**Freshman Humanities Requirements**

Entering freshmen are required to take two terms of freshman humanities; that is, humanities courses numbered 60 or below in the Catalog. These classes introduce students to the basic issues in the four core disciplines of English, history, philosophy and visual culture. The only exception is students whose writing needs special attention (see *Writing in Freshman Humanities*, below).

Two terms of freshman humanities are required for graduation and are prerequisites for advanced humanities courses. The two freshman humanities courses may be taken in any two terms of the freshman year. To encourage breadth, students will have to take their two freshman humanities classes in different disciplines, the disciplines being English, history, philosophy and visual culture.

Below is a list of the freshman humanities courses offered first term. Because the courses have limited enrollments (in line with our policy of keeping classes small), and because the rest of your schedule imposes constraints, it may not be possible to register for your first preference, be prepared with alternate choices when registering.

**Hum/H 2. Freedom Dreams: African American Visions of Liberation Since Emancipation.** Over the course of their history in the United States, African Americans have advanced various visions of liberation and strategies for attaining it. This course will examine how African Americans have conceptualized and sought to realize their freedom dreams since the end of chattel slavery. We will focus, in particular, on visions of freedom considered radical or utopian, both in their contemporary moment and in our present. Investigating how African Americans have imagined freer lives beyond their own localities, beyond U.S. borders, and even beyond Earth, our topics of discussion in the course may include emigration movements, black communism, pan-Africanism, black feminism, cults, Afrofuturism, hip hop culture, and abolitionism.

**Hum/H 5. The History of the Chinese Empire.** This class will explore several facets of how the concept of empire and its historical formation in China was defined, portrayed, and developed over time. It offers students a chance to reflect on the interaction of event, record, and remembrance as these components combine in the creation and contestation of history. This course will particularly emphasize how the making, writing, and remembering of history responds to the advent of different regimes of legitimacy in order to give students a new perspective on the relationship between action, authorship, and interpretation in history.

**Hum/H 10. Medieval Europe: The Problem of Violence.** This course will explore how people understood violence in Europe between ca. 500 and ca. 1400 AD. It will focus on the various norms that governed the use of violence in a period when the right of free people to carry and use weapons was considered self-evident. Working through primary sources, students will explore the relationship between violence and vengeance, the law, central authority and public order, religion, emotions, public ritual, and economics. As they go along students will consider whether violence can coexist with or even promote stable, ordered societies, or whether it by definition creates disorder.

**Hum/H 11. Love and Death: Using Demography to Study the History of Europe from 1700.** Demographic events - births, marriages, deaths - have always been highly responsive to changes in the local environment. Decisions about when to marry, how many children to have, or what kind of household to live in have always been closely correlated to decisions people take in other areas of their lives and, as a result, can tell us a great deal about the economic, social, and cultural worlds people inhabit. This course examines differences in demographic trends in Europe across space and time, from 1700 to the present, as well as existing explanations for these differences, including political economic factors, social and
cultural norms, biology and disease environments. Some topics include: the demographic effects of war, industrialization, and urbanization; changes related to the emergence of reliable contraceptive technologies; changes related to the expansion of economic opportunities for women; the effects of government policies on demographic decisions.

**Hum/H 13. Brave New Worlds: Race, Human Rights and the Age of Discovery.** This course traces the origins of modern racism and, perhaps surprisingly, of human rights advocacy itself, to a seminal moment in global history sometimes called the Age of Discovery. At this time, two small European kingdoms, Spain and Portugal, first conducted trade and conquest in Atlantic Africa, the Americas, and the Indian and Pacific Oceans, forging the world's first truly global empires. We study the legacy of racism and humanitarianism in eye-witness accounts, maps, images and other materials attesting to Spain's seminal encounters with the Americas.

**Hum/H/HPS 14. Race, Science, and Medicine in U.S. History.** This course will explore how natural philosophers and scientists have defined, used, and sometimes challenged ideas about race from the eighteenth century to today. Using a range of primary and secondary sources, we will examine how scientific ideas about race developed in concert with European imperial expansion and slavery; how these ideas were employed in legal cases, medical practice, and eugenics policies; and how activists and scholars have challenged racist practices and ideas. Finally, we will turn to the recent resurgence of racial thinking in biology and medicine in the light of the history of race and science.

**Hum/H/HPS 16. Visualizing the Heavens: Images and Instruments of Early Modern Astronomy.** In Europe during the period from 1450-1650, there were several radical "revisions" of the universe. Nicolaus Copernicus proposed a sun-centered, rather than earth-centered, cosmos. Galileo Galilei turned his telescope towards the heavens and observed the Moon, Sun, and moons of Jupiter, and the voyages of discovery led to an expansion of the known world. At the same time, the innovation of the printing press played a crucial role in disseminating information and in allowing for astronomical printed images, including celestial atlases and maps, to reach a broad audience. Paintings of the heavens during this period are also a rich source of shifting astronomical ideas. In this course, we'll trace the role that images and instruments of astronomy played in both producing and reflecting these dramatic "revisions" of the universe. We'll study astronomical models, eclipse diagrams, almanacs, and printed instruments, alongside astrolabes, telescopes, and celestial globes, to uncover how images and instruments literally produced a new "vision" of a sun-centered universe for the early modern world.

**Hum/En 20. Ancient Epic.** For over 2,000 years epic poetry was the foremost genre of literature. This most prestigious kind of poetry was also unusually competitive and self-referential. Apollonius of Rhodes imitates and alludes to Homer, Virgil imitates and revises Homer and Apollonius, Ovid and Lucan criticize Virgil's political agenda, and Milton transforms the entire epic tradition. We will consider the differing conceptions of heroism in epics such as Homer's Iliad and Odyssey, Apollonius of Rhodes' Argonautica, Virgil's Aeneid, Ovid's Metamorphoses, Lucan's Civil War, and Milton's Paradise Lost.

**Hum/En 21. Monsters and Marvels.** Marvels flourish at the boundaries of literary invention, religious belief, and scientific inquiry, challenging assumptions about natural processes and expected outcomes. From Grendel, the monstrous foe of Beowulf, to Satan, Milton's charismatic antihero, this seminar examines the uses of the marvelous in a variety of texts and genres, including Shakespearian drama, medieval romance, and early travel-writing. Readings may include Beowulf, Marie de France, Chaucer, John Mandeville, Shakespeare, Milton.

**Hum/En 24. The Scientific Imagination in English Literature.** This course considers three periods of major scientific development—the Renaissance, the nineteenth century, and the modern period— to explore the influence new ideas, discoveries, and theories had on the imagination of English writers. We will look at the early modern interplay between magic and science, Romantic and Victorian debates about evolution,
and the twentieth-century advent of modern physics as we confront consistent tropes like the mad scientist, the scientist-hero, and the problem of uncertainty. Authors covered may include Shakespeare, Marlowe, Bacon, Shelley, Darwin, Conan Doyle, Stevenson, Auden, McEwan, and Stoppard.

**Hum/En 30. Reading Animals.** In this course we will look closely at representations of nonhuman animals in literature from the nineteenth century to the present as opportunities to revisit definitions of, and the boundaries created and blurred between, the "human" and the "animal." Readings may include Darwin, Wells, Kafka, Herriman, Moore, Coetzee, Kelly, Myles, and Emezi.

**Hum/En 31. Introduction to Black Literature and Culture in the United States.** As both a celebration and remembrance of Black expressive thought, this course will serve as an introduction to Black literature and culture across several US geographic regions from the standpoint of a variety of intersectional identities and experiences. This course centers on how the artistic, cultural, and literary lives of Black people have shaped US economic, political, and social history since the eighteenth century. In addition to literary texts, this course will introduce students to several examples of cultural expression that have also become beloved touchstones in Black cultural history. Because literary works and works of cultural expression by Black people have long informed the possibilities of American artistic expression and critical thought even before the US became a nation, they provide possible blueprints for how US national life might unfold in the future. Students will learn to apply several existing contexts and methodologies for the study of Black literature and culture, propose directions for future study, and explore their own unique possibilities for deepening their relationships to this body of work.

**Hum/Pl 41. Knowledge and Reality.** The theme of this course is the scope and limitations of rational belief and knowledge. Students will examine the nature of reality, the nature of the self, the nature of knowledge, and how we learn about the natural world. Students will be introduced to these issues through selections from some of the world’s greatest philosophical works, including Descartes’s *Meditations*, Pascal’s *Pensées*, Hume’s *Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Berkeley’s *Principles of Human Knowledge*, and Kant’s *Prolegomena to any Future Metaphysics*. A variety of more contemporary readings will also be assigned.

**Hum/Pl 45. Ethics & AI.** How do we reconcile the possibilities of modern machine learning with ethical and moral demands of fairness, accountability and transparency? This course will take a case study based approach to the challenges at the interface of algorithms and human values. By exploring existing debates on algorithmic bias, explainable AI and data ownership, students will be exposed to the relevance of ethical systems of thought to modern social questions.

**Hum/VC 48. Ways of Seeing.** “The knowledge of photography is just as important as that of the alphabet,” wrote artist László Moholy-Nagy in 1928. “The illiterate of the future,” he warned, “will be the person ignorant of the use of the camera as well as the pen.” Almost a century later, this pronouncement rings as true as ever in a world so profoundly shaped not just by photography but also films, advertisements, and video games, cartoons and comics, molecular graphics and visual models. In this course we will explore how visual culture shapes our lives and daily experiences, and we will learn to find wonder in its rich details. In doing so, we will develop the visual literacy that Moholy-Nagy envisioned: essential skills in reading, analyzing, dis-cussing, and writing about visual materials and their circulation through the physical and virtual networks that structure our world.

**Hum/VC 49. Consuming Victorian Media.** Proliferating communication and entertainment media technologies in 19th-century England vexed the imagined boundaries between humans and machines while catalyzing social anxieties about aesthetics, attention, and distraction. We will explore both "old" (novels, paintings, sculptures) and "new" forms of 19th-century media (telegraphs, magic lanterns, and photography) as we analyze overly stimulating Gothic print media in Jane Austen’s *Northanger Abbey*,...
Wordsworth's contempt for popular entertainments in The Prelude, and the inversion of imperial consumption in Bram Stoker's Dracula, a novel mediated through characters' telegrams, diary entries, and phonographic recordings. Authors studied also may include: Dickens, Christina Rossetti, Doyle, Kipling, and Vernon Lee.

**Hum/VC 50. Introduction to Film.** This course examines the historical development of film as a popular art and entertainment medium from the 1880s to the present, with a focus on the American and European contexts. Students will learn how to watch a film-how to pay attention to significant visual details and to the ways films construct meaning from the language of images-and will develop the skills to write fluently about what they see. The course covers some of the most influential genres and movements from the earliest actuality films, through the French New Wave, to the Disney/Marvel Universe. Films covered may include short comedies from Charlie Chaplin and Buster Keaton, "M", "It Happened One Night", "The Seven Samurai", "The Battle of Algiers", and "Black Panther".

**Hum/VC 52. The Legacy of the Mexican School in Black and Latino Artistic Imaginaries.** Artists in the United States greatly admired the Mexican muralists and printmakers of the 20th century. Respected as much for their cultural politics as their artworks, the Mexican School attracted generations of Black and Latino artists who visited, studied and worked in Mexico. In the legends and practices of the Mexican School, American artists found models for generating self-defined cultural and artistic practices unavailable to them in the United States. This international exchange ultimately generated a transnational aesthetic tradition of resistance to Euro-American colonization. This course begins with an introduction to the major debates of Mexican printmaking and muralism; follows Mexican and U.S. artists as they travel between the respective countries throughout the first half of the 20th century; and concludes with the legacy of the Mexican School on contemporary Black and Latinx public art practices.

**Writing and Freshman Humanities**

All freshman humanities classes include a substantial writing component. Before school begins, we conduct a writing placement test to determine whether a student must successfully complete an introductory writing class before taking a freshman humanities class. Introduction to Academic Writing (Wr 2) prepares students as academic writers across disciplines. It features a lively “workshop” environment, frequent individual conferences with the instructor, and ample opportunities to develop and revise assignments in response to feedback. The 9 units of Wr 2 counts towards the 36 unit additional HSS requirement. After the completion of Wr 2, some students may be asked to complete additional Wr coursework at the discretion of our faculty.

Students who participate in the spring writing placement test in June will receive an email about their placement results in July.

Freshmen and transfer students who do not participate in the June writing assessment will write a make-up essay in September. Information about the makeup writing assessment will be provided to students via email in September.