Doctor 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, drawing from the multiplicity of methods and perspectives nurtured and cultivated in the many disciplines of a great university.

The Doctor of Liberal Arts (DLA) program is designed for the experienced adult learner who wishes to pursue rigorous interdisciplinary study along with independent, scholarly reading and research. The degree is designed to cultivate interdisciplinary skills, intellectual habits, analytical and critical reasoning, effective writing, and broad-based decision making. This degree neither constitutes a professional credential nor provides training for an academic career.

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Degree Requirements

Doctor of Liberal Arts

To earn the Doctor of Liberal Arts (DLA) degree, a student must complete 45 credit hours after earning a relevant master’s degree, pass written and oral comprehensive examinations, and write and defend a thesis. There are 36 units of graduate course work, including two required DLA seminars, five concentration courses, and five elective courses. Students choose among four interdisciplinary concentrations to focus their studies: Textual Traditions, Historical Context, Visual Culture, or Global Perspectives.

The DLA thesis (9 units) emphasizes original interpretation and synthesis. A faculty adviser, appointed to each student early in the program, works closely with the student at all stages of the thesis.

Courses

Visit online course listings to view semester offerings for U96 DLA (https://courses.wustl.edu/CourseInfo.aspx?sch=U&dept=U96).

U96 DLA 600 Independent Work in DLA
Requires signed proposal, approved by program coordinator and dean in University College.
Credit variable, maximum 4 units.

U96 DLA 6012 Family and Community Ties
This course examines documentary and imaginary accounts of family and community, to consider how individuals shape their support systems in a changing society. We will explore how ideas about family and community differ according to economic, racial, ethnic, educational, and personal experience. Materials include memoirs such as Jesmyn Ward, The Men We Reaped, and Alexandra Styron, All the Finest Girls; testimonials from the StoryCorps project, Ties That Bind; fictive journalism in Paula Hawkins, The Girl on the Train and in Gabriel Garcia Marquez, Chronicle of a Death Foretold; Lauren Acampora’s stories, The Wonder Garden; the novels, Matt Johnson, Loving Day, selections from Jonathan Franzen, The Corrections, and Carolyn Chute, Treat Us Like Dogs and We Will Become Wolves.
Same as U98 MLA 5012
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 605 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.

U96 DLA 606 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 by Means of 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, 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.
Same as U98 MLA 505
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 607 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
U96 DLA 6117 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 and the engaging political essay "The Open Veins of Latin America," stories of urban life, as well as 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 Papers in the Wind; and a pair of riveting television series (telenovelas) from Mexico and Argentina.
Same as U98 MLA 5117
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 620 DLA Counterpoints and Flashpoints: Topic for Spring 2018: The Baroque of Milton, Rembrandt, and Bach
Topic for Spring 2018. 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.

U96 DLA 621 Seminar: Literature and Religion
Same as L14 E Lit 521
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 6261 The American Renaissance
Literature of the mid-19th century with attention to social and intellectual backgrounds and the sources of the transcendentalist movement.
Same as L14 E Lit 426
U96 DLA 6464 Medicine and Morality in Global Perspective
Credit 3 units.

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.
Same as U98 MLA 567
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 665 From Mikado to Makudo: A Literary View of Japan
Credit 3 units.

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.
Same as U98 MLA 5565
Credit 3 units. UColl: NW

U96 DLA 669 Film, Politics, and Aesthetics in the Global South
Credit 3 units.

This class studies the uses of cinema, the relationship to film and politics, as well as the history and ideologies underlying film production outside of North American, European and East Asian systems. With a particular focus on Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and South Asia, the class will examine how filmmakers appropriate cinema to political and aesthetic agendas in countries marginalized by film producers and film critics alike. We will discuss the Brazilian Cinema Novo and global Third Cinema movements as well as the Nollywood and Bollywood industries. Students will examine works by Fernando "Pino" Solanas, Satyajit Ray, and Sembene Ousmane in the 1960s through films by contemporary directors Elia Suleiman, Abderrahmane Sissako, and Lucrecia Martel. Our study of films, manifestoes, and criticism will engage students in thinking about cinema "otherwise" through an emphasis on how Global South countries resist the hegemony of both Hollywood and the Europe- and Sundance-centered art cinema markets.

U96 DLA 6500 An Island with a View: Reimagining Cuba through Literature, Art, and Film
Credit 3 units.

This class will survey Cuba's unique cultural heritage, social complexity, and place in West European- and Sundance-centered art cinema markets.

U96 DLA 667 Translating Worlds
Credit 3 units.

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