

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS COURSES (MLAR)

MLAR 7010 Ancient Political Thought (3)

This course will study classical works of ancient political philosophy in the Western tradition, with a concentration on Plato and Aristotle. We will examine their understanding of political life and the place of the individual in society, exploring the questions they raise that remain of central importance in our world today: What is justice? What is a citizen? Why is the rule of law desirable? What is the relation between freedom and equality in democracy?

MLAR 7020 Modern Political Thought (3)

This course will be devoted to a study of classical works of modern political philosophy in the Western tradition. How did the early modern political philosophers try to make a new beginning by turning to a realism they thought missing in the ancients? How did they go about defending individual rights in society on that basis? We will examine Machiavelli's introduction of this approach, and its development in the political theories of thinkers such as Hobbes, Locke and Rousseau.

MLAR 7030 Masterworks West Lit Foundation (3)

This course will examine literary texts, ancient and medieval, that have played an important role in shaping Western thought and imagination. We will explore the understanding of the human condition that comes to light in works such as the Bible, the Homeric poems, Greek tragedy, the dialogues of Plato, the writings of Augustine or Dante, among others.

MLAR 7040 Masterworks of Western Literature in the Modern Era (3)

This course will examine literary texts central to the Western tradition from the Renaissance to the present. We will explore the understanding of the human condition that comes to light in works such as those of Cervantes, Shakespeare, Dostoevsky, Kafka, Toni Morrison, and others.

MLAR 7050 Understanding Amer Foundations (3)

This course is an intense analytical investigation of social, political, economic, religious, and philosophical issues in the early years of the American republic. The course examines the people and events of the founding of the American republic from the revolution, through the creation of the American Constitution, and culminating in the election of 1800. This course is primarily an intellectual history course and the main scholarly work that we will read is the work of historians, but the course also delves deeply into issues in political theory, political economy, and political and social philosophy. The course charts the development of American political ideas about constitutionalism, governance, political freedom, economic freedom, representative democracy, republicanism, and federalism primarily from the vantage point of the careers of two of the main figures from this period, John Adams and Thomas Jefferson. The views of other figures will also be central to our investigation, particularly the views of James Madison and Alexander Hamilton. The student will be challenged to examine fundamental assumptions about these topics in order to rethink the intellectual origins of the American political tradition in its founding years.

MLAR 7060 Understanding Amer Modern Era (3)

This course is an intense encounter with the work of perhaps the most significant, original, and influential philosopher in American history, Richard Rorty (1931-2007). The material that we read will cover all the main aspects of Rorty's philosophical and political work. The main focus of the course will be an attempt to come to terms with Rorty's critique of the cult and culture of professional philosophy. We will also be concerned with an attempt to understand Rorty as a major figure in the American intellectual tradition and locate him within the history that includes such figures as Emerson, Whitman, William James, John Dewey, and other figures considered to be exemplars of naturalism, pragmatism, or neo-pragmatism in one form or another.

MLAR 7070 Political World (3)

This course examines the political economy of food by exploring the processes of production, regulation, and consumption that determine the relationships between humans and the food we eat in the world today. We will explore the moral, political, social, and economic dimensions of this topic with the goal of providing a platform for personal exploration and transformation. The presentation of material in the course is designed to be engaging, provocative, and stimulating and to provide the student with an opportunity to make informed decisions about the moral and political dimensions of their own relationship to food.

MLAR 7080 The Economic World (3)

This course examines the causes and consequences of the Great Recession, the economic crisis of 2008 and beyond. Over the past thirty years, the economic and political landscape of the world has been transformed by sweeping economic changes that reflect the influence of the once marginalized but now dominant ideology of neo-liberalism and free market fundamentalism. These changes have created the greatest accumulation of individual wealth in human history, but also have arguably created greater suffering, poverty, inequality, anti-democratic developments, and the growing potential for the catastrophic failure of the global economy, as evidenced by recent events. We will consider a variety of political and economic views of the Great Recession, from a broad spectrum of economic and political thinkers.

MLAR 7100 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7101 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

Maximum Hours: 99

MLAR 7102 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7103 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7113 Philosophy of Religion (3)

This course will analyze various ways of understanding the nature and importance of religious experience and religious beliefs. We will consider some of the most influential arguments for the existence of God and examine central issues such as the problem of evil or the relation between revelation and reason.

MLAR 7122 King Arthur: History & Legend (3)

In this course, we will investigate the evidence, both textual and archaeological, for the existence of an historical Arthur, King of the Britons, and will then consider how that evidence was transformed into an imaginative cycle of stories concerning kingship and chivalry that were highly influential within and beyond the Middle Ages. We will pay particular attention to three themes: the ideals of monarchy and knightly behavior that inform the Arthurian stories (e.g. the medieval theory of the divine right of kings); the development within the Arthurian materials of ideas about medieval romantic love or *fin amor*, especially in representations of the passionate but doomed relationship between Lancelot and Guinevere; and the mystical dimensions of Arthurian romance, as these emerged from writings about the Round Table fellowship's pursuit of the Holy Grail. We will read Sir Thomas Malory's late medieval revision of the Arthurian story cycle, but with reference to other non-Malory materials to be introduced and explained by the instructor (e.g. a long alliterative poem concerning Arthur's battle with the giant of St. Michael's Mount). We will also deal briefly at the end of the course with Victorian adaptations of the Arthurian materials, especially those by Tennyson in his *Idylls of the King* and William Morris in his *Defence of Guenevere*. Three written assignments: a midterm and final examination (essay format) and a short critical paper (5 pp. typed, double-spaced). Required Text: Sir Thomas Malory, *Le Morte Darthur: The Winchester Manuscript*, ed. by Helen Cooper (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

MLAR 7123 Robin Hood (3)

This course will explore the legendary history of the medieval outlaw figure, Robin Hood, as it developed through the Medieval and Early Modern periods and into our own century. We will begin by examining historical and archaeological evidence for the person "Robin Hood" (including pre-Christian influences on his character) and then will consider Robin Hood's complex literary and cultural identity. We will also be concerned with various political uses to which the figure of Robin Hood was put in the Medieval and Early Modern periods and with Robin Hood's persistent role in modern British and American popular culture, especially the movies. Three written assignments: a midterm and final examination (essay format) and a short critical paper (5 pp. typed, double-spaced). Required Texts: Stephen Knight and Thomas Ohlgren, eds., *Robin Hood and Other Outlaw Tales*, 2d ed. (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 2000) and Stephen Knight, *Robin Hood, A Mythic Biography* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 2009).

MLAR 7124 Great Irish Famine (3)

The Great Irish Famine, 1846-1852, is the central event in the history of modern Ireland. The Famine or the Great Hunger killed approximately one million Irish, forcing the emigration of another two million, and altering not only the history of Ireland, but also the history of Britain, Australia, Canada, and the United States. This course will concentrate on the seminal issues concerning the Famine: Ireland's political and social relationship with British society, the tortured relationship between landlord and tenant, the desperate poverty which afflicted the Irish underclass and threatened much of the population with ruin, the bitter sectarian conflicts which convulsed the island and tainted its political and economic arrangements, and Ireland's struggle for self-determination. We will discuss the causes of the Famine (which were different from the blight which attacked the potato), the domestic and international responses to it, and its consequences for Ireland, Britain, and the United States. This course is a seminar and will emphasize reading, discussion, and writing.

MLAR 7126 Tudors in TV and Film (3)

This course will look at popular depictions of Henry VIII, Thomas Cromwell, Catherine of Aragon, and Anne Boleyn. We will explore questions about creators of historical fiction: Do they have obligations to their audience and to the memory of the dead? Are there some cases in which it is particular important to achieve historical accuracy and others not?

MLAR 7129 Canterbury Tales (3)

This course will investigate the medieval phenomenon of pilgrimage—or religious vacationing—by way of a reading of one of the classics of English literature, Geoffrey Chaucer's 14th c. masterpiece, *The Canterbury Tales*. In addition to the motif of devotional journeying, we will study the different medieval social classes (knights, clerics, and peasants) and story types (chivalric romances, fabliaux or bawdy tales, saints lives) that Chaucer explores in his literary masterwork.

MLAR 7130 Love/Romance in Lit & Film (3)

In this course we will look at the portrayal of love, romance, and marriage in modern society in short stories, plays and films.

MLAR 7132 Masculinities (3)

What does it mean to be “masculine”? What effects does the concept of “masculinity” have on men, on women, and on society? Until recently, masculinity was considered “natural” for “real men.” Recently, however, traditional notions have been challenged by economic crises, social conditions, feminists, and men who do not “fit” the characteristics of “traditional” masculinity. This class takes a critical look at the concept of “masculinity,” particularly “hegemonic masculinity,” its domination of various “sub” masculinities, and its constructions in popular culture. Through readings, lectures, class discussions, and analyses of films and other cultural elements, we examine what it means to conform to and challenge “hegemonic masculinity” in the United States over the last half century or so.

MLAR 7133 Culture & Politics of Marriage (3)

Although today there are numerous ways to construct a family in America, marriage continues to be the preferred option. Nearly 100% of Americans routinely report a desire to marry at some point in their lives. Roughly 90% of them do marry at least once, and over half do it more than once. Yet soaring divorce rates point to a disconnect between what we expect marriage to be and what it actually is. As young children, we’re told that marrying our prince/princess will ensure us a happily ever after, as it did for Cinderella, and this cultural message only gets stronger as we grow up. We’re so bombarded by these assurances that we take it for granted that we must marry our prince or princess just to be happy. For this reason, we rarely stop to consider that marriage is a social institution that creates, reinforces, and reflects power and hierarchy. This is a master’s level seminar on the social institution of marriage. This course engages questions such as: What is marriage? Where does our notion of marriage come from? How does popular culture act to construct and reinforce that notion and make it part of our taken-for-granted stock of knowledge? How do our idealized notions of marriage differ from our practice of marriage? What politics are implicated in our idealized notions about marriage, and how do those politics play out in the practice of marriage? Drawing on class readings, discussions, and exercises, we engage these issues (and more) as part of the ongoing family values debate that questions whether marriage is in crisis or simply in transition. The intent of this course is to make students aware of some of the hidden forces that shape our contemporary attitudes and ongoing cultural debates about marriage and family.

MLAR 7134 History, Power and the State (3)

This course will explore the theme of power and the state through a study of films, such as “The Man for All Seasons,” “Amistad,” “Schindler’s List” or “Book Thief.” We will discuss the historical accuracy of the films, asking what they can teach us, both about the period depicted and the period in which they were made, considering in particular the way people have thought about power and the state.

MLAR 7135 Huey Long in Literature & Film (3)

This course will consider the life of Huey Pierce Long as depicted in biography and film. It will discuss and analyze three major biographical and literary works about Long: Alan Brinkley’s comparative biography *Voices of Protest: Huey Long, Father Coughlin, and the Great Depression*, Richard D. White, Jr.’s *Kingfish: The Reign of Huey P. Long*, and Robert Penn Warren’s classic political novel, *All the King’s Men*. The course will also view and analyze two films about Huey Long: Ken Burns’s documentary *Huey Long* and an Academy Award film based on Robert Penn Warren’s *All the King’s Men*. The course will also discuss and assess Long’s life in light of other writings on the history of Louisiana, the South, and nation from the 1890s through the 1930s.

MLAR 7136 Philosophy of Art (3)

This course is an examination of central philosophical questions about the nature of art. We will examine philosophers’ responses to questions such as: what is art? Does art differ from craft? Must art be beautiful? Is art universal or the same across cultures? Are there objective standards for determining the value of a piece of art? What is the relationship of aesthetic value to moral value, and what role (if any) does art play in social justice? We will also examine issues that arise in relation to particular art forms, including poetry, music, painting, dance, and theater.

MLAR 7137 Love and Death in Lit and Film (3)

In this course we analyze the representation of love and death in works of literature and cinema. We will discuss questions about the way these works reveal presumptions of gender, economic class, public and private life.

MLAR 7140 Represent of War in Lit/Film (3)

In this course we will look at the ways war has been portrayed by writers or film directors and address a number of important questions: Why do countries go to war? When, if ever, is resorting to war legitimate or necessary? What are the psychological effects of war?

MLAR 7153 The Twentieth Century (3)

Was it the most violent century or the most humane? Technologically advanced or spiritually sick? What is often called “the American Century” seems to be characterized by contradictions. What is its legacy? This course will address that question by considering important events and processes, including World War II, the Cold War, Existentialism, Colonialism, Imperialism, and Post-Colonialism.

MLAR 7155 Utopia and Dystopia (3)

This course is devoted to the depiction of utopia and dystopia in Western culture from Plato to the present. We will consider the relation between the two: Why does utopia so often turn into dystopia? What are the elements of a perfect society? Why have all attempts to create a utopian society failed, at least so far?

MLAR 7157 Witchcraft Early Modern Europe (3)

In this course students analyze the causes of the rise of witchcraft prosecution in late medieval and early modern Europe (roughly 1300-1700), while also examining recent historiographical trends in early modern witchcraft research. Topics include the relationship between gender and witchcraft, as well as the effects of social, political, and religious change on witchcraft accusations and trials.

MLAR 7160 Contemporary Culture in Lit/Film (3)

In this course we will look at problems in our contemporary culture as they have been represented in short stories, plays, and films.

MLAR 7161 Civil War New Orleans (3)

This course is a seminar which emphasizes reading, discussion, research, and writing. Despite the contentions of some historians, the Civil War had a profound impact on the people and history of New Orleans. During the late antebellum period (1840s-1850s), the city was the principal slave market in the nation. This domestic trade fueled the lower south and New Orleans' economic development. Slavery shaped the economic and social character of the south, over the years creating not only a society with slaves, but also a slave society. Despite its dominance and apparent unanimity, slavery was also a contentious and divisive institution. Slavery in New Orleans was no exception to these twin dynamics. The historical records, newspapers, acts of sales, successions, census records, and private correspondence demonstrate the centrality of slavery to New Orleans' antebellum society. On the other hand, the city's complex racial, ethnic, and sectional composition heightened political and social tensions, raising suspicions and fears about racial identity, naturalization and citizenship, and loyalty. Slavery and ethnicity shaped issues of civil liberties, criminal justice, and politics. The presidential and secession elections of 1860 and 1861 sharply divided New Orleans, as they did throughout much of the urban south. These divisions did not disappear with mobilization and civil war, but were only intensified in the hothouse of occupation, reunion, reconstruction, and, above all, loss. New Orleans suffered greatly during and after the Civil War. Thousands of men were killed or died from wounds and disease and even more were maimed physically and scared emotionally. The fighting ended, but the war continued beyond Appomattox Court House. To this day, the privileges and immunities of American citizens are intensely debated, bringing not only hope but also rancor and division, as much as they did in antebellum New Orleans and America.

MLAR 7166 Genocide as a Political Weapon (3)

This course examines the character of genocide in the modern world, from the killing of the Armenians during World War I to events in Rwanda and Bosnia. What is a genocide? Is it something different than mass murder? What lessons can we learn from the Holocaust and subsequent examples of genocide?

MLAR 7169 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7171 Introduction to the Bible (3)

This course examines the structure and content of the Bible from historical, literary, philosophic, and religious or theological perspectives.

MLAR 7193 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts. Course may be repeated unlimited times for credit.

Course Limit: 99

MLAR 7194 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7195 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7196 Special Topics (3)

Special topics in liberal arts.

MLAR 7200 Racial Formation Around the World (3)

This course is a comparative sociohistorical inquiry into the bases and mechanisms of racial domination as a "denegated form of ethnicity" anchored in culturally salient (putative) physical differences. Readings include a wide range of sociological, historical, and anthropological studies of ethno-racial vision and division, accommodation, and conflict in Latin America, Asia, Western Europe, the United States, and Africa. They are geared toward helping us uncover the social mechanisms that lead to the rise, reproduction, and transformation of ethno-racial inequality, wherever and whenever it is found. This course is problem-oriented, not group-oriented; its purpose is neither to celebrate nor to denigrate the experiences of this or that particular category but to explain and understand them in sociological terms.

MLAR 7210 Language, Power, & Identity (3)

Language is a powerful mode through which identities and social norms are created, negotiated, and transformed. This course will examine how people use language to enact different cultural, social, or linguistic identities, and how language ideologies impact the understanding and reception of those enactments. We will also explore how people's language beliefs and practices support or challenge dominant power structures and mainstream discourses. Readings will include critical theoretical perspectives on language and discourse, focusing on topics that include multilingualism, code-switching, language loss, microaggressions, and domestic and global language policies.

MLAR 7215 Asian Philosophy (3)

This course studies the major intellectual traditions of India and China, including Hindu and early Buddhist thought in India, as well as Confucian, Taoist, and later Buddhist thought in China.

MLAR 7220 Digital Cultures (3)

This course will critically explore participation in digital communities, including social networks, blogs, intellectual, political and civic collaborations, and emerging digital cultures and art forms. Through sociocultural perspectives on multimodal discourses, we will examine the relationship between technology and culture, community, identity/representation, language and power, and social activism in global digital communities.

MLAR 7240 Justice, Law & Public Policy (3)

This course will examine considerations of justice and morality that help shape law and public policy. Issues to be discussed may include: crime and punishment, drugs, gun control, treatment of enemy combatants, torture, surveillance and privacy, free speech and national security.

MLAR 7245 Medieval New Orleans (3)

By way of numerous Power Point tours of on and off campus sites and materials, as well as our reading of a popular American novel, Mark Twain's *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, this course will consider the influence of medieval culture and ideas on New Orleans and, to some extent, Southern culture in general, especially during the post-Civil War period and Reconstruction. For instance, we will discuss medieval architectural styles preserved in Tulane and other local buildings (Richardsonian Romanesque and Gothic Revival), experience medieval music by New Orleans' *Musica da Camera* (a special guest performance), and explore real medieval manuscript materials from the Tulane Rare Books Room in Jones Hall. We will also talk about medieval influences on such pre-Lenten festivals as Mardi Gras and on such regional foods as gumbo and turducken. Class will conclude with our viewing of a musical film version of *Connecticut Yankee*, which suggests how Hollywood adapted medieval experience to bring it in line with certain nineteenth-century attitudes toward the Middle Ages. Three written assignments: a midterm (essay format), short critical paper (5 typed pp.), and a final examination (on course terminology). Required Text: Mark Twain, *A Connecticut Yankee in King Arthur's Court*, ed. by MLAR Justin Kaplan (New York: Penguin, 1972).

MLAR 7247 Shakespeare (3)

What makes Shakespeare a great writer and why are some of his plays and poems judged to be greater than others in terms of their literary merits? We will take up this twofold question by way of a discussion of some of Shakespeare's "greatest hits," examples derived from each of his major literary genres.

MLAR 7250 Verbal and Visual Rhetoric (3)

This course will focus on theories and practices of verbal discourse in comparison with visual imagery and technology. While concentrating on rhetorics of western cultures, some comparison will be made with rhetorical discourse and imagery in other cultures. The course will examine topics such as the interfaces of religion and politics, mass media and persuasive campaign, or the role of values in institutional leadership and issue campaigns.

MLAR 7280 Philosophy of Religion (3)

This course examines various attempts to understand the nature and importance of religious experience and religious beliefs from a naturalistic perspective. We will discuss the ontological, epistemic, and axiological significance of claims about the nature of religious experience and religious beliefs in an attempt to situate these phenomena in a broader naturalistic understanding of the self and the world. After a consideration of the varieties of religious experience as exemplified in the work of William James, we will review arguments by Pascal Boyer and Daniel Dennett to the effect that the origin, development, and diversity of religious belief and religious experience are all phenomena that are scientifically explainable within the naturalistic frameworks of evolutionary biology and cognitive psychology.

MLAR 7400 Gender, Culture and Families (3)

Research suggests that gender and family are inseparable concepts. Family carries particular gender role expectations at both the "ideal" and the "practice" level. However, we rarely think about what family is or how gender plays into family—we simply take gendered family roles for granted. Yet where do our ideas about family and gender come from? This class will explore our perceptions of the gender-family nexus, and the changes that have occurred over the last half century or so, from the perspective of popular culture.

MLAR 7451 Religions of the World (3)

This course will examine the teachings of several major religious traditions—including Hinduism and Buddhism as well as Judaism, Christianity, and Islam—through selected readings from their sacred scriptures.

MLAR 7500 Independent Study (3)

For specific topics, see Schedule of Classes. Course may be repeated up to unlimited credit hours.

Maximum Hours: 99

MLAR 7550 Holocaust in Film & Literature (3)

This course will consider the Holocaust, the attempted genocide of European Jewry by the Nazis during World War II, and the diverse ways that the events related to it are portrayed and understood by diverse audiences. The course is divided into thematic sections that highlight the different issues motivating the authors and creators of relevant texts and films.

MLAR 7940 MLA Transfer Credit (3)

MLA Transfer Credit. Course may be repeated up to unlimited credit hours.

Maximum Hours: 99

MLAR 7950 Capstone Portfolio (3)

The Capstone Portfolio will enable students to integrate the knowledge gained from three courses in the MLA program, while participating in a reflective writing seminar. Building on a portfolio of three previously completed papers/projects, the seminar will culminate in a paper or a creative project (e .g., artwork, website, podcast, etc.) accompanied by a shorter academic narrative. Students will explore topics such as metaphor in narrative writing ; reflective and reflexive inquiry; and credibility and knowledge in reflective writing practice.

MLAR 7980 Capstone Project Seminar (3)

The Capstone Project seminar will be structured as a workshop that will support students in improving their research, writing, and critical thinking skills. A variety of writing concerns will be covered, including warranting claims, conducting library searches, writing from sources, creating a dialogue among different disciplines and scholars, interpreting and attributing sources, writing for an audience, analyzing data and methods, exploring structures of presentation, and improving clarity and style. The course will also explore the challenges and opportunities in designing interdisciplinary research projects. Students will work collaboratively to articulate their project's scope, goals, and significance ; develop a comprehensive literature review; frame the research and methods; and complete a full version of the project.

MLAR 7990 Masters Research (3)

Research in Liberal Arts

MLAR 9980 Masters Research (3)

Research in Liberal Arts Course may be repeated up to unlimited credit hours.

Maximum Hours: 99