

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) 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

All HUMA 10000-level sequences that meet general education requirements, with the exception of HUMA 17000-17100, are available as either a two-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter) or as a three-quarter sequence (Autumn, Winter, Spring).

NOTE: Students registered in HUMA 10000-level sequences that meet general education requirements must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.

11000-11100-11200. Readings in World Literature. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* This sequence examines the relationship between the individual and society in a rich selection of literary texts from across the globe. We address the challenges faced by readers confronting foreign literatures, reading across time and cultures, and reading texts in translation. We focus on two major literary themes and genres: Epic Poetry (Autumn Quarter) and Biography/Autobiography (Winter Quarter). Selected readings may include: Homer's *Odyssey*, the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, the Ancient Indian *Ramayana*, Saint Augustine's *Confessions*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Invitation of a Beheading*, *Invitation of a Beheading*, and Wole Soyinka's *Ake: The Years of Childhood*. Students wishing to take the third quarter of this sequence in the Spring Quarter choose among a selection of topics (e.g., "Gender and Literature," "Crime Fiction and Murder Mysteries," "Reading the Middle Ages: Europe and Asia," or "Poetry").

11500-11600-11700. Philosophical Perspectives on the Humanities. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their*

registration will be dropped. This sequence considers philosophy in two lights: as an ongoing series of arguments addressed to certain fundamental questions about the place of human beings in the world, and as a historically situated discipline interacting with and responding to developments in other areas of thought and culture. Readings tend to divide between works of philosophy and contemporaneous works of literature, but they may also include texts of scientific, religious, or legal practice.

In Autumn Quarter, we explore fundamental ethical questions—concerning virtue, the good life, the role of the individual in society, the extent of human freedom and responsibility—as they were formulated by ancient Greek writers and philosophers. We begin with the foundational text of Greek thought, Homer’s *Iliad*, and proceed to the Greek dramatists, Plato, and Aristotle.

Winter Quarter focuses on the questions and challenges posed by the scientific and philological “revolutions” of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. A central topic is worries about the possibility of knowledge, both of the self and of the surrounding world. Authors include Descartes, Hume, Shakespeare, and several others.

In Spring Quarter we return to the ethical questions of the autumn, but considered now from the vantage point of Enlightenment and post-Enlightenment thought. How do art and philosophy of the modern and contemporary periods approach questions of responsibility, obligation, and the possibility of human happiness? Authors in the spring vary widely, but tend to include Hume, Kant, and Melville. We also may screen a movie or two.

12000-12100-12200. Greek Thought and Literature. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* 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*.

12300-12400-12500. Human Being and Citizen. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* 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 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 writings as detached spectators. Instead, we come to realize our own indebtedness to our predecessors and are inspired to continue their task of inquiry. In addition to providing a deeper appreciation of who we are as human beings and citizens, this course aims to cultivate the liberating skills of careful reading, writing, speaking, and listening. The syllabus is revised slightly each spring for the next academic year. The reading list that follows will be used in 2009–10. Autumn: Plato, *Apology* and *Symposium*; Homer, *Iliad*; and *Genesis*. Winter: Aristotle, *Nicomachean Ethics*; Augustine, *Confessions*; and Dante, *Inferno*. Spring: Shakespeare, *Measure for Measure*; Kant, *What Is Enlightenment?* and *Foundations of the Metaphysics of Morals*; a selection of English lyric poetry; and Hardy, *The Return of the Native*.

13500-13600-13700. Introduction to the Humanities. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* This sequence emphasizes writing, both as an object of study and as a practice. As we study the texts of the course, we 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 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 average one writing assignment per week, and we 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 read two of Plato’s *Dialogues*, *The Declaration of Independence*, selections from *The Peloponnesian War*, and *Henry IV*. In the Winter Quarter, we read further selections from *The Peloponnesian War*, short fiction by Bierce and Conrad, and Nietzsche’s *Beyond Good and Evil*. In the Spring Quarter, we read Descartes’s *Meditations*, Tolstoy’s *War and Peace*, and selections from radical feminist prose.

14000-14100-14200. Reading Cultures: Collection, Travel, Exchange.

Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped. 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.

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 World’s Columbian Exposition of 1893 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 folktales. 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 (e.g., 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 screen films.

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, Text, Sound. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* In this three-quarter sequence, the focus is on the question of how aesthetic experience can be affected by the medium in which an artwork is presented. Students are introduced to some of the fundamental issues raised in the interpretation of visual, verbal, and aural works. Each quarter arrays a mix of artworks involving different media—visual, aural, textual—for examination, but addresses an issue that is primarily associated with one of these three media.

The Autumn Quarter deals with the aesthetic experience of seeing, exploring problems that arise when objects and texts seem to offer themselves as images which reflect or imitate reality (e.g., Velázquez’s *Las Meninas*, the computer-generated hyperreality of *The Matrix*, Wilde’s *Picture of Dorian Gray*).

The Winter Quarter turns to the experience of reading and the questions routinely associated with the quest to decipher meanings from the enigmas, puzzles, or clues offered by artworks (e.g., Welles’s *Citizen Kane*, Van Gogh’s “Peasant Shoes,” Sophocles’ *Oedipus Rex*, Austen’s *Pride and Prejudice*, Plato’s *Cratylus*).

The Spring Quarter focuses on hearing, with particular emphasis on how sounds are “composed” into forms or structures that produce aesthetic effects (e.g., Stravinsky’s *Rites of Spring*, blues songs, Blake’s *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, Nietzsche’s *Birth of Tragedy*).

17000-17100. Language and the Human. *Students registered in this sequence must attend the first and second class sessions or their registration will be dropped.* Language is at the center of what it means to be human and is instrumental in all humanistic pursuits. With it, we understand others, persuade, argue, reason, and think. This course aims to provoke us to critically examine common assumptions that determine our understanding of texts, of ourselves, and of others.

The first quarter of this sequence (Autumn Quarter) explores fundamental questions of the nature of language, concentrating on language in the individual: the properties of human languages (spoken and signed) as systems of communication distinct from other forms, of how language is acquired, used, and changes, to what extent language shapes perception of the world and cognition, and the nature of translation and bilingualism. These questions are examined through classic and contemporary primary and secondary literature, drawn from the Bible, Plato, Beowulf, Chaucer, Shakespeare, Descartes, Lewis Carroll, Chomsky, and other modern authors.

The second quarter of this sequence (Winter Quarter) is devoted to examining how language mediates between the individual and society; its origin, spread, and development; and its role in power, gender, identity, culture, nationalism, and thought; as well as its use in politeness, irony, and metaphor. Selected readings include Rousseau, Herder, von Humboldt, Saussure, Sapir, Bloomfield, Whorf, Eco, and George Orwell.

Writing Seminars

19100. 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; students who fail 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 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 once in Spring Quarter and once in Autumn Quarter. Course fee \$150; students in need of financial aid should contact Susan Art at 702.8609. D. Spatz. Summer.*

20800. Milton's *Paradise Lost*. (=FNDL 21900, GNDR 21600, RLST 26400) This course focuses on a close reading of *Paradise Lost*, attending to its redefinition of the heroics of war and of marriage and friendship. Topics include family, politics, history, psychology, and theology. *W. Olmsted. Autumn.*

21604. Melville, *Moby Dick*. (=FNDL 21704). This seminar is devoted to close reading and discussion of this explicitly philosophical novel. In addition to paying careful attention to the unfolding of its plot and its major characters, we address its major themes, including, among others, the relation between nature and civilization, human nature and human good, the nature of evil, the meaning of suffering, the possibility of redemption, and the limits of democracy, especially of American democracy. *A. Kass. Spring.*

22600. Russian Literature from Modernism to Post-Modernism. (=ISHU 22600, RUSS 25700/35700) Given the importance of the written word in Russian culture, it is no surprise that writers were full-blooded participants in Russia's tumultuous recent history, which has lurched from war to war, and from revolution to revolution. The change of political regimes has only been outpaced by the change of aesthetic regimes, from realism to symbolism, and then from socialist realism to post-modernism. We sample the major writers, texts, and literary doctrines, paying close attention to the way they responded and

contributed to historical events. This course counts as the third part of the survey of Russian literature. Texts in English. *Spring.*

22700. Augustine's *Confessions*. (=FNDL 24310, GNDR 27601, LATN 25000/35000, RLST 25100) *PQ: LATN 20600 or equivalent.* Substantial selections from books 1 through 9 of the *Confessions* are read in Latin (and all thirteen books in English), with particular attention to Augustine's style and thought. Further readings in English provide background about the historical and religious situation of the late fourth century AD. *P. White. Spring.*

22800-22900. Problems in Gender Studies. *PQ: Second-year standing or higher. Completion of the general education requirement in social sciences or humanities, or the equivalent. These courses may be taken in sequence or individually.* This two-quarter interdisciplinary sequence is designed as an introduction to theories and critical practices in the study of feminism, gender, and sexuality. Both classic texts and recent conceptualizations of these contested fields are examined. Problems and cases from a variety of cultures and historical periods are considered, and the course pursues their differing implications in local, national, and global contexts. Both quarters also engage questions of aesthetics and representation, asking how stereotypes, generic conventions, and other modes of circulated fantasy have contributed to constraining and emancipating people through their gender or sexuality.

22800. Problems in the Study of Gender. (=ENGL 10200, GNDR 10100, HIST 29306, SOSC 28200) This course addresses the production of particularly gendered norms and practices. Using a variety of historical and theoretical materials, it addresses how sexual difference operates in various contexts (e.g., nation, race, class formation; work, the family, migration, imperialism, postcolonial relations). *K. Schilt, Winter; D. Nelson, Spring.*

22900. Problems in the Study of Sexuality. (=ENGL 10300, GNDR 10200, SOSC 28300) This course focuses on histories and theories of sexuality: gay, lesbian, heterosexual, and otherwise. This exploration involves looking at a range of materials from anthropology to the law and from practices of sex to practices of science. *S. Michaels, Autumn; B. Cohler, Winter.*

23000-23100-23200. Medieval Jewish History I, II, III. (=JWSC 23000-23100-23200, JWSG 38100-38200-38300, NEHC 20411-20412-20413) *PQ: Consent of instructor. This sequence does not meet the general education requirement in civilization studies.* This three-quarter sequence deals with the history of the Jews over a wide geographical and historical range. First-quarter work is concerned with the rise of early rabbinic Judaism and development of the Jewish communities in Palestine and the Eastern and Western diasporas during the first several centuries CE. Topics include the legal status of the Jews in the Roman world, the rise of rabbinic Judaism, the rabbinic literature of Palestine in that context, the spread of rabbinic Judaism, the rise and decline of competing centers of Jewish hegemony, the introduction of Hebrew language and culture beyond

the confines of their original home, and the impact of the birth of Islam on the political and cultural status of the Jews. An attempt is made to evaluate the main characteristics of Jewish belief and social concepts in the formative periods of Judaism as it developed beyond its original geographical boundaries. Second-quarter work is concerned with the Jews under Islam, both in Eastern and Western Caliphates. Third-quarter work is concerned with the Jews of Western Europe from the eleventh through the fifteenth centuries. *N. Golb. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

23502. The Organization of Knowledge. (=BPRO 23500, HIPS 23000, ISHU 23502) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* This course explores several structures of knowledge that students may have encountered in their core and specialized education, with the goal of enabling students to identify and explore the implications of these different structures. We ask whether all knowledge is relative, and if so, to what? When things are structured differently, does that mean that knowledge is lost? Or are there several diverse ways of structuring knowledge, each of which may be viable? We read a wide range of classical and modern thinkers in various disciplines. *H. Sinaiko, W. Sterner. Spring.*

24000. Russian Literature from Classicism to Romanticism. (=ISHU 22400, RUSS 25500/35500) Russia acquired a modern literature in the eighteenth century, during the ascendancy of the neo-classicist aesthetics, leading to a flowering of literary culture in the 1830s at the hands of such writers as Pushkin, Lermontov, and Gogol. The so-called “Golden Age” of Russian literature existed in a creative tension both with the neo-classical heritage and with contemporary developments in Western Europe, most notably Romanticism. This survey of eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Russian literature includes works by Lomonosov, Derzhavin, Radishchev, Karamzin, Zhukovskii, Pushkin, Griboedov, Baratynskii, Lermontov, and early Gogol. Texts in English and the original. Optional Russian-intensive section offered. *Autumn.*

24100. Realism in Russia. (=ISHU 23100/33100, RUSS 25600/35600) From the 1830s to the 1890s, most Russian prose writers and playwrights were either engaged in the European-wide cultural movement known as “realistic school,” which set for itself the task of engaging with social processes from the standpoint of political ideologies. The ultimate goal of this course is to distill more precise meanings of “realism,” “critical realism,” and “naturalism” in nineteenth-century Russian through analysis of works by Gogol, Turgenev, Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Aleksandr Ostrovsky, Goncharov, Saltykov-Shchedrin, and Kuprin. *Winter.*

24160. Love and Tragedy in Tolstoy’s *Anna Karenina*. (=BPRO 24160, CHDV 24160, GNDR 24160, ISHU 24160) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* Tolstoy’s great novel *Anna Karenina* may be the finest and most compelling depiction in literature of the diverse aspects and outcomes of romantic love. Combining humanistic and social scientific perspectives, this course undertakes an intensive study of the novel to examine the joys and sorrows of romantic love, and the successes and tragedies that follow from it, as well as the aesthetic

achievement of the novel as a major work of art. Resources for understanding the development of the novel’s characters and the fate of their relationships are drawn from Freud’s *Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis* and other works. Bases for a critical appreciation of novel are drawn from Aristotle’s *Poetics* and Nietzsche’s *The Birth of Tragedy*. *D. Orlinsky, H. Sinaiko. Spring.*

24906. What is Civic Knowledge? (=BPRO 21500, ISHU 24906, PHIL 21006) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* What is civic knowledge? Although civic rights and duties are supposedly universal to all citizens in a “democratic” nation, their implementation often depends on the strength of community connections and the circulation of knowledge across racial, class, and social boundaries. Focusing on the city of Chicago, we ask how citizens (in their roles as citizens) forge communities, make urban plans, and participate in civic affairs. How does the city construct the public spheres of its residents? Are the social practices of Chicagoans truly “democratic”? Could they be? What does “Chicago” stand for, as a political and cultural symbol? For both Chicagoans and their representatives, the circulation of knowledge depends not only on conventional media but also on how the city is constructed and managed through digital media. *R. Schultz, M. Browning. Autumn.*

25203. Digital Networks: Social Media and Public Spheres. (=ISHU 25203) Online and offline, digital media generate societal networks that transform our spatial and temporal environments for living and working. In this postindustrial relation of technology and society, digital networks reconfigure our basic cultural capacity: how we communicate with each other and ourselves, in public and private, as well as our cultural production and civic participation. Assuming that we not only shape our media but we’re also shaped by it, this course investigates instantaneous mass self-communication and global information exchange in practices of social media, online games, and citizen media. Our critiques will examine ‘digital literacies’ developed and used in hypermediated environments with regard to media convergence, participatory culture, and collective intelligence. *M. Browning. Autumn.*

27400. Language, Power, and Identity in Southeastern Europe: A Linguistics View of the Balkan Crisis. (=ANTH 27400/37400, LING 27200/37200, SLAV 23000/33000) This course familiarizes students with the linguistic histories and structures that have served as bases for the formation of modern Balkan ethnic identities and that are being manipulated to shape current and future events. This course is informed by the instructor’s thirty years of linguistic research in the Balkans, as well as experience as an adviser for the United Nations Protection Forces in Former Yugoslavia and as a consultant to the Council on Foreign Relations, the International Crisis Group, and other organizations. Course content may vary in response to current events. *V. Friedman. Winter.*

28109. What Is Enlightenment? (=BPRO 28100, RLST 23403) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing.* What is enlightenment? How does one become enlightened, and who is enlightened? In Euro-American civilization, the 18th-century Age of

Enlightenment championed the powers of human reason against religion and superstition to achieve scientific progress. Buddhism in the 19th century was represented by the heirs of Enlightenment as a religion for the Enlightenment to the point of not being a religion at all. Both traditions offer pathways to freedom (or liberation?) that draw on our rational capabilities, and both sponsor the production of knowledge that re-vision our place in the world, but they seem to be opposed: How could reason reject 'religious' beliefs but also take part in 'religious' traditions that aim to bring certain kinds of persons into being? We compare the mental models, discourses, methods of analysis, world-images, and practices of these traditions of enlightenment in order to assess the kinds of disciplines that their theoreticians and practitioners acquire and use. *M. Browning. Spring.*

28400. Comparative Fairy Tale. (=CMLT 21600, GRMN 28500, NORW 28500) For some, fairy tales count as sacred tales meant to enchant rather than edify. For others, they are cautionary tales, replete with obvious moral lessons. Critics have come to apply all sorts of literary approaches to fairy tale texts, ranging from stylistic analyses to psychoanalytical and feminist readings. For the purposes of this course, we assume that these critics are correct in their contention that fairy tales contain essential underlying meanings. We conduct our own readings of fairy tales from the German Brothers Grimm; the Norwegians, Asbjørnsen and Moe; and the Dane, Hans Christian Andersen. We rely on our own critical skills, as well as on selected secondary readings. *This course is offered in alternate years. K. Kenny. Winter. Not offered 2009–10; will be offered 2010–11.*

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.*