

# Literature

## Course 21L

The study of humanities has a long history at MIT. In 1865, MIT's first president, William Barton Rogers, declared that the Institute would offer a strong program in general studies. In 1955, the faculty unanimously voted to offer joint majors combining humanities with science and engineering.

### **Literature at MIT**

Literature is one part of the vast study of humanities at MIT. The curriculum in literary studies here has a double intent. First, it aims to meet the needs of the student who is interested in literature as an elective and may take only one or two literature subjects in his or her career at the Institute. Second, it provides a rich program of study for undergraduates concentrating, minoring or majoring in literature. Classes are small--usually about 20 students--so there is ample opportunity for active classroom participation. Each class focuses on improving students' writing skills. The curriculum puts emphasis on interdisciplinary approaches to literary study and on theoretical and thematic subjects that range widely across geographical, linguistic and historical boundaries.

### **Undergraduate Program**

#### *Major*

The Literature Section of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) offers three options for the Bachelor of Science degree: a full major, a joint major with engineering or science, and a double major. Undergraduates may pursue their studies in these areas: aesthetics and literary theory, American literature, cultural history, drama, ethnic studies, English literature, European literature, fiction, film and media studies, popular culture, or poetry. Students may also study according to these period sequences: Ancient and Medieval, Renaissance, Restoration and 18th Century, 19th Century, 20th Century and Contemporary.

#### *Minor*

Undergraduates may elect to minor in designated areas of the humanities. The Minor program requires students to complete six subjects in a given field from a curriculum arranged into at least three levels, expressing different degrees of sophistication. Students electing to minor in Literature will satisfy the HASS concentration requirement in that field of study. They will also have the Minor in Literature specified on their undergraduate degree.

#### *Concentration*

Literature is also available as a HASS Concentration to fulfill part of MIT's General Institute Requirements (GIRs).

### **Extracurricular Opportunities**

Literature is a popular field of study at MIT and commonly taken as an elective. Students can participate in many extracurricular activities related to literature including Monday "Tea" and the MIT Literary Society, an undergraduate reading group. The Literature Section has a number of subjects closely linked to the Women's Studies and Writing & Humanistic Studies programs at MIT, and there are opportunities for cross-registration at Harvard University and Wellesley College.

### **Post Baccalaureate Opportunities**

The study of literature is particularly useful training for professional fields such as journalism, law, medical school, literary criticism, theatre, and writing. Studying humanities at MIT is a valuable complement to studying engineering or the sciences.

**Contact Information**

For more information about Literature at MIT, contact the Literature Headquarters, MIT  
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Information is also available on the web at  
<http://lit.mit.edu>

The MIT Bulletin, Courses and Degree Programs Issue, contains further information on the Institute, including all graduate and undergraduate courses and programs. For details on ordering the course catalogue, please visit the MIT Press Bookstore website at  
<http://web.mit.edu/bookstore/www/bulletin.html>

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