Master of Liberal Arts

We live today in a rich and varied culture. Every moral, social, political and cultural question we face demands the broadest consideration we can give it, and it is important that we draw from the multiplicity of methods and perspectives nurtured and cultivated in the many disciplines of a great university.

The Master of Liberal Arts (MLA) program fosters intellectual breadth through courses that address a broad range of cultural issues from different academic perspectives. Students may explore questions of identity through art, literature and religion. They may analyze the politics of race in fiction, historical documents, the visual arts and music. They may debate ethical choices presented by fiction writers, jurists, philosophers and scientists from antiquity through the present. MLA seminars examine literary, artistic and cinematic masterpieces; historic moments of discovery and change; traditions of thought; cultural differences; and civic responsibilities.

MLA students sharpen their thinking about contemporary values and choices through courses that ask them to reflect on the individual's relation to society, technology and the spread of ideas, challenges to freedom, inspiration and creativity.

Students pursue course work and independent research with Washington University scholars from a number of academic disciplines, including architecture, art, film, history, literature, music, philosophy, religion and science.

The MLA program emphasizes critical thinking and inquiry, close reading, intensive writing and problem solving, all of which are hallmarks of a liberal arts education and essential skills for a range of professional contexts.

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Degree Requirements
Master of Liberal Arts

Required Courses: 30 units

Students complete 30 units total, including at least 15 units of core MLA interdisciplinary seminars and a final research project that typically earns 3 credits.

Core MLA Seminars

The Master of Liberal Arts program consists of seminars that introduce students to the methods and questions of different disciplines. These seminars are planned and taught by full-time Washington University faculty, and they cover a wide variety of topics and issues. Most core seminars are held one evening a week during the fall and spring semesters and twice a week during the summer term.

Some students take all required courses as the seminars that are designed specifically for the MLA program; others augment a particular interest by taking up to 9 to 12 units of related courses drawn from different departments, with MLA department approval.

Final Project

A 3-credit final research project, developed under the supervision of a Washington University faculty member, is required for the MLA degree. This project presents an opportunity for the student to independently and extensively explore an area of personal interest, and it must be completed at the conclusion of a student's course work. Under special circumstances and with permission, some students complete a final project that comprises two semesters of research and writing for 6 units of credit.

Courses


U98 MLA 354 Abnormal Psychology: The Major Mental Disorders
This is an introductory course in psychopathology or the scientific study of mental health disorders. The course will include definitions, theories, and classification of abnormal behavior. Content will focus on symptoms, classification, prevalence, etiology and treatment of mental health disorders, including mood, anxiety, eating, schizophrenia spectrum, substance use, and personality disorders. Prerequisite: Psych 100B.

Same as L33 Psych 354
Credit 3 units.
A&S IQ: SSC
Arch: SSC
Art: SSC
BU: BA
EN: S

U98 MLA 445 Seminar: Reality Theater
Rotating upper-level seminar. Senior seminar normally offered each semester and meant to satisfy the 400-level requirement for the drama major.

Same as L15 Drama 445
Credit 3 units.
A&S IQ: HUM

U98 MLA 4471 Archeology of the St. Louis Region
This course introduces students to archaeology of the St. Louis region and explores the cultures of its early inhabitants, from 12,000 years ago through the 19th century. We study a number of very important archaeological sites in the region, including Mastodon State Park, where artifacts of human manufacture were found in direct association with extinct mastodons dating to about 12,000 years ago, and Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site (a World Heritage Site) in Illinois, dating to the Mississippian period AD 1050-1350. We also examine methods and theories used by archaeologists to understand archaeological remains.

Same as U69 Anthro 3471
Credit 3 units.
U98 MLA 4625 Venice
A seminar focusing on the art of Venice, in particular on Bellini, Giorgione, and Titian. Special attention to the international reputations of these three artists and to problems of patronage, connoisseurship, and interpretation. Prerequisite: Art-Arch 361 or 362, or permission of the instructor.
Same as L01 Art-Arch 4625
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: HUM Art: AH, HUM EN: H

U98 MLA 472 Social Theory and Anthropology
A seminar on social theory and its ethnographic implications. Course combines major works of modern social theory, including Marx, Weber, and Durkheim, with current work by contemporary anthropologists, such as Clifford Geertz, Eric Wolf, Marshall Sahlins, and Fredrik Barth, and ethnographers from related disciplines, such as Pierre Bourdieu and Paul Willis. Prerequisite: previous anthropology course work or permission of instructor.
Same as L48 Anthro 472
Credit 3 units. A&S IQ: SSC, SC, SD Art: SSC EN: S

U98 MLA 4941 Milton
Major poems and prose works in relation to literary and intellectual currents of the 17th century.
Credit 3 units. Art: HUM

U98 MLA 500 Independent Study
An independent research project under the supervision of a member of the faculty of the MLA program. Approved proposal must be presented at the time of registration. Open only to students admitted to the MLA program. For more information, contact the assistant dean for Graduate Programs at 314-935-6700. Prerequisite: U98 502.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 502 Directed Research
An independent research project under the supervision of a member of the faculty of the MLA program. Approved proposal must be presented at the time of registration. Open only to students admitted to the MLA program. For more information, contact University College at 314-935-6700. Prerequisite: U98 502.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 503 Master’s Thesis
An independent research project under the supervision of a member of the faculty of the MLA program. Approved proposal must be presented at the time of registration. Open only to students admitted to the MLA program. For more information, contact University College at 314-935-6700. Prerequisite: U98 502.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 504 Directed Research Project II
For students undertaking a 6-unit, two-part directed research project. Requires permission from dean in University College, department coordinator, and instructor.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 505 Darwin, Marx, and Wagner
This seminar studies three works completed in 1859 that profoundly influenced all western thought to the present day: Karl Marx’s Treatise on Political Economy, Charles Darwin’s On the Origin of Species Natural Selection, and Richard Wagner’s Tristan and Isolde. We will explore how these three works share remarkable and intriguing parallels: an inherent belief in evolution; materialism permeated with romanticism; faith in progress; and a similar (“dialectical”) approach to understanding the dynamics of change and the application of change in all aspects of the natural and social world. These three works will enable the class to consider aspects of 19th-century intellectual, economic, and social sociopolitical history. No special knowledge of biology, political science, or music is required.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5072 Humanizing Technology
In order to explore the ways that technology had changed the way we read and write, this course examines the myriad ways that technology and the humanities interact in shaping culture and identity in contemporary society. We will study the interactions between the internet and literature, examining the ways that short stories by Jorge Luis Borges and novels like Snow Crash by Neal Stephenson have first shaped the ways that we use and think about the internet. We will investigate new approaches to writing inspired by digital technology with the Bolivian novelist Edmundo Paz Soldán’s novel Turing’s Delirium. The class will consider the development of a technological posthuman identity in society, literature, and films through an analysis of Philip K. Dick’s novel Ubik, the film The Matrix, along with the work of cultural theorists Donna Haraway (“A Cyborg Manifesto”) and Katherine Hayles (How We Became Posthuman). To examine the development of digital humanities as a discipline, students will read selections from Jerome
U98 MLA 514 Seminar: The Middle Ages: Languages and Histories of Desire
Same as L14 E Lit 511
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5117 Popular Culture in Latin America
This course examines popular culture in Latin America both as it thrives today and as it has developed historically since the 1800s, when countries achieved their independence. We will study different forms of cultural practice, analyzing how they become "popular" and how they involve connections between artistic expression, politics, economics, ethnicity, and race. The class will consider differences between "high culture" and popular culture; folklore traditions; the impact of modernization and the dream of "being modern"; the role of the media; and the growth of globalized popular culture. Our cultural geography will survey the gauchos (cowboys) of Argentina and Uruguay; national dances such as salsa and reggaeton in the Caribbean; forms of cultural resistance to military rule in Chile; and the pervasive economic, political, and emotional power of soccer (fútbol). Students will examine the best-selling novel The Gaucho Juan Moreira, the engaging political essay "The Open Veins of Latin America," stories of urban life, and contemporary texts that explore the rise of populism (elites vs. others), dictatorship and social revolution, and the immigrant experience. We will also consider examples of music; films including The Secret in Their Eyes and Paper in the Wind; and a pair of riveting television series (telenovelas) from Mexico and Argentina.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5120 Breath on the Mirror: Ancient Maya Religion
Contemporary scholars of Maya religion are gradually coming to appreciate the great myth cycles, cosmogonic visions, and understandings of the Maya divine beings, due in large part to the increasingly productive decipherment of ancient texts and imagery. This course surveys what we know and how we document our current interpretations of ancient Maya religion. Topics include the Maya’s famous calendar systems, mythology, and cosmology, including Maya archaeoastronomy and time keeping. We will analyze the complexity and dynamism of Maya understandings of the supernatural. The class will examine enduring ideas and stories at the core of the Maya religion, as told in the Popol Vuh, the Quiche’ Book of Counsel. We will also study recent field research and discoveries, exploring links between classic Maya religion and the religion of the great hillyland Mexican society of Teotihuacan in the Valley of Mexico. The professor will share information about his ongoing field research project in northwestern Peten at the site of El Peru-Wake. The class will learn what scholars have unearthed, literally, about El Peru-Wake, the capital of a kingdom and seat of a royal dynasty established in the Preclassic period that endured more than 500 years and boasted more than 26 successors to the throne.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5150 Hollywood on Hollywood
Same as U98 AMCS 5151
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACF

U98 MLA 5173 The Origins of Political Thought in Classical Antiquity
In order to understand the origins and development of politics and political ideas in Greco-Roman antiquity, we examine several of the most influential imaginative and philosophical texts of this period, including selections from the works of Homer, Thucydides, Sophocles, Plato, Cicero, Virgil, and Augustine. What is the nature of politics altogether and in its historically distinctive expressions in the ancient Mediterranean? What is the relationship between political ideas and the development of democratic, republican, and monarchic constitutions? Why is an understanding of ancient politics significant for citizens of modern democratic nation-states? To answer such questions, we concentrate on ancient ideas about virtue and vice, political education, citizenship, and the distribution of power and wealth.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5200 Visions and Re-Visions: 19th-Century Arts and Society
In this multidisciplinary course we will examine how 19th-century literature, painting, and music reflected, as well as affected, contemporary Western life, both in Europe and the United States. We will consider how different writers and artists attempt first to represent and then to modify, either directly or indirectly, several important sociopolitical and economic situations of their time, such as the institution of marriage; increased urbanization and industrialization; and the spread of nationalism. Included among the literary works to be studied are Romantic, Transcendentalist, and utopian texts by Balzac (Père Goriot), Sand (The Country Wait), Thoreau (Walden), Hugo (Last Day of a Condemned Man), Baudelaire (“The Painter of Modern Life”), and Robert Owen (A New View of Society). In the field of art history we will analyze the social impact of paintings from the Realist and Barbizon schools. In the areas of theater and opera we will study works by Ibsen (A Doll’s House), Maeterlinck (Pelleas and Melisande), and Wagner (“Opera and Drama” and examples of his Ring Cycle).
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5203 America: Through a Glass Darkly
This course studies depictions of America by non-Americans. We will examine the social, political, and economic aspects of their accounts and their influence on America’s beliefs, policies, and international reputation. The class will consider fundamental values as well as ethnic and gender-based differences. Comparing historical periods from both western and eastern perspectives, students will read texts written during the past three centuries from England, France, Germany, Cuba, and China. For the colonial/Revolutionary War period, we will study Chartier, History & Description of New France and Crèvecoeur, “Letters from an American Farmer.” Readings from the 19th century include Tocqueville, Democracy in America; Frances Trollope, Views of Society and Manners in America; Dickens, American Notes; Francis Lieber, The Stranger in America; and newspaper articles by José Marti. Our discussions of the 20th century will focus on Kafka, Amerika; Francis Hsu, Americans and Chinese; Beauvoir, America: Day to Day; and Baudrillard, America.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5204 Patterns of Thought
Exploring how patterns shape our understanding, this seminar will focus on recurring motifs in literature and art. Our study of patterns will refer to thematic elements as well as to repeated
figures, structures, and designs. We will examine the function of mirrors in paintings by van Eyck, Velázquez, and works of the Italian Renaissance, as well as the "mirror function" of paintings within paintings in works by Dutch Golden Age painters Vermeer and his contemporaries. We will also study the importance of mirroring in short stories by Borges and novels about novel writing ("metfiction"), including Krauss, History of Love; Auster, The City of Glass; and Knausgaard's autobiographical novel My Struggle. The class will analyze the distinctive narrative structures of Lafayette. The Princess de Clèves and Joyce, Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man, novels in which art figures prominently. We will contrast these works with Flaubert's Madame Bovary, where art is eclipsed by consumerism, and Nolan's film Memento, which plays with chronological sequencing. We will further consider the patterns of urban landscapes evident in Abela. Jude's camera obscura images of world capitals and Andreas Gursky's crowds and large-scale images, contrasting these contemporary works of photography with breaks in associative patterns in the surrealist paintings of Magritte.

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5217 Paint it Black: Understanding American Film Noir

A product of highly diverse influences and traditions, film noir is known for its stylized visual aesthetic, cracking dialogue, moral ambiguity, and existential paranoia. Its style and language continue to inform filmmakers in Hollywood and worldwide. This seminar positions the aesthetic shapes and traumatic narratives of film noir within the context of American culture and film history during the war and post-war years. As importantly, it explores film noir as a test case in order to probe notions of film history, genre, and authorship, of cultural and intermedial transfer and the popular. Required screenings will take place during the second half of each week's class. Films will likely include many of the following: The Maltese Falcon, Phantom Lady, Double Indemnity, Laura, Gun Crazy, Somewhere in the Night, The Glass Key, The Blue Gardenia, and Chinatown. Prerequisite: Consult Course Listings.

Credit 3 units. UColl: ACF

U98 MLA 524 The American Dream: Myth and Reality

This course will examine the origins and history of "The American Dream." What do we mean when we use this term? How does it resonate and influence our politics, advertising, and especially the arts? We will discuss the experience of immigration and assimilation, how foreigners with different cultural backgrounds enter American society. Beginning with the implications of America's image as a "brave new world" in European thought and philosophy (including Shakespeare's The Tempest), and the prescient view of our culture by de Tocqueville and others, we will examine how the dream of success and wealth has been depicted and employed in theater, fiction, cinema, and the visual arts. Texts include: Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby, William's The Glass Menagerie, Miller's Death of a Salesman, West's Day of the Locust, Lorraine Hansberry's A Raisin in the Sun, Albee's "The Zoo Story" and "The American Dream," and John Guare's The House of Blue Leaves. We will consider modern painters whose work offers a commentary on the dream, such as Edward Hopper and Andy Warhol. We will also study overviews by Charlie Chaplin to Orson Welles and Francis Ford Coppola who have used "The American Dream" as significant elements in their work.

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5290 Exploring Medieval Literature

This course will read widely in medieval literature, from Britain and Western Europe. We will investigate how authors depict battle (Beowulf, The Song of Roland), love (troubadour poetry and romance), travel, and quest (Mandeville's Travels, The Book of Margery Kempe). In addition, we shall study work by some of the most important writers in the emerging vernacular literatures of medieval Europe: Marie de France, Jean de Meun (The Romance of the Rose), Dante, Boccaccio, Machaut, Chaucer, and the anonymous poet of Sir Gawain and the Green Knight. Texts will be studied in translation, sometimes in full and sometimes in extract, and will be placed in their historical and cultural contexts.

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5300 Modernism

This course will explore modernism's search for new ways to narrate experience in a radically changed world. Traveling across time and space, from East to West, and into modern cities and uncharted locations, we will explore how writers and filmmakers in the 20th and 21st centuries experiment with innovative forms of artistic expression in response to the growing influence of foreign cultures; technological changes and developments in science; the globalization of world markets; and issues of identity, gender, race, and ethnicity. The class will analyze modernism as a rejection of social and political norms, a crisis of identities, and the fragmentation of life. Works to include Franz Kafka, The Metamorphosis; James Joyce, Dubliners; Joseph Conrad, Heart of Darkness; Amos Tutuola, My Life in the Bush of Ghosts; Italo Calvino, If on a Winter's Night a Traveler; Jorge Luis Borges, Fictions; Alejo Carpentier, The Kingdom of This World; Salman Rushdie, East, West: Stories; and Don DeLillo, The Body Artist, as well as films by Christopher Nolan (Memento); Akira Kurosawa (Rashomon), and Michelangelo Antonioni (Blow-Up).

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5301 Against the Grain: Transgression and Controversy in Modern Art

This course will examine the public controversies that surround the development of modern art over the last 150 years, to probe the question of the social and political functions of transgressive art. After reviewing key theories of the avant-garde, we analyze both the persona of the modern artist (Gauguin, Picasso, Pollock) and the place of women artists in the revolutions of modernism (Cassatt, Höch, Kahlo). A key issue to address is how modernism tests limits by asking what is (and is not) art (Duchamp and Brancusi). Some of the most controversial exhibitions in this time frame, from the Salon des Refusés in 1863 to Mirroring Evil in 2002, highlight the challenges raised by modern artists' treatment of the body. Debates waged over public art in St. Louis, and recent controversies over public funding of contemporary art, will close the course. No prior knowledge of art history required.

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5310 Mind-Brain and the Arts

This course considers ways that recent research in cognitive science might shed light on four traditional topics in the philosophy of the arts. Each topic will focus on a certain type of art (although not exclusively) and on one or more mental faculties: How do pictures represent? How do we understand stories and what roles do they play in the life of the mind?
What do we like in the arts and why, according to psychological theories based on brain research? Is style in the arts and can there be a scientific explanation of its history? A parallel concern is with how distinctive features of the arts might shed special light on the nature of the mind. Readings will include essays by prominent art historians, philosophers, psychologists, and scientists. Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5353 Cultural Geography: Mapping Paris
This course explores how, over centuries and across national borders, Paris remains central to our sense of Western culture. Our focus on Paris will extend from the 16th century through the present via pairings that join the French capital with other European cities. We will study King Francis I's expansion of the Louvre in Paris in conjunction with the proliferation of castles in the Loire Valley, the court's patronage of Italian artists, and the arrival of Leonardo da Vinci in Amboise. The class will examine the 17th-century court of Versailles as it casts a shadow over Paris, and we will compare the art of the French monarchy during this period with that of Vermeer and his contemporaries in Delft and Amsterdam. We will analyze views of Paris and London the 18th century that show new architectural features and home decor and we will contrast paintings of Boucher, Fragonard, and Watteau in France with those of Hogarth and Gainsborough in England. The class will consider desire in the 19th century as it radiates both through Paris in Flaubert's Madame Bovary and Vienna in Freud's Dora. We will consider contemporary portraits of Paris and New York in Barbery's The Elegance of the Hedgehog and Foer's Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close. The animated film The Triplets of Belleville will offer a contemporary take of these cities. Open to all MLA and DLA students, including those who have taken Paris and New York. Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5416 Urbis & Civitas: Florence Beyond the Tourist's Gaze
This course explores the urban history of Florence, Italy, from its origins as a small Roman town at the edge of an Etruscan settlement to its contemporary position as the industrial, commercial, and cultural center of a sprawling metropolitan area along the Arno river valley. We will study Florence's long history as it comprises periods of rapid development, symbolic and intellectual pre-eminence, and political influence, on the one hand, and economic stagnation, internal conflicts, depopulation, and subjection to external control, on the other. Our focus on both the urbs (the built environment, the physical realm) and the civitas (the social constituency, the civic sphere) will reveal Florence to be a complex artifact that is constantly shaped and reshaped by human action and social imagination. In order to look beyond the tourist image of Florence that we have inherited from the late 19th century, we will examine what defines our experiences and conceptions of a city. This investigation will include comparisons of Florence with other urban centers and discussion about the meanings of urban memory, culture, and citizenship. Readings will address the study of the urban history of Florence as well as urbanization, urbanism, and the public sphere, including works such as An Outline of Urban History by Silvano Fei, Grazia Gobbi Sica, and Paolo Sica; A Brief History of Florence by Franco Cardini; and Florence: Architecture, City, and Landscape edited by Marco Bardeschi. Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5420 History of American Architecture
This course examines the ideological, political, economic and social determinants that have shaped the look of American architecture. Throughout readings that will include a survey text in addition to topical works covering the social history of housing, the vernacular architecture of Las Vegas and the rise (and fall, and rise) of Frank Lloyd Wright, students will learn the definitive characteristics of American architecture. A central point of study will be examining contradictory tendencies in the American practice of architecture: the embrace of exceptionalism through modern forms and styles representing a new national identity, occurring alongside the emulation of classical and European precedents to legitimate a new nation's buildings. The readings will illuminate how the characteristics of American architecture reveal the social, economic and political structures of its production. Ultimately, students will be able to read an American building to discern evidence of national identity, individual political agency, the evolution of gender roles, the assertion of disciplinary and economic power, and the evolution of the American artistic sensibility. This course will count toward major in American Culture Studies for day students. This course fulfills the Humanities distribution requirement for the AMCS MA program. It also counts toward the MD and some concentration area requirements for the AMCS major and minor. Same as U89 AMC 420 Credit 3 units. UCall: ACF, ACH

U98 MLA 5430 Imagining Germany in the Long 19th Century
Between the start of the French Revolution (1789) and the outbreak of the First World War (1914), Germany was transformed from a patchwork of over 300 sovereign territories into a unified nation-state with immense political and economic power. This course examines the crucial role played by literature and the arts in creating a sense of a German national community during this period. Our materials will include national anthems, fairy tales, painting, public monumental art, opera, essays, propaganda, and popular culture, and we will investigate these materials with an eye toward the different and sometimes opposing visions of the nation and national character to which they give expression. Within this broader context, we will address the perceived contribution of men, women, and the family to the project of nation building; the role of language, of national heroes and legends, and of geography in creating a sense of unity; and the ways in which national identity is defined in opposition to a perceived Other (in this case, France). We will also consider Zionism as an offshoot of the European nationalisms and a response to anti-Semitism in Germany. Works studied include fairy tales by the Brothers Grimm; essays and poems by Johann Wolfgang Goethe, Heinrich von Kleist, and Berthold Auerbach; Germany, A Winter's Tale by Heinrich Heine; The Patrioteer by Heinrich Mann; and The Jewish State by Theodor Herzl. Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5450 Global Cinema: A Love Story
Focusing on the ubiquity of love stories in cinema, this seminar will explore connections between romance, anxieties, and aspirations in contemporary society. Studying celebrated films from the United States (When Harry Met Sally, Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind), Latin America (Love in the Time of Hysteria), Europe (Amelie, Café au Lait), South Asia (The Lunchbox), and East Asia (2046, Happy Together), among others, we will consider how love functions as a symptom of what ails society. The class will examine not only personal relationships but also social structures, economic systems, and
political conflicts. Topics will cover issues of class, gender, and race; the construction of economic identities; and the formal structures and aesthetics of film. Students will be required to watch two films per week as well as to complete selected short readings.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5454 Medicine and Morality in Global Perspective
What does it mean to be sick? What does it mean to be a patient, or a healer? Is it possible to imagine a universal morality in which our understanding of medical ethics is shared among peoples worldwide? What are some of the ethical dilemmas associated with genetic testing, organ transplants, and global disparities in health? Framed by these questions, our class will examine how culture shapes our concepts of disease and our expectations for treatment. Similarly, we will consider how social class, race, and ethnicity influence both health and access to health care worldwide. Our readings will focus on medical history and the evolution of diagnosis and treatment of disease; health disparities; the varying relations of patients and healers in different cultures; African health crises; public health controversies; folk illness in Latin America; medical technologies and ethical conflicts; and other issues of medical anthropology pertaining to the prevention and treatment of illness and the healing process around the globe. We will also consult the documentaries: Frontline: Sickness Around the World; Donka: X-Ray of an African Hospital (Doctors Without Borders); and Dan Rather Reports: Kidney Pirates (with anthropologist Nancy Scheper-Hughes).
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5478 American Folklore in Context
For the last several election cycles, candidates and supporters from across the political spectrum have invoked "the real American." But what does it mean to be authentically American? A simple answer might be that they are "us." A more complex one requires that we dive into American folklore. The scholarly field of Folklore may be defined loosely as exploring what we say, what we do, and what we believe. Following this schema, this course will probe the question of what it means to be "American folk" by examining how folklore informs and shapes the world around us and our everyday lives. More particularly, we ask how race and ethnicity, class and gender are encoded and contested through folk expression. Beginning with the question "who are the folk," we will look at classic and contemporary texts in folklore studies to explore how our food, our stories, our daily rituals, and our music, to name a few, interweave to create a complex, multilayered, and uniquely American folk. Readings pair specific genres with different theoretical approaches and include our jokes, urban legends, folktales, foodways, music, and material culture. Crucially, we seek to trouble popular notions of folklore as "antiquities" to question how the lens of Folklore studies may reveal how American culture not only consists of folklore but is constructed by it as folk forms are deployed in contemporary contexts, from Slenderman to Snopes to modern slave auctions. The course will entail several small collection projects to give students an understanding of the work a folklorist does in the field and how folklore is coproduced within a community, and a longer research project. This course satisfies the Humanities requirement for the master's program in American Culture Studies. Same as U89 AMCS 478A
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH

U98 MLA 5497 Shakespeare and His Contemporaries
Though we often read Shakespeare in isolation, he developed his art in the vibrant theatrical culture of late 16th- and early 17th-century London, whose audiences discovered his distinctive qualities in comparison with other playwrights. In this course, we will read plays both by Shakespeare and by some of his most interesting contemporaries — including Kyd, Marlowe, Jonson, Webster, Beaumont, and Fletcher — and consider why some plays are "of an age" and others "for all time." This course will count toward the major in English literature for day students. Same as U65 ELit 497
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE

U98 MLA 5500 An Island with a View: Reimagining Cuba through Literature, Art, and Film
Credit 3 units. UColl: CD

U98 MLA 5501 Combating Cruelty
This seminar focuses on large-scale acts of violence such as war, torture, and genocide as they are expressed through "ordinary" acts of cruelty that degrade, isolate, exploit, and terrorize individuals. The class will analyze individual instances of envy, greed, anger, and brutality in novels depicting the early modern through the present, including Dunant, Birth of Venus; Racine, Phèdre; Lacaïs, Dangerous Liaisons; Zola, Thérèse Raquin; Faulkner, Sound and the Fury; Schlink, The Reader; Coetzee, Disgrace; and Barnes, Sense of an Ending, as well as examples of contemporary cinema by Kassovitz (Hate) and Haneke (The White Ribbon). Our goal is to consider the causes and effect of violence in order to appreciate aesthetic and ethical responses that combat the destructive effects of cruelty. Students enrolled in the DLA program should register for U98 581.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5544 Paris and New York
Cultural icons, Paris and New York represent brilliant successes in art, theater, film, and urban design. We will study how the French and Americans define themselves through their premiere cities, notably in the works of leading writers, artists, and architects. The themes of innovation and tradition, order and disorder, integration and isolation as represented by Emile Zola, Marcel Proust, Baron G.-E. Haussmann, Edouard Vuillard, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Alfred Stieglitz, Henry James, Jackson Pollock, Adam Gopnik, Woody Allen, and others will guide our examination of the powerful hold Paris and New York have on our imagination. We will study history as reflected in public spaces (monuments, museums, and the streets themselves), exploring how each city functions as a locus of collective memory even as it fashions the future.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5565 From Mikado to Makudo: A Literary View of Japan
This course will survey Japan's social and cultural history through selected literary works that span the seventh century (Mikado) to the present day (Makudo). Our readings — including fiction, poetry, drama, and personal writings — will serve as guides to key historical epochs: the aristocratic culture of the Heian era (Tale of Genji), the warrior society of the medieval era (Tale of the Heike), and the insular Tokugawa period (Basho's haiku). Novels by Soseki, Tanizaki, Mishima, and Oe will expose the complexities of modern Japan. Students will gain an
appreciation of Japan’s unique heritage, social complexity, and place in East Asia and the world today.
Credit 3 units. UColl: CD

U98 MLA 567 Translating Worlds
This course studies different forms of cultural translation, that is, the communication of knowledge, behavior, and language from one culture to another. We will examine how an author reworks earlier and foreign traditions, adapting ideas and practices for which there may be no direct equivalent in the author’s own culture. In the new cultural setting, do the roles of men and women shift? Do questions of ethnicity, class, religion, and sexuality become more pronounced, or do they fade away? These questions will frame our study of historic cultural encounters, colonialism, exile, and other processes that shape modernity. Students will explore two dramatic points of cultural intersection: Tolkien’s modern reworking of Sir Orfeo, a medieval version of the classical myth of the musician Orpheus and his wife Eurydice; and Goethe’s Italian Journey, the journal of the German writer’s experiences with the people, art, and history that he encountered during his travels. We will see how diaspora and migration shape perceptions in works by Alejo Carpentier (The Kingdom of This World), Salman Rushdie (East/West), and Jhumpa Lahiri ( Interpreter of Maladies). The class will also learn how different scholarly and artistic fields address the concept of cultural translation, including cultural anthropology (James Clifford), film adaptation (Louis Malle’s Vanya on 42nd Street, inspired by Chekhov’s play), and colonial history ( Vicente Rafael). In addition, we will discuss how digital technology affects cultural translation today (Google Translate, and projects using geographic information system [GIS] technology). Students will consider challenges facing the humanities and the sciences as these technologies advance. Will it be possible to make all knowledge, and all culturally-specific information, universally accessible? No foreign language experience required.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5701 The Making of the Modern Catholic Church
This course will look at three church councils that put their stamp on the Catholic Church at key moments in its history, making it what it is today. The first section will be dedicated to the Fourth Lateran Council (1215), which defined the high medieval church as an all-encompassing papal monarchy with broad powers over the lives of all Europeans Christian and non-Christian alike. In the second section, we will turn our attention to the Council of Trent (1545-1563), which responded to the threat posed by the Protestant Reformation by reforming the Catholic Church, improving clerical education, tightening ecclesiastical discipline, and defining and defending Catholic doctrine. We will conclude with a consideration of the largest church council ever, Vatican II (1962-1965), which reformed the liturgy and redefined the church to meet the challenges of the modern, multicultural, postcolonial world.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 572 Genre Cinema: The Art of Variation
This seminar explores the role of genre as a powerful means of mainstream cinema to tell compelling stories and structure the viewer’s identification. Even though genres such as the melodrama, the western, the romantic comedy, the musical, the science fiction film, the horror film, or the thriller are often seen as quite predictable staples of dominant filmmaking, they also inspire and allow for considerable formal experimentation and thematic departure. This seminar examines the logic of some of the most important genres of Hollywood filmmaking while at the same time emphasizing the creative possibilities of working with certain genre expectations. We discuss such classic representatives of certain genres as Imitation of Life, Stagecoach, His Girl Friday, The Day the Earth Stood Still, 42nd Street, and North By Northwest, and then juxtapose these paradigmatic examples with more contemporary films reworking or pushing the limits of the classical genre system such as Far from Heaven, Lone Star, Blade Runner, Dancer in the Dark, and Breathless.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 575 From Buggy to Benz: Global Capitalism, Gender, and Race
In this course, we will examine global capitalism, with particular attention given to how it intersects with gender, race, and place in specific historical moments. Using critical, historical, and ethnographic perspectives, we will consider the emergence of and changes in capitalism and how it relies on and reproduces particular gender, racial/ethnic, and other hierarchies. Course materials will draw examples from around the world and will include novels, ethnographic and historical case studies, social theory, films, and articles from the popular media. Through written assignments, students demonstrate the ability to examine the impact of capitalism on the environment, health, indigenous and marginalized groups, policy, and access to education, jobs, housing, and other resources.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 576 Haunting the World: Refugees in Literature & Film
As of 2019, 65.8 million people — or 1 in 113 individuals — have been forcibly displaced within their own countries or across borders. In this course, we will study literary texts, film, and other forms of cultural production that will provide a window into the complex lives of displaced individuals from World War II to the present. In addition to contextualizing the historical and legal significance of such terms as refugee, asylum, sanctuary, non-refoulement, and forced displacement, our discussions will also allow us to engage with the broader meanings of concepts that include human rights, hospitality, identity, belonging, and citizenship. Our course will move chronologically from the early 20th century to the present; the last part of the semester will focus specifically on new forms of storytelling that have emerged as a response to the current “crisis.”
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 581 DLA Interdisciplinary Proseminar
This gateway course to the DLA program provides training in analytic thinking and writing through critical examination, discussion, research, and progressive writing on interdisciplinary topics such as historical narrative, text and image, the life of the mind, the creative impulse, the good life, and other major themes that have guided scholarly investigation and research in many fields. Students will analyze works from at least four disciplines (e.g., literature, art history, film, history, philosophy, women and gender studies, religion, political science, anthropology, history of science) and write a progressive research paper, submitted and reviewed incrementally, that demonstrates comparative, analytic, and critical thinking.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 592 Decoding the City
While architecture and infrastructure are worthy of study in themselves, often they signify more complex cultural meanings,
mask efforts to erase or reorder the city, and conceal histories of injustice. This course presents methods for "reading" the built form of the American city to decode histories of architecture, culture, public policy and economics. City space can be read literally, but this course will unpack the symbolic meanings of urban spaces, neighborhoods, buildings and sites. Students will undertake readings that will present methods for understanding and analyzing the city's form, before delving into a specific case study of the Mill Creek Valley. As St. Louis' largest African-American neighborhood, but almost completely erased between 1959 and 1965 using city and federal funds, the site of the neighborhood remains a potent and under-examined part of St. Louis. The course will examine the history of the neighborhood as well as related histories of federal and local urban renewal policies, African-American cultural history and historic preservation. Research into the neighborhood will include experiences at local archives where students will learn to attain and apply primary source documents vital to urban history including Census records, building permits, municipal ordinances and insurance maps. Additional readings will offer insights into possible methods for interpreting and commemorating places that illuminate the urban built environment's historic past. The final project in this course will entail students collaboratively working on a public interpretive project for Mill Creek Valley where they can apply both methods of decoding and curating the city. This course satisfies the Humanities and Social Science requirement for the master's program in American Culture Studies.

Same as U89 AMCS 492
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5931 The Baroque of Milton, Rembrandt, and Bach
In his magisterial J.S. Bach, Albert Schweitzer observes that we "classify the arts according to the material [artists] use to express the world around them." We describe tones for a musician, colors for a painter, and words for a poet. But "the material," he notes, "is secondary. [Each] is not only a painter, or only a poet, or only a musician, but all in one." In this course we will examine works by the poet Milton, the artist Rembrandt, and the musician J.S. Bach, three major figures of the Baroque era. We will examine how they conceive their role and the function of their works, as well as their treatment of both religious and secular subjects. We will also consider the rich variety of techniques that these artists employ to achieve the most complex and compelling rendering of subjects that extend from the mystery of divine justice in a dark world to the most intimate and searching self-examination. Works to include, among others, Milton's Paradise Lost and Samson Agonistes; Bach’s St. Matthew Passion and Art of the Fugue; self-portraits by Rembrandt, as well as some of his Biblical paintings and etchings.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5941 Milton
This course analyzes the world of John Milton, arguably the greatest of English poets and also among the greatest of polymaths. The class will examine how, for Milton, extensive learning rhymed with magnificent poetry. Having read every significant book published up until his time in an attempt to educate himself “to perform justly, skilfully, and magnanimously all the offices, both private and public, of peace and war,” Milton produced an epic poem of such scope and power that “the world would not willingly let it die.” We will closely read that poem, Paradise Lost, as well as his other major poems (Paradise Regained, Samson Agonistes), adding lesser poems and prose works to illuminate his development as a writer and thinker, and his relation to theological, literary, intellectual, and political currents of the 17th century.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 883 Continuing Master's Research
Required for Master of Arts students with incomplete work. Must be taken as Audit only.

U98 MLA 5941 Milton