Liberal Studies

Program is not currently accepting new applications.

LIBS 528 Roman Art and Memory 3 Credit Hours
In this course, we examine Roman art closely associated with personal commemoration and cultural memory, including portrait sculpture, funerary monuments, imperial monuments, and public architecture. We explore these objects’ relationship to Roman literary culture’s theories of mnemotechnics, and in the social context of the Roman obsession with memory perpetuation. We also examine how art historians apply modern theories of collective and social memory in their scholarship on Roman art, creating new ways of understanding Roman sculpture, painting, and architecture. Finally, we investigate Roman spectacle and performance as a vehicle of cultural memory. Graduate students enrolled in this seminar will be exposed to theoretical and historiographical scholarship of cultural and collective memory, as well as to current topics in Roman art. Graduate students are responsible for additional readings assignments and more lengthy and substantial oral presentations and final papers, as outlined below. Students cannot earn credit for both ARTH 428 and ARTH/LIBS 528.
Prerequisite(s): ARTH 101 or ARTH 102 or ARTH 103 or ARTH 104 or ARTH 106
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 536 Memoir and Travel Writing 3 Credit Hours
A course in narrative nonfiction that focuses on memoir and travel writing. Reading involves several books as well as classic essay-length examples. Assignments include both short and analytical papers and the writing and revising of three original articles, based on research, interviews, memory, and observation, and drawing on literary techniques. In addition to these assignments, graduate students must prepare a substantial critical analysis focusing on a particular writer or theme, and present their work to the class as well as in writing. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Level is Graduate

LIBS 560 Foundations in Liberal Studies 3 to 6 Credit Hours
This course is mandatory for students entering the MALS program. It will introduce students to the understanding of advanced liberal studies and to graduate-level interdisciplinary skills and methodologies.
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
Can enroll if Major is Liberal Studies

LIBS 561 Self and Society 3 Credit Hours
This seminar examines various facets of autobiography and memoir within the context of historical and contemporary cultures. Drawing on texts from Europe, Africa, Asia, and North America, the seminar analyzes the purpose of self-narrative and explores the cultural patterning of individual experience and literary discourse. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
Can enroll if Major is Liberal Studies

LIBS 562 Postmodernism and Truth 3 Credit Hours
Examines the development in the last 20 years of the emergence of "postmodern" scholarship in a number of fields in the natural and social sciences, humanities, and popular culture; considers how in each case these approaches seem to challenge the authority of single explanations and absolute truth. Addresses issues such as diversity in cultures; why cultural pressures produce new forms of relativism; the dynamics of race and gender in intercultural clashes; and the interplay of strongly held values and toleration. Course format will require close reading of complex texts and responses to them in class discussion.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 563 New World Cultures 3 Credit Hours
This is a MALS Core Seminar that will focus on the topic of crosscultural encounters in the Atlantic from the advent of the Atlantic slave trade to the emancipation of slaves in the western hemisphere. Course will stress interdisciplinary approaches to the topic, including economics, history, and anthropology. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 564 Literature & Science Studies 3 Credit Hours
An introduction to the humanistic study of science using works of literature and the techniques of literary, historical, sociological, philosophical, cultural, feminist and rhetorical analysis. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 566 Investigating Academic Literacy 3 Credit Hours
Intensive investigation of, and practice with, writing and research skills required for graduate-level work. Through regular assignments, guided reading of a variety of texts, and intensive work with instructor/s and one another, students will explore what it means to produce academic discourse, learn its conventions, and develop skills in written analysis. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 567 The Self in Philosophy & Lit 3 Credit Hours
This course will utilize both philosophical and literary texts to examine the nature of the self. We will explore the self's inwardness, its relation to others, its capacity for self-knowledge and self-deception, its connection to gender, its desire to disown itself and finally its relation to death. The philosophical texts will provide theoretical structures within which to both experience and discuss the literary texts. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 568 Religion & Society 3 Credit Hours
The course will focus upon how social scientists examine the role of religion in public life. It will examine several religious organizations or communities or religious-based ideologies. The format of the class will be to read primary source materials or research studies and discuss them. This is not a class in theology or faith. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
LIBS 569  The Texture of Memory  3 Credit Hours
This seminar will examine theories of individual, collective, and cultural memory and their practical application. In addition, we will read three major novels in which the authors explore memory in its various forms. We will begin the semester by examining the ways in which clinical psychologists have looked at memory versus the ways in which social constructivists and psychologists have viewed memory. In our examination, we will try to find some points of intersection between the two groups. This will provide the framework for further explorations of memory and the study of constructions of memory and their uses and abuses. We will focus on the ways in which memory has been conceptualized in the disciplines of art history, history, literary criticism, Holocaust studies, sociology, and psychology, as well as the interdisciplinary field of cultural studies. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
Can enroll if Degree is Master of Arts Liberal Studies

LIBS 570  History of Warfare, 1500-2000  3 Credit Hours
A History of Warfare during the Age of Gunpowder offers a summary of human strife from approximately 1500 to the present. Drawing on a series of diverse sources - including analytical assessments by eminent contemporary historians, eyewitness accounts by combatants, and cinematic representations of warfare - this course seeks to explore the origins of human conflict, its evolution during the past 500 years, and its future, if any. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 571  Science&Philosophy of Emotion  3 Credit Hours
This course will examine how past philosophers and psychologists analyzed emotions to set the stage for an examination of more recent work on emotions being produced in philosophy, psychology, and neuroscience. This course will use these analyses to explore the following topics: the relationship of emotions to reason, memory, and morality, and the overall role of emotions in our relationship to ourselves and to others. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 572  Migrations of the Holy  3 Credit Hours
This course will probe the dynamic shifts in religious subjectivity that mark the years ranging from the early Christian centuries (first and second centuries AD) to the end of the Middle Ages (1500 AD). It will attend mainly to the evidence to be found in the literary record of these two sequential periods, and will be concerned with examining a wide variety of topics, such as the formation of orthodox belief, the challenges posed by apostate and heretical sects, competing modes of ascetic life and practices, the power struggles between secular and ecclesiastical authority, and the rise of mysticism and affective piety. The course will demand close analysis and comparison of texts in class discussion as well as in written assignments.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 575  Making Modern Science  3 Credit Hours
This seminar will explore how science became a defining feature of modern life around the world in the last five centuries. We will study the so-called "Scientific Revolution" in a global context in relation to other forms of belief, such as religion and magic, and changes in human society at large. By critically studying theoretical texts, primary sources, and secondary materials tied to the emergence of the modern sciences, the seminar will challenge participants to examine their assumptions and presuppositions about what science is, how science was in the past, how science has been done, and what its history should be. We will discover how people in different cultures made knowledge of the natural world in pre-modern times, and examine why some ways of making natural knowledge became more reliable and widespread than others in recent centuries.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 580  Gender, Culture and Identity  3 Credit Hours
This is a course about how scholars analyze women, gender, and feminist theories. It introduces students to key questions about gender and the principal methods for studying them. It will serve as a forum for building and testing theories on the totality of women's experience. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 581  Aspects of Greek Culture  3 Credit Hours
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 582  Eur Ideas in American Culture  3 Credit Hours
This course will introduce students to key topics in modern western culture, with focus specifically on the role played by European ideas in the creation of American culture from the eighteenth century to the present. Organized around three case studies of European intellectual influences on America using the writings of John Locke, Charles Darwin, and Sigmund Freud. (OC)
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 583  Early Mod Era/New & Old World  3 Credit Hours
This is a course on the history of the early modern West from multiple perspectives, with special emphasis on the role played by the Old and New World, together, in the creation of the modern. Course fulfills the Liberal Studies track core seminar requirement. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 584  ENST: Concepts and Philosophy  3 Credit Hours
An extensive and intensive analysis of the roots of environmental studies. Environmental studies becomes meta-disciplinary as it makes connections between the traditional disciplines in the natural sciences, social sciences, humanities, and technological sciences when dealing with current environmental issues. The students will examine and discuss the philosophical, scientific, social, and religious basis of the environmental movements through classical and contemporary readings. Possible topics will include: views of nature, sustainability, carrying capacity, management of commons, the environment of cities, and developing a sense of place. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
LIBS 585 Watershed Analysis 3 Credit Hours
An interdisciplinary study of watersheds, the most commonly used bioregional unit. The course will integrate the analysis of many factors which contribute to the character of watersheds, including bedrock and surficial geology, surface and groundwater hydrology, social history, land use history, water quality analysis, biological diversity, laws and regulations, management models, drinking water and wastewater systems, best management practices, and educational programs. The Rouge River Watershed will serve as the primary case study. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version. (YR).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 586 Ecological Economics 3 Credit Hours
A review of major theories and issues concerning the relationship between ecological and economic systems. Topics include these questions: What is the purpose of economic activity? How important is the preservation of the natural world compared to the production of economic goods? How do principles of social and intergenerational equity affect the use of resources and choice of goods to be produced? The course utilizes a transdisciplinary approach in the development of new models where conventional economics and ecology alone have been ineffective in addressing questions of sustainability and equity. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560

LIBS 587 Women and Public Spaces 3 Credit Hours
Despite old and persistent myths of a woman’s place being in the home, women in America have consistently maintained a presence in public spaces. Their participation, however, was not unfettered. Laws, social mores, familial and religious restraints, etiquette, the threat of violence, lack of funds, and other factors influenced and restricted women’s behavior when in public and structured society’s reactions to their presence. This course will consider the development of these codes of behavior, formal and informal, how women of different ethnicities, races, sexual orientations, and classes experienced their effects, and the ways in which women sought to temper and undermine the system, particularly in the 20th century. This course will provide an interdisciplinary approach to historic, social physical, economic, and cultural geographies through which women have traveled. Readings will consider the scholarship generated by urban geographers, historians, sociologists, anthropologists, literary critics, economists, novelists, and journalists. Additional assignments will distinguish this course from its undergraduate version. (OC)
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 588 Creative Class/Working Class 3 Credit Hours
In this course we will explore changing conceptions of work and its impact on urban redevelopment policies. The issue will be set within a larger theme: the relationship between work and creativity. We begin with a review of writings by Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Karl Polanyi, E. P. Thompson and others on the history and concept of work as a specific form of productive human activity. We will then critically examine the nature of the shift from manufacturing to services and the emergence of a new, knowledge-based system of production. Specific policies aimed at recruiting members of the "creative class" to live and work in "cool cities" - Michigan’s cool cities initiative, for example - will be examined and critically evaluated. (OC)
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 599 Independent Studies - MALS 1 to 3 Credit Hours
Provides opportunity for qualified graduate students in the MALS program to pursue independent research under the direction of a graduate faculty member. Project must be defined in advance, in writing, and must be appropriate to the student’s chosen track. It must be designed to produce a scholarly paper or papers which reflect significant results from the course.
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
Can enroll if Major is Liberal Studies

LIBS 690 Topics in Liberal Studies 3 Credit Hours
Presents topics of current interest in graduate liberal studies. Topics vary from term to term. (OC).
Prerequisite(s): LIBS 560
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
Can enroll if Program is MALS-Liberal Studies

LIBS 690A Topics in Liberal Studies 3 Credit Hours
TOPIC: Wetern Tradition: the Judeo-Christian and the Greek. Students taking this class will begin to consider some of the issues of human and Western Culture; establish a core of language, literature, and ideas to use in discussing Western culture; and evolve a series of recurring questions about Western tradition. The course examines two strands of the Western tradition: the Judeo-Christian and the Greek. It establishes the foundation for subsequent courses in the Liberal Studies Track. (OC)

LIBS 690B Topics in Liberal Studies 3 Credit Hours
Topic: Environmental Economics. Examines economic issues involving the physical environment in which we all live.
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate

LIBS 697 MALS Capstone Experience 3 Credit Hours
This course is designed as a capstone experience for students in the MALS program who are interested in a non-thesis/non-project option. Its aim is to allow students to reflect and draw upon the knowledge they gained in MALS, and then apply this knowledge in class discussions, essays, and research projects on an interdisciplinary topic chosen from an agreed-upon list of topics that relate to the general MALS curriculum.
In the first section of the course, students will reflect upon the interdisciplinary nature of their graduate training, drawing connections between diverse courses they have taken, pinpointing applications to the outside world, and examining the ways that interdisciplinary work has transformed their thinking. The remainder of the class will be organized around an interdisciplinary exploration of one of the following interrelated topics: "Memory", "Identity", "Place", "Community", or "Ways of Knowing".
Students will examine how different disciplines and scholars approach the topic. They will also consider the relevance of this broad theme for contemporary issues and debates. Also, students should have completed at least 24 credits in the MALS program, if enrolled concurrently in a LIBS graduate course, or 27 credit otherwise, with a minimum GPA of 3.0.
Restriction(s):
Can enroll if Class is Graduate
LIBS 698  MALS Master’s Project  3 or 6 Credit Hours
An alternative to the usual master’s thesis for students who can present a feasible plan for a project using methods of intellectual exploration and analysis other than the document-based research typically used in preparing a thesis. Might include gathering data through the use of human subjects, as with interviews and survey instruments; creative representation, as in painting; creative writing, and other forms of artistic expression; or devising new modes of interdisciplinary analysis of human experience and thought. To be carried out under the general supervision of a member of the graduate faculty in CASL. Project plan must be approved by the MALS program director before student registers for this course. Report and oral presentation to a panel of faculty members required when the project is completed. (F,W,S).

LIBS 699  MALS Master’s Thesis  3 or 6 Credit Hours
MALS students electing the Thesis option in the last stage of the program will work under the general supervision of a member of the graduate faculty in CAS&L, but will plan and carry out the work independently. A prospectus for the thesis must be approved by the MALS program director before the student registers for this course. The student will submit a report on the thesis and give an oral presentation to a panel of faculty members when the thesis is completed. (F,W,S).

* An asterisk denotes that a course may be taken concurrently.

Frequency of Offering

The following abbreviations are used to denote the frequency of offering:
(F) fall term; (W) winter term; (S) summer term; (F, W) fall and winter terms; (YR) once a year; (AY) alternating years; (OC) offered occasionally