GENERAL STUDIES AGREEMENT FORM

For New General Studies Courses

Please complete and attach all materials for your General Studies Course Proposal Application to this form. If you have questions about the General Studies process or would like to discuss your course prior to submitting your Application, please contact the Convenor of the appropriate General Studies Course Review Committee. The completed application should be sent to the Dean of the School of General Studies.

If you design your own course, you will be asked to submit a Proposal Application. Refer to the document entitled "How to Propose a General Studies Course" for description of the course proposal process and guidelines for completing your Proposal Application.

If you propose to teach an existing course or a section of a course with multiple sections, it will suffice to submit a standard syllabus. However, if you propose to teach a course that is part of the College's course inventory but may have fallen into disuse because a faculty member either departed or no longer teaches the course, please submit a complete Proposal Application as if the course were new.

Adjuncts of courses that are not part of multiple section offerings agree to meet with the apropos General Studies committee during the second and fourth years of a course offering to review their experience; after that, adjunct faculty will review their course every 5 years. This course review follows the course review process described in the document entitled "How to Propose a General Studies Course"; refer to that section for fuller explanation of the review process and procedures.

All faculty members whose General Studies courses are approved agree to submit their courses for a review process every five years. A section of the web page entitled "How to Propose a General Studies Course" describes the review process; refer to that section for an explanation of the review process and procedures.

Finally, all instructors are advised that the approval of a General Studies course does not automatically insert such a course into an interdisciplinary minor no matter how suitable such inclusion may be. Decisions about faculty membership in the minor and about inclusion of courses in the curricula of minors are at the discretion of the program faculty of the minor. Similarly, courses do not receive attributes or subscripts automatically, either. Nor does a course become part of the Freshman Seminar Program concurrent with its approval as a General Studies course. Attribute and subscript designation and inclusion in the Freshman Seminar Program require separate approval after the course has gone through the General Studies course approval process. Faculty members interested in such designations should contact the appropriate coordinator.

Please sign this page and submit it together with your General Studies Course Proposal Application materials to the Dean of the School of General Studies.

	April 16, 2021
Signature	Date

Nancy Reddy

Please print your name clearly here

Please send this form and any attachments to the Dean of the School of General Studies at least two weeks prior to a scheduled new course proposal meeting. Sample, completed new course forms are accessible on the **General Studies website**.

GENERAL STUDIES NEW COURSE PROPOSAL FORM

These sections should be completed by the faculty/staff member proposing the course.

GIS	4XXX	4
Acronym	Course Level (1XXX 2XXX 3XXX 4XXX 5XXX 6XXX)	Credits

Schedule Type	☐ Lecture (1-5)	☒ Seminar (0-6)	☐ Tutorial (7)	☐ Independent study (8)	☐ Internship (9)

Nancy Reddy	First Year Studies	GENS
Instructor Name	Program	School

Resisting the Attention Economy
Complete Course Title (30 characters maximum)

Prerequisite	☐ Yes ☒ No
If yes, list prerequisite by Acronym & Number	

Course Status:	☒ New ☐ Adapted

NOTE: All Subscript designations and/or W/Q approvals must be submitted through the appropriate Convenor.

Course Description for the Bulletin – must be approximately 45 words

Open only to juniors and seniors. Examines attention, distraction, and connection across a range of disciplines including psychology, sociology, creative writing, visual arts, business, economics, and more. Students will consider forces that pull their attention and how to be purposeful with how they direct their attention.

The sections below should be completed by the General Studies Convenor.

Review Outcome:	*Yes*	*No*	
	☐	☐	Course meets guidelines for "G" category
	☐	☐	Course meets at least two General Studies objectives List Objective Numbers _____

Course As A Whole Is:	☐ Approved Unanimously	☐ Disapproved With A Split Vote
	☐ Approved With A Split Vote	☐ Disapproved Unanimously

Subcommittee Members Present:	

Recommendations:	

Program Convenor: _____ **Date:** _____

Dean of General Studies: _____ **Date:** _____

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1. General Studies Category

Identify and explain the ways in which the course fits the selected **course category** (GAH, GEN, GIS, GNM or GSS):

Select Course Category: GIS

Explanation of chosen course category:

Resisting the Attention Economy is a capstone course that asks students to integrate knowledge from their major discipline and other disciplines to consider how the demands on their attention impact their learning, relationships, physical health, mental health, and more. Course content draws on a wide range of fields, including psychology, sociology, environmental studies, business, economics, creative writing, and visual arts. Students will create a capstone project that draws on knowledge from the course and their own academic and professional interests, as well as their goals for their future. It's my hope that this course is a bridge between their habits and practices as college students and their work and leisure beyond college.

2. Course Description (250-300 word explanation of the course, overall focus, and academic rationale):

Using Jenny Odell's How to Do Nothing as its primary text, this course considers how the many technologies that demand our attention - email, social media, other apps and smartphones and smart devices broadly - impact our quality of life and the clarity of our attention. This course takes as its starting assumption that attention is students' most valuable intellectual and personal resource and that this resource is being increasingly drained by digital distractions that fragment our attention. This course is organized around a series of key words, including time, connection, distraction, place, animals & objects, that allow students to explore different dimensions of attention. Each week, students will complete journal activities and exercises related to course readings; the goal of these assignments is to help students make connections between course materials and their disciplinary knowledge from their major courses, as well as to consider their work habits and how they spend their leisure time.

The timing of this course - following the long disruption of the pandemic; fingers crossed that it's reasonable to talk about the end of the pandemic by Spring 2022 - is intentional as well. Attention is also about connection, and this course aims to help students consider how they can be more deeply connected to the people and places around them

3. Course Proposal Narrative

Explain the new learning opportunities provided by the course and the interdisciplinary nature of the course; in addition provide a course outline/syllabus, including overall organization of the course – learning modules, breakdown of the in-class and out of class work -- readings and assignment descriptions; please refer to the document entitled "**How to Propose a General Studies Course**" for a fuller description.

Interdisciplinary Nature:

This course is an interdisciplinary study of attention as a phenomenon. As such, it includes readings and other course materials (podcasts and recorded lectures) from a wide range of disciplines. Jenny Odell's How to do Nothing is a deeply interdisciplinary book and draws on everything from visual arts and music to environmental studies, philosophy, and ancient history. The supplemental readings are similarly wide-ranging, including articles and essays from sociology, anthropology, business, and economics alongside poems and personal essays. Because the course aims at helping upper level students consider how different disciplines examine and value attention differently and how that connects to their own disciplinary training and professional and personal goals, it's a good fit for a GIS.

Because bioregionalism - connection to the places in which we live - is a key part of the book, I'm also hoping to make use of the resources on Stockton's campus, like our art gallery and our outdoor spaces including Lake Fred and the Stockton Maple Forest, and I'll ask faculty from those programs to present to us. I haven't finalized those details.

Difference from a Program Course in an Academic Discipline

Describe the ways in which the course is different in content, goals, and objectives from a Program course in a discipline:

Because of its interdisciplinary nature, this course is not similar to any Program courses.

4. Alignment of Course Goals to Assignments

Identify the objectives met by this course. All courses are expected to meet at least two **General Studies objectives** and one or more college-wide ELOs. Content goals specific to the course should also be given here.

Course Content Goals:

List specific goals here (e.g. For a Food Science course - Students will explain the physics of heat transfer and how this influences cooking with different materials)

- describe how different disciplines have defined and studied attention
- make connections across readings and connect readings to personal, academic, and professional experiences
- consider the role of attention and distraction in their own academic and personal life
- plan an act of "attention resistance"
- define the stakes of attention in both personal and collective terms

General Studies Objectives	ELOs	IDEA
Objective 1	Creativity and Innovation	Objective 8
Objective 5	Communication Skills	Objective 10
Objective 6	Critical Thinking	Objective 12

Explain how the goals identified above will be met and assessed, for example through specific readings and assignments. If you need more space, please attach additional information with your completed form.

The major assignments for the course are described on the syllabus.

The response papers aim to help students engage with the texts, activities, and other course materials and make connections between new concepts and their prior knowledge in their discipline and personal and professional lives. Students will be able to make choices about a research project (the attention resistance project) and a maker project and will be able to tailor that project to their personal or professional interests.

Adjunct faculty proposing a new General Studies course should, in addition, complete a Sponsor Form and attach a CV.

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GIS XXXX: Resisting the Attention Economy

Spring 2022 Course Syllabus

day & time

Faculty Name: Nancy Reddy, PhD, MFA

E-mail: nancy.reddy@stockton.edu

classroom:

Office Hours: TBD, J-111

Syllabus Contents

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About the Course

The secret title of this course is "Senior Seminar in Doing Nothing." But in this class, we'll be learning about and practicing a particular kind of Nothing, one that's modeled after Jenny Odell's *How to Do Nothing*, our primary course text.

We often think about attention in economic terms: we're *paying* attention, or not. In the attention economy, apps and websites compete for "eyeballs," treating attention as a resource that can be sought after and commodified. Is attention something we can spend? How can we cultivate habits of attention? What are you doing with your attention? Does the way you use your attention support your goals and align with your values?

As a GIS, this course aims to help you think in an interdisciplinary way and to integrate the disciplinary and professional knowledge you've developed in your time at Stockton and to connect that knowledge with readings, activities, and experiences across the semester. It's my hope that you'll be able to think about the knowledge, skills, habits, and dispositions you've developed as a college student – and consider your relationship to work, leisure, and the world around you as you enter your life after college. The course will conclude with a maker project that you will design based on your personal, academic, and professional interests.

This course is a W2. You'll write regularly as a way of reflecting on course content and connecting readings and activities to your own knowledge and experiences. The underlying purpose of many of our writing assignments is to consider the

relationship between writing and attention: how can writing about something help you attend to it? How do attention and distraction function in your writing practice?

What You'll Need

You'll need the following course materials:

- *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy* by Jenny Odell
- additional readings posted to Blackboard

a technology note:

I'll expect you to use Blackboard and check your Stockton email regularly. If you are planning to access Blackboard with a mobile device, download the app from the App Store (iphone/iPad) or from Google Play (Android phones and tablets). The Blackboard app permits you to view course content, take tests, and obtain your grades. These tutorials can help you navigate Blackboard.

If you have difficulty accessing or using these programs, please ask for help. The ITS Help Desk can help you with your e-mail, Blackboard, the Stockton Portal, wi-fi connectivity, and other issues. You can find them on the main campus in D-121, by phone at 609.652.4309, or helpdesk@stockton.edu. Read more at https://its.stockton.edu

What You'll Learn

Student Learning Outcomes

This course has five central objectives:

- describe how different disciplines have defined and studied attention
- make connections across readings and connect readings to personal, academic, and professional experiences
- consider the role of attention and distraction in their own academic and personal life
- plan an act of "attention resistance"
- define the stakes of attention in both personal and collective terms

This course also addresses the following **IDEA Student Rating of Instructors Objectives**:

Essential
Developing skill in expressing oneself orally or in writing

Important
Developing creative capacities (writing, inventing, designing, performing in art, music, drama, etc.)
Gaining a broader understanding and appreciation of intellectual-cultural activity (music, science, literature)

What You Need to Know

Assignments

Expect to read and write a lot in this course. You'll have a reading response due each Monday and a writing assignment due to Blackboard each Thursday by 12.30PM. You'll read, on average, one chapter from How to Do Nothing and two to three supplemental essays, articles, and/or poems each week.

Engagement, Participation & Attendance

Your engagement in this class matters. Being engaged means not only showing up to class but also completing all the reading thoughtfully and critically, completing all reading responses and writing assignments carefully, and, most importantly, *asking questions* when you're confused or need help or just want to make sure you're on the right track. Your course engagement – measured by your self-assessment and my feedback at three points during the semester – makes up 20% of your overall grade.

If you're going to miss a class meeting, check Blackboard to see what you'll be missing, submit any work that's due for that class, and send me an email letting me know you'll miss class and asking any questions you have about what you're missing.

Pandemic Safety

Your health and safety are the highest priority. I encourage you to keep yourselves safe by wearing a mask and maintaining social distance while you are on campus and in other gathering spaces. You can see the Stockton FAQ website for updated information.

If you contract COVID-19 or another illness, or if your ability to participate in class is impacted by the need to quarantine, please be in touch via email. You do NOT need to disclose any specific medical diagnosis or other details; I'm asking you this just so we can coordinate about how to ensure that you're successful in class. You can also reach out to Care & Community Standards for help.

Due Dates & Extensions

It's important that you stay on top of assignments and turn all your work in on time. I have firm deadlines for work in this class because I want to be able to read your work and give you feedback quickly. If you submit a weekly writing assignment or reading response late, you will not receive feedback.

If you need additional time for any major assignment, you should ask for an extension. I want you to be able to do your best work, and I'll grant you an extension if you email me 24 hours before the deadline. If you submit a major assignment late without having asked for an extension in advance, you'll lose half a letter grade for each day it's late.

Grades and Feedback

Grading Policy

Your final grade will be determined as follows:

course engagement	20%
response papers	30%
attention resistance presentation	20%
field guide presentation	10%
maker project + final paper	20%

I use the following grade scale to convert percentages to letter grades:

Major Assignments

Response papers

Most weeks you'll write a brief (500 words) response paper that shows your engagement with that week's reading. These response papers are intended to help you process the readings, make connections across concepts and readings, and track your interests and questions as you begin your final maker project.

Attention Resistance presentation

Attempts to resist the attention economy, including the Time Well Spent movement and digital productivity tools like Freedom, RescueTime, and Leech Block, have gotten a lot of coverage from journalists in recent years. You'll select one of these groups or tools and give a presentation that explains how it works and links it to one of the key concepts from *How to do Nothing*.

Field Guide presentation

Bioregionalism is a key concept in *How to do Nothing*, and Odell describes how she never really feels like she's arrived in a new city until she's walked its landscape and gotten to know some of its plants and wildlife. In this project, you'll learn about a place that matters to you and take us on a virtual tour.

Maker Project + Final Paper

Ian Bogost, an author and game designer, argues that craft – making physical things – is one way to resist the fracturing of attention that characterizes our daily life now. Similarly, Cal Newport, author of *Deep Work* and *Digital Minimalism*, suggests that "craft," which he defines as "any activity where you apply skill to create something valuable," is a good source of the high-quality leisure he argues is important. In this final project, you'll design a project of your choice and present your work to your classmates. After finishing your craft, you'll write a brief (4-5 pages) final paper that connects your experience of making this craft with our discussion of attention, distraction, and other key concepts from the semester.

Academic Honesty

Here is Stockton's official policy on academic honesty:

> Dishonesty of any kind will not be tolerated in this course. Academic dishonesty includes, but is not limited to, cheating, plagiarizing, fabricating information or citations, facilitating acts of academic dishonesty by others, having unauthorized possession of examinations, submitting work of another person or work previously used without informing the instructor, or tampering with the academic work of other students. Students who are found to be dishonest will receive academic sanctions and risk failing the course. Other sanctions may also apply and all cases will be reported to Academic Affairs. You are responsible for knowing this policy, particularly what constitutes plagiarism: http://intraweb.stockton.edu/eyos/page.cfm?siteID=209&pageID=17.

Here's how that policy will play out in this class: I expect all the work you do in this class to be your own, and I expect that you'll do your best to accurately cite all the sources you use in your written work. Missing citations – using someone else's ideas in your writing but not giving credit to them with a citation – are a form of plagiarism. If you're unsure about how or if to cite something in a paper, ask for help. If you submit a paper that's missing citations or has other issues related to academic honesty, you'll get a one-time chance to revise your work. That first time, I'll enter a zero in the gradebook and give you a chance to revise your work. (And I'm happy to help you with this revision. You can also work with a tutor at the Writing Center.) After you revise and resubmit, I'll replace the zero with your paper grade. However,

any subsequent issues with missing citations, or other issues with academic honesty will undergo serious sanctions in accordance with the school's Academic Honesty policy.

How and Where to Get Help

Communicating with Me

If you have a question or need help, please ask! If you have a quick question, I'm always happy to chat after class, and we can have longer conversations about your writing or other course topics during office hours or via email.

Here are a few tips for sending a clear, professional email to me or to your other professors: include an informative subject (something like "question about assignment 1"), a salutation ("Dear Professor Reddy," or just "Professor Reddy," is fine), and a closing ("Thanks, Student X"). So your email should look like something like this:

> subject: questions about reading response #5
>
> Professor Reddy,
>
> I looked at the schedule on Blackboard, but I'm a little confused about what we need to read this week. Do we need to read all the essays listed, or just the ones we choose?
>
> Thanks!
>
> Your Name

If you're attaching a file in an email, please always explain that's what you're doing, rather than just sending the attachment with no explanation. (A quick "Professor Reddy, I'm attaching the revised version of the exercise we talked about today" followed by your name will do just fine.)

Campus Resources

Basic Needs

Many students in college struggle with affording groceries or accessing sufficient food to eat every day, or lack a safe and stable place to live. If this applies to you, and if you believe this may affect your performance in the course, you can find information about food assistance and other resources on the Student Affairs website. If you're comfortable doing so, feel free to talk to me as well, and I'll work to connect you with other resources available on campus and in our community.

Learning Access and Accommodations

I want to help you learn in this class. If you have documentation from the Learning Access Office, please share it with me early in the semester so I know how to best help you. (And if you don't have this documentation, the folks in the Learning Access office in J-204 can help you determine what kinds of support services you might qualify for.) Whether you have an accommodation letter or not, I'm happy to work with you to make sure your needs are met in class.

Stockton University complies with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In accordance with the ADA of 1990 as amended and Sections 504 and 508 of the Rehabilitation Act, students with a documented disability who need accommodations are encouraged to register with the Learning Access Program (LAP). Registration for support services is strictly voluntary and on a confidential basis. Support services provided by LAP are

designed to help students devise strategies for meeting the University's educational demands and to foster independence, responsibility, and self-advocacy. The Learning Access Program can be found on campus in room J-204 or online at www.stockton.edu/LAP. Please call **609-652-4988** or send an email to **LAP@stockton.edu** for more information. Once you receive an accommodation letter from LAP, please contact your instructor to privately discuss your needs as soon as practical to ensure that reasonable accommodations are implemented. Retroactive accommodations cannot be granted.

Click on the link https://stockton.edu/wellness-center/disability-services/index.html for more information.

Care and Community Standards

The Care and Community Standards office fills two roles on campus: they help students navigate crises, emergencies, and personal difficulties, and they also oversee the Campus Conduct Code, Campus Hearing Board, and conflict mediation. If you're having trouble with something class-related or extracurricular, they can be a good starting point because they can help connect you to resources. (I'm also always happy to help you figure out which office on campus can help you with any problems you're having, in this class or others, or with other issues related to your classes or your life at Stockton.)

The Wellness Center

Stockton's Wellness Center includes four departments: Counseling Service and Alcohol & Drug Education; Health Services; Disability Services (the Learning Access Program); and the Women's, Gender, and Sexuality Center. Many college students struggle with mental health challenges, including anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and other issues, and the Wellness Center has a range of resources to help students in those areas. If you'd like help getting connected to resources, I'm happy to connect you with the Wellness Center and make sure you get the support you need.

The Women's, Gender and Sexuality Center (WGSC) is a confidential center that supports all students who have experienced power-based personal violence; this includes sexual harassment, sexual assault, dating/domestic violence, LGBTQ identity-based harassment, stalking, and bullying. Title IX makes it clear that violence and harassment based on sex and gender are Civil Rights offenses subject to the same kinds of accountability and the same kinds of support applied to offenses against other protected categories such as race, national origin, etc.

If you find yourself a victim of sexual misconduct, including sexual assault, domestic violence, dating violence, and/or stalking, the following resources are available to you at Stockton and in Atlantic County. In addition, the Counseling Center can help you with other problems, from homesickness to anxiety, stress, grief, depression, or something more severe.

CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES:

WGSC Hotline	609-849-8473
Counseling Center	609-652-4722
Avanzar	1-800-286-4184
Avanzar (www.avanzarnow.org) is the county domestic violence/sexual assault program.	

NON-CONFIDENTIAL RESOURCES:

Stockton Police	609-652-4390
Student Rights and Responsibilities	609-626-3585
Title IX Coordinator, Valerie Hayes	609-652-4693

Additional Campus Resources

ITS Help Desk
Assistance with your e-mail, Blackboard, the Stockton Portal, Wi-Fi connectivity, etc.
Main Campus - D121
(609) 652-4309
helpdesk@stockton.edu
https://its.stockton.edu

Course Schedule

Week 1: What is attention, anyway? (And is the internet really the problem?)
Before the Internet (from The New Yorker's Shouts & Murmurs)
Don't Take Your Head Out of the Clouds! by Rebecca Renner
Paying Attention: The Attention Economy from the Berkeley Economic Review
The Attention Economy by Davenport & Beck
Paying Attention to Attention by Joanna Cook

Week 2: distraction
readings: "Introduction: Surviving Usefulness" from *How to Do Nothing*
Finding It Hard to Focus? Maybe It's Not Your Fault by Casey Schwartz (in the NYT)
Your smartphone reduces your brainpower, even if it's just sitting there by Robinson Meyer
The Dangers of Distracted Parenting by Erika Christakis

Week 3: productivity
readings: "Chapter 1: The Case for Nothing" from *How to Do Nothing*
The Productivity Obsession by Melissa Gregg
Workism Is Making Americans Miserable by Derek Thompson

Week 4: burnout
readings: "Chapter 2: The Impossibility of Retreat" from *How to Do Nothing*
How Millennials Became The Burnout Generation by Anne Helen Peterson
This Is What Black Burnout Feels Like by Tiana Clark
Bring Back the Nervous Breakdown by Jerry Useem

Week 5: boredom
readings: "Chapter 3: Anatomy of a Refusal" from *How to Do Nothing*
How Boredom Can Lead to Your Most Brilliant Ideas (TED Talk)
You Are Doing Something Important When You Aren't Doing Anything by Bonnie Tsui

Week 6: economy
readings: "Chapter 4: Exercises in Attention" from *How to Do Nothing*
The Attention Economy: The Natural Economy of the Net by Michael H. Goldhaber
Distracted by Attention by Jason Read
The Binge Breaker by Tristan Harris

Week 7: connection & conversation
readings: "Chapter 5: Ecology of Strangers" from *How to Do Nothing*
Have Smartphones Destroyed a Generation? by Jean Twenge
Stop Googling. Let's Talk by Sherry Turkle
The Flight From Conversation by Sherry Turkle

Week 8: place
readings: "Chapter 6: Restoring the Grounds for Thought" from *How to Do Nothing*

Spring Break

Week 9: place two
readings: “Conclusion: Manifest Dismantling” from *How to Do Nothing*
attention resistance movements: select one to research and present on in week 11

Week 10: craft, satisfaction, and high-Quality Leisure
readings: “Reclaim Leisure” from *Digital Minimalism* by Cal Newport
begin discussing maker projects; brainstorm ideas and discuss connection between craft and attention

Week 11: attention resistance presentations
no readings – student presentations and discussion

Week 12: looking & listening
readings: “Professional Vision” by Charles Goodwin
“An Anthropologist Underwater: Immersive Soundscapes, Submarine Cyborgs, and Transductive Ethnography” by , Stefan Helmreich
Technologies of Seeing (lecture) by Jenny Odell for UC Berkeley Arts + Design, recorded December 4

Week 13: animals & objects
readings: “Arts of Noticing” In *The Mushroom at the End of the World* by Anna Tsing
“Seeing like a Rover: Visualization, Embodiment, and Interaction on the Mars Exploration Rover Mission” by Janet Vertesi
“‘I Fell in Love with Carlos the Meerkat’: Engagement and Detachment in Human–animal Relations” by Matei Candea

Week 14: Maker Project Presentations + Final Papers