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Revised Draft 3.0

**Alliance for Social, Political, Ethical and Cultural
Thought (ASPECT) Doctoral Program: Initial Discussion Draft**

Mission and Focus

The Alliance for Social Political Ethical and Cultural Thought (ASPECT) prepares doctoral students to conduct sophisticated interdisciplinary research on the cultural, economic, ethical, political, and social challenges posed by contemporary life. Given the complexity of these questions, ASPECT enlists faculty from four departments in the College of Liberal Arts and Human Sciences as well as from other programs, departments and colleges across the University. Through core seminars in History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy and Political Science, ASPECT will stress four concentrations for doctoral study: 1) social theory; 2) political theory; 3) ethical theory; and 4) cultural theory. Students take a degree by concentrating on one of these areas of research with the goal of applying their analytical skills, ethical training, historical knowledge, and political studies in professional positions with government agencies, the media, or universities. To get a running start, this draft utilizes the University's stock of existing graduate

courses, but the participating departments' faculty members expect to create new classes for ASPECT in due course.

Basic Requirements

In keeping with a small core, mentor-based design for the ASPECT Ph.D., all students will complete a 15-hour, five course foundational core with:

- 1) a foundation gateway course
- 2) a major area substantive seminar (social, political, ethical, or cultural thought)
- 3) a minor area substantive seminar (social, political, ethical, or cultural thought)
- 4) a pedagogy and professional ethics course
- 5) a capstone integrative course

A language requirement is an integral part of this degree program, and each doctoral student's advisory committee can also set additional language or methodology expectations once the students' committees are established. All students are required to have a major field (one of the four thematic concentrations) and at least one minor field (one of the four concentrations or, given approval by the ASPECT program director, a closely related area of study outside of the ASPECT program). Each doctoral student must

complete a minimum of 90 semester hours of graduate study, and then write and orally defend a dissertation.

The small core, mentor-driven doctoral program model permits each student the flexibility to develop a strong disciplinary foundation in social analysis, politics, ethics or cultural studies. Many will have upon entry, or earn at Virginia Tech, an M.A. degree in one of these more specific disciplinary fields. Each student's doctoral mentor and Ph.D. advisory committee will guide subsequent work toward the Ph.D. The 15 core hours and 24 dissertation hours in the degree allow for another 13 courses, or 39 hours, of concentrated study to tailor each student's degree to his/her chosen major and minor specializations. Preliminary examinations will draw from recommended lists of key readings, and they will ordinarily occur no later than by the end of the third year of study. After completing prelims, students will also present and defend a written dissertation prospectus.

A new foundations course, ASPECT XXXX, does not exist, but it will be created. Until then, at least five existing courses listed below could be used to meet gateway course requirement. The rest of the 15-hour, 5 course core requirements in Area 1, 2, and 3 could use existing courses, but new courses for the more focused needs of Area

4, ASPECT YYYY, and Area 5, APSECT ZZZZ, also must be developed. Area 6 lists possible electives.

1) Foundation Course:

ASPECT XXXX:	Analysis as Social Political Ethical Cultural Thought [New]
HIST 5104:	Historical Methods
PHIL 5344:	History of Ethics
PSCI 5214:	Contemporary Political Theory
SOC 5104:	History of Sociological Thought
WS 5914:	Feminist Theory

2) Major Concentration *[same list as no. 3]* (pick one):

HIST 5104	Historical Methods
HIST 5114:	U.S. to 1877
HIST 5124:	U.S. since 1877
HIST 5205, 5206 (STS 5205, 5206):	Main Themes in the History of Science and Technology
HIST 5254:	Topics in Modern European History
HIST 5504:	Modern European History
HIST 5524:	Emergence of the Pacific Century
HIST 5534:	Imperialism, Nationalism, & Decolonization
HIST 5694:	American Environmental History
PHIL 5204:	Topics in the History of Philosophy
PHIL 5334:	Ethics
PHIL 5344:	History of Ethics
PHIL 6014:	Special Topics in Philosophy
PHIL 6204:	Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy
PHIL 6324:	Advanced Topics in Social and Political Philosophy
PSCI 5214:	Contemporary Political Theory
PSCI 5224:	Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory
PSCI 5364:	Public Ecology

PSCI 5374:	E-Governance
PSCI 5504:	Discourse Analysis
PSCI 5514:	Global Security
PSCI 5574:	Arts, Culture, and Civil Society
PSCI 5444:	International Politics
WS 5914:	Feminist Theory

3) Minor Concentration [same list as no. 2] (pick one):

HIST 5104	Historical Methods
HIST 5114:	U.S. to 1877
HIST 5124:	U.S. since 1877
HIST 5205, 5206 (STS 5205, 5206):	Main Themes in the History of Science and Technology
HIST 5254:	Topics in Modern European History
HIST 5504:	Modern European History
HIST 5524:	Emergence of the Pacific Century
HIST 5534:	Imperialism, Nationalism, & Decolonization
HIST 5694:	American Environmental History
PHIL 5204:	Topics in the History of Philosophy
PHIL 5334:	Ethics
PHIL 5344:	History of Ethics
PHIL 6014:	Special Topics in Philosophy
PHIL 6204:	Advanced Topics in the History of Philosophy
PHIL 6324:	Advanced Topics in Social and Political Philosophy
PSCI 5214:	Contemporary Political Theory
PSCI 5224:	Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory
PSCI 5364:	Public Ecology
PSCI 5374:	E-Governance
PSCI 5504:	Discourse Analysis
PSCI 5514:	Global Security
PSCI 5574:	Arts, Culture, and Civil Society
PSCI 5444:	International Politics
WS 5914:	Feminist Theory

4) Pedagogy and Professional Ethics Course:

ASPECT YYYY:	Seminar in Pedagogy and Professional Ethics [New]
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5) Capstone Course:

ASPECT ZZZZ:	Capstone Theory and Analysis Seminar [New]
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6) Possible Elective Courses:

ENG 5064:	Topics in Language
ENG 5354:	Comparative Studies in Literature
ENG 5454:	Studies in Theory
ENG 5544:	Current Topics in Literary Study
GEOG 5014:	Geographic Theory & Research
GEOG 5424:	Topics in Political Geography
GEOG 5564:	Contemporary Thought in Human Geography
GEOG 5654 (SOC 5654):	The Global Division of Labor
PSCI 5214:	Contemporary Political Theory
PSCI 5224:	Alternative Perspectives in Political Theory
SOC 5024:	Power in Institutions
SOC 5114:	Contemporary Sociological Theory
SOC 6104:	Issues in Sociological Theory
STS 5444:	Issues in Bioethics
STS 6524:	Critical Approaches to Science & Technology
STS 6534:	Cultural Studies of Science, Technology & Medicine
STS 6614:	Advanced Topics in Technology Studies
STS 6664:	Advanced Topics in Science & Technology Policy
STS 6674:	Advanced Topics in Alternate Perspectives on Science, Technology & Medicine
STS 6824 (SOC 6824):	Normative Structuring of Science & Technology

These course lists are preliminary. New additions, deletions, and redefinitions are all very much open for wider discussion.

Summary

At this juncture in Spring 2005, the Departments of History, Interdisciplinary Studies, Philosophy, and Political Science can offer more than 30 courses to anchor the ASPECT program. They will implement plans for teaching these courses, plus whatever new core courses will be proposed for adoption during 2005, as soon as the resources are released to them for AY 04-05 and 05-06. Along with these existing 30 plus course options, there needs to be a flexible set of 5000 and/or 6000 level "topics" courses in each department, like those existing to an extent already in Philosophy, that can focus flexibly on ASPECT-oriented substantive issues. The program also would benefit from having at least one common "gateway" foundation and one shared "capstone" summation course for all ASPECT doctoral students to complete. Some sort of professional socialization, pedagogical techniques, and publishing skills, or a "how to survive/thrive as an academic" seminar also needs to be developed. Plainly, any existing 5984

course in the core departments that can be converted to serve as a regular useful ASPECT class also should be added. Finally, these classes should be supplemented with cognate courses from other departments, once their syllabi are reviewed by the ASPECT program for their utility.