

World Literatures

World literatures is focused on historical and contemporary literature and the processes of globalization. Students analyze, in English translation, a wide range of fiction, poetry, and drama produced in different geopolitical regions of the world. Students study different literary texts and traditions in their historical and cultural contexts. Program courses emphasize close reading and analysis of particular texts, but also explore the relationships between those texts and the cultures that produced them. Students investigate many complex issues that surround the subject of world literatures: What is lost when literature is translated from one language to another? How are the globalizing forces of today different from those of the past? How is literature related to social change and stability? As world literatures majors, students consider these and many other questions about literature and globalization.

To ensure that students' understanding of different literary traditions is global in scope, all students select courses in which they study the literature of the following geopolitical regions: Africa, the Middle East, East and South Asia and the Pacific Islands, Europe and North America, and Latin America and the Caribbean.

No advanced study of foreign languages is required, only a serious interest in literature, global interconnection, and cultural interaction. The world literatures major makes it possible to study the literatures of the entire world without learning multiple languages. At the same time, students are strongly encouraged to study a foreign language beyond the level required for general education and to substitute one or more courses in a foreign language for courses in translation.

Pursuing World Literatures at Ohio State

All Ohio State freshman applicants are considered within a competitive admission process for the Columbus campus. The primary criteria for admission are the completion of the applicant's high school college preparatory program, performance in that program as indicated by class rank and/or grade-point average, and performance on either the ACT or SAT. Upon admission to the university, students can declare a major in comparative studies within the Arts and Humanities. Interested students should contact the undergraduate advisor in the Department of Comparative Studies and an undergraduate advisor in the College of the Arts and Sciences.

Students majoring in world literatures participate actively in constructing their own course of study and are encouraged to pursue an independent research project or honors thesis. In consultation with their advisors, students choose elective courses from a list of specified classes in the language and literature departments as well as three required courses in comparative studies.

World Literatures Requirements

The world literatures major requires 55 credit hours: 15 credits (three courses) in comparative studies, and 40 credits (eight

courses) in literatures in other departments. These eight courses are drawn from a list of approved courses in other humanities departments: African American and African Studies, Comparative Studies, East Asian Languages and Literatures, Greek and Latin, Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Slavic and East European Languages and Literatures, Spanish and Portuguese, and Women's Studies. Most are focused in the particular literary traditions of the world's regions, and students must take at least one course in each of those regions.

In addition to those five courses, a strong framework for thinking about the world's literatures is provided by these three comparative studies courses:

- **Comparative Studies 273**
Introduction to World Literature
This course introduces the world's diverse literary traditions and helps students identify principles of cross-cultural study.
- **Comparative Studies 373**
Translating Literatures and Cultures
This course focuses on the complexity of translating literary and other texts from one language (and culture) to another.
- **Comparative Studies 573**
World Literature: Theory and Practice
This course builds on the previous two courses to analyze literature in greater depth and more fully explore the role of literature in historical and contemporary contexts of globalization.

Co-Curricular Opportunities

Ohio State offers many opportunities for students to learn and grow outside of the classroom. These range from cooperative education (co-op) and internships to study abroad programs to student organizations. Co-ops and internships place students in professional environments while they are Ohio State students. Ohio State offers more than 100 study abroad programs in 40 countries around the world. In addition, there are hundreds of student organizations on campus to meet the interests of a diverse student population.

These experiences enable students to gain valuable work experience, learn about cultures, and take on leadership roles before they enter the workforce. All of these experiences enhance learning and may provide an advantage in the job market.

Honors & Scholars Programs

Ohio State offers the Honors and Scholars programs to create an environment of intellectual support and stimulation within a close-knit community of high-ability undergraduate students. Through these programs, students have access to smaller classes, undergraduate research opportunities, close working relationships with faculty, priority scheduling, and unique housing options.

Honors and Scholars programs represent great opportunities to be part of a smaller community within a large university. Good

For more information, check these web sites:

Comparative Studies: comparativestudies.osu.edu

Arts and Humanities: artsandhumanities.osu.edu

Ohio State: osu.edu

Admissions: undergrad.osu.edu

Multicultural Center: multiculturalcenter.osu.edu

First Year Experience Program: fye.osu.edu

Curriculum Sample

This is a sample list of classes a student will take to pursue a degree in World Literatures. Programs for other areas would draw on a separate set of classes, and each student's program is designed to meet individual needs and interests. Since university students need more than specific education in a narrow field, they also will take classes to complete the General Education Curriculum (GEC). The GEC will allow students to develop the fundamental skills essential to collegiate success across major programs. Course work options satisfying the GEC often come from a variety of academic areas of study allowing students to tailor their GEC toward their interests. Note: This sample represents one of several possible paths to a degree in World Literature. Consult the departmental web site, comparativestudies.osu.edu, for details.

Freshman Year:

Electives	10
GEC courses	35
Humanities Survey	1
Freshman Seminar	1
Total hours	47

Sophomore Year:

Introduction to World Literature	5
The Novel in the Middle East	5
Electives	5
GEC courses	35
Total hours	50

Junior Year:

Translating Literatures and Cultures	5
Chinese Fiction in Translation	5
Arabic Folk Narrative	5
Philosophy in African Literature	5
Electives	15
GEC	5
Total hours	40

Senior Year:

World Literature: Theory and Practice	5
Japanese Literature: Modern Period	5
The Victorian Novel	5
Latin American Literatures: Fiction & Reality	5
Special Topics in World Literature in English	5
Electives	15
GEC	10
Total hours	45

candidates for these programs will receive additional information after admission to the university. Learn more about the Honors and Scholars program at honors-scholars.osu.edu.

Career Prospects in World Literatures

Like students majoring in other Arts and Humanities disciplines, students majoring in world literatures develop skills in critical thinking and verbal communication that are essential to many positions in government and other service institutions, in business and industry, and in education. The world literatures major also prepares students to further their education in professional schools and in graduate degree programs in the humanities.

Arts and Humanities graduates have chosen jobs in the public and private sectors and many have continued their education to become lawyers, professors, teachers, and other professionals.

Like other liberal arts majors, the Bachelor of Arts in World Literatures prepares students to be critical thinkers, creative problem-solvers, and good writers and communicators. Graduates with world literatures degrees have increased understanding of cultural differences and interrelationships, which is especially important in today's complex global politics and economy.

More information about careers for humanities majors is available at Ohio State's career services web site: asccareerservices.osu.edu.

More about World Literatures

The world's diverse societies have very different modes and habits of cultural expression, and many nations, including the United States, are themselves broadly multicultural. The major in world literatures will help students develop the knowledge they need to better understand the many complex interrelationships among societies across the world. Ohio State, with its extraordinary faculty and curricular resources in African, East and South Asian, Middle Eastern, Latin American and Caribbean, as well as North American and European literatures, is a particularly promising site for this innovative new program.

The major in world literatures is distinct from other majors available to undergraduates within the humanities. It differs from the English major in its broader scope, focusing not only on literatures written in English, but also on a wide range of translated texts. Students in the major will not focus their studies on a particular region or historical period. Rather, they will study a limited number of texts representing each of five geopolitical regions and concentrate their attention on the differences and interrelations (historical, aesthetic, and political) among them. Chief among the questions students investigate is the subject of "world literature" itself, a question addressed explicitly in the three progressively more sophisticated courses in comparative studies (Introduction to World Literature, Translating Literatures and Cultures, and World Literature: Theory and Practice). This major also makes available to students literary traditions that would otherwise be inaccessible without extensive foreign language study, particularly Asian and African literatures.

The insights and skills students in this major develop in their study of cross-cultural relations, both within the United States and globally, will serve them well in their future role as citizens who must cope with the economic, political, and cultural dimensions of contemporary globalization processes. As students begin to understand the distinctive literary and cultural histories of the world's regions, they will expand their ability to respond to the future challenges of an inextricably interdependent and conflicted world.

Revised September 2009. For the most up-to-date information on the world literature program, please visit comparativestudies.osu.edu.

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