

Humanities

First-year general education courses engage students in the pleasure and challenge of humanistic works through the close reading of literary, historical, and philosophical texts. These are not survey courses; rather, they work to establish methods for appreciating and analyzing the meaning and power of exemplary texts. The class discussions and the writing assignments are based on textual analysis. These courses meet the general education requirements in the interpretation of historical, literary, and philosophical texts. In combination with these courses, students are required to take Humanities Writing Seminars (HUMA 19100-19200-19300) that introduce the analysis and practice of expert academic writing.

The 20000-level Collegiate courses in Humanities seek to extend humanistic inquiry beyond the scope of the general education requirements. A few of them also serve as parts of special degree programs. All of these courses are open as electives to students from any Collegiate Division.

Courses: Humanities (HUMA)

General Education Sequences

11000-11100-11200. Readings in World Literature. *This sequence is available as either a two-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter; or Winter, Spring) or a three-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter, Spring).* This sequence examines the relationship between the individual and society in literary texts from across the globe. Texts studied range from Dante to Toni Morrison, from Flaubert to James Baldwin, from Kafka to Osamu Dazai and Nadine Gordimer. In the first quarter, the class surveys prose works from Plato to the 1980s, in which individuals learn (or struggle) to situate themselves in a society that is often unaccepting of individuality. The theme for this quarter is alienation. In the second quarter, students consider the problem of evil through an analysis of authors as diverse as Shakespeare, Conrad, Dostoevsky, and Lorca. Students wishing to take the third quarter of this sequence in the Spring Quarter choose among a selection of topics (such as “Myth and Reason,” “Gender and Literature,” or “Poetry”). Writing is an important component of this sequence; students work closely with a writing tutor and participate in weekly writing workshops. *Autumn, Winter; or Winter, Spring; or Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

11500-11600-11700. Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities. This sequence studies philosophy both as an ongoing series of arguments, mainly, but not exclusively, concerning ethics and knowledge, and as a discipline interacting with and responding to developments in the natural sciences, history, and literature. Papers are assigned throughout the course to help students develop their writing and reasoning skills. Readings may vary slightly from section to section, although the year is organized around several common themes. The

Autumn Quarter focuses on Greek conceptions of ethics and epistemology, primarily through analysis of Platonic dialogues, but readings may also come from Aristotle and the Greek dramatists. The Winter Quarter focuses on questions and challenges raised by the intellectual revolution of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, with readings from Montaigne, Bacon, Descartes, Pascal, Galileo, and Shakespeare. The Spring Quarter focuses on modern moral philosophy, and on the relation of philosophy to literature, with readings from Hume and Kant, among others. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

12000-12100-12200. Greek Thought and Literature. *This sequence is available as either a three-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter, Spring) or a two-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter).* The first two quarters of this sequence are designed as a complete unit, and they approach their subject matter both generically and historically. First, they offer an introduction to humanistic inquiry into the most important genres of Western literature: epic poetry (Homer); tragedy (Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides); historiography (Herodotus and Thucydides); philosophic dialogue (Plato); and comedy (Aristophanes). Secondly, they offer a broad introduction to ancient Greek thought and culture, which aims at understanding what ancient works meant to their original authors and audiences as well as how they reflect the specific historical conditions of their composition. In Spring Quarter, each section builds on the experience of the previous two quarters by tracing the development of a different literary genre (e.g., historiography or tragedy) or cultural mode of expression (e.g., philosophy or oratory) from the Greeks and Romans into the modern period. Thus, for example, a section on epic might progress from Vergil and Milton to Derek Walcott's modern epic *Omeros*, and one on comedy from Plautus and Shakespeare to *The Simpsons*. *Autumn, Winter; Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

12300-12400-12500. Human Being and Citizen. Socrates asks, "Who is a knower of such excellence, of a human being and of a citizen?" We are all concerned to discover what it means to be an excellent human being and an excellent citizen, and to learn what a just community is. This course explores these and related matters, and helps us to examine critically our opinions about them. To this end, we read closely and discuss seminal works of the Western tradition, selected both because they illumine the central questions and because, read together, they form a compelling record of human inquiry. Insofar as they force us to consider different and competing ways of asking and answering questions about human and civic excellence, it is impossible for us to approach these great writings as detached or indifferent spectators. Instead, we come to realize our own indebtedness to these our predecessors and our obligation to continue their task of inquiry. In addition to providing a deeper appreciation of who we are as human beings and citizens, this course also aims to cultivate the liberating skills of careful reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The syllabus is slightly revised each spring for the next academic year. The reading list that follows was used in 2005-06. Autumn: Plato, *Apology*; Homer, *Iliad*; *Genesis*; Plato "Meno." Winter: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*; Augustine, *Confessions*; Dante, *The Inferno*. Spring: Selected lyric poems

and/or American documents; Kant, *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*; and Ellison, *Invisible Man. Autumn, Winter, Spring*.

13500-13600-13700. Introduction to the Humanities. This sequence emphasizes writing, both as an object of study and as a practice. As we study the texts of the course, we will pay special attention to the nature and effects of different writing structures and styles: How does the written form of a text influence the way that we interpret it? The texts raise enduring humanistic issues, such as the nature of justice, the scope of freedom, and the stability of knowledge. As we consider these questions we will consider how our views are shaped by the very language used to ask and to answer.

This sequence also emphasizes writing as practice. Over the course of the year, students will average one writing assignment per week, and we will discuss these assignments in seminar groups of five or six. The writing workload is significant: this is not a course in remedial writing; rather it is a course for students who are particularly interested in writing or who want to become particularly proficient writers.

Readings for this course are selected not thematically or chronologically but to serve the focus on writing. In the Autumn Quarter we will read two of Plato's *Dialogues*, *The Declaration of Independence*, selections from *The Peloponnesian War*, and *Henry IV*. In the Winter Quarter we will read further selections from *The Peloponnesian War*, short fiction by Bierce and Conrad, and Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*. In the Spring we will read Descartes's *Meditations*, Tolstoy's *War and Peace*, and selections from radical feminist prose. *Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07*.

14000-14100-14200. Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange. This sequence introduces methods of literary, visual, and social analysis by addressing the formation and transformation of cultures across a broad chronological and geographic field. Our objects of study range from the Renaissance epic to contemporary film, the fairy tale to the museum. Hardly presuming that we know definitively what "culture" means, we examine paradigms of reading within which the very idea of culture emerged and changed. *Autumn, Winter, Spring*.

14000. Reading Cultures: Collection. This quarter focuses on the way both objects and stories are selected and rearranged to produce cultural identities. We examine exhibition practices of the past and present, including the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition and the University's own Oriental Institute. Some of the texts we read include Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, *The Arabian Nights*, and collections of African-American folk tales. We conclude by considering modernist modes of fragmentation and reconstellation in Cubism, T. S. Eliot's *The Waste Land*, and film.

14100. Reading Cultures: Travel. Focusing on the literary conventions of cross-cultural encounter, this quarter concentrates on how individual

subjects are formed and transformed through narrative. We investigate both the longing to travel and the trails of displacement. We read several forms of travel literature, from the Renaissance to the present, including texts about the European encounter with the Americas, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano or Gustavus Vassa the African*, Jamaica Kincaid's *A Small Place*, and film.

14200. Reading Cultures: Exchange. This quarter works toward understanding the relation (in the modern and post-modern periods) between economic development and processes of cultural transformation. We examine literary and visual texts that celebrate and criticize modernization and urbanization. Beginning with Baudelaire's response to Paris in his prose poems, we then concentrate on novels that address economic, social, and cultural change in the 1930s, including Abdelrahman Munif's *Cities of Salt* and Richard Wright's *Native Son*. As the quarter concludes, students develop projects that investigate the urban fabric of Chicago itself.

16000-16100-16200. Media Aesthetics: Image, Sound, Text. This three-quarter sequence introduces students to the skills, materials, and relationships of the various disciplines of the Humanities, including literary and language study, philosophy, rhetoric, history, and the arts. Its particular emphasis falls on issues in aesthetics and especially on the problem of "the medium." For the purposes of this course, we construe "aesthetics" rather broadly: as a study in sensory perception, as a study in value, as a study in the stylistic and formal properties of artistic products. "Medium," too, will be understood along a spectrum of meanings that range (in Aristotle's terms) from the "material cause" of art (stone for sculpture, sounds for music, words for poetry) to the "instrumental cause" (the apparatus of writing or printing, film, the broadcast media, the Internet). Of course, all experience of the arts involves a medium; our aim is to call particular attention to that involvement.

The vehicle of communication conditions aesthetic experience—mediates between producers and receivers—and thus our larger questions will include some of the following: What is the relation between media and kinds of art? What constitutes a medium? Can artistic media be distinguished in a rigorous and systematic way from non-artistic media? What, for instance, is the relation between artistic and non-artistic use of photography? Of painting or drawing? Of language? What is the relation between the media and human sensations and perceptions? Do the human senses alter in response to changes in the available media? Do we learn new ways of seeing and hearing from inventions like drawing, painting, photography, the phonograph, cinema, and video? What happens to objects when we adapt or "translate" them into other media: written narratives into film narratives or architecture into photography?

This is not a course in "media studies" as that term has come to be more narrowly understood in contemporary society. We will consider works of philosophy, criticism, and theory, ancient and modern: Plato, Descartes, Hume, Kant, Benjamin, and Woolf. We will range across historical eras and moments to

consider aesthetic objects of many kinds: films, paintings, photographs, novels, songs, poems, sonatas, plays, and operas. In some instances, we will be asking questions about how the aesthetic object is situated within cultural history. More often, though, we will be asking questions aimed at fostering sensitivity to, and analysis of, the sensory, cognitive, and emotional shaping of the aesthetic experience, and how that shape is shaped by the medium in which it occurs.

Each quarter of the three-quarter sequence will array a mix of objects and media for examination but will also carry a particular thematic emphasis. The Autumn Quarter will focus on **seeing**, especially on the problems that arise when objects and texts seem to offer themselves as “reflections” or “imitations” of the world (e.g., Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, Plato’s allegory of the cave, Aristotle’s *Poetics*, Hitchcock’s *Vertigo*, Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*, and Cindy Sherman’s photographs). The Winter Quarter will focus on **hearing**, with particular emphasis on how sounds are “composed” for effect in various ways—in this quarter we will attend to issues of musical form, to the prosodic analysis of poetry, to representations of composed sound in fiction and cinema, to philosophical discussions of hearing, and to the analyses of sound composition in such writers as diverse as Poe and Adorno. The Spring Quarter will focus on **reading** and the questions routinely associated with the aesthetic object considered as a “text” to be “interpreted” (e.g., Plato’s *Phaedrus*, *Genesis*, *Hamlet*, Welles’s *Citizen Kane*, Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse*). *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

Writing Seminars

19100-19200-19300. Humanities Writing Seminars. *PQ: These seminars are available only in combination with either a two- or a three-quarter general education sequence in the Humanities.* These seminars introduce students to the analysis and practice of expert academic writing. Experts must meet many familiar standards for successful writing: clear style, logical organization, and persuasive argument. But because they work with specialized knowledge, experts also face particular writing difficulties: they must be clear about complexities and specific about abstractions; they must use uncomplicated organization for very complicated ideas; they must create straightforward logic for intricate arguments; they must be concise but not incomplete, direct but not simplistic; they must clarify the obscure but not repeat the obvious; and they must anticipate the demands of aggressively skeptical readers. The seminars do not repeat or extend the substantive discussion of the Humanities class; they use the discussions and assignments from those classes as a tool for the advanced study of writing. We study various methods not only for the construction of sophisticated and well-structured arguments but also for understanding the complications and limits of those arguments. These seminars also address issues of readership and communication within expert communities. As students present papers in the seminars, we can use the reactions of the audience to introduce the techniques experts can use to transform a text from one that serves the writer to one that serves the readers. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

Collegiate Courses

02980. Practicum. (=SOSC 02980) *Must be taken for P/F grading; failure to complete the course requirements will receive an F on their transcript (no W will be granted). Students receive .25 course credits at completion of course.* This course is for students who secure a summer internship. For details, visit https://frogs.uchicago.edu/internships/course_credit.cfm. Students write a short paper (two to three pages) and give an oral presentation reflecting on their internship experience. *Course meets twice (June 3, 2006, from 4 to 5 p.m.; September 23, 2006, from 3 to 5 p.m.). Course fee \$150; students in need of financial aid should contact Susan Art at 702-8609. A. De Gifis. Summer.*

20800. Milton's *Paradise Lost*. (=FNDL 21900, GNDR 21600, IMET 31900, RLST 26400) *Class limited to twenty-five students.* For course description, see Fundamentals. *W. Olmsted. Winter, 2008.*

21400. Rhetorical Theories of Legal and Political Reasoning. (=ISHU 22800/32800, LLSO 22400, SOSC 22400) For course description, see Law, Letters, and Society. *W. Olmsted. Winter.*

22303. Empire. (=BPRO 22300, ISHU 22303) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* For course description, see Big Problems. *M. L. Behnke. Autumn, 2007.*

22700. Augustine's *Confessions*. (=FNDL 27600, GNDR 27601, RLST 25501) *Knowledge of Latin not required.* For course description, see Fundamentals. *W. Olmsted. Winter, 2007.*

22800-22900. Problems in Gender Studies. (=ENGL 10200-10300, GNDR 10100-10200, SOSC 28200-28300) *PQ: Second-year standing or higher. Completion of the general education requirement in social sciences or humanities, or the equivalent. May be taken in sequence or individually.* For course description, see Gender Studies.

22800. Problems in the Study of Gender. *S. Michaels, Winter; L. Auslander, Spring.*

22900. Problems in the Study of Sexuality. *S. Michaels, Autumn; B. Cobler, Winter*

22902. Kinds and Arts of Storytelling. (=IMET 32900, LLSO 22900) Most recent talk about stories is solely in terms of narratives, one manner of storytelling. The course will explore different kinds of stories through the reading of specific examples as well as reflect on what stories are and can do. In addition,

students will be given practice in reading stories with attention to how they are put together, especially as sustained sequences, a traditional concern of what have been called arts of storytelling. *D. Smigelskis. Spring, 2007.*

23000-23100-23200. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III. (=JWSC 23000-23100-23200, JWGS 38100-38200-38300, NEHC 20411-20412-20413) *PQ: Consent of instructor. This sequence does not meet the general education requirement in civilization studies.* For course description, see Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations (Near Eastern History and Civilization). *N. Golb. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

23110. Recent Ethical Reflections. (=IMET 33110, LLSO 23110) For course description, see Law, Letters, and Society. *D. Smigelskis. Spring.*

23201. Marxism and Modernism. (=CMLT 21200, ISHU 23201/33201, RUSS 23200/33200) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (Russian). *Class discussion encouraged. R. Bird. Winter, 2008.*

23300. The Brothers Karamazov. (=FNDL 26201, RUSS 24300) *PQ: Required of new Fundamentals majors; open to others with consent of instructor.* For course description, see Fundamentals. *S. Meredith. Winter, 2007.*

23502. The Organization of Knowledge. (=BPRO 23500, HIPS 23000, ISHU 23502) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* For course description, see Big Problems. *H. Sinaiko, W. Sterner. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

23900. Liberating Narratives. (=IMET 31800, LLSO 21800) For course description, see Law, Letters, and Society. *D. Smigelskis. Winter.*

24100. Introduction to Russian Literature III: Twentieth-Century Russian Literature. (=ISHU 23100/33100, RUSS 25700/35700) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (Russian). Texts in English. *Class discussion encouraged. R. Bird. Spring.*

24900. Happiness. (=GNDR 25200, PLSC 22700, PHIL 21400) For course description, see Philosophy. *B. Schultz. Spring, 2007.*

24901. Youth, Crime, and Masculinity in Modern Japanese Literature and Visual Culture. *B. Bergstrom. Spring, 2007.*

24902. Telling the Truth: Skepticism, Relativism, and Bullshit. *N. Hansen. Spring, 2007.*

24903. Music, Muses, and Muteness. (=MUSI 22806) *H. Law. Winter, 2007.*

24904. The Enlightenment and the Virtue of Selfishness in Its Historical Context. (=CMLT 26200, FREN 26200, ISHU 24904) *Course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students majoring in Comparative*

Literature. Although the course will be taught in English, students who read French authors on the syllabus in French and do all written work in French may receive credit toward the French major or minor. The overarching aim of this course is to examine the centrality of selfishness as a moral attribute to French literature and thought of the long eighteenth-century. As such, we relate the revalorization of *amour-propre* by thinkers such as D'Holbach, Diderot, Voltaire, and Condillac to both earlier and contemporaneous attacks on all forms of self-interest, such as those leveled by Pascal, Fénelon, Racine, and Rousseau. We conclude with Kant and Benjamin Constant. *K. Pagani. Winter, 2007.*

24905. The Silk Road: Language, Geography, and Religion. (=NEHC 20595)
I. Yakubovich. Winter, 2007.

25201. Human Intelligences: Animal to AI. (=HIPS 23201, ISHU 25201)
Human intelligence, ignorance, and fallacies are explained not only in terms of different human capabilities (e.g., verbal, spatial, kinesthetic) but also in relation to identities of our culturally developed subordinates (animals), superiors (angels), and competitors (robots). As we characterize humanity in terms of what we think we're not (animals, angels) and in terms of what we create (artificial intelligence), we people our worlds with comparative conceptions of intelligence in which the relations of our minds, bodies, and emotions are configured reciprocally by prevailing models (e.g., machines, spiritualities, atoms/neural nets). Beginning with the early modern separation of mind and body, this course explores mechanical, spiritual, functional, and atomistic designs of intelligences in conjunction with practicing kinds of body mindfulness either directly or second-hand (e.g., weight-lifting, martial arts, yoga, robots). *M. Browning. Winter, 2008.*

25350. Utopias. (=ARTH 22804, BPRO 25300, ENGL 25302, ISHU 25350)
For course description, see Big Problems. *L. Berlant, R. Zorach. Offered 2007-08; not offered 2006-07.*

25400. Kinds of Sophisticated Lawyering. (=IMET 31800, LLSO 23000) For course description, see Law, Letters, and Society. *D. Smigelskis. Winter.*

26901/36901. Narratives of Suspense in European and Russian Literature and Cinema. (=CMLT 22100, CMST 25102/35102, ISHU 26901/36901, SLAV 26900/36900) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (General Slavic). *Class discussion encouraged. R. Bird. Autumn, 2006.*

27400. Language, Power, and Identity in Southeastern Europe: A Linguistics View of the Balkan Crisis. (=ANTH 27400/37400, LING 27200/37200, SLAV 23000/33000) For course description, see Slavic Languages and Literatures (General Slavic). *V. Friedman. Winter.*

27701. Codes, Cultures, and Media. (=ISHU 27701, LLSO 21502) As organizations of cultural knowledge, codes create not only means of communicating but also infrastructures for communication. In our globally networked societies, digital media and technologies generate new forms of messages for us to encode and decode as well as develop new public and private environments for communications. We compare cultural case studies of earlier electronic media (i.e., telegraph, radio, television) with the re-mediating influences of digital media (i.e., computers, software, cyberspace, cell phones) on cross-cultural conceptions and practices of property, democracy, and the commons. *M. Browning. Winter, 2007.*

27801/37801. How Dostoevsky's *The Idiot* Is Made. (=CMLT 29300/39300, ENGL 28902/48902, HUMA 27801) *Reading knowledge of Russian, French, and/or Spanish is helpful but not required.* This course examines the intellectual and aesthetic backgrounds and structure of Dostoevsky's novel *The Idiot* (1869). We approach *The Idiot* in the contexts of both European and Russian literary traditions, exploring its links to such antecedents as Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Dickens' *The Pickwick Papers*, and Flaubert's *Simple Heart*, as well as its influence on Dostoevsky's later works such as *The Demons* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. All work in English. *L. Steiner. Spring, 2007.*

28400. Comparative Fairy Tale: The Brothers Grimm, H. C. Anderson, and Asbjørnsen and Moe. (=CMLT 21600, GRMN 28500, NORW 28500, SCAN 28500) For course description, see Germanic Studies (Norwegian). *K. Kenny. Winter, 2007.*

29700. Reading Course. *PQ: Consent of instructor and senior adviser. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*