INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES PROGRAM

Program Director: Orrin Robinson

Introduction to the Humanities offers courses which satisfy a three-quarter General Education Requirement (GER) for first-year students. The purpose of the Area 1 requirement is to build an intellectual foundation in the study of human thought, values, beliefs, creativity, and culture. Introduction to the Humanities courses enhance skills in analysis, reasoning, argumentation, and oral and written expression, thus helping to prepare students for more advanced work in the humanities, and for work in other areas such as the sciences, social sciences, and engineering.

The Area 1 requirement may be satisfied in two different ways:

Introduction to the Humanities courses (one-quarter introductory courses followed by two-quarter thematic sequences), *or*

The Program in Structured Liberal Education (an intensive, three-quarter, residence-based program satisfying the Area 1 requirement, the University writing requirement, and one additional General Education Requirement)

COURSES

INTRODUCTION TO THE HUMANITIES

Students enrolled in Introduction to the Humanities courses satisfy, in two parts, the Area 1 requirement by pairing a one-quarter introductory course in Autumn Quarter with a two-quarter thematic sequence in Winter and Spring Quarters. The Autumn Quarter introductory courses hone skills in humanistic disciplines through a close reading and critical investigation of a limited number of works as preparation for further work in the humanities and, specifically, for any one of the Winter-Spring sequences.

AUTUMN

14. The Good Life—What does it mean to live the "good life?" What must people do in order to fulfill their potential as human beings and assert their difference from other species? What is the highest value, against which are rated all other human values and activities? Reason? Love? Freedom? Originality? Explicitly and implicitly, written texts (be they philosophical or literary in form) reveal prime values and comment on the nature of the good life. The texts read stage a conflict between competing values, values which although equally desirable turn out to be fundamentally incompatible. Through an analysis and discussion of these works, contrasting visions of the good life put forward by each text are explored.

5 units, Aut (Elam, Landy, Rehm)

19. The Self, the Sacred, and the Human Good—The works examined were written across a span of 2,300 years, from very different cultural and historical situations, and in very different forms and genres. Taken together, they create an urgent conversation about the ways in which human beings define their place in this world, and how they attempt to give meaning and dignity to lives subject to every kind of social and personal evil, bodily affliction, and spiritual doubt. In the face of such difficulties, and mortality, how do humans build systems of value, whether based on personal, sacred, or social authority? What is the relationship between these ways of making meaning and establishing standards of virtue and vice? Are they compatible or antithetical? The works studied give various answers, or refuse to answer at all. Their differences give creative tension to an examination of these issues, as they offer unique aesthetic and persuasive achievements.

5 units, Aut (Wolff, Yearley)

40. Conversions, Past and Present—Conversion experiences are a staple of Western biographical narratives, especially autobiographies, where the moment of conversion (from one faith to another, from one frame of mind to another, from one understanding of the self to another) is often the crux around which the retelling of a life is centered. In five autobiographical works from different periods, narratives of the self rely, each in its own way, on the experience of conversion as the defining factor in describing in words the events, patterns, and meanings of a life.

5 units, Aut (Harrison, Sheehan)

41. The History of Nature/The Nature of History—Human understanding of environmental problems is thoroughly embedded in human behavior, cultures, and values as they have developed over time. Students think historically about the relations of humans to the natural world; examine boundaries between "natural" and "cultural" and understand how humanists and scientists define this boundary; and explore social solutions to crises in the relations between humans and nature.

5 units, Aut (Kennedy, White)

42. Origins: Contested Identities—Origins are privileged moments in forming personal and social identity. Students engage critically origins and originality narratives through texts that suggest different stakes and outcomes in the ways that they address the question, "where did *(blank)* come from?" The goals are methodological, to teach students to read closely and analyze texts in different fields and genres (e.g., philosophy, popular science, cultural archeology), and to grapple with questions of personal, social, and human identity.

5 units, Aut (Hodder, Shanks)

43. Self-Reflections: The Examined Life—Philosophical, religious, and literary texts are explored which, in different ways, hold up a mirror before the self, and show something about this practice of self-understanding. The texts take different approaches to serious reflection, and come to different conclusions about the nature of a worthwhile life. In all of them, the path of reflective self-examination opens a way forward in a journey or pilgrimage toward the good, learning something about the kind of self-examination depicted within them, and as a set of tools for helping students start that journey themselves.

5 units, Aut (Anderson, Bobonich, Gelber)

44. Things of Beauty—Students are shown how to actively enjoy different forms of the arts (opera, painting, architecture, literature, and film), and are encouraged to see how familiar forms of communication actually belong to the field of aesthetic experience. The aesthetic experience has changed in time, and historical knowledge can enhance aesthetic appreciation. The approaches are grounded in philosophical reflection about aesthetic experience, and in consideration of individual and social functions served by things of beauty.

5 units, Aut (Gumbrecht, Plebuch)

45. Tradition and Revolution: **Rewriting the Classics**—The complex interactions between philosophy, history, and literature are examined within distinct generic traditions: drama, political fiction, and epic. Major classical texts are paired with Renaissance works that imitate and adapt each model to answer the needs of a radically different intellectual, historical, and aesthetic environment. Through these juxtapositions, it is shown how the relationship between the three disciplines in the humanities changed over time, with the accompanying transformations in understanding what it means to be human.

5 units, Aut (Evans, McCall)

WINTER-SPRING SEQUENCES

2,3. Great Works: The Hereafter, the Here-and-Now—The sequence explores great texts (religious, philosophical, and literary) that have addressed the hereafter and the here-and-now, comparing different conceptions of the afterlife and the ways that traditions about the afterlife are created and appropriated. How the imagined involvement of the underworld in everyday life is modified, tracing the ways that the presence (or

absence) of spirits takes on different meanings and makes different claims on the behavior of the living.

2. *5 units, Win (Harrison, Schnapp)*

3. *5 units, Spr (Landy, Schilling)*

8A,9A. Myth and Modernity: Culture in Germany—The contrasts and interplays between traditional and modern cultures are explored, raising questions about history, progress, and change. What defines a cultural tradition? How do values change? When does a national past sustain or impinge on the present? These questions are posed with reference to German literary and philosophical writings, visual arts, films, and music. Within this cultural field, the focus is on the impact of modernization on values, expressivity, and community. Students are encouraged to assume a critical perspective on their own cultures, via close examination of the constellation of ideas and values that contributed to the German legacy, with its proximity of intellectual achievement and political disaster. How did an obsession with "race" overtake Germany? Do all cultures require such myths, or can mythic thinking be overcome?

8A. *5 units, Win (Berman)*

9A. *5 units, Spr (Eshel)*

21A,B. The Literature of Transformation—This sequence explores the ways in which writers from Ovid to Maxine Hong Kingston have dealt with and described the phenomenon of change in their own lives and in the world around them. The foundational text is Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, which surfaces throughout the course in the original version (read in translation) and in various transformations from the medieval through the modern periods.

21A. *5 units, Win (Evans, Middlebrook)*

21B. *5 units, Spr (Evans, Middlebrook)*

22A,B. Performing the Past—Since 5th-century Athens, urban centers have taken material from their historical and mythical past and reshaped it into a theatrical form that articulates significant issues for their immediate situation. This sequence addresses such cultural remappings by examining a series of plays and related documents in which difference societies revise their past and address their present simultaneously.

22A. *5 units, Win (Fordyce)*

22B. *5 units, Spr (Fordyce)*

23A,B. Reason, Passion, and Reality—What roles should passion and reason play in human life? Answers to this question cross various boundaries of human difference: gender, race, age, culture, and epoch. Contrasting roles for passion and reason are traced in the context of three traditional philosophical concerns: value and obligation; knowledge, emotion, and understanding; God and reality. These problems are explored through classics of philosophy and drama, poetry, novels, and wisdom literature.

23A. *5 units, Win* (*Bobonich, Moravcsik)*

23B. *5 units, Spr (Anderson, Taylor)*

24A,B. Ten Days that Shook the World—Focus is on ten events that "shook the world" in their own times, or owing to their medium and long-range effects (and usually both), or in terms of their emblematic nature for historical processes at work: the destruction of the second Temple of Jerusalem (70 BC); the arrival of Islam in India; the Great Plague in Europe, Asia, and N. Africa (1347-50); the battle of Kosovo (1389); the French Revolution; and the "opening" of Japan by Commodore Perry (1853). The leading themes are ideologies of imperialism, universalism, and globalism (religious, political, and economic), and the processes of empire-building and globalization (and resistance to them). The material begins and ends with "the West" because, for better or worse, "the West" created successful world-uniting imperialism in ideology and fact. The Roman imperium, other formations such as the Muslim commonwealth and the Turkish empire, and through contact, India, Japan, and Africa.

24A. *5 units, Win (Buc)*

24B. *5 units, Spr (Rodrigue)*

26A,B. Democratic Society in Europe and America: Origins, Crises, Dilemmas—The development of the theory and practice of democracy is analyzed in Europe and the U.S. from the 18th century to the present. The technique is comparative: by studying European and American materials in parallel, perspectives are developed on both the universal and the particular elements that have shaped the histories of Europe and N. America in the last two centuries. Where appropriate, comparisons are drawn with developments in Asia, Africa, and Latin America.

26A. *5 units, Win (Kennedy, Lougee)*

26B. *5 units, Spr (Kennedy, Roberts)*

27A,B. Encounters and Identities—The formation of ideas about individual and collective identities is investigated in Latin America, Western Europe, and the U.S. Some contemporary ideas about identity, including nationalism and national identity; and historical encounters and social transformations linking these areas of the globe. In emphasizing the similarities and differences among ideas of individual and collective identity found in different regions of the world, challenges are presented to assumptions about the origins of human identity.

27A. *5 units, Win (Collier)*

27B. *5 units, Spr (Yanagisako)*

28A,B. Poetic Justice: Order and Imagination in Russia—This sequence examines the difference between justice and law in the view of 19th- and 20th-century Russian writers, focusing on the notion of "poetic justice": the artistic representation of order, whether divine, natural, or human. The aim is to heighten awareness of familiar narratives, mythologies, ideas, and images, and at the same time convey a sense of a long-established national culture with its own dynamic and vision.

28A. *5 units, Win (Safran)*

28B. *5 units, Spr (Bulgakowa, Freidin)*

31A,B. Ancient Empires—This sequence investigates a decisive place and period in world history: the Mediterranean basin between 800 BC and 400 AD. Great empires (Assyria, Persia, Macedonia, and Rome) were carved out in bloody wars and permanently changed the course of human development. Why these empires arose when and where they did, how they worked, and what was their legacy, balancing their economic, religious, and artistic achievements against their records of genocide, enslavement, and brutal warfare. The evidence surviving from ancient literature and archaeology, tracing the roles of religion, property, and freedom across these centuries, and what they meant for the shape of the world today.

31A. *5 units, Win (Morris)*

31B. *5 units, Spr (Trimble)*

32A,B. Serious Laughter: Fantasy and Invective in Greece, Rome, and Beyond—Few things are as good at revealing fault-lines, tensions, and taboos in culture as what makes people laugh. This sequence examines the full range of comic, satiric, and invective discourse in Greece and Rome (graffiti, oratorical insults, vase paintings, novels) over a millennium (8th century BC to 2nd century AD) to discover how laughter and related responses functioned in ancient social life. The relationship between ancient modes and modern cultural productions (from drama to political rhetoric). Film, visual art, performance, and literary texts provide objects of study.

32A. *5 units, Win (Martin)*

32B. *5 units, Spr (Connolly)*

33A,B. Gender and Genre—This sequence focuses on the construction of gender, male and female, in the principal literary and philosophical genres or forms in the ancient and early modern worlds. Emphasis is on the terms of such genres, and connections between specific forms of

thought and the encoding of gender. Which genres represent particular assumptions about gender and gender relations? What are the roles of language and images in forming identity, the connections between genres and their intellectual and cultural context, and their modification in later historical periods? What about the absence of certain voices, issues of authority, and power?

33A. *5 units, Win (McCall)*

33B. *5 units, Spr (Brooks)*

PROGRAM IN STRUCTURED LIBERAL EDUCATION

Track Chair: Mark Mancall (History)

Structured Liberal Education (SLE) offers students an intensive, three-quarter, residence-based learning experience, which simultaneously satisfies the Area 1 requirement, the University writing requirement, and one General Education requirement in the humanities.

SLE encourages students to live a life of ideas in an atmosphere that stresses critical thinking and a tolerance for ambiguity. The residence hall is the informal setting for lectures and small-group discussions. SLE instructors work closely with students and participate in dorm life. SLE enhances the classroom experience with other residence-based educational activities: a weekly film series throughout the year and a student-produced play each quarter.

SLE students receive intensive and individualized writing instruction from a team of instructors and peer writing tutors. See the "Structured Liberal Education" section of this bulletin.