

# The Humanities Center

The Humanities Center reflects a characteristic quality of Johns Hopkins University as an intellectual community. The coordinated study of Western civilization through its literature, art, philosophy, and history has been one of the oldest continuing concerns at Hopkins. Because it has remained by design and tradition the smallest of the major American universities and because of the interdisciplinary interests of some of its most distinguished faculty, Hopkins has fostered to a remarkable degree the free exchange between scholars and students across departmental boundaries. In addition to its programmatic concern with comparative literature, intellectual history, and feminist theory, the Humanities Center does much to coordinate such exchange, which it encourages among students and scholars at all levels of their careers.

Supplementing its regular course offerings, the center from time to time sponsors conferences, colloquia and short-term seminars on topics of special interest to its graduate students and to the intellectual community at large. The center is also responsible for publishing annually the *Comparative Literature* issue of MLN; graduate students may apply to work as editorial assistants in its production and are invited to contribute to its reviews of current publications.

A recent development has been the appointment of several distinguished scholars as associates of the Humanities Center for terms of variable length. Each associate visits the campus once a year to teach an intensive seminar open to graduate students (and in certain cases to advanced undergraduates) in the Humanities Center as well as in other departments. The associates also meet informally with interested students and faculty and in general play an active role in the intellectual life of the University.

## The Faculty

*Secondary appointments in parentheses.*

**Hent de Vries**, Professor (Philosophy): modern European thought, history and critique of metaphysics, philosophies of religion, political theories, concepts of violence, literature and temporality.

**Michael Fried**, Professor, J. R. Herbert Boone Chair in the Humanities (History of Art): modern art and literature, critical theory, modern poetry.

**Neil Hertz**, Professor Emeritus.

**Ruth Leys**, Professor (Director): history and theory of psychoanalysis, history of psychiatry and psychology, 19th- and 20th-century intellectual history, feminist theory.

**Richard A. Macksey**, Professor (The Writing Seminars; History of Science and Technology): comparative literature, critical theory, film studies.

**Paola Marrati**, Professor (Philosophy): modern and contemporary French thought, phenomenology, philosophies of life (Bergson, Dilthey, Cangvilhem, Deleuze), philosophy and cinema, aesthetics.

**Elizabeth Patton**, Visiting Assistant Professor: Renaissance and early modern literature with special emphasis on women writers.

**Nancy S. Struever**, Professor Emerita.

## Joint Appointments

*Primary appointments in parentheses.*

**Veena Das**, Eisenhower Professor (Chair): history and myth, philosophy and anthropology, violence, social suffering, medical anthropology: South Asia, Europe.

**Marcel Detienne**, Basil L. Gildersleeve Professor: Greek, social history, cultural history, mythology, anthropology and classics.

**Frances Ferguson**, Professor (English): literature, aesthetic theory, and moral/legal philosophy in the 18th and early 19th century.

**Eckart Förster**, Professor (Philosophy): metaphysics, history of philosophy, Kant and German idealism.

**Stephen G. Nichols**, James M. Beall Professor of French (Romance Languages and Literatures): medieval language, literature and culture; interrelation of literature with history, philosophy, and art history.

## Undergraduate Programs

The Humanities Centers activities for undergraduates address two different needs. For students interested in a general liberal arts preparation or in one of the University's preprofessional programs, the center provides a broad introduction to the documents and thought of Western culture. For students interested in pursuing their interests in graduate school, the center offers a fundamental preparation geared to the individual's specific talents that can be the basis for more specialized humanistic study at the graduate level. In either case, the center stresses skill in critical reading

and writing, sophistication in the use of research tools, and opportunities for supervised independent study. The coherence of each individual's program depends upon careful consultation with the faculty adviser.

### **Honors Program in Humanistic Studies**

The Honors Program offers all qualified undergraduates the possibility for pursuing an independent, often interdisciplinary, research project. Students can propose to do research in some area of intellectual or cultural history, English, foreign and comparative literatures, women's studies, film studies, anthropology, philosophy, or any other humanistic discipline. Students who wish to pursue such a program need not be humanities majors, as the program also gives majors outside the humanities a chance to broaden and combine their studies. To be eligible, a student's performance in courses taken in the humanities should be distinctly above average, and his/her proposed program should show coherence, focus, and seriousness of purpose. Candidates should apply to the Honors Board at the end of sophomore year or the beginning of junior year. Questions about the application procedure and current deadlines should be directed to Dr. Richard Macksey, 114 Gilman. Each project must be sponsored by two faculty members. Frequently, members of the Honors Board serve as advisers, and in special cases an appropriate adviser may be found outside the University.

### **Requirements for the Honors Program**

No fixed number of courses is required for completion of the program. Students usually, however, are expected to participate in the program for four semesters. The chosen advisers assist in designing a program, which generally includes humanities area (H) or other related courses and up to two tutorials or independent studies per semester (designated as honors work on the transcript). In addition, honors students are encouraged to apply for research and travel funds through the Provost's grants and the Rose Traveling Fellowship. Studies will culminate in an honors essay written in the senior year.

At the end of the senior year, the student's work is reviewed by his/her advisers. The Board of Honors Advisers, taking into account the recommendations of the advisers, must approve the honors essay as fulfilling the requirements for the B.A. honors degree. Seniors who complete the program successfully are awarded honors at the commencement ceremony and on their transcripts.

### **The B.A./M.A. Program**

Students whose work in the Honors Program in Humanistic Studies shows exceptional promise may apply at the end of junior year or the beginning of senior year for admission to candidacy for the concurrent B.A./M.A. degree. This degree requires a reading knowledge (usually at the third-year level) of one foreign language, either ancient or modern. In the case of some individual programs a second foreign language may be necessary. In the senior year, the candidate presents a thesis of criticism or research more extensive in scope and depth than that required for the honors B.A. Subject to the advisers' recommendation and the board's approval, the candidate will receive the B.A. and M.A. degrees concurrently.

### **Graduate Programs**

The center sponsors programs of study leading to the Ph.D. degree in two general fields: comparative literature and intellectual history. These programs are designed with the cooperation of the faculty in the adjacent literary and historical departments. Only a few highly qualified applicants can be admitted; the center gives priority to candidates whose proposed course of study is congruent with faculty interests and strengths.

### **Requirements for the Ph.D. Degree**

Each student works with an ad hoc committee of three faculty members who help to design a coherent, individual program of studies. During the first two years the candidate works closely with each of his or her advisers. The course of studies, seminars, and tutorials lead to three area examinations administered by the advisory committee. During the second year, qualified students are invited to teach under faculty supervision, and on occasion advanced students have been allowed to offer undergraduate seminars of their own design.

### **Program in Comparative Literature**

Normally, candidates for the Ph.D. in comparative literature should be competent in three national literatures and have a general familiarity with critical theory. Students in this program are encouraged to spend at least one year of study abroad, usually as members of groups working in Paris, Florence, Hamburg, Geneva, or Madrid in programs sponsored by the modern language departments and the Center. The university maintains the Villa Spelman in Florence as a study center, and the Departments of German and Romance Languages and Literatures have regular programs of faculty exchange.

Students in the comparative literature program can apply for a joint major with the Department of German. They become supervised teaching assistants in that department and receive a master's degree in German upon completion of the field examinations, before the doctoral degree in comparative literature. On a more ad hoc basis, similar arrangements for well-qualified candidates can generally be made with the Departments of Classics and Romance Languages and Literatures.

### **Program in Intellectual History**

The centers doctoral program also allows flexibility in the construction of a course of study

in intellectual history involving comparatist and interdisciplinary approaches. Candidates should also note related special programs at Hopkins, such as the program in political theory and the research facilities of the Institute of the History of Medicine.

### **Financial Aid**

Tuition grants, stipends, and teaching fellowships are available to doctoral candidates. Qualified students are eligible for funded internship training as editorial assistants to scholarly publications under the supervision of center faculty.

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## **Undergraduate Courses**

### **Introductory Courses**

#### **300.105 (H,W) Introduction to the Fictions of Detection**

Readings in the analytic, "hard-boiled," and postmodern versions of the detective story.

Macksey 3 credits

#### **300.116 (H,W) Forms of Comedy: Theory and Practice**

A comparative survey of comic forms in drama and narrative from classical antiquity to the present. Texts will be read with representative theoretical statements.

Macksey 3 credits

#### **300.118 (H,W) The Uses of Comedy: Theory and Practice**

A comparative study of writing and theory with special attention to the devices of satire, irony, and parody.

Macksey 3 credits

#### **300.123 (H) Film as Autobiography**

Autobiographical narratives in film, with a focus on recent women film-makers (Armstrong, Sanders, Brahm, von Trotta, et al.). Corequisite: 200.112.

Macksey 2 credits

#### **300.133 (H,W) Women of Epic Frame**

This survey of Western epic and drama examines the role of women in society via Homers Penelope, Virgils Dido, Dantes Beatrice, (and Petrarchs Laura), Miltons Eve, and the Cleopatra dear to Renaissance playwrights.

Patton 3 credits

### **Advanced Courses and Seminars**

*Courses at the 200-level are open to graduate students by permission of the instructor.*

#### **300.302 (H) Philosophy as a Way of Life: From Antiquity to Wittgenstein and Foucault**

This course will trace the historical tradition of spiritual exercises and its modern transformations as analyzed by

Pierre Hadot. Readings include Marcus Aurelius, Augustine, Ignatius of Loyola, Wittgenstein, and Foucault. de Vries 3 credits

#### **300.303 (H,W) Early Modern Women Writers I: The Renaissance**

This seminar begins with women orators of the Italian Quattrocento and then explores the poetry of European salons and social circles: Gaspara Stampa, Vittoria Colonna, Louise Lab, Les Dames des Roches, Margaret More Roper, Elizabeth I, Katherine Parr, Mary Sidney, and Elizabeth Cary.

Patton 3 credits

#### **300.304 (H) Philosophy and Cinema**

The aim of this course, devoted to the work of Gilles Deleuze and Stanley Cavell, is to analyze how cinema has displaced some traditional problems in aesthetics and ontology.

Marrati 3 credits

#### **300.306 (H,W) Early Modern Women Writers II: The 17th Century**

This seminar investigates the poetry, drama, and romance of women writers in Europe and South America: Mary Wroth, Isabella Whitney, Margaret Tyler, Aemelia Lanyer, Elizabeth Cary, Katherine Philips, Margaret Cavendish, Theresa of Avila, Maria de Medici, and Sor Juana Ins de la Cruz.

Patton 3 credits

#### **300.308 (H,W) Comic Relief: Comedy and Catharsis**

Versions of comic theory from Aristotle to Freud, Bergson, and Koestler, with an emphasis on psychological explanations of comic design and response. Illustrations will be drawn from examples in literature, film, and the graphic arts.

Macksey 3 credits

#### **300.318 (H,S,W) Madness in Culture**

An examination of the question of madness in diverse historical and cultural contexts.

Leys 3 credits

**300.330 (H) The Ghost & The Machine**

The seminar explores the modern obsession with the “ghost in the machine,” the “brain in the vat,” in view of a conception of the “spiritual automaton,” etc. Readings will include Descartes, Spinoza, Bergson, Wittgenstein, Benjamin, Ryle, Dreyfus, Putnam, and Cavell.

de Vries 3 credits

**300.331 (H,W) Marcel Proust and the Idea of the Novel**

The role of books and the metaphor of the Book in the conception of *A la recherche du temps perdu*. Proust’s novel is read in its entirety along with his own critical writings and those of a few of his critics.

Macksey 3 credits

**300.333 (H) The Dramatic Event**

An eclectic tour of theatrical spaces, forms, and texts from Athens to the present. Interpretation through performance with comparative study of dramatic and cinematic representation. Comic and tragic perspectives.

Macksey 3 credits

**300.336 (H) Classics of Art Criticism I: Diderot and Baudelaire**

In this seminar we shall read and discuss the art criticism of Denis Diderot (1713-84) and Charles Baudelaire (1821-67) in the context of the art and thought of their time. All texts to be read in translation.

Fried 3 credits

**300.339 (H,W) Narrative, Case History, and the Fictions of Detection**

The relation of case-history methods, abduction, and the rise of detective fiction—1840s to the present. Readings include exemplary medical, anthropological, and historical narratives as well as the literature of detection from several cultural perspectives.

Macksey 3 credits

**300.341 (H) Film as Case History**

Course, designed as a satellite to 200.339, will examine detection strategies in both documentary and narrative film.

Macksey 2 credits

**300.347 (H,S,W) Hysteria and Feminism**

The aim of this seminar is to analyze the history of the hysteria diagnosis as a problem for feminism.

Leys 3 credits

**300.351 (H,W) Trauma and Feminism: The Case of Multiple Personality**

This seminar addresses the following questions: Why has multiple personality become such a popular diagnosis in America? Why are the majority of cases female? What is the role of violence, especially childhood sexual abuse, in the production of multiple personality? What concepts of the female subject, trauma, and memory are at stake in the concept of multiplicity?

Leys 3 credits

**300.355 (H) Classics of Art Criticism II: Fry and Greenberg**

In this seminar we shall read and discuss the art criticism of Roger Fry (1866-1934) and Clement Greenberg (1908-1995) in the context of the art and thought of their time.

Fried 3 credits

**300.359 (H, S) The Freud Wars**

Who was Freud and why are scientists, psychiatrists, and others still warring over his ideas? An introduction to some of the basic issues and controversies in psychoanalysis.

Leys 3 credits

**300.363 (H,W) Reading Judith Shakespeare: Women Playwrights of the English Renaissance**

Virginia Woolf’s account of the thwarted career of Shakespeare’s hypothetical sister, Judith, frames our reading of English playwrights Elizabeth Cary and Mary Sidney (sister of Philip), and women poets of Renaissance England.

Patton 3 credits

**300.370 (H,S) Trauma and Testimony**

An analysis of the links between trauma and testimony in psychoanalysis, psychiatry, and the history of the Holocaust.

Leys 3 credits

**300.372 (H,S) Holocaust Testimonies**

A seminar on written, oral, cinematic, and other forms of Holocaust testimony.

Leys 3 credits

**300.377 (H) Radical Enlightenments: Spinoza’s Heretic Atheism and the Materialist Tradition**

This undergraduate course will introduce one of the major thinkers of the so-called radical Enlightenment, analyze his materialist equation of God and Nature, his conception of philosophy and intuitive knowledge, civil religion and the political order, and discuss the renewed influence of his thought in contemporary debates.

deVries 3 credits

**300.378 (H) What Can a Body Do?**

This course will explore different conceptions of the body and its biological, political, cultural, and ethical boundaries. Readings will include: Spinoza, Deleuze, Sartre, Levinas, Butler, Nancy.

Marrati 3 credits

**300.383 (H) What Makes us Desire?**

This course will analyze different philosophical and literary conceptions of desire. Readings will include: Plato, Pascal, Freud, Proust, V. Wolf, Levinas, Deleuze, and others.

Marrati 3 credits

**300.386 (H, W) The Satiric Muse**

A comparative study of satiric writing from Petronius to contemporary practitioners. Issues will include the variety of satiric genres; the uses of parody, invective, and irony; the devices of verbal and visual satire including some examples from film. (H)

Macksey 3 credits

**300.394 (H,W) Films and Fictions of Robert Bresson**

A seminar on the development of Bresson's career as filmmaker and on the fictions that he has adapted for the screen. Texts by Diderot, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bernanos, and Bresson's own critical writings (*Notes sur le Cinématographe*). Some considerations of an ancestor (Dreyer) and a successor (Godard).

Macksey 3 credits

**300.501 Independent Study in Humanities (Tutorial)**

Staff

**300.502 Independent Study Comparative Literature**

Staff

**300.503-504 Individual Honors Work Juniors**

Open only to students in the Humanistic Studies Honors Program.

Macksey

**300.505-506 Individual Honors Work Seniors**

Open only to students in the Humanistic Studies Honors Program.

Macksey

**300.507 (H) Honors Seminar**

A workshop on Honors projects in progress and their relation to methods in humanistic studies. Open only to those admitted to the Honors Program.

Macksey 1 credit

**300.508 (H,W) Honors Seminar: Methods and Motives**

Open only to students admitted to the Honors Program in Humanistic Studies.

Macksey 1 credit

**300.526 Editorial Internship**

Students with a serious commitment to critical journalism in arts and letters may contract a supervised internship with one of the university publications, the JHU Press, or cooperating sponsors in the community (newspapers, magazines, TV stations). Admission by interview. Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory.

Macksey 3 credits

## Graduate Courses

**300.600 Instances: On Living Here and Now**

The seminar is devoted to different historical examples and contemporary formalizations of the privileged, fulfilled, yet fleeting moment (the instant, presence, *kairos*, *Augenblick*, *durée*, *Jetztzeit*). Readings will include Bergson, Bachelard, Heidegger, Badiou, and Hadot.

de Vries

**300.602 Theory, Painting, Vision**

Readings in theoretically interesting texts on painting, photography, vision, the visual arts. Authors studied include Merleau-Ponty, Barthes, Derrida, Cavell, Benjamin, Wittgenstein, and Marin.

Fried

**300.607 Topics in the History and Theory of Psychoanalysis**

A consideration of historical and theoretical issues in the development of psychoanalysis. The focus of the seminar will vary from year to year. The central emphasis is always likely to be Freud, but readings will also include such gures as Ferenczi, Lacan, Derrida, Laplanche, Kristeva, Abraham, Torok, and others.

Leys

**300.609 Rhetoric of Fiction**

Macksey

**300.611 Identification/Disidentification**

The concepts and politics of identification and disidentification in psychoanalytic, feminist, queer, and postcolonial theories of identity. Texts by Butler, Bhabha, Borch-Jacobsen, Fanon, Ferenczi, Freud, Sedgwick, and others.

Leys

**300.612 (H) Concepts of Life**

The aim of this seminar is to analyze the renewed primacy of the concept of life in contemporary French philosophy and to retrace some of its different genealogies.

Marrati

**300.614 (H) The Levinas Effect**

This seminar will address some of the major writings and concepts of Levinas as well as his critical role as a touchstone and a dividing line in the formation and intellectual demarcation of a wide variety of 20th-century and contemporary philosophical projects (phenomenology, deconstruction, pragmatism, post-analytic philosophy, feminism, political theory, etc.). In addition to Levinas central texts, we will read and discuss different attempts to come to terms with his oeuvre. Readings will include Bataille, Blanchot, Derrida, Lyotard, Ricoeur, Irigaray, Henry, Marion, Badiou, Nancy, Putman, Cavell, Habermas, Honneth, Benhabib, Butler.

de Vries

**300.616 Readings in Classic and Contemporary Film Theory**

From early French, German, and Russian theorists to recent discussions of cinematic representation, medium, syntax, style, semiotics, and sociology.

Macksey

**300.617 Violence and Representation**

An examination of problems of trauma, repetition, witnessing, and memory in psychoanalysis and the history of the Holocaust. Texts by Freud, Derrida, Borch-Jacobsen, Blanchot, Felman, Caruth, Yerushalmi, LaCapra, Friedlander, Vidal-Naquet, and others.

Leys

**300.619 Trauma Theory Now**

A discussion of current debates about trauma, testimony, memory, and representation after Auschwitz. Texts by Freud, Derrida, Felman, Caruth, LaCapra, Žižek, and others. Films by Resnais (*Hiroshima mon amour*) and Lanzmann (*Shoah*).

Leys

**300.625 Theories of Representation**

A number of texts by major 18th-century theorists will be read and discussed. Authors will include Shaftesbury, Dubos, Addison, Hume, Grimm, Winckelmann, Diderot, Lessing, Rousseau, Burke, Reynolds, and Kant. Fried

**300.629 Madness after Foucault**

Selections of Foucault's texts on psychiatry and psychoanalysis will be read with and against commentaries by historians (e.g., Goldstein, Micale, Lunbeck, Toews), philosophers (e.g., Derrida, Deleuze), feminist critics (e.g., Butler), and others. Leys

**300.640 Ironic Narrative: Theories and Practices**

Romantic, modern, and postmodern concepts of irony; verbal and situational instances; perpetual parabasis and the limits of communication. Macksey

**300.652 Versions of Narrative Voice: Readings in Short Fiction**

The rise of the modern Recit and the narrative fragment; parables and fables; Kafka, Bataille, Beckett, and Blanchot. Macksey

**300.653 Mimesis: Critical Foundations**

Plato, Aristotle, and Longinus read in the light of contemporary critical debates about representation. Macksey

**300.655 Graduate General Seminar in Poetry and Politics**

Topics to be determined. Fried, Grossman

**300.656 The Event and the Ordinary. On the Philosophy of Deleuze and Cavell.**

This seminar aims at discussing a set of issues shared by Cavell and Deleuze: the meaning of the ordinary and the event, the question of immanence, belief, and moral perfectionism. Marrati

**300.659 The Idea of the Novel**

Questions of text, temporality, authorship, and audience in narrative contexts. Macksey

**300.665 Versions of the Elegy: The Poetry of Mortality**

Elegiac tradition from the Romantics to their 20th-century inheritors. Utility and limits of genre criticism and historic periodization. Critical readings consider recent approaches to the tension between loss and mourning, and the human needs to which this poetry responds. Macksey

**300.677 Transcendence and Imminence: Theodor W. Adorno and Gilles Deleuze**

Seminar will consist in a systematic confrontation of two important concepts in two influential 20th century thinkers by way of a close reading of their two major works: Adorno's *Negative Dialectics* and Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*. Central topics of discussion will be: transcendence and immanence, the concept of the concept and the task of philosophy, difference and dialectics, materialism and empiricism. deVries/Marrati

**300.683 The Philosophy of Neurosciences of Emotions**

Topics include: The role of meaning and intention in the emotions; the nature of the intentional object; Darwinian approaches to the emotions; natural kinds and the emotions; and recent neurological approaches to the emotions. Staff

**300.800 Independent Study**

Staff

**300.801 Independent Study: Field Exams**

Staff

**300.803-804 Dissertation Research**

Discussion of dissertations in progress. Limited to students writing dissertations. Staff

**300.805 Literary Pedagogy**

Staff