture: Natural Learning Relationships, Whole-Child Development, School Culture, and Working with Parents (3 credits) J. Luvmour**

The school culture is part of our student's learning experience. Creating a school culture of meaning and inspiration requires vision that unifies faculty, students and parents around a common mission. A cornerstone of success is a safe and caring environment, shared values and relational trust, a powerful pedagogy and curriculum, high student motivation and engagement, a professional faculty culture, and effective partnerships with families and the community.

Trust and collaboration are mutually reinforcing. This course addresses compelling contemporary issues for today's educators and administration, with skills and training that will meaningfully enhance and add significant value to any educator's knowledge base. Students' achievement and character are shaped by the culture around them. The course includes the following foci:

*Educational environment:* creating your educational community that is inspired with meaning; relationship in education: the context of learning; classroom environments that inspire and promote meaning in each student; school environments that support well-being in the child; conflict resolution and responses that restore relationship

*Natural Learning Relationships:* nurturing optimal well-being of the whole-child; academic excellence and child development in the classroom; how to support emotional intelligence at every age

*Teacher Development:* collegial team building of common goals and common values; developing a culture of shared belief that we are a part of something great; respectful interactions that build trust and implement change; building culturally responsive school environments

*Parent-teacher relationships:* parent-teacher relationships and communication for student success; effective collaboration with parents to support students' learning; parent education and building a bridge between home and school; guidelines for parent in-classroom participation

**PM 538: Personalized Learning (3 credit) M. Maser**

Personalizing Learning is a hallmark of educational change throughout North America, characterized by different forms and approaches and various uses of technology. In this course learners will explore various applications of Personalized Learning (PL) in coaching and educational settings, and they will deepen their own experiences of PL from the perspective of learner, educator, and administrator. In praxis, they will work individually and collaboratively with course colleagues designing and reviewing applications of PL in a learning community setting, following from which they will reflect on their results as they seek to better understand where PL is most vibrant and 'alive', personally and professionally.

## **Master of Arts in SelfDesign, with a Concentration in Designing Learning Communities**

Learners who complete the *Master of Arts in SelfDesign with a Concentration in Designing Learning Communities* will develop an understanding of the principles, practices and qualities of a learning community. A learning community does not merely exist in a static form; it studies itself with the intention of expanding its capacity to create its desired future. Learners will gain an understanding that no living system can exist if not connected with its medium. They will investigate how individuals come together to create a community which becomes an entity that is more than a collection of individuals, and how the community, in turn, influences and supports the learning and growth of its members. Learners will explore the potential within/among learning communities to create caring civic societies.

In addition, learners will gain a complex and systemic understanding of the principles and tools of SelfDesign, including Self-Authorship, Co-Inspiration, the SelfDesign Life Spiral, the SelfDesign Four Aspects and Four Transitions, and the SelfDesign CognoSphere, Life Mandala, Paragon, and Life Matrix. Learners will have developed initial mastery in the application of all of these tools to their own personal SelfDesign process, and they will have employed this initial mastery in the service of their own adult development. They will also have gained initial mastery in the use of the various SelfDesign insights and tools for the purpose of facilitating the SelfDesign process in others, with a focus on children, adolescents, and/or adults.

### **Degree Completion Requirements**

The degree comprises 36 semester credits, including four Core SelfDesign (12 credits), three required Learning Communities courses (9 credits), three elective courses and/or Directed Studies (9 or 12 credits), and a 3- or 6-credit thesis or project. A semester is 15 weeks of classes, including one “reading week” at the start and one “reflection and self-assessment week” at the end.

### **Course Details**

#### **SelfDesign Core Courses**

**SD 500 SelfDesign: Principles and Praxis** (3 credits) *1<sup>st</sup> Year Residency*

**SD 501 Modes of Inquiry** (3 credits) *First Year Fall Semester*

**SD 502 Epistemological Foundations of Learning** (3 credits) *First Year Winter Semester*

**SD 503 Living in a Learning Community** (3 credits) *2<sup>nd</sup> Year Residency*

#### **Learning Communities Required Courses**

**LC 500 Living Inquiry: Examining the Experience of Community** (3 credits)

Like fish unaware of the water, it is easy for us to allow our being-in-the-world to become a backdrop to our actions, an unexamined other, somehow separate from who we are and what we do. If, as educators, we are to welcome children into the experience of being in the world, being in a community, we need heighten our own awareness of being. Kohak proposes: “Look to

experience with a fresh eye, taking as our datum whatever presents itself in experience, using the totality of the given as the starting point ...” (1984, p. 22).

This course is not teaching about inquiry. It constitutes a practice of inquiry. The horizons of inquiry are our everydayness and our immediate participation in daily life. We will use four existential themes common to all of us to initiate our study of daily life: place, language, time, and self/other. Curriculum will emerge from the shared investigations of the narratives, histories, and realities into which we were born, live and work.

### **LC 501 Intercultural Dimensions of Learning (3 credits)**

Living in multiethnic and multilingual societies we have become aware of differences between belief systems, values, perceptions, worldviews, cultural practices and assumptions. We have learned to acknowledge and understand these differences. Creating spaces of togetherness across differences however, continues to present challenges.

This course focuses on interculturalism (1) as a critique of multiculturalism and (2) as a proposal to engage in more open dialogue and active negotiation of meaning across assumed cultural differences in community formation. The course participants will have an opportunity to acquaint themselves with the diverse and complex theoretical landscape of interculturalism. This entails working through issues of power relationships in society, colonial histories, racism and other forms of discrimination. By acquiring adequate theoretical tools, learners will be better equipped to reflect critically on their own cultural embeddedness and locate themselves ideologically on the map of interculturalism.

The course inquiry is rooted in the lived ‘intercultural’ experiences of learners that can be shared with the learning community in a variety of ways.

### **LC 502 Alternatives in Scholarly Writing (3 credits)**

This course explores what constitutes scholarly writing as well as various non-traditional forms, styles and intentions that can be an appropriate fit within our research texts in progress. Writing a thesis is like running a marathon, being in “shape” is necessary. Constructive critique is critical to our writing at beginning and finishing stages. We will participate in collaborative critique.

As a writing community, we will:

- examine issues related to scholarly writing (e.g., representation, assumptions, bias, the unsaid)
- explore ‘alternative’ styles and forms of writing
- participate in group/partner writing activities
- practice writing (in daily practices and short pieces)

### **SD 504-506, 508-509 Directed Studies (3 credits) (available for selection)**

Learners will self-design each Directed Study, with the supervision of a faculty member, and then will conduct the study in dialogue with the same faculty member. The faculty member will assess the learner’s enactment and completion of the study.

**LC 600 Master’s Thesis or Project in Designing Learning Communities (3 credits)**

The Master’s Thesis represents significant original research in Designing Learning Communities and a substantial written thesis.

Also **LC 601** for 6-credit thesis or project.

**Elective courses from the following list. NOTE: All electives offered by the Institute are open to all Institute learners.**

**LC 510 Inclusivity and Marginality in Education (3 credits) (Purru)**

The notion of ‘border’ has been the focus for scholars who explore the issues of ethnic, racial, gender identities and differences of those who occupy the margins – the “borderlands” of modern nations and communities. Border thinking is a form of knowledge construction among subaltern communities, coined by the cultural critic Walter Dignolo, in which the peripheral is brought to the center. Among the ways that the border is examined include ‘contact zones’, ‘in between’, ‘third space’, ‘creolization’, ‘métissage’, ‘hybridity’, ‘nepantla’, and others. In this course, learners will participate in a space of inquiry where different cultural narratives, discourses, languages, disciplinary experiences, life events and ways of knowing are engaged, confronted, renegotiated and transformed. The course employs the notion of ‘border’ not only as a challenging geopolitical construct and an analytical category but also as an emerging epistemology.

**LC 511 Micro to Macro Living Communities (3 credits) (Jocksch)**

Learners in this course confront the ecological reality that we are *not alone*, and will explore interrelated living communities from several perspectives – microbiology, deep ecology and eco-theology.

Microbes have existed since the beginning of life on earth. They evolved along with the most primitive organisms and established complex relationships of mutual survival. Today we know that microbes interact intimately with us and that this interaction, while mostly benign, can be detrimental. In this course, learners will examine the presence of microbes and the conditions for their survival.

Using images of nature as the backdrop, learners reflect on the changes wrought by the Industrial Revolution and modernity. Some of these changes include: our sense of belonging and purpose, how we engage in research, how we might bring poetic dimensions to inquiry, how we understand of educational technology, and how our immersion within the more-than-human world in inextricable dependency affects how we learn.

The unprecedented destruction of our Earth home, invites us to a spiritual awakening. The survival of both humans and other species is at stake. Learners consider the role that spirituality plays in our earthly community’s thriving or diminishment?

**LC 512 Ways of Sense-making (3 credits) (Sweeney, Decker)**

Learners turn to musical and comic resources to reconsider the way we use our senses to “make sense” of our world and experiences. Taking a second look at the certainties and givens of

communities, cultures and traditions, learners heed Hyers' (1981) advice that "it has been the task of clowns and fools and comic heroes to remind us of our intrinsic freedom and flexibility."

For this course, songs have been selected for the manner in which they hold intact the acoustic patterns and metrics of spoken English. The sound of the natural inflection of spoken English is enhanced by singing and playing folk song-games. The games provide situations for enjoyable social interactions allowing the meaning of the words to arise in context. Through playing the games again and again, the songs become strong aural images that help structure the natural flow of oral English. In turn, the symbolic representations of the song become structures for holding patterns of inflection, duration and articulation.

Learners consider how to use music and comedy to explore communities as living expressions of "sense".

### **LC 513 Observing for Learning (3 credits) (Forsythe)**

The notion of Observing for Learning is based on the concept that "Everything is seen by the observer" [1]. We often act as if knowledge exists in the world outside us and that it must be structured into us if we are to learn. Modern thinking about learning suggests that knowledge is composed when we make sense of our experiences within our environment by ascribing meaning and significance to our interactions. We compose our meaning and develop our knowledge from acting and interacting with the concepts and ideas of each other through interactions known as conversations. A conversational model of teaching and learning blurs the distinction between the partners. The role of the observer, within such a conversational model is not that of the non-participating, "scientific" observer, but of the naturalistic inquirer - the participant researcher who works with qualitative information in a dynamic environment. The naturalistic inquirer who observes for learning is not the one who measures, but the one who relates and understands.

In this course, learners will be asked "What does learning look like? What conduct would we describe as adequate to say that learning is occurring, has occurred or that a learner 'knows' something?" Observing for learning is both an epistemological frame that departs from traditional notions of assessment and a methodology that radically transforms the relationship between learner and mentor as both come to delight and inquire in the construction of their own unique knowledge architecture. Learners will engage in their own Observing for Learning as a fundamental aspect of the course.

### **LC 514 Conversation Circles: Nurturing a Passion for Teaching (3credits) (Forsythe)**

Learners explore the possibilities of teacher conversations, formal and/or informal, for sustaining personal and professional growth. The course examines how sharing teaching experiences may contribute to teachers in the process of becoming. Another focus is to gain an understanding of the influence of social interactions in improving the practice of individual teachers and how cultural nuances affect the interaction process. Learners will study the conversation theory of Gordon Pask and other scholars.

### **LC 515 Performative Inquiry: Dancing on the Edge of Chaos (3 credits) (Fels)**

*Not walls  
of cement,  
but...the melodies  
of your temperature. —Barba, (1995)*

Performative inquiry is an arts-based research methodology that invites cross-disciplinary exploration through drama/theatre, visual arts, dance, writing, and/or music. Researcher and participants engage in artistic practices and creative activities in order to investigate a research question or inquiry. Theoretically located within the interstices of complexity theory, enactivism, and performance studies, performative inquiry calls attention to our everyday habits of engagement, our assumptions, and our practices—who we are in relationship to others and our environment. Performative inquiry investigates the emergent “stops” (Appelbaum, 1995)—*moments of risk, moments of opportunity*—that a performative lens brings to our inquiry and pedagogy. A stop is an interruption to our daily scripts, the roles we play or the roles created by others for us to perform. Performative inquiry requires of its practitioners embodied “wide-awakeness” (Greene, 1978) so that we might in turn ask the question of each other and ourselves in our multiple locations (e.g. social, political, physical, pedagogical, communal), “Who is performing who?”

### **LC 516 Creating Community in the Classroom through Participatory Learning (3 credits) (A. Smith)**

This is a practical course for learners who are interested in using drama techniques to build community in their classrooms or groups that they lead. The strategy is to use drama activities to teach other subjects; the course is not about teaching drama and thus is accessible to everyone, not just drama aficionados. The course includes both theory and practice in participatory learning and performative inquiry through drama techniques, particularly role drama. Role dramas are multiple activity, integrative projects that can focus on one curriculum area or integrate multiple curricular areas. For example, a role drama that focuses on a social studies topic such as ancient Egypt could include learning activities in geometry, astronomy, social and religious structures, music, literature, archaeology, and/or geography/environmental science, from the imaginative stance of “what if”?

The work of Augusto Boal and other community educators and activists is explored through readings and discussion. Attention is paid to multiple intelligences, multi-literacies, and complexity theory. Learners develop and implement a role drama within their own teaching/community situation and share their discoveries with colleagues through discussion and an audiovisual presentation. Learners test out their ideas with their colleagues and faculty mentor before they implement their role drama, building on the ideas of the class.

### **LC 517 Performing Truth and Reconciliation (3 credits) (A. Smith)**

In 2007, the United Nations adopted a Declaration of Indigenous Rights that was not ratified by either Canada or the US until 2010. This resistance to recognizing the rights of our own Indigenous peoples shows how deeply seated colonial attitudes of discrimination are in our countries’ governments and cultures. In 2015, Canada’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission

(TRC) completed its work, having heard thousands of testimonies from Aboriginal people about the abuses they suffered in residential schools over three, sometimes four generations. The TRC has published documents that reveal important information that had been buried away from our collective consciousness. Now is the time to look at how our education of Indigenous children can redress the injustices of the past, to reach for truth and reconciliation. That many public school jurisdictions across Canada are now requiring teachers to include the history of residential schools makes this course a valuable resource for understanding the ramifications of the cultural genocide perpetrated on our Indigenous fellow citizens.

In this course we will study the findings of the Canadian Truth and Reconciliation Commission and other documents such as plays, poetry, stories, film, and novels from a variety of Indigenous cultures to understand the legacies of colonialism so that we can move forward in our work as educators to honour Indigenous peoples and to learn from them. This course is about both personal discovery and social justice in education.

### **Certificate Program**

The Certificate Program invites learners who do not have the formal qualifications for admission to the M.A. Program but who demonstrate the capacities to engage successfully in the SDGI learning environment to enroll in SDGI courses and directed studies. Certificate applicants apply as do M.A. applicants; they are admitted at the discretion of the Academic Dean. The Certificate Program includes SD 500, SD 501, SD 502, and three self-selected courses or studies.

The Institute requires every applicant to its Certificate Program to provide official documentation (e.g., high school diploma, general educational development tests [GED]) that the applicant possesses a high school diploma or its recognized equivalent at the time of admission.

It is possible that the Institute would allow an exception to this required admission criterion. If there is any exception to this required admission criterion, it will be appropriate—demonstration of extraordinary capacities and experience—and it will be documented.



## Admissions

### Admission Requirements

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute (SDGI) offers only graduate programs. Programs are open to learners who have completed an undergraduate degree from an accredited institution. Learners are required to submit a transcript from the institution from which the undergraduate degree was granted, and from any institutions attended subsequent to completion of the undergraduate degree. Learners verify their identity through the submission of an official transcript. (On rare occasions a learner who has not earned an undergraduate degree but who presents extraordinary qualifications in terms of experience and capabilities demonstrated through self-directed learning and/or prior work experience may be admitted to the program.) The Institute seeks applicants who are profoundly interested in and drawn to the principles and praxis of SelfDesign, enthusiasm-based learning, and freedom-based learning.

**English Language Proficiency Assessment** Applicants whose native language is not English must demonstrate an appropriate level of proficiency in English by the following: a score of at least 530 on the TOEFL PBT or at least 61 on the iBT, or a 6.5 on the IELTS.

### Application for Admission Process

The admission process is the following:

- Completion of the application for admission form, available on the SDGI website:
- Interviews with both an Admissions Committee representative and with a member of the Dean's staff (which will be conducted in person or via Skype)
- Submission of appropriate transcript(s)
- Payment of the non-refundable application fee of \$60 USD or CDN
- Verification of applicant's identity.

Applicants must follow the application procedures on the Institute's website:

[selfdesigninstitute.org](http://selfdesigninstitute.org)

SelfDesign Graduate Institute learners may begin their matriculation in the Winter or Summer Semesters or at our annual August Residency, which takes place during the second full week of August each year. **All applications for admission must be received 30 days before the first day of class in each semester.** (Under unusual circumstances and with permission from the Dean, a learner may begin his/her matriculation in the Fall Semester.)

Official notice of acceptance or non-acceptance to SelfDesign Graduate Institute will be sent by email within 14 days of the completion of the second interview. Acceptance is not a guarantee of course registration.

### Scholarships

The Institute offers tuition scholarships when such funds are available. These are listed and described on the Institute's website.

## **Prior Learning Assessment**

SelfDesign Graduate Institute recognizes that learners may have achieved an equivalent level of post-secondary learning through work, training, or experiences outside the formal post-secondary education system. Through Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) SDGI may grant a maximum of six (6) credits towards a Master's degree for this learning if it fulfills the requirements of the program to which the student has applied.

Applications for Prior Learning Assessment (PLA) credit are available from the Office of the Registrar to determine if the student has met the required standards. Prior learning may be demonstrated through one or more of the following methods:

### *Product/portfolio:*

The portfolio contains documents or objects that have been produced by the applicant and demonstrate tangible proof of accomplishment. These may include—but are not limited to—reports, videos, illustrations, prototype models, etc. Applicants may be asked to answer questions about the portfolio by the assessor.

### *Demonstration:*

This is a simulation or actual presentation of the applicant's abilities/experience, which may be live or recorded. The demonstration may include such elements as presenting a speech, role-playing a situation, creating a document, performing music or dance, completing a procedure, etc.

### *Interview:*

This assessment focuses on oral questions related to course objectives and may include open-ended questions, responses to a case study, and/or analysis of a problem. This interview may follow, or be used in combination with, other forms of assessment.

### *Worksite assessment:*

In this method, the applicant is observed performing tasks specifically assigned or normally conducted at the workplace. The assessment is done by the SDGI assessor or by a field expert identified by the assessor.

### *Self assessment:*

This assessment is completed by the applicant, typically via questionnaire. It normally complements assessment by the SDGI assessor or field expert.

### *External evaluation:*

This assessment is conducted by an expert other than the SDGI assessor and may result in a letter of validation, which complements other forms of assessment.

## **EXEMPTION**

In the event of the granting of a maximum of 6 credits of exemption from required courses as a result of Prior Learning Assessment, the learner must still complete the required number of courses and credits for the degree, including the granted PLA credits.

## **Transfer Credit**

A learner who has successfully completed a graduate level course at another accredited post-secondary institution may request that these credits be transferred to SDGI if the course work is similar to a course offered by SDGI or if the learner can show that the course is meaningfully related to the learner's selfdesigned program. SDGI may grant a maximum of 6 credits towards a Master's degree for this previously completed course work if it is approved and if the credit has been granted within the past five years.

Learners send applications for transfer credit to the Academic Dean. The learner must provide an official transcript for the course credit and a course syllabus or content outline.

Within two weeks of receipt such application, the Academic Dean will provide a response to the learner. If the Dean rejects the application, a written explanation for rejection will be provided. The learner may appeal the rejection to the Institute's President.

## **Advising**

Staff in the Office of the Academic Dean provide both pre-admission advising and academic advising, by telephone, e-mail, synchronous electronic media, or in-person interviews. During these conversations, learners learn about admission policies and procedures, transfer information, course and program planning, graduation requirements, and career planning. The SDGI website posts Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on these topics.

The Academic Dean communicates with enrolled learners on an ongoing basis in matters related to academic programming and career preparation. In addition each cohort is assigned a faculty advisor, who is available to the members of that cohort for three years for all advisement issues and concerns.

## Enrollment, Courses, and Records

### Tuition and Other Costs

**Tuition for 2017 is \$1392 US or \$1528 CDN for each three-credit course.** Tuition is paid online, as directed by email from the Institute's Assistant Dean.

***Learners must select a tuition payment plan within 2 weeks of the start of each semester and must make at least the first payment during the first three weeks of the semester.***

Costs for books and other learning materials will vary. Learners must pay for their own transportation, room, and board expenses for the Residency Workshop. On completion of registration for the Residency Workshop, learners will receive detailed information about the costs. *Learners must also pay for their own high speed Internet connection.*

### Initial Enrollment in the MA Program

When an applicant is accepted into the MA Program and chooses to enroll, the new learner is required to pay a registration deposit of \$250. This amount is credited toward SD 500, the first course in the program, as partial tuition payment.

If the learner chooses to withdraw from the program at least 60 days prior to the first day of the Residency or her/his first course, she/he is entitled to a full refund of this amount. If the learner withdraws at least 30 days before the first day of Residency or her/his first course, the refund is 50%. After that date there is no refund.

### Course Enrollment

Learners must enroll for each individual course. Enrollment is not considered final until at least the first tuition payment has been made. Enrollment opens online about 30 days prior to the beginning of the semester, and learners must enroll in their selected course(s)/studies) within two weeks of the opening of enrolment for each semester.

### Adding or Dropping a Course

***It is possible for learners to adjust their course enrollment in a semester by adding or dropping a course or directed study, provided this is done on or before the Friday of the third week of the semester.*** A completed Drop request must be submitted to the Academic Dean by email within this time period, and the Drop request is formalized only when the learner receives an email in response from the Dean noting this Drop.

A learner who drops a course can claim a refund of all charges associated with that course provided the withdrawal request is received by the Academic Dean on or before the Friday of the third week of the semester. **No refund will be issued and no charges will be removed if the learner drops a course after the refund period; a learner who withdraws from any course after the Friday of the third week of the semester will be responsible for the tuition for the course.** A grade of "W" will appear on the academic transcript for all course withdrawals.

A learner must make application to add a course on or before the Friday of the second week of the semester, by emailing the Academic Dean with this request. The decision to admit this late learner to the course is made by the course faculty mentor who will notify the learner, and the Dean, within 24 hours of receiving the application.

However, learners may only withdraw and receive a tuition refund from a Residency Workshop if they submit this request by email to the Academic Dean at least 15 days prior to the first day of the Residency.

### **Change in Concentration**

Learners wishing to change their concentration should contact the Academic Dean.

### **Cancelled Classes**

Occasionally it is necessary to cancel a course for educational or administrative reasons. When a course is cancelled, enrolled learners will be notified and offered assistance in selecting an alternative course. In the event that an alternative course is not available, the learner may choose a full refund of tuition for the cancelled course, or the application of that tuition toward a future registration. Any cancellation decision will be announced by the Friday of the first week of the semester to allow learners to make alternative arrangements.

### **Refunds**

Learners who withdraw from a program are entitled to a full refund of tuition (except for the amount of the Application Fee), if withdrawal occurs on or before the last business day prior to the first official day of the semester.

**A matriculating learner who withdraws from a specific course or directed study can claim a refund of tuition for that course according to the following schedule: 90% by the Friday of the 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the semester; 60% by the end of the 4<sup>th</sup> week; 40%, the 5<sup>th</sup> week; 30%, the 6<sup>th</sup> week; 20%, the 7<sup>th</sup> week; 10%, the 8<sup>th</sup> week; and none after that. Withdrawal notification must reach the Office of the Academic Dean on or before the Friday of the week of the withdrawal. If the learner withdraws after the 4<sup>th</sup> week, a grade of “W” will appear on the academic transcript.**

**Learners may withdraw and receive a 100% tuition refund from a Residency Workshop if they submit this request by email to the Academic Dean at least 15 days prior to the first day of the Residency. If the withdrawal is received after that period, the refund is 70%.**

### **Courses and Directed Studies**

Courses enroll 3-12 learners and meet on Zoom or a similar web platform for 3 hours once each week for 13 weeks at a scheduled time. The first week of each 15-week semester is a Reading Week; the last week is an Assessment Week.

The faculty mentor constructs and leads the course. We expect the mentor to elicit input from learners about elements of the course as the semester goes on and, as possible, to be responsive to learner interests and enthusiasms within the context of the course.

## **Directed Studies**

At the SelfDesign Graduate Institute, we expect the curriculum of each directed study to evolve from conversations between the faculty mentor and the learner(s) through which both parties collaborate to construct the study in an emergent manner. If there is a leader in this process, we expect that the leader will be the learner—but we very much value the co-inspiration that can take place in this form between the learner and the mentor.

A learner can initiate a directed study by communicating her/his interest in exploring a topic and/or working with a particular faculty mentor to the Academic Dean. The Dean will then put the learner in touch with the appropriate faculty member.

Directed studies enroll 1-2 learners. The amount of face-to-face meeting time varies depending on the number of learners. **As a minimum there are at least 6 meetings (online or in person) between the mentor and the learner(s) during the 15 week semester.** Meeting times and lengths are negotiated by the mentor and the learner(s).

*Please be sure to contact the faculty mentor and meet with her/him during the first 5 days of the semester, so you can get the study underway.*

## **Documentation of Directed Studies**

The mentor and the learner(s) create a “Study Syllabus” at the beginning of the study. The syllabus includes the following elements:

1. **Title of the study**
2. **Initiating Question(s):** what question(s) initiates the study
3. **Study Description:** a paragraph or more that describe the study
4. **Study Objectives:** a description of what the study intends for the learner to learn, gain, develop, accomplish, etc.

Objectives need to be written in the following format:

I will gain an understanding of...

I will be able to...

I will understand that...

I will develop...

Objectives begin with "I will..." and describe a specific learning outcome.

5. **Texts and other learning resources:** listed
6. **A schedule of meetings** between the learner and mentor (this may emerge over the course of the semester and be documented here at end of the study; include dates)
7. **Learning assignments, products, projects, etc.**—what gives evidence to the learning in the study (describe or attach in the final draft)
8. **Method of assessment**

*Every directed study must generate some artifacts—assignments, products, projects, artworks, expressive pieces, videos, synthesis documents, etc.—that document the learner's learning and growth in the study.*

The lived experience of the directed study may vary from the planned syllabus, as the conversation between mentor and learner may lead to emergent elements in the study.

*The learner should complete the first draft of the Study Syllabus by the end of the second or third week of the semester. When the draft Study Syllabus is satisfactory to both the learner and the mentor, it is approved. At this time the learner should email the draft syllabus to the Dean.*

*At the end of the course the learner and the mentor should jointly revise the Study Syllabus, if such revision is needed, to document the actual experience of the course and then email the syllabus to the Academic Dean.*

### **Assessment and Grading**

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute is a self-renewing learning community of care. We value integrity, responsibility, trust, and open communication. We ask our learners and our faculty mentors to bring all of these values into their actions in both the Course/Study Self-Assessment/Learner Assessment and Course/Study Evaluation processes.

### **Credit/No Credit**

All assignments and courses are evaluated as credit (C) or no credit (N). If an assignment is “(N) no credit,” the learner is expected to revise the assignment to reach the (C) status.

A learner’s status in a course/study may be temporarily marked as (I) for incomplete, if a course or directed study extends beyond the end date of the semester in which it began. Ultimately every course/study must be resolved as either credit or no credit. *Learners must complete the course/study Self-Assessment and the Course/Study Evaluation to be awarded credit for the course/study.*

### **Learner’s Course/Study Self-Assessment**

At the end of each course/study each learner writes an assessment of her/his learning in this course/study. These assessments vary from several paragraphs at least to two pages or more

(single spaced, 12 point). When the learner has completed her/his Course/Study Self-Assessment, she/he emails it to her/his faculty mentor for this course/study.

### **Requirements for Writing Your Self-Assessment**

Be specific and detailed in all your comments. Be honest and truthful with yourself.

What did you learn in this course or study? *First, answer this question specifically in relation to each of the course's or study's objectives. State the objective and then describe your learning and growth in relation to this objective.*

When you have assessed your own learning in relation to each objective, you may choose to respond to each of the questions below that feel useful to you. Or you may choose to expand on your assessment of your learning and growth in the course/study without reference to these questions.

Did you experience changes in your perceptions? Conceptions? Ways of making meaning or understanding phenomena? If so, describe these.

What assignments did you complete in the course or study? Did the assignments help to enhance your knowledge? Understanding? Insights? Skills?

Did you challenge yourself in this course or study? If so, how? What resulted from this challenge(s)?

Describe your participation in class discussions—or in your interaction with your mentor in your directed study.

Did you have any problems or difficulties with the way the course or study was working for you? If so, what did you do about this?

Overall how effectively did you use the resources available to you in this course or study?

What were your strengths and weaknesses in this course? What do you need to work on most? What new strengths or weaknesses did you discover, if any?

Where do you go from here in your program? What's next?

### **Faculty Mentor's Learner Assessment**

The faculty mentor reviews the learner's Course/Study Self-Assessment and then writes a Learner Assessment of the learner's participation and learning in the course/study from the mentor's perspective. This Learner Assessment is several paragraphs at least and may be considerably longer. The faculty mentor also assigns a grade: credit or no credit. The faculty mentor then sends this Learner Assessment to the learner.

The faculty mentor also sends both documents, the learner's Course/Study Self-Assessment and faculty mentor's Learner Assessment, with an assignment of credit or no credit) to the Academic Dean.



**Conversation**

Both the learner and the faculty mentor may initiate a Skype conversation with the other about the assessment documents, if such is desired by either party.

**Appeal**

If the learner is not satisfied with the mentor's assessment and/or grading of her/his learning in a course, the learner may appeal, as detailed in the Learner Handbook.

**Reporting and Record Keeping**

The Academic Dean's office compiles the course record for each learner in each course. This includes the course description, the learner's Course Self-Assessment, and the faculty mentor's Learner Assessment and grade. This record is maintained in the matriculation file for the learner in the Academic Dean's office.

**Course/Directed Study Evaluation**

Once the Learner Assessment procedure is completed and the learners have received their assessments and grades, the Academic Dean's office asks each learner to write a Course or Directed Study Evaluation.

In keeping with the values of integrity, responsibility, trust, and open communication, we ask each learner to sign his/her course evaluation.

Learners email their Course Evaluation to the Academic Dean, who reviews these documents and forwards them to the faculty mentor.

If a learner does not feel comfortable in providing a signed Course/Study Evaluation to the mentor, she/he should contact the Academic Dean about this concern.

Course/Study evaluations include responses to the prompts below. You are invited to include any additional comments as well.

1. Describe the ways in which this course was effective and meaningful for you.
2. How could this course be improved in the future?
3. Describe the ways in which the faculty mentor effectively facilitated this course.
4. How could the faculty mentor improve her/his efforts in this course in the future?

Course/study evaluations are required elements for the granting of credit for completing a course or directed study.

**Extensions and Incompletes**

Faculty mentors may, with their own discretion, offer extensions to learners beyond the end of the semester. Mentors should employ their own professional judgment in the granting of any

extension, keeping in mind that the quality of the learner's work should be satisfactory up to the granting of the extension.

When an extension is granted, the mentor and the learner should agree on a new due date for the assignment(s).

When an extension is granted, the mentor should report this extension to the Academic Dean. Ordinarily we expect that all courses/studies granted an extension will be completed prior to the end of the subsequent semester. With extraordinary circumstances the learner, with the support of the mentor, may appeal to the Academic Dean for a longer extension.

When the learner has completed an extended course/study, the following activities will transpire:

- a. The learner will complete her/his self-assessment for the course/study and send this to the mentor.
- b. The mentor will complete the learner assessment for the course/study, assign a grade of credit/no credit, and send all of these materials to the Academic Dean.
- c. The learner will complete a course/study evaluation and send this to the Academic Dean.

On completion of these documents, the Dean will assign the grade as noted by the mentor. If the Dean does not receive a final grade by the deadline specified, a grade of N will be assigned as the final grade.

## **Grade Reports**

Learners receive their grade report from the faculty mentor with their Learner Assessment for each course and directed study.

## **The Master's Thesis/Project**

The intention of the Master's thesis/project is to engage the learner in a culminating activity that draws on her/his prior learning and unfoldment and engages her/him in a significant exercise of scholarship or action in the world related to her/his studies. The thesis/project requires the learner to achieve the following objectives:

The learner will deepen and enhance her/his knowledge base regarding the topic of the thesis/project.

The learner will broaden her/his understanding of the topic of the thesis/project.

The learner will engage in synthesis in relation to the knowledge and wisdom related to her/his topic.

The learner will create new knowledge and/or wisdom related to her/his topic, or the learner will engage and complete a creative act in the world as described in her/his project.

Each concentration offers its own thesis/project course. The thesis/project may be 3-credits or 6-credits.

**SD 600, 601 Master’s Thesis/Project in Self Design (3 or 6 credits)**

The Master’s Thesis is a significant original research in Self Design and a substantial written thesis. It may also be a significant project in the application of Self Design and a substantial documentation of the project.

**PM 600, 601 Master’s Project/Thesis in Post-Modern Education (3 or 6 credits)**

The Master’s Project/Thesis is one the following: (1) develop a plan for a post-modern school and begin to create it, with substantial documentation; (2) envision an integral learning form and begin to create it, with substantial documentation; (3) demonstrate the learner’s effective preparation to teach in a post-modern school; or (4) engage in significant original research in post-modern education or integral learning and complete a substantial written thesis.

**LC 600, 601 Master’s Thesis/Project in Designing Learning Communities (3 or 6 credits)**

The Master’s Thesis represents significant original research in Designing Learning Communities and a substantial written thesis or a significant project in the application of Self Design to a learning community and a substantial documentation of the project.

**Thesis/Project Procedure**

1. Upon the successful completion of her/his ninth course, the learner consults with the Dean to discuss thesis/project possibilities and to consider whether to engage in a 3-credit or a 6-credit thesis.
2. When the learner has successfully completed either ten or eleven courses, depending on the learner’s intention to engage in a 3-credit or 6-credit thesis/project, the learner applies to the Dean for Thesis Status. In this application, the learner states her/his intention to enact a 3-credit or 6-credit thesis. Upon receipt of the application, the Dean places the learner in Thesis/Project Status.
3. The learner articulates an initial idea or vision for her/his thesis or project and recruits an appropriate faculty mentor. The faculty mentor informs the Dean that she/he has agreed to enact this role.
4. With the support of the faculty mentor, the learner drafts an “Idea Paper” for her/his thesis or project and submits it to the mentor.

For a thesis:

- What is the research question?
- Why is this question worthy of your time and energy?
- Briefly describe your research plan.

For a project:

- Describe the purpose and enactment of the project.
- How will you document the project?
- Briefly describe your project plan.

5. The mentor reviews the “Idea Paper” and discusses it with the learner. When the mentor and the learner both agree that the “Idea Paper” is satisfactory, the mentor approves it, informs the Dean of this approval, and emails a copy of the “Idea Paper” to the Dean.

6. The learner recruits one additional faculty member and one learner colleague to serve on her/his Thesis/Project committee. The learner serving on the committee receives a \$100 tuition credit.

7. With support from the mentor, the learner then develops a formal thesis or project proposal. The thesis proposal includes at least the following elements:

- a. A more detailed discussion of the research question than is included in the Idea Paper
- b. A plan for a literature review in relation to the topic of the thesis
- c. A discussion of research methodology and the identification of the methodology/ies to be employed in this thesis; appropriate references to the academic literature about the nature and utility of this methodology/ies
- d. A detailed plan for the research to be conducted for the thesis

The project proposal includes at least the following elements:

- a. A more detailed discussion of the nature and purpose of the project
- b. A plan for a literature review in relation to the plan for the project
- c. A detailed plan for documentation of the project
- d. A detailed plan for activities to be enacted in the project

The learner creates the proposal with support from her/his mentor. When both the learner and the mentor agree that the proposal is complete, the learner presents the Thesis/Project Proposal to her/his committee, which must convene at least once in person (online) to discuss the proposal, give feedback to the learner, and with the learner “leaving the room,” approve the proposal or require revision.

8. The learner’s committee has final approval of the Thesis/Project Proposal. All approved proposals are sent to the Dean, who will share all approved proposals with members of the Academic Programs Committee.

9. The learner conducts her/his thesis/project activity, with support from the faculty mentor and, if requested, members of her/his committee. A 3-credit thesis/project should be completed within 3-5 months of the approval of its proposal; a 6-credit thesis/project, within 6-8 months. If the learner needs more time for completion, she/he may petition the Dean for additional time.

10. When the thesis or project documentation is completed, the learner submits this document to her/his committee members. The committee members review the document and have an online conversation with the learner about the thesis/project. The scheduling of this process and the conversation itself are facilitated by the faculty mentor.

The faculty mentor then polls the committee as to the members' approval of the thesis/project documentation. All members of the committee must approve the thesis/project for it to be accepted as is.

If the thesis/project documentation is not approved, the faculty mentor meets with the learner to inform her/him of needed additions/revisions, and the learner must complete these to the satisfaction of all committee members.

11. Once the committee has approved the thesis/project, the faculty mentor informs the Dean. Learners may propose to engage in a thesis/project with a partner. Such proposals should be directed to the Dean. Each proposal will be considered on its individual merits by the Academic Programs Committee.

## **Graduation Requirements**

Learners must successfully complete the program of study outlined for the specific degree in which they are enrolled. Learners have a maximum of five years from the date of admission to complete the degree program. At the discretion of the Academic Dean, a learner may obtain a "leave of absence" from her/his matriculation. All time "on leave" will not count as part of the five year period.

Any learner who has not completed the degree program in five years may request an extension from the Academic Dean. The Dean will grant such extension, unless there is a compelling reason to reject such request.

## **Procedures**

The awarding of the degree is conducted when the thesis/final project course(s) is awarded credit.

Graduation exercises are held once a year, in August, at the Residency. Learners who have completed their program in the previous 12 months may participate in the graduation ceremony. Transcripts and degree parchments reflect graduation dates, rather than the date of the commencement ceremony.

## **Transcripts**

In accordance with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, transcripts are issued only upon the signed, written request of the learner, received in the Office of the Registrar and accompanied by the appropriate fee. There is a \$5 fee for the first copy, and a \$2 fee for each additional copy prepared at the same time. A transcript request will be honored within five working days. The SDGI reserves the right to withhold transcripts from learners who are not in good financial standing with the Institute.

## **Leave of Absence Policy**

A learner who has enrolled in the SelfDesign Graduate Institute MA or Certificate Program may take a leave of absence for one semester at her/his discretion. The learner must inform the Academic Dean of her/his decision to take a leave in an email or letter prior to the first day of the

semester. The email or letter should explain the reason(s) for the leave.

If the learner wishes to extend a leave of absence to a second consecutive semester, the learner must contact the Academic Dean via email at least 20 days prior to the start of the semester. The Dean will then contact the learner to discuss her/his request. *A second consecutive leave is discouraged. It is within the discretion of the Dean to grant or deny the leave. If the leave is denied, the Dean will place the learner on “inactive status,” and the learner will need to re-apply to regain active status in the Institute.*

## **Institute Policies and Regulations**

### **Academic Advising and Guidance Services**

Staff in the Office of the Academic Dean provide both pre-admission advising and academic advising, by telephone, e-mail, synchronous electronic media, or in person interviews. During these conversations, learners learn about admission policies and procedures, transfer information, course and program planning, graduation requirements and career planning. The SDGI website posts Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) on these topics.

The Academic Dean communicates with enrolled learners on an ongoing basis in matters related to academic programming and career preparation. In addition each cohort is assigned a faculty advisor, who is available to the members of that cohort for three years for all advisement issues and concerns.

### **Placement Services and Employment Opportunities**

*The Institute provides no specific placement services and makes no claims in relation to the future employment of graduates.*

On request Institute staff assist interested learners in meeting educators in the network of post-modern and integral schools in the US and Canada and in meeting educators working within SelfDesign organizations around the world.

### **Confidentiality and Privacy**

SDGI complies with the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 which was designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of learners to inspect and review their educational records, to challenge the content of those records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, to submit an explanatory statement for enclosure in the record if the outcome of the hearing is unsatisfactory, to prevent disclosure, with certain exceptions, of personally identifiable information, and to secure a copy of the Institute policy which includes the location of all education records.

### **Disability Services**

SelfDesign Graduate Institute is committed to ensuring that all learners have equal access to its academic programs.

Learners with disabilities are entitled to reasonable accommodation services according to Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) of 1990. Learners have the right not to be discriminated against or treated with disrespect based on an actual or perceived disability.

They are entitled to access all Institute programs if “otherwise qualified” to participate. Along with these rights come responsibilities. Learners are expected to provide documentation of their disability; to inform the Office of the Registrar of any accommodation needs or program barriers; and to notify the Office of any complaint regarding the provision of access or accommodations.

While SDGI works to provide every learner with suitable accommodation, the Institute has the right to refuse any accommodation that would fundamentally alter an academic program, or would pose an undue burden on the Institute.

## **Learner Rights and Responsibilities**

### **Rights**

#### **Respect**

Learners are entitled to be treated with respect and due consideration by all Institute faculty mentors, staff, and learners.

#### **Access to Records**

Learners are entitled to all rights established by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act of 1974 which was designed to protect the privacy of educational records, to establish the right of learners to inspect and review their educational records, to challenge the content of those records, to have a hearing if the outcome of the challenge is unsatisfactory, to submit an explanatory statement for enclosure in the record if the outcome of the hearing is unsatisfactory, to prevent disclosure, with certain exceptions, of personally identifiable information, and to secure a copy of the Institute policy which includes the location of all education records. Questions concerning the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act should be addressed to the Registrar.

#### **Learner Grievance Policy and Procedure**

A learner may bring a grievance against a faculty or staff member to the attention of the Academic Dean. Prior to filing a formal grievance, the Institute strongly encourages learners to discuss their concerns with the faculty or staff member concerned, if possible, or, if not, with a member of the Institute's administration.

If a learner chooses to file a formal grievance, the following procedure will be followed:

1. The learner will describe the grievance in writing and present the grievance document to the Dean.
2. The Dean shall inform the faculty or staff member in question of the grievance and provide her/him with a copy of the grievance document.
3. The first recourse in the event of a formal grievance is mediation. The Dean shall appoint a mediator within 10 business days, and the appointee shall conduct a formal mediation with the learner and the faculty or staff member. If the mediation comes to a conclusion acceptable to both parties, the Institute will consider the grievance resolved. The Dean shall keep a record of the grievance and mediation.
4. If a resolution cannot be achieved via mediation, the Dean shall investigate the grievance within 10 business days of the failure of the mediation.
5. If the Dean finds probable cause but the nature of the grievance is not adequately serious to warrant formal disciplinary action, the Dean will attempt to resolve the matter informally.



6. If the Dean finds probable cause and the nature of the grievance is adequately serious to potentially warrant disciplinary action, the Dean shall inform both the learner and the faculty or staff member of this finding. Then the Dean shall hold a hearing on the grievance within 10 business days and render a final decision with another 10 business days.
7. If the learner is unsatisfied with the Dean's decision, she/he may appeal to the Institute's President. The President will respond to the appeal within 10 business days.

If the learner's grievance is with the President, the learner may bring her/his appeal to the Chair of the Board of Directors. The Chair will respond within 10 business days.

## **Responsibilities**

### **Code of Conduct**

In every context of their experience within the SelfDesign Graduate Institute, learners are expected to behave with due consideration and respect toward their colleagues and toward the Institute's faculty mentors and staff.

The activities listed below may result in probation, suspension, or expulsion, as defined below, if they occur within any SDGI auspices. Other violations of consideration and respect not specified may also result in similar outcomes.

**Probation:** a status of "being on warning" not to engage in any other violations of the Code of Conduct

**Suspension:** a status of being removed from enrollment or any other participation in the Institute for a period of time

**Expulsion:** a status of being expelled from enrollment, without any possibility of future re-enrollment

### **Prohibited Activities**

- Physical or verbal obstruction of Institute activities
- Threatening or inflicting bodily harm on any other person
- Theft, vandalism, destruction, or gross negligence toward property of the Institute or Institute learners, faculty, or staff
- Possession of firearms or dangerous explosive materials
- Furnishing false information to the Institute with intent to deceive
- Plagiarism
- Soliciting or assisting another to do any act that would subject a learner to probation, suspension, or expulsion
- Violation of any criminal statutes of the State of Washington if the violation occurs within Institute auspices or affects the Institute community

### **Academic Dishonesty**

Academic dishonesty in all forms is a serious educational offence. The SDGI will proceed with appropriate disciplinary action in alleged cases of cheating, plagiarism, or unauthorized use of aids, assistance, or materials.

## **Disciplinary Procedures**

Charges of violations of the Code of Conduct may be made by any member of the SDGI community. Charges shall be in writing and shall be filed with the Academic Dean. Upon such filing, the Dean shall investigate the alleged violation.

If the Dean determines that there is no substance to the charge, the charge shall be dropped.

If the Dean initially determines that the charge may warrant the penalty of “probation,” the Dean shall meet with the learner and offer her/him an opportunity to respond to the charge. If after such response the Dean determines that the charge warrants probation, the Dean shall explain her/his finding to the learner and place the learner on probation for a specified time of no more than one semester. The Dean shall place a letter explaining the probation in the learner’s file. At the end of the specified time, if there are no other violations, the probation is terminated.

If the Dean determines that the charge may warrant the penalty of “suspension,” the same procedures are followed as those described for “probation.” If the Dean finds for “suspension,” the learner may appeal this judgment to the President. The learner shall state her/his appeal in writing to the President within 5 business days of receiving the Dean’s finding. During this time the learner may not participate in any activities of the Institute.

Once the President has received the written appeal, he/she shall meet with the learner and discuss the charge and the appeal. The President shall then inform the learner in writing of her/his decision within 5 business days.

The same procedures shall be followed if the Dean determines that the charge warrants the penalty of “expulsion.”

## **Non-Discrimination Policy**

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, age, gender, religion, physical ability or disability, or national or ethnic origin in the admission to or administration of any of its programs.

## **Sexual Harassment Policy**

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute seeks to promote and maintain an environment free from harassment of any type. Sexual harassment can interfere with a learner’s growth and learning as well as her/his emotional and physical well-being.

### Definitions

Sexual harassment is defined as any unwelcome, offensive behavior of a sexual nature; unwelcome sexual advances; requests for sexual favors; and other verbal or physical conduct of a sexual nature when:

- Submission to such conduct is made either explicitly or implicitly a term or condition of employment or academic admission or advancement;
- Submission to or rejection of such conduct is used as the basis (or threatened to be used as the basis) for employment actions or academic decisions or evaluations; or

- Such conduct has the purpose or effect of unreasonably interfering with an individual's work or learning or creating an intimidating, hostile, or offensive work or learning environment.

Sexual harassment can occur between any pair of individuals within the Institute. The harasser is often, but not always, in a more powerful position than the person being harassed. In such situations, sexual harassment is particularly serious because it may unfairly exploit the power inherent in a supervisor's or faculty member's position. All forms of sexual harassment are violations of the Institute's policy and will not be tolerated. Often sexual harassment is also a violation of Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972.

### Confidentiality

Those persons responsible for consulting about, investigating, and resolving complaints of sexual harassment will make efforts, to the extent possible, to protect the privacy of both the complainant and the respondent.

### Sexual Harassment Complaint Procedures for Learners

Any learner who believes that he/she has been a victim of sexual harassment by any member of the SDGI community—learner, faculty, or staff—and wishes to report or discuss the matter may use either a formal or informal complaint procedure. No individual shall be penalized or retaliated against in any way by a member of the Institute community for his or her participation in this complaint procedure.

### Informal Complaint Procedure

The informal complaint procedure seeks to achieve a resolution upon which both the complainant and the alleged harasser agree. An informal complaint may be oral or in writing. It should be brought to the Academic Dean. Informal complaints may have several outcomes. The person raising the issue may only want to discuss the matter with a neutral third party to clarify whether harassment may be occurring and to determine his/her options, including the pursuit of more formal action. In such a situation, the Dean will give assistance and offer suggestions on how the issue might be resolved, without drawing a conclusion as to whether harassment has occurred. In other cases, the Dean may be asked to act as a mediator, to talk to the other person(s) to see whether an informal resolution of the issue can be reached. If resolution is reached by this process, no further actions will be taken, and the matter will be considered closed.

The Dean will keep a confidential record of the complaint and its resolution, including the names of the involved parties. Issues not so resolved may require that further inquiries be made and/or that the Institute take a more active role in finding a solution to the problem. If a satisfactory resolution cannot be reached, the formal complaint procedure may be used at the option of the complainant, the respondent, or the Institute.

### Formal Complaint Procedure

A complainant may make a formal complaint without first using the informal complaint procedure. A formal complaint should be in writing and submitted to the Academic Dean. The formal complaint should include: the alleged harasser's name; the times, dates, places, and circumstances surrounding the allegation of harassment; a description of the harassment; and the

names of any witnesses to the incident(s).

After receipt of the formal complaint, the Dean will consult with the complainant, the person against whom the complaint is made, any witnesses, and any appropriate others, in an attempt to resolve the matter and/or to determine whether further investigation is warranted. A copy of the formal complaint will be provided to the individual against whom the complaint is made. A formal investigation can be terminated at any time, e.g., if a satisfactory resolution is agreed to before a written finding is made, or if an appropriate resolution is implemented.

*Upon completion of the investigation, the Dean will issue a finding and, if appropriate, recommendations.* A complainant or respondent dissatisfied with the finding or recommendations may file a rebuttal statement with the Dean for inclusion in the investigative file. The complainant or respondent may also appeal the finding or recommendation to the President of the Institute. If an appeal is filed, the President will meet with both the complainant and the respondent and will then issue a finding, which is binding within the SDGI.

## **Web-Mediated Learning**

### **Requirements and Methods**

Most of the interaction between learners and faculty and among learners within SDGI courses, directed studies, and advisory conversations takes place through web-mediated communication. For one-on-one communication, the Institute uses Skype. For course classes, the Institute uses Zoom.com or a similar web platform. Learners receive instructions for how to access Zoom and use this platform with no additional charge.

To use either platform, learners need a recently-manufactured computer with a camera connected to it and a high-speed Internet connection. Learners can open skype.com, establish a Skype account without charge, download the no-cost Skype operating software, and then make video calls, also without charge. Learners are sent a Zoom log-in and can access the platform simply by selecting the log-in link.

Learners also need to be able to access the Internet.

The Institute encourages learners to develop their own technical skills for web-mediated learning. As needed, the Institute provides assistance to learners in this technical skill development. This assistance is provided by appointment. Learners need to make such appointments through the Dean's Office.

The Institute expects learners, faculty, and staff to exhibit the same respectful and considerate behavior towards each other online that they exhibit in person. All standards for behavior described in this Handbook apply in all contexts of Institute life.

## **Academic Responsibilities and Standards of Academic Progress**

Learners are responsible for active participation in every class and directed study. They are responsible for their engagement in the Core courses and for selfdesigning their M.A. Program to best engage their curiosity and manifest their inspiration as learners and as members of a self-renewing community of care.

Standards of academic progress in the SelfDesign Graduate Institute's M.A. Program include the following:

Successful completion of the Core Courses, earning credit in each course

Successful articulation of a selfdesigned M.A. Program building on the Core courses, including the earning of credit in all courses and directed studies

Successful design and completion, with credit, of the M.A. thesis or culminating project

## **Withdrawal from the Program**

Learners may be asked to withdraw from the program if they fail to earn credit in more than one course or directed study. Learners may withdraw from the program at any time. To do so, they must inform the Dean and the Registrar.

## **SDGI Library**

The Institute's library includes more than 220 volumes that explore SelfDesign, post-modern schooling, and designing learning communities. The library's holdings are listed on the Institute's website. Learners may borrow any of the books for one month, with a limit of three books at a time. Requests are made to the Academic Dean. Books are sent through the mail.

## **Transferability of Credits from SelfDesign Graduate Institute to Other Institutions**

While the SelfDesign Graduate Institute has received authority from the Washington Student Achievement Council in Washington State to offer degree programs, the Institute is in its sixth full year of operation and is not yet accredited. Thus, credits earned at SDGI may not be accepted as transfer credits at other accredited graduate schools. *Acceptance of transfer credit is determined by the receiving institution.*

## **Learner Complaints**

Learner complaints should be filed in writing: by mail to David Marshak, SelfDesign Graduate Institute, 1807 McKenzie Ave. Bellingham WA 98225, USA. Or by email: [davidmarshak@selfdesign.org](mailto:davidmarshak@selfdesign.org)

Learners may file a complaint about any issue or concern that relates to their interaction with the Institute, its personnel and faculty, and its services. If the complaint is a formal grievance, the process described on page 46 will be followed. If the complaint is not a grievance, Dr. Marshak will respond to the complaint within 3 days of its receipt and negotiate and enact an acceptable response with the learner. If the learner is not satisfied with this negotiation, she/he may appeal to Chair of the Board of Directors, Renee Poindexter.

If a learner is not satisfied with the response of the Institute to her/his complaint, the learner may file a complaint with the Washington Student Achievement Council. Information about how to file a complaint is here: <http://www.wsac.wa.gov/student-complaints>.

## 2017 SelfDesign Graduate Institute Academic Calendar

### **Winter Semester 2017**

First day of semester January 3  
Last day of semester April 14  
Grades due: April 24  
Legal holidays: January 16, February 20

### **Summer Semester 2017**

First day of semester April 24  
Last day of semester August 4  
Grades due: August 14  
Legal holidays: May 29, July 4

### **Residency 2017**

First day August 13  
Last day August 20  
Grades due: August 28

### **Fall Semester 2017**

First day of semester September 5  
Last day of semester December 15  
Grades due: December 23  
Legal holidays: November 23-24

## **Institute Faculty and Administration**

### **Board of Directors**

The SelfDesign Graduate Institute is governed by the Board of Directors of the SelfDesign Foundation, which determines the general policy of the Institute, makes laws for its governance, manages its investments and directs the expenditure of funds. The Board of Directors includes:

Anne Adams  
Terry Cochran (ex officio, non-voting)  
Jeff Goebel  
Linda Inlay  
Brandy McCray (Learner/alumnae member, secretary)  
Jon Ouellette  
Renee Poindexter (chair)  
David Marshak (ex officio, non-voting)

### **Officers**

Operationally, the Institute is managed by its Officers and Deans.

#### **President—David Marshak, Ed.D.**

The President is the chief executive officer of the SelfDesign Graduate Institute and provides leadership in all domains of Institute activities, in concurrence with the Board of Directors of the SelfDesign Foundation. The President is responsible for the presentation of all Institute policies and recommendations to the Board. In the execution of her/his duties, the President consults with, and delegates to, the Dean, faculty, and administrative staff.

#### **Vice-President for Finance—James Terrence Cochran, M.B.A.**

The Vice-president of Finance is the chief financial administrator of the Institute and is responsible for supervising the preparation and oversight of the Institute budget and all other financial matters. The Vice-president of Finance works with the President and the Dean, faculty, and administrative staff to initiate and execute strategic operations.

**Director of Student Services** Student services are directed by the Academic Dean and the Assistant Dean.

**Library Director** Library services are coordinated by the Assistant Dean.



## Faculty

### **Academic Dean—David Marshak, Ed.D.**

The Academic Dean ensures that appropriate courses are available to learners, taught by suitably qualified faculty. The Dean ensures that applicants receive adequate advising about admissions, transfer, course and program planning, and graduation requirements. The Dean communicates with learners on an ongoing basis in matters related to academic programming and career preparation.

The Dean provides administrative and academic leadership to the faculty, consulting with faculty regularly, building consensus, removing obstacles to the achievement of the Institute's mission, supporting innovation and excellence in teaching, encouraging critical reflection and adaptability. The Dean works with the faculty search committee to recruit and select new faculty, and makes the necessary recommendations to the President. The Dean reports to the President.

### **Assistant Dean and Registrar—Laurel Tien, M.A.**

The Assistant Dean and Registrar is responsible for the creation and maintenance of student academic records, transcript services, course registration, tuition and fee assessment and refunds, and the student information system. The Assistant Dean also supports the Academic Dean in all of her/his activities.

## Faculty

**Anne Adams** California Institute of Integral Studies, Ph.D. 2005. Integral Learning

**Peter Berg** Walden University, Ed.D. 2013. Post-Modern Schools

**Marcia Braundy** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2005. Learning Community

**Pille Bunnell** University of California, Berkeley, Ph.D. 1973. Integral Learning

**Mali Burgess** The Union Institute and University, Ph.D. 2004. Integral Learning

**Sam Crowell** University of Virginia, Ed.D. 1992. Integral Learning

**Elaine Decker** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2004. Learning Community

**Kathleen Forsythe** Open University (United Kingdom), B.A. 1974. Open University ABD, 1980. SelfDesign

**Paul Freedman** Goddard College, M.Ed. 2007. Post-Modern Schools

**Jeanne Marie Iorio** Teachers College, Columbia University, Ed.D. 2007. Integral Learning

**Daniel Kirkpatrick** Antioch University Seattle, M.A. 1990. Post-Modern Schools

**Hilary Leighton** University of Victoria, Ph.D. 2014 Integral Learning

**Darrell Letourneau** University of Victoria, M.Ed. 1999. SelfDesign

**Geoffrey “Ba” Luvmour** Sonoma State University, 1984. M.A. Integral Learning

**Josette Luvmour** Fielding Graduate University, 2008. Ph.D. Integral Learning

**Margo MacLeod** Yale University, Ph.D. 2000 Integral Learning

**David Marshak** Harvard University, Ed.D. 1985 Integral Learning

**Michael Maser** Simon Fraser University, M.A. 1997. SelfDesign

**Chris Mercogliano** Post-Modern Schools

**River Meyer** University of Northern Colorado, M.A. 1976. SelfDesign

**Kadi Purru** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2003. Learning Community

**Chungha Jennie Oliver** Argosy University, Hawaii, Ed.D. 2012. Learning Community

**Zachary Oliver** Argosy University, Ed.D. 2009. Integral Learning

**Lucila T. Rudge** Ohio State University, Ph.D. 2008. Post-Modern Schools

**Elizabeth Simpson** Auburn University, Ph.D. 2000. Integral Learning

**Annie Smith** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2007. Learning Community

**Prapanna Smith** University of California, San Diego and California State University, San Marcos, Ed.D. 2010. Integral Learning

**Anna Soter** University of Illinois. Ph.D. 1985. Integral Learning

**Beth Sutton** Antioch University, New England, M.Ed. 1990. Integral Learning

**Fleurette Sweeney** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2002. Learning Community

**Jonathan Taylor** Rutgers University, Ph.D. 1970. Integral Learning

**Teresita-Salve R. Tubianosa** University of British Columbia, Ph.D. 2000.

## **ADVISORY COUNCIL**

The Institute's Advisory Council includes the following members in 2015:

**Robert C. Gilman**, Founder and President of the Context Institute

**Robert Manzer**, Provost, American InterContinental University

**Milt Markewitz**, retired IBM programmer and team leader; sustainability educator

**Stephanie Pace Marshall**, Founding President and President Emerita of the Illinois Mathematics and Science Academy, former president of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development

**Hal Morse**, chairman and CEO of The Health and Healing Network

**Dana Pearlman**, Mycelium Program leader and designer of inaugural Bold Academy

**Stephanie Sarantos**, co-founder and 20 year staff member at The Clearwater School near Seattle

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## Research Methods

***Quantitative research*** “refers to the systematic empirical investigation of social phenomena via statistical, mathematical or numerical data or computational techniques. The objective of quantitative research is to develop and employ mathematical models, theories and/or hypotheses pertaining to phenomena. The process of measurement is central to quantitative research because it provides the fundamental connection between empirical observation and mathematical expression of quantitative relationships. Quantitative data is any data that is in numerical form such as statistics, percentages, etc. In layman's terms, this means that the quantitative researcher asks a specific, narrow question and collects a sample of numerical data from participants to answer the question. The researcher analyzes the data with the help of statistics. The researcher is hoping the numbers will yield an unbiased result that can be generalized to some larger population.” Wikipedia

***Qualitative research*** is aimed at gaining a deep understanding of a specific organization or event, rather than a surface description of a large sample of a population. It aims to provide an explicit rendering of the structure, order, and broad patterns found among a group of participants. It generates data about human groups in social settings.

Qualitative research does not introduce treatments or manipulate variables or impose the researcher's operational definitions of variables on the participants. Rather, it lets the meaning emerge from the participants. It is more flexible in that it can adjust to the setting. Concepts, data collection tools, and data collection methods can be adjusted as the research progresses.

Qualitative research aims to get a better understanding through first hand experience, truthful reporting, and quotations of actual conversations. It aims to understand how the participants derive meaning from their surroundings, and how their meaning influences their behavior.

(<http://www.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa696/696quali.htm>)

### Qualitative Research Strategies

***Participant Observation*** is a period of intensive social interaction between the researcher and the source individuals or group, in the latter's environment. For the participant observer, everything is noted as if it were happening for the first time, and everything is subject to inquiry. Nothing is taken for granted. It is an attempt to see the world from the other person's point of view. It assumes that what people say and do is a product of how they see and interpret the world.

Participant observation is founded on the theory of symbolic interactionism. This assumes that people are constantly in a process of interpretation and definition as they move through various situations that are more or less familiar to them. This is how situations obtain their meaning. People develop shared perspectives through social interaction. Objective frameworks, rules, goals, norms, values, rewards, organizational structures may set conditions and fix consequences for actions, but they do not determine what people will do. People act in terms of the meaning of these structures for them.

(<http://www.csulb.edu/~msaintg/ppa696/696quali.htm>)

**Observation** is a fundamental way of finding out about the world around us. As human beings, we are very well equipped to pick up detailed information about our environment through our senses. However, as a method of data collection for research purposes, observation is more than just looking or listening. Research, simply defined, is “systematic enquiry made public” (Stenhouse, 1975). Firstly, in order to become systematic, observation must in some way be selective. We are constantly bombarded by huge amounts of sensory information. Human beings are good at selectively attending to what is perceived as most useful to us. Observation harnesses this ability; systematic observation entails careful planning of what we want to observe. Secondly, in order to make observation ‘public’, what we see or hear has to be recorded in some way to allow the information to be analyzed and interpreted.

Observation can provide rich qualitative data, sometimes described as ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973), for example, where the relevant phenomena have been carefully observed and detailed field notes have been recorded. Typically, the researcher would not approach the observation with pre-determined categories or questions in mind. Because of this openness, observation in qualitative research is often referred to as **unstructured**.

Structured observation is more likely to be carried out by those operating from a ‘positivist’ perspective, or who at least believe it is possible to clearly define and quantify behaviours. Unstructured observation is more likely to be carried out by those operating from an ‘interpretive’ or ‘critical’ perspective where the focus is on understanding the meanings participants, in the contexts observed, attribute to events and actions. Positivist and critical researchers are likely to be operating from a ‘realist’ perspective, namely that there is a ‘real world’ with ‘real impact’ on people’s lives and this can best be studied by looking at social settings directly.

<http://www.strath.ac.uk/aer/materials/3datacollection/unit5/whatisobservation/>

**Action Research:** In action research, the researcher is the lead participant. Action research is a disciplined process of inquiry conducted *by* and *for* those taking the action. The primary reason for engaging in action research is to assist the “actor”—the researcher— in improving and/or refining his or her actions.

(From *Guiding School Improvement with Action Research* by Richard Sagor)

Action researchers examine their interactions and relationships in social setting seeking opportunities for improvement. As designers and stakeholders, they work with their colleagues to propose new courses of action that help their community improve work practices. As researchers, they seek evidence from multiple sources to help them analyze reactions to the action taken. They recognize their own view as subjective, and seek to develop their understanding of the events from multiple perspectives. The action researcher uses data collected from interactions with others to characterize the forces in ways that can be shared with other practitioners. This leads to a reflective phase in which the action researchers formulates new plans for action during the next cycle.

Action research provides a path of learning from and through one's practice by working through a series of reflective stages that facilitate the development of progressive problem solving (Bereiter & Scardamalia, 1993). Over time, action researchers develop a deep understanding of the ways in which a variety of social and environmental forces interact to create complex patterns. Since these forces are dynamic, action research is a process of living one's theory into practice (McNiff & Whitehead, 2010).

<http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html>

**Interviews:** The qualitative research interview seeks to describe the meanings of central themes in the life world of the subjects. The main task in interviewing is to understand the meaning of what the interviewees say. (Kvale, 1996)

A qualitative research interview seeks to cover both a factual and a meaning level, though it is usually more difficult to interview on a meaning level. (Kvale, 1996) Interviews are particularly useful for getting the story behind a participant's experiences. The interviewer can pursue in-depth information around the topic. Interviews may be useful as follow-up to certain respondents to questionnaires, e.g., to further investigate their responses. (McNamara, 1999)

<http://www.public.asu.edu/~kroel/www500/Interview%20Fri.pdf>

### *Reasons for using interviews*

Interviews are a useful method to:

- investigate issues in an in depth way
- discover how individuals think and feel about a topic and why they hold certain opinions
- investigate the use, effectiveness and usefulness of particular library collections and services
- inform decision making, strategic planning and resource allocation



- sensitive topics which people may feel uncomfortable discussing in a focus group
- add a human dimension to impersonal data
- deepen understanding and explain statistical data.

### *Advantages of interviews*

The main advantages of interviews are:

—they are useful to obtain detailed information about personal feelings, perceptions and opinions

—they allow more detailed questions to be asked

—they usually achieve a high response rate

—respondents' own words are recorded

ambiguities can be clarified and incomplete answers followed up

—precise wording can be tailored to respondent and precise meaning of questions clarified (eg for students with English as a Second Language)

—interviewees are not influenced by others in the group

—some interviewees may be less self-conscious in a one-to-one situation.

### *Disadvantages of interviews*

The main disadvantages of interviews are:

—they can be very time-consuming: setting up, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, feedback, reporting

—they can be costly

—different interviewers may understand and transcribe interviews in different ways

<http://www.evalued.bcu.ac.uk/tutorial/4c.htm>

**Case Study** refers to the collection and presentation of detailed information about a particular participant or small group, frequently including the accounts of subjects themselves. A form of qualitative descriptive research, the case study looks intensely at an individual or small participant pool, drawing conclusions only about that participant or

group and only in that specific context. Researchers do not focus on the discovery of a universal, generalizable truth, nor do they typically look for cause-effect relationships; instead, emphasis is placed on exploration and description.

<http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/page.cfm?pageid=1285>

Case study research excels at bringing us to an understanding of a complex issue or object and can extend experience or add strength to what is already known through previous research. Case studies emphasize detailed contextual analysis of a limited number of events or conditions and their relationships. Researchers have used the case study research method for many years across a variety of disciplines. Social scientists, in particular, have made wide use of this qualitative research method to examine contemporary real-life situations and provide the basis for the application of ideas and extension of methods. Researcher Robert K. Yin defines the case study research method as an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context; when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident; and in which multiple sources of evidence are used (Yin, 1984, p. 23).

Critics of the case study method believe that the study of a small number of cases can offer no grounds for establishing reliability or generality of findings. Others feel that the intense exposure to study of the case biases the findings. Some dismiss case study research as useful only as an exploratory tool. Yet researchers continue to use the case study research method with success in carefully planned and crafted studies of real-life situations, issues, and problems. Reports on case studies from many disciplines are widely available in the literature.

<https://www.ischool.utexas.edu/~ssoy/usesusers/l391d1b.htm>

**Portraiture** is a qualitative research methodology that bridges science and art, that merges "the systematic and careful description of good ethnography with the evocative resonance of fine literature" (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997, p. 4). Developed by Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot, the Emily Hargroves Fisher Professor of Education at Harvard University, Portraiture seeks to unveil the universal truths and resonant stories that lie in the specifics and complexity of everyday life. In its attention to both scientific and aesthetic concerns, Portraiture can be seen as an early innovation in modern [Arts-Based Research](#) (Cahnmann-Taylor, 2008).

Since the first use of Portraiture in *The Good High School* (1983), Lawrence-Lightfoot has taught hundreds of others to use this methodology, and Jessica Hoffman Davis has adapted the methodology for teams of researchers (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997). Portraiture has a number of additional defining attributes, some of which it shares with [ethnography](#). First of all, Portraiture pays close attention to context as an important tool for interpreting meaning. Second, in response to what Lawrence-Lightfoot sees as a tendency in social science research to focus on "pathology and disease rather than on health and resistance" (p. 8), Portraiture actively seeks "goodness," though with the

understanding that goodness will always be laced with imperfection. Third, Portraitists not only listen to stories, but also do what Lawrence-Lightfoot calls "listening *for* a story," a process of co-creating compelling narratives with participants complete with characters, metaphors, and a central narrative arc. Fourth, Portraitists explicitly insert themselves into the stories they tell in an in-depth process of [reflexivity](#). And fifth, Portraiture seeks to speak to broad and diverse audiences; an explicit act of intervention and community building (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

Portraitists can collect data in numerous ways, though Sara Lawrence-Lightfoot relies heavily on [in-depth interviews](#) and [observation](#). The method is founded on a [phenomenological epistemology](#), much like [ethnography](#) (Lawrence-Lightfoot & Davis, 1997).

<http://sites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=qualitative&pageid=icb.page340906>

***Appreciative Inquiry*** is the cooperative search for the best in people, their organizations, and the world around them. It involves systematic discover of what gives a system 'life' when it is most effective and capable in economic, ecological, and human terms. AI involves the art and practice of asking questions that strengthen a system's capacity to heighten positive potential. It mobilizes inquiry through crafting an "unconditional positive question" often involving hundreds or sometimes thousands of people."

Cooperrider, D.L. & Whitney, D., "Appreciative Inquiry: A positive revolution in change." In P. Holman & T. Devane (eds.), *The Change Handbook*, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, Inc., pages 245-263.

"[Appreciative Inquiry] deliberately seeks to discover people's exceptionality – their unique gifts, strengths, and qualities. It actively searches and recognizes people for their specialties – their essential contributions and achievements. And it is based on principles of equality of voice – everyone is asked to speak about their vision of the true, the good, and the possible. Appreciative Inquiry builds momentum and success because it believes in people. It really is an invitation to a positive revolution. Its goal is to discover in all human beings the exceptional and the essential. Its goal is to create organizations that are in full voice!"

Cooperrider, D.L. et. al. (Eds) , *Lessons from the Field: Applying Appreciative Inquiry*, Thin Book Publishing, 2001, page 12.

***Structured Interviews*** are best suited for engaging in respondent or focus group studies in which it would be beneficial to compare/contrast participant responses in order to answer a research question. For structured qualitative interviews, it is usually necessary for researchers to develop an interview schedule which lists the wording and sequencing of questions. Interview schedules are sometimes considered a means by

which researchers can increase the reliability and credibility of research data.

**Grounded Theory** is a systematic methodology in the social sciences involving the discovery of theory through the analysis of data. Grounded theory method is a research method which operates almost in a reverse fashion from traditional social science research. Rather than beginning with a hypothesis, the first step is data collection, through a variety of methods. From the data collected, the key points are marked with a series of *codes*, which are extracted from the text. The codes are grouped into similar *concepts* in order to make the data more workable. From these concepts, *categories* are formed, which are the basis for the creation of a *theory*, or a reverse engineered hypothesis. This contradicts the traditional model of research, where the researcher chooses a theoretical framework, and only then applies this model to the phenomenon to be studied. Wikipedia

All research is "grounded" in data, but few studies produce a "grounded theory." Grounded Theory is an inductive methodology. Although many call Grounded Theory a qualitative method, it is not. It is a general method. It is the systematic generation of theory from systematic research. It is a set of rigorous research procedures leading to the emergence of conceptual categories. These concepts/categories are related to each other as a theoretical explanation of the action(s) that continually resolves the main concern of the participants in a substantive area. Grounded Theory can be used with either qualitative or quantitative data.

<http://www.groundedtheory.com/what-is-gt.aspx>

**Narrative inquiry**, a relatively new qualitative methodology, is the study of experience understood narratively. It is a way of thinking about, and studying, experience. Narrative inquirers think narratively about experience throughout inquiry. Narrative inquiry follows a recursive, reflexive process of moving from field (with starting points in telling or living of stories) to field texts (data) to interim and final research texts. Commonplaces of temporality, sociality and place create a conceptual framework within which different kinds of field texts and different analyses can be used. Narrative inquiry highlights ethical matters as well as shapes new theoretical understandings of people's experiences.

<http://www.mofet.macam.ac.il/amitim/iun/CollaborativeResearch/Documents/NarrativeInquiry.pdf>

**Triangulation:** Validity, in qualitative research, refers to whether the findings of a study are true and certain—"true" in the sense that research findings accurately reflect the situation, and "certain" in the sense that research findings are supported by the evidence. Triangulation is a method used by qualitative researchers to check and establish validity in their studies by analyzing a research question from multiple perspectives. Patton (2002) cautions that it is a common misconception that the goal of

triangulation is to arrive at consistency across data sources or approaches; in fact, such inconsistencies may be likely given the relative strengths of different approaches. In Patton's view, these inconsistencies should not be seen as weakening the evidence, but should be viewed as an opportunity to uncover deeper meaning in the data. In this paper, five types of triangulation are presented:

1. Data triangulation
2. Investigator triangulation
3. Theory triangulation
4. Methodological triangulation
5. Environmental triangulation

<http://edis.ifas.ufl.edu/fy394>

In the social sciences, **triangulation** is often used to indicate that two (or more) methods are used in a study in order to check the results. "The concept of triangulation is borrowed from navigational and land surveying techniques that determine a single point in space with the convergence of measurements taken from two other distinct points." The idea is that one can be more confident with a result if different methods lead to the same result.

Triangulation is a powerful technique that facilitates validation of data through cross verification from two or more sources. In particular, it refers to the application and combination of several research methodologies in the study of the same phenomenon. Wikipedia

**Ekphrasis**, from the Greek meaning to draw out or to make clear, is the practice of creating art in response to art... I am naming my practice of writing poetry in response to audience and performance a methodological form called ekphrastic inquiry. While I realize I am placing myself in some very illustrious company, my aims are far more modest than to achieve the immortality of the poets above. My goal is to simply offer a term for researchers to add to the growing field of arts-based (or arts-informed) inquiry. This is the term that may work effectively for any researcher, such as myself, who is interested in writing poetically about art.

[http://www.ierg.net/confs/2004/Proceedings/Prendergast\\_Monica.pdf](http://www.ierg.net/confs/2004/Proceedings/Prendergast_Monica.pdf)

**Ethnography** is a research methodology that describes people and cultures through writing, and has [disciplinary roots](#) in anthropology. Researchers employing ethnographic methods gather data directly through involvement with the people and cultures researched over an extended period of time, with particular attention to how the data is related to context. [Participant observation](#) and [interviewing](#) are the most common data

collection methods, but ethnography can also include surveys and [video and audio collection](#).

One of the primary purposes of ethnographic research is to improvise new, and revise extant theory (Cerwonka & Malkki, 2007). This approach entails a direct and extended involvement with people and cultures, detailed description, and a context-dependent interpretation of all data collected in an effort to privilege the understanding of people in the culture being researched over that of the researcher. Since interpretation should be contextually dependent, the use of an ethnographic research strategy emerging from the scholarly work of Clifford Geertz (1973), known as “thick description,” requires ethnographers to capture their reality in as much depth as possible. This requires describing individuals, times of the day, rituals, signs, symbols, and other aspects of context, and not just the behaviors or speech of the individuals.

In the past, researchers unengaged with their role in their research have produced ethnographies that reduce societies and cultures to stereotypes or simply “the other.” Today there is an ongoing debate around including the researcher in observation and analysis, a method of managing researcher [subjectivity](#).

What constitutes ethnography as a qualitative method as well as its strengths and weaknesses are sources of debate. Such debates include: the concept of the “field” or where the researcher conducts research; ethnography as a methodology; the relationship between the researcher and the researched (Mitchell, 2007). The current trend in ethnography as described by Mitchell (2007) is toward shorter investigations in multiple sites which has raised the question, “if ethnography abandons its commitment to long-term participant observation and holistic description, then what makes it different from any other qualitative method? (Mitchell, 2007, 64.)”

<http://sites.harvard.edu/icb/icb.do?keyword=qualitative&pageid=icb.page340343>

***Autoethnography*** is "is an approach to research and writing that seeks to describe and systematically analyze personal experience in order to understand cultural experience. This approach challenges canonical ways of doing research and representing others and treats research as a political, socially-just and socially-conscious act. A researcher uses tenets of autobiography and ethnography to do and write autoethnography. Thus, as a method, autoethnography is both process and product."

"When researchers do *autoethnography*, they retrospectively and selectively write about epiphanies that stem from, or are made possible by, being part of a culture and/or by possessing a particular cultural identity. However, in addition to telling about experiences, autoethnographers often are required by social science publishing conventions to analyze these experiences. As Mitch Allen says, an autoethnographer must

"look at experience analytically. Otherwise [you're] telling [your] story—and that's nice—but people do that on *Oprah* [a U.S.-based television program] every day. Why is your story more valid than anyone else's? What makes your story more valid is that you are a researcher. You have a set of theoretical and methodological tools and a research literature to use. That's your advantage. If you can't frame it around these tools and literature and just frame it as 'my story,' then why or how should I privilege your story over anyone else's I see 25 times a day on TV?" (personal interview, May 4, 2006) [8]

Autoethnographers must not only use their methodological tools and research literature to analyze experience, but also must consider ways others may experience similar epiphanies; they must use personal experience to illustrate facets of cultural experience, and, in so doing, make characteristics of a culture familiar for insiders and outsiders. To accomplish this might require comparing and contrasting personal experience against existing research (RONAI, 1995, 1996), interviewing cultural members (FOSTER, 2006; MARVASTI, 2006; TILLMANN-HEALY, 2001), and/or examining relevant cultural artifacts (BOYLORN, 2008; DENZIN, 2006). [9]

<http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095>

### ***Heuristic Research***

Heuristic inquiry was developed by Clark Moustakas; and Douglass & Moustakas, drawing heavily upon the ideas of Michael Polanyi. It is defined as follows:

*“Heuristic research is a search for the discovery of meaning and essence in significant human experience. It requires a subjective process of reflecting, exploring, sifting, and elucidating the nature of the phenomenon under investigation”*(Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p.40).

*“Heuristics is concerned with meanings, not measurements; with essence, not appearance; with quality, not quantity; with experience, not behaviour”* (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p.42).

The heuristic approach is an adaptation of phenomenological inquiry, but explicitly acknowledges the involvement of the researcher, to the extent that the lived experience of the researcher becomes the main focus of the research. Indeed, what is explicitly the focus of the approach is the transformative effect of the inquiry on the researcher's own experience.

*“From the beginning and throughout an investigation, heuristic research involves self-search, self-dialogue, and self-discovery. The research question and methodology flow out of inner awareness, meaning, and inspiration. [ . . . ] My primary task is to recognize whatever exists in my consciousness as a fundamental awareness – to*

*receive it, accept it, support it and dwell inside it*" (Moustakas, 2001, p.263).

Table 1 presents a summary of the heuristic approach. Douglass & Moustakas outline a three-phase model, and they suggest that, ". . . a natural process is at play when one attempts to do a thing heuristically" (Douglass & Moustakas, 1985, p. 47). Moustakas (1990) has elaborated this model further, and has identified a number of core processes, together with seven basic phases of inquiry.

**Table 1: A summary of heuristic inquiry**

**MOUSTAKAS (1990) :**

**Concepts and processes:**

- **Identify with the focus of the inquiry**
  - **Self dialogue**
- **Tacit knowing**
- **Intuition**
- **Indwelling**
- **Focussing**
- **Internal frame of reference**

**Phases of research:**

- **Initial engagement**
- **Immersion**
- **Incubation**
- **Illumination**
- **Explication**
- **Creative synthesis**
- **Validation of the heuristic research**

***Organic Inquiry***

Organic Inquiry begins with an "assumption that all things are sacred and interconnected" and as such "it allows the researcher to find connections between things that might otherwise be considered separate" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 16). This assumption allows for the concept of 'oneness' and the interconnectedness of



everything as put forward by the new science and as Mack (2002) speaks about as qualities of a worldview based on spiritual principles.

Organic Inquiry has as its goal the transformation of the researcher (Curry & Wells, 2003). Usually this happens as a result of the researcher's contact with the subjects. The Organic Inquiry methodology is an exploratory and subjectively descriptive one, rather than a predictive or even abstractly interpretive method and "it is especially well suited for investigating elusive topics, or questions that take the researcher into the unknown, and for concepts for which there is not yet an agreed upon vocabulary" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 15).

In Organic Inquiry engagement with the sacred in some manner is expected.

- 1) Include "soul, spirit, God and...all that was known by native peoples and all people, really, throughout history".
- 2) Have "a quality of flexible-mindedness where everything can be either real or imagined or both".
- 3) Recognize the impact that the researcher was having on the subject of enquiries.
- 4) Be comfortable "with ambiguity, paradox, uncertainty and mystery."
- 5) Include "the inner world, subjectivity, and concepts of the Divine."
- 6) Have regard for and honor "the Divine, other worlds, other domains and ways of knowing."
- 7) Be of a worldview where "heart-knowing" is valid. (Mack, 2003)
8. Organic Inquiry "claims its belonging to the participatory paradigm rather than the modernist view of the Universe" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 20) because "the principle of the sacred is positioned as the first aspect of the original Organic Inquiry model" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 20).
9. Parallel to the Heuristic Method (Moustakas, 1990), Organic Inquiry also has as the core of the investigation the researcher's subjective experience of the topic.
10. Organic Inquiry has as its third principle an honoring of the chthonic, a word used by Jennifer Clements, et. al. (1998, 1999) "to refer to the contents of the subconscious, a time-place in which the roots of the research grow in unexpected directions and ways, not to be contained by the original...research plan" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 21). This is the arena where "researchers' instincts guide the growth of the project, where they battle to overcome doubts and worries, and learn to trust the guidance they receive, and to trust themselves as disciplined knowers" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 22).
11. Organic Inquiry also embraces the concept of 'the numinous' "as the upper world counterpart to the chthonic from which the researcher may receive inspiration, direct knowing, and other forms of intersubjective guidance" (Curry & Wells, 2003, p. 23). Organic Inquiry, therefore, allows for manifestations of inner knowing and information gleaned from these realms into the research design. It therefore allowed the researcher to incorporate information from dreams, intuitions and/or synchronicities, all illogical, irrational realms which are a part of the worldview beyond reason.

12. Organic Inquiry focuses on transformative learning and transformative changes of heart for both participants of the study, researchers and the eventual audience who will read the study. Curry, D., & Wells, S. (2003). *An organic inquiry primer for the novice researcher*. Kirkland, WA: Liminal Realities.

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## Qualitative Validity

Depending on their philosophical perspectives, some qualitative researchers reject the framework of validity that is commonly accepted in more quantitative research in the social sciences. They reject the basic realist assumption that there is a reality external to our perception of it. Consequently, it doesn't make sense to be concerned with the "truth" or "falsity" of an observation with respect to an external reality (which is a primary concern of validity). These qualitative researchers argue for different standards for judging the quality of research.

For instance, Guba and Lincoln proposed four criteria for judging the soundness of qualitative research and explicitly offered these as an alternative to more traditional quantitatively-oriented criteria. They felt that their four criteria better reflected the underlying assumptions involved in much qualitative research. Their proposed criteria and the "analogous" quantitative criteria are listed in the table.

<b>Traditional Criteria for Judging Quantitative Research</b>	<b>Alternative Criteria for Judging Qualitative Research</b>
internal validity	credibility
external validity	transferability
reliability	dependability
objectivity	confirmability

### **Credibility**

The credibility criteria involves establishing that the results of qualitative research are credible or believable from the perspective of the participant in the research. Since from this perspective, the purpose of qualitative research is to describe or understand the phenomena of interest from the participant's eyes, the participants are the only ones who can legitimately judge the credibility of the results.

## ***Transferability***

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalized or transferred to other contexts or settings. From a qualitative perspective transferability is primarily the responsibility of the one doing the generalizing. The qualitative researcher can enhance transferability by doing a thorough job of describing the research context and the assumptions that were central to the research. The person who wishes to "transfer" the results to a different context is then responsible for making the judgment of how sensible the transfer is.

## ***Dependability***

The traditional quantitative view of [reliability](#) is based on the assumption of replicability or repeatability. Essentially it is concerned with whether we would obtain the same results if we could observe the same thing twice. But we can't actually measure the same thing twice -- by definition if we are measuring twice, we are measuring two different things. In order to estimate reliability, quantitative researchers construct various hypothetical notions (e.g., [true score theory](#)) to try to get around this fact.

The idea of dependability, on the other hand, emphasizes the need for the researcher to account for the ever-changing context within which research occurs. The researcher is responsible for describing the changes that occur in the setting and how these changes affected the way the research approached the study.

## ***Confirmability***

Qualitative research tends to assume that each researcher brings a unique perspective to the study. Confirmability refers to the degree to which the results could be confirmed or corroborated by others. There are a number of strategies for enhancing confirmability. The researcher can document the procedures for checking and rechecking the data throughout the study. Another researcher can take a "devil's advocate" role with respect to the results, and this process can be documented. The researcher can actively search for and describe *and negative instances* that contradict prior observations. And, after the study, one can conduct a *data audit* that examines the data collection and analysis procedures and makes judgements about the potential for bias or distortion.

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There has been considerable debate among methodologists about the value and legitimacy of this alternative set of standards for judging qualitative research. On the one hand, many quantitative researchers see the alternative criteria as just a relabeling of the very successful quantitative criteria in order to accrue greater legitimacy for qualitative research. They suggest that a correct reading of the quantitative criteria would show that they are not limited to quantitative research alone and can be applied equally well to qualitative data. They argue that the alternative criteria represent a different philosophical perspective that is subjectivist rather than realist in nature. They claim that research inherently assumes that there is some reality that is being observed and can be observed with greater or less accuracy or validity. If you don't make this assumption, they would contend, you simply are not engaged in research (although that doesn't mean that what you are doing is not valuable or useful).

Perhaps there is some legitimacy to this counter argument. Certainly a broad reading of the traditional quantitative criteria might make them appropriate to the qualitative realm as well. But historically the traditional quantitative criteria have been described almost exclusively in terms of quantitative research. No one has yet done a thorough job of translating how the same criteria might apply in qualitative research contexts. For instance, the discussions of external validity have been dominated by the idea of statistical sampling as the basis for generalizing. And, considerations of reliability have traditionally been inextricably linked to the notion of true score theory.

But qualitative researchers do have a point about the irrelevance of traditional quantitative criteria. How could we judge the external validity of a qualitative study that does not use formalized sampling methods? And, how can we judge the reliability of qualitative data when there is no mechanism for estimating the true score? No one has adequately explained how the operational procedures used to assess validity and reliability in quantitative research can be translated into legitimate corresponding operations for qualitative research.

While alternative criteria may not in the end be necessary (and I personally hope that more work is done on broadening the "traditional" criteria so that they legitimately apply across the entire spectrum of research approaches), and they certainly can be

confusing for students and newcomers to this discussion, these alternatives do serve to remind us that qualitative research cannot easily be considered only an extension of the quantitative paradigm into the realm of nonnumeric data.

<http://www.socialresearchmethods.net/kb/index.php>

## Research Ethics Policy

In conventional research, the researcher presents his/her plan for gathering data from her/his subject at the start of such an activity and asks for “informed consent” from the subject. Once consent has been given, the conventional norm is that all data gathered from the subject becomes the property of the researcher and may be used in any way that the researcher chooses. This arrangement is a construct of modernist consciousness.

From a post-modern perspective, there are three ethical problems with this policy. One, while a researcher may explain her/his intentions to a subject, there is no realistic way that the subject, another human being, likely a lay person in the context of the research, can fully understand all of the implications of the planned research, including possibly unanticipated consequences. In practice people often give “informed consent” because they like the researcher, not because they fully understand every possible impact of the research on their lives.

Two, from a post-modern perspective, the researcher’s fellow human beings cannot be subjects. Once someone is viewed as a subject, that person inevitably begins to be objectified from the researcher’s perspective. A subject is used, a subject is observed, a subject is questioned, and so on. In contrast, when the researcher views the people from whom she/he is gathering data as persons, as equals, even as colleagues in the investigation, there is a much greater likelihood that the relationship between these people will be guided by mutual respect rather than objectification and utilitarian calculation.

*Given this intention for mutual respect, the researcher should consider what benefit the interviewee, respondent, and/or community to be studied may receive from the research. She/he should seek to ensure that there is some actual benefit to be received.*

Three, if the subject is not a subject but is a person of equal value, then the person who is providing the data, the source, must always retain ownership of her/his own narrative and data.

*There is an inevitable intrusion when an outsider enters any social environment which is occupied according to respected norms that are not immediately visible to the outsider/researcher. To the extent possible, the researcher should be aware of her/his*

*own perspectives and should approach the research project with a tender and humble stance, a view to observe and learn and to make judgments and reach conclusions with great care.*

These three problems with the ethics of modernist research norms provide the basis for a simple policy of research ethics for the SelfDesign Graduate Institute.

1) We ask you as researchers to explain as best you can to any potential sources of information what your study is about, how you would like them to participate in your study, *how the research might be of mutual benefit to the researcher and the person giving her/his consent*, and what you plan to do with the finished product. Once sources have told you that they understand this and have had an opportunity to ask you any additional questions and receive answers, we ask you to have each source sign an informed consent form.

2) If you intend to publish any material that you have received from a source via email, interview, sharing of documents, or whatever, we ask you to show that material to the source and ask for permission to publish this material. If the source chooses to withhold permission for any part or all of this material, we ask you to honor that request. If the source wants to edit or revise any part of that material, we ask you to honor that request. (Publishing includes sharing your completed document with faculty and colleagues within the Institute.)

3) We ask you to give a copy of your completed document to all persons who have contributed any material to your research.

### **Informed consent form**

I, \_\_\_\_\_, affirm that I understand the purposes and the activities of the research project identified as \_\_\_\_\_. I note by my signature on this document that I agree to participate in this research.

I understand that the researcher, \_\_\_\_\_, will allow me to see any quotes attributed to me prior to publication and will allow me to edit and/or revise any such attributions so that they accurately express what I want to communicate.

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Name

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Date