

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 reconstitution 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.* This three-quarter sequence introduces students to the skills, materials, and relationships of a variety of disciplines in the humanities, including literary and language study, philosophy, cinema studies, history, theater, and the

arts. We construe “aesthetics” broadly: as a study in sensory perception, value, and the formal properties of artistic products. “Medium,” too, is understood along a spectrum of meanings that range from the “material cause” of art (sounds for music, words for poetry) to the “instrumental cause” (the apparatus of writing, film, the broadcast media). Our central questions include: What is the relation between media and kinds of art? Can artistic uses of media be distinguished from non-artistic uses? What is the relation between media and human sensations and perceptions? How do media produce pity, fear, or pleasure? Do we learn new ways of seeing and hearing through the devices involved in painting, photography, and cinema? What happens when we adapt or “translate” objects into other media: painting into photography, writing into film, or music into words?

This not a course in “media studies” in any narrow sense. It is rooted in works of criticism and philosophy by such writers as Plato, Aristotle, Rousseau, Nietzsche, Freud, Foucault, Kracauer, Benjamin, and Barthes. We range across historical eras to consider aesthetic objects of many kinds: films, paintings, photographs, novels, songs, poems, sonatas, plays, and operas. In some instances, we ask questions about how the aesthetic object is situated in cultural history. More often, though, we foster sensitivity to, and analysis of, the sensory, cognitive, and emotional shaping of the aesthetic experience as framed by the medium in which it occurs.

Each quarter arrays a series of works for examination through a thematic emphasis. The **Autumn Quarter** focuses on seeing, especially on the problems that arise when objects and texts seem to offer themselves as images that constitute visual “reflections” or “imitations” of the world (e.g., Velázquez's *Las Meninas*, Hitchcock's *Vertigo*, Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, and Cindy Sherman's photographs). The **Winter Quarter** focuses on reading and writing, and questions associated with objects considered as material texts to be “translated” or “interpreted” (e.g., Kosuth's conceptual art, *Genesis*, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Godard's *Contempt*). The **Spring Quarter** focuses on hearing, with particular emphasis on how sounds have meaning, the power of voice, the form of song, the relationship between sound and image, as well as representations of sound in fiction, radio, and cinema (e.g., Dickinson's “Split the Lark,” Cage's 4'33”, Du Bois's *The Souls of Black Folk*, Schubert's “Erlkönig,” and Altman's *Nashville*).

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.*

23502. The Organization of Knowledge. (=BPRO 23500, HIPS 23000) *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.*

23801. The Thought of Hannah Arendt. (=JWSC 22902) *H. Sinaiko. Winter.*

23903. Criticism: Art, Artist, and Audience. The diversity of critical theory and practice derives from a more fundamental diversity of views about the nature of a work of art and its relations to the artist, the audience, and the world. This course focuses on four contrasting but seminal statements on the nature of art and the kind of criticism appropriate to it: Aristotle's *Politics*, Plato's *Phaedrus*, Nietzsche's *Birth of Tragedy*, and Croce's *Aesthetics*. *H. Sinaiko. Autumn.*

24204. Romantic Love: Cultural and Psychological Prospectives. (=BPRO 24204, CHDV 24204, GNDR 24204) *PQ: Fourth-year standing.* "Romantic" love is distinguished from other forms of love by the desire to be inseparable from one's beloved and the "ecstatic" (sometimes "crazy" or "desperate") experience of being "truly in love." This has been a major theme in Western culture for many centuries and is a central part of personal life in modern society due to its large effect on individual happiness and its critical association with marriage (as the "best" reason for marrying and also a frequent reason for divorce). Psychologically, romantic love challenges our familiar concepts of rationality, volition, and mental health, as it is viewed both as a "normal" and desirable yet notably irrational condition. This course draws on social, cultural, and psychological literature to explore diverse aspects of romantic love. Students read Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina* as the basis for a term paper. (Prior reading of the novel is strongly recommended.) *D. Orlinsky. Autumn.*

24906. What Is Civic Knowledge? (=BPRO 21500, PBPL 21500, 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. Spring.*

26303. Human Condition: Self as Subject/Object/Machine. (=HIPS 26302)

Self, subject, object, individual, person, personality, identity: who or what are we human beings? In Western traditions, a modern conception of self has developed from the Cartesian universal and unhistorical subject to a subject objectified by human sciences, by cultural divisions, and by technologies of the self. How do these kinds of “self” serve (or not serve) the modern state, economy, society, or individual? This course examines temporal, spatial, personal, and communal disciplines of media, work, and labor with regard to how human sciences configure subjects as objects of study and how machines serve as models of human beings, from clocks and engines to computers, robots, cyborgs, and networks. *M. Browning. Autumn.*

26307. The Gospel of Luke.

This course consists of a close reading of the New Testament Gospel of Luke in its historical, literary, and social contexts. The Gospel of Luke is the first of a two-volume work that comprises nearly a quarter of the New Testament and recounts the life of Jesus and the spread of the emergent Christian movement from Jerusalem to Rome. Through our study of Luke, we attend to such issues as the relationship between early Christianity and Judaism, the attitude of early Christians toward the Roman Empire, the social and economic status of early Christians and their views on wealth and poverty, and the literary relationships among the New Testament gospels and the implications of this question for our understanding of nascent Christianity. Greek is not required for the course, but there is opportunity for students of ancient Greek to read Luke and related literature in Greek in optional reading sessions. *B. Cline. Spring.*

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.*