Master of Liberal Arts

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 They may analyze the politics of race in fiction, historical documents, the visual arts and music.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, one writing intensive course, one research methods course, and a final research project that typically earns 3 credits.

Core MLA Seminars

The MLA 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.

Among the seminars, some will be noted as “writing intensive” and “research methods.” These courses are intended to hone graduate-level writing and research techniques, preparing students for their final research projects.

Some students take all required courses in the seminars that are designed specifically for the MLA program; others augment a particular interest by taking 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 4440 The American Novel on the Road

superhighway. We will study how novels depict characters who are mobile as well as those who lack mobility -- who are stranded or fixed in one place or time -- and the way the texts reflect on the government’s intervention in developing and maintaining infrastructures like the interstate system, within the context of conflicts such as the World Wars, the Cold War, and globalization. Through discussions, close readings, work with primary source documents, and attention to American culture’s shifting aesthetic sensibilities, this course provides students with an understanding of how the American novel evolved over the 20th century in response to an ever-increasing reliance upon roadways. This course fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement for both the Master of Liberal Arts and the Master of Arts in American Culture Studies programs.

Same as U89 AMCS 4440
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH, GWRT

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 EN: H

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 450 Topics in AMCS: The Future of Culture: Cultural Sustainability & Why We Have to Let it Linger
Topic varies by semester.
Same as U89 AMCS 450
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH, ACS

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 Arch: SSC Art: SSC EN: S

U98 MLA 490A St. Louis Blues: The Musical History of a City
From bustling Mississippian city to frontier port town to the eclectic, innovative, storied metropolis of today, St. Louis never seems to stand still. In this course, we will explore the history of St. Louis through the music that have been made, sustained, and remembered here. In the words of ethnomusicologist John Blacking, music is nothing less than “sounded organized humanity.” Our musical investigation will lead us to consider how St. Louis-area residents have constructed geography, place, ownership, and identity. We will progress through several chronological-topical units that engage with race/ethnicity, class, regional identity, and cultural memory. Celebrities and musical icons such as Chuck Berry and Tina Turner will share our attention with grassroots and community music-makers such as the musicians of Little Bosnia and the protesters who sounded off sounded during the Ferguson demonstrations. This course satisfies the humanities or arts distribution requirement for the AMCS MA program. This course also can count toward the undergraduate major or minor.
Same as U89 AMCS 490A
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH, ACH

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 EN: H

U98 MLA 4999 Racial Identity and American Popular Music
This course investigates the history of racial identity and American popular music from the mid-18th century to the present day. What can popular music -- a vehicle of entertainment and commercialism, culture and disposability -- tell us about how Americans have experienced and constructed race? How did Blackness and whiteness sonically rub shoulders, even during the heights of segregation? How did Frank Sinatra journey from being a son of Italian immigrants to being an icon of white, American masculinity? Why did Miley Cyrus' twerking cause an uproar? Participants will be trained in listening closely to musical artifacts, and they will be given opportunities to contextualize their own listening history. Our analysis will incorporate methods from the fields of musicology, history, and cultural studies. Student assignments will include reading, listening, writing, and discussion. This course counts toward the American Culture Studies major for day students, and it fulfills the Humanities or Arts distribution requirement for the AMCS MA program. It also fulfills the Writing Intensive requirement for both the Master of Liberal Arts and the Master of Arts in American Culture Studies programs.
Same as U89 AMCS 4999
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACF, ACH, GWRT, OLI

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.
Credit variable, maximum 3 units.

U98 MLA 5002 Sounding Tudor Music
We will enter 16th-century English soundscapes, from the soaring brilliance surrounding Henry VIII (Taverner), to the determinedly earthbound tones of Edward VI's Chapel Royal, to the judicious mix of music, religion, and politics marking the beat of Elizabeth I's court (Tallis and Byrd). Exploring the wedding of notes to words, the class will study Byrd, who keeps an Englishman's head; Morley and Weelkes, who yield to Italian fashions; and Dowland, who charts a musical path that
U98 MLA 5012 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. 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. Required for the Master of Liberal Arts. Open only to students admitted to the MLA program. For more information, contact University College at 314-935-6700. 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 5031 Food Cultural Studies: Theories, Methods, and Public Writing
Over the past few years, the study of food and gastronomy from the perspective of cultural studies and the humanities has been on the rise. This course introduces students to the interdisciplinary field of food cultural studies and its theories, methods and practices. The course also uses the topics of food studies to train students into different forms of public writing, including reviews, longform magazine essays, blogs and others. The course will discuss the ways in which different disciplines focus on the study of food (including history, anthropology, philosophy and others), basic elements of global food history (e.g., the medieval spice trade, the Columbian Exchange, the role of colonialism and empire), case studies around different cuisines (including but not limited to Mexican, Italian, and Chinese), and the work of some of the major food writers of our time (e.g., Samin Nosrat, Michael Pollan). Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5041 Contemporary Latin American Female Writers
This course examines the newest and most cutting-edge novels and short-story collections of women writers in Latin America. We will develop a set of tools for literary analysis in order to examine these works from the point of view of style and literary expression, and we will also examine how these young authors engage with the issues facing women in the region today, including politically and sexually motivated violence, collective memory, gender and race, and citizenship. We will also address what it means to be a Latin American woman author in the 21st century, and we will look at related issues, including structural barriers in the industry, institutional erasure, sexism and the literary canon. Evaluation will be based on writing assignments and on a multimedia portfolio on a writer of students’ choice, which will present to the instructor and the class at the end of the semester. This course fulfills the research methods requirement for both the Master of Liberal Arts and the Master of Arts in American Culture Studies programs. Credit 3 units. UColl: ACF, ACH, GRES

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 important themes 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 has 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 McGann, Radiant Textualities and Schreibman, Siemens, and Unsworth, A Companion to Digital Humanities. Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5114 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 course 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,” engaging the 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 grand 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 class surveys what we know and how we document our current interpretations of ancient Maya religion. Topics include the Maya’s famous calendar systems mathematics, astronomy, 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, and the pervasive economic, political, and emotional power of soccer (fútbol). The class will learn what scholars have unearthed, literally, about El Peru-Waka, 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 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, Velazquez, 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 (“metafiction”), including Krauss, History of Love; Auster, The City of Glass; and Knausgard’s autobiographical novel My Struggle. The class will analyze the distinctive narrative structures of Lafayette, The Princesse 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 Abelardo Morell’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 surrealism 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, crackling 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,” Williams’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,” John Guare’s “The House of Blue Leaves,” Lynn Nottage’s “Sweat,” and so on. We will consider modern painters whose work offers an implicit commentary on the dream, such as Edward Hopper and Andy Warhol, and study cinematic innovators from Charlie Chaplin to Orson Welles (“Citizen Kane”) and Francis Ford Coppola (“The Godfather”), who have used the idea of “The American Dream” as significant elements in their work.
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACF, ACH, OLI.

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; Alejandro 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 5303 Topics in AMCS: No Future: Punk and the End of the 20th Century
Topic varies by semester. For current title/description, please refer to semester listings.
Same as U89 AMCS 433
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 role 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? What 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 Barbey’s The Elegance of the Hedgehog and Foet’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 subjectation to external control, on the other. Our focus on both the urbis (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 awareness 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 organizational hierarchy, 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 U98 AMCS 420
Credit 3 units. UColl: 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 exclusion of men, women, and 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, Cafe 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 discuss three 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 Schepers-Hughes).
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE

U98 MLA 5500 An Island with a View: Reimagining Cuba through Literature, Art, and Film
In the wake of such momentous events as president Obama's visit to Cuba and Fidel Castro's death, for many Americans the island has advanced from the category of a "forbidden fruit" to a full-fledged reality. Now is a good time to ask not only "What is next for Cuba?" but also "What can we learn from its history and its present?" This course explores the multilayered Cuban realities—both on the island and in the diaspora—and the intertwined history of the United States and Cuba (Missile Crisis, Bay of Pigs, Guantánamo). Using a combination of literary texts (Carpentier, Cabrera Infante, Ponte, Bobes, Obéjaz, Morejón, Padura), films (Strawberry and Chocolate, Guantanamera, The Promise, and The New Art of Making Ruins), artwork (Mendieta, Bruguera, Galarica), political speeches, and unique documentary materials compiled by the instructor during her many research trips to Cuba, we will look at the island's "post-socialist" reality through the lens of its colonial and postcolonial past. Topics include ethnic and gender identities; the "myths" of Che Guevara and Fidel Castro; African-Cuban religions; popular music; political oppression and dissent; and migration and exile. We will also examine critical aspects of contemporary life in Cuba such as foreign tourism, food rationing, the dual-currency economy, the restoration of colonial Havana, education, and healthcare.
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; Laclos, Dangerous Liaisons; Zola, Thérèse Raquin; Faulkner, Sound and the Fury; Schlimg, The Reader; Coetzee, Disgrace; and Barnes, Sense of an Ending, as well as examples of contemporary cinema by Kassovitz (Haté) 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 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—among Kydd, 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 5547 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 U98 AMCS 478A
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH

U98 MLA 5497 Shakespeare and His Contemporaries
This course 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 discuss three 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 Schepers-Hughes).
Credit 3 units. UColl: ENE

U98 MLA 5548 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 5566 The Experience of Modernity
This course explores what it means to be modern. Our expansive study will engage the concept of radical change as it affects a range of historical periods and geographical areas. The course will consider how modernity entails a breakaway from tradition; the development of new intellectual, scientific, and geographic frontiers; and the experimentation with new technologies and art forms as a way of creating new futures and ruptures with the past. By examining questions of time, space, innovation, and translation, we will study key literary and cultural works that express a groundbreaking sense of modernity and revolution in ways that highlight epistemological, political, and social tensions. Works studied include Cervantes's "Don Quixote," Blake's poems, Whitman's "Age of Innocence," Conrad's "Heart of Darkness," Woolf's "Mrs. Dalloway," Lorca's "Poet in New York," Achebe's "Things Fall Apart," and Lisper's "Hour of the Star." We will also discuss Dali's collaboration with Bunuel in their film "An Andalusian Dog" ("Un Chien Andalou"), along with Kurosawa's "Rashomon" and other visual works that capture the inventions, uncertainties, and energy of the modern experience.
Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 5567 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 5569 Film, Politics, and Aesthetics in the Global South
This course introduces students to the cinema of industries outside the United States and the historically dominant markets of East Asia and Western Europe. Focused mostly on fiction films, the class explores the ways in which filmmakers around the world touch upon significant questions of our times - race, immigration, climate change, political strife-and develop new forms of filmmaking that seek new aesthetic pathways, distinct forms of cinematic experience and attention, and projects shielded from market pressures. Discussion will also focus on the ways in which this cinema, which rarely has access to movie theaters at a global scale circulates, through mainstream and alternative streaming platforms, including Netflix, MUBI and the Criterion Channel.
Credit 3 units. UColl: CD

U98 MLA 5672 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, students 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) had 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. UColl: ACF, ACH

U98 MLA 578 Representing Religion, Race, and Gender in Early Modern Latin America
This seminar explores the history of religion, gender, and empire in Latin America, focusing primarily on the colonial period (1492-1821) but also including some precolonial materials. Through primary documents, secondary scholarship and student-centered discussion, we will consider connections between religious beliefs, gender norms and relations, and the ways that race, class, and gender intersected with ideas about religion, empire and power. We will study the clash of religions that occurred during the conquest and its terrible aftermath, the politics of evangelization, and how marginalized subjects such as women, African slaves, and Indigenous peoples navigated religious authoritarianism to develop their own spiritual beliefs and expressions. Finally, we will take a brief look at how some of these religious practices have persisted until the present day and what these legacies can tell us about questions of race and gender in a religious context in Latin America. This course will also introduce students to key research methods in the humanities and to the conventions of graduate-level writing necessary for completing the degree thesis.

Credit 3 units.

U98 MLA 579 National Identity and the Visual Arts
What is national identity? What does it mean to call oneself "an American," "a Moroccan," or "a Tahitian"? What elements comprise a national identity, and, more specifically, how do visual artists express them? This course will explore these questions in art and architecture from an array of periods and cultures, with an emphasis on the past 150 years and a special focus on art made after the Cold War. Readings in political theory will ground our study of specific artists whose works explore the tensions and complexities inherent in the construction of and challenges to national identities. Among the themes we will address are territory, history, language, ethnicity, immigration and emigration, "foreignness," colonization, exile, and diaspora. We will also touch on issues of intersectionality, considering how gender, religious and class identity can inflict one's sense of national belonging.

Credit 3 units. UColl: ACS, OLI

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 582 Black is...Black Ain't: Society, History, and the Politics of Race
This course is framed by a simple contradiction. Race is "socially constructed," yet racial categories have very real social, economic, material, legal, and health consequences. Racial categories are rooted in history and culturally constructed through laws, the media, and various institutions. These categories are reproduced, subverted, and sometimes changed by people through socialization, media consumption, interaction, dialogue, protest, and political participation. Yet, what makes race real, animates it with so much power, and fosters its tenacious hold on much of the Western world's collective psyche? Is it the fact that people largely believe that race has something to do with nature, biology, or rational science. Ironically, it is biology and the so-called natural sciences that provide the best evidence that there is no valid basis to organize people by racial categories. We will explore both race's historical construction and its contemporary manifestation as a crucial aspect of many places around the world and an integral component of people's identities. Drawing on classical and contemporary readings from Du Bois to Goulid to Gilberto to contemporary ethnographies, we ask whether the logic of race has shifted over time, and, with that changed logic, how we can respond to new configurations of race, science, technology, and inequality. Considered are the rise of evolutionary racism, debates about eugenics in the early 20th century, Nazi notions of "racial hygiene," nation-building projects and race in Latin America, colonial monuments, racialized state violence, and Black liberation such as the Black Lives Matter Movement. At the conclusion of this course, students should be able to critique contemporary ideas of biological notions of race; explain how race is socially constructed through laws, media,
U98 MLA 583 Global Energy and the American Dream
This course explores the historical, cultural, and political relationship between the United States and global energy politics. We focus primarily on the problem of fossil fuels (oil, coal, natural gas) and the challenge of transitioning to renewable energy (sun, wind, and water). Through international and US-based case studies, we learn about the social and technical dimensions of fossil fuel extraction, production, distribution, and use. We consider impacts on public health, politics, and the environment and how we are intimately connected to fossil fuels in daily life. The United States is the world's largest consumer of oil and energy (per capita). That makes it one of the contributors to climate change (and to some extent, militarism and war). A major contradiction is this: the United States' voracious demand for fossil-fuel based energy generates multiple kinds of violence both abroad and at home even though our culture tends to express love and desire for fossil fuel-dependent ways of life (trucks, gas stoves, SUVs, etc.). How might we think more deeply about the culture and politics of energy as a way of thinking more clearly about what a better relationship to energy and the climate might look like in the future?
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH, OLI

U98 MLA 5911 Reading the Globe
While literature from the United States and other English-speaking countries is translated into many languages across the world, only a very small percentage of literature published in English in the US is in translation. However, as readers, scholars and writers it is important that we go beyond the borders of our own national literary traditions and the English language and engage with the cultural contexts that the larger global literary landscape offers. Literary translation, moreover, goes beyond simply translating one text into another - it is an art form in itself. In this class, we will read literature from Africa, Asia, Europe and the Americas written in languages other than English. We will read and discuss them as novels in their own right and develop and strengthen our tools of literary analysis and close reading. However, we will also reflect on and study the question of translation and the theories that inform the task of the translator including. We will also look at translation concepts and debates including fidelity and foreignization as well as examine translation as activism, LGBTQ+ translation and translation's intersection with race and gender. This class will also offer a focus on research and writing conventions for graduate students and will include: writing an abstract, writing an outline, peer review, citation, and preparing an annotated bibliography. Visits to the Writing Center and relevant research librarians are encouraged. No prior foreign language experience required.
Credit 3 units. UColl: GRES, GWRT

U98 MLA 592 Decoding the City
Does the space between a house and the sidewalk tell you something about class? Does a vacant lot on a dead-end street record the forced relocation of thousands of black residents? Can street names narrate the relationship between the growth of the city and national narratives of immigrant assimilation, continental expansion and world wars? The answer to these questions is yes, but it is far from obvious. The built environment of an American city like St. Louis can seem opaque and silent, when actually it is laden with social, economic, political, gender and racial meanings. This course unpacks St. Louis' built environment by drawing broad historic and theoretical readings on urban space to specific local sites. Readings will assist students in the interrogation of actual places in St. Louis through field visits, so that the streets become unquiet and the embedded meanings in plain sight. This is a hybrid course, with an online discussion component and a mostly field work requirement. Attendance at these field work sessions is mandatory. The course counts toward the American Culture Studies major for day students, and fulfills the Humanities and Social Science requirements for the M.A. Program in American Culture Studies. Same as U89 AMCS 492
Credit 3 units. UColl: ACH, ACS, HSM, HUS, OLH

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. 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 andetchings. 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, skillfully, 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.