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, 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 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

Required Course Work

To earn the Doctor of Liberal Arts (DLA) degree, a student must complete 45 credit units after earning a relevant master’s degree.

Graduate Course Work (36 units)

Course work includes 12 required DLA seminars.

Students will be required to take a comprehensive exam that tests their ability to synthesize the knowledge that they have gained in individual DLA courses. The exam consists of written and oral questions. The student must pass the written exam questions as a prerequisite for taking the oral portion of the exam.

Thesis Research and Writing (9 units)

The DLA thesis emphasizes original interpretation and synthesis. A faculty adviser appointed to the 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 603 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 to 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 (the medieval spice trade, the Columbian Exchange, the role of colonialism and empire, and so on), 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.

U96 DLA 604 Contemporary Latin American Female Writers
This course examines the newest and most cutting-edge novels and short story collections by 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, but 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 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 addressing a writer of the student's choice, which they will present to the instructor and the class at the end of the semester.
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
The class will consider differences between “high culture” and become “popular” and how they involve connections between study different forms of cultural practice, analyzing how they impact of modernization. The dream of “being modern”; the role of the media; and popular culture; folklore traditions; the impact of modernization in the Caribbean; 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. Same as U98 MLA 5117

Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 620 DLA Counterpoints and Flashpoints: Topic for Spring 2019: 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. Er will consider how modernity entails a break away 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. 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, Wharton’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 Lispector’s Hour of the Star. We will also discuss Dali’s collaboration with Buñuel in their film 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.

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

U96 DLA 630 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? What is style in the arts and how 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.
Same as U98 MLA 5310
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 633 Against the Grain: Transgression and Controversy in Modern Art
This course will examine the public controversies that have surrounded 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 will analyze both the persona of the modern artist
associated with genetic testing, organ transplants, and global 
peoples worldwide? What are some of the ethical dilemmas 
patient, or a healer? Is it possible to imagine a universal morality 
What does it mean to be sick? What does it mean to be a 

Credit 3 units.

Same as U98 MLA 5301
Cred 3 units.

U96 DLA 643 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 

U96 DLA 645 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 aids 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 
t Watch two films per week as well as to complete selected short 
readings. 
Same as U98 MLA 5450
Credit 3 units.

U96 DLA 6464 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 
Scherer-Hughes). 
Same as U98 MLA 5454
Credit 3 units.

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

U96 DLA 665 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. 
Same as U98 MLA 5555
Credit 3 units. UColl: CD

U96 DLA 667 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.

U96 DLA 675 From Buggy to Benz: Global Capitalism, Gender, and Race
In this course, students will examine global capitalism with particular attention 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 will 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.

U96 DLA 676 Haunting the World: Refugees in Literature & Film
By 2019, 65.8 million people (or 1 in 113 individuals) will 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. The 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.

U96 DLA 678 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 including some precolonial materials. Through primary documents, secondary scholarship, and student-centered discussions, 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.