FUNDAMENTALS: ISSUES AND TEXTS

Department Website: http://fundamentals.uchicago.edu

ABOUT FUNDAMENTALS

The Fundamentals program enables students to concentrate on fundamental questions by reading classic texts that articulate and speak to these questions. It seeks to foster precise and thoughtful pursuit of basic questions by means of (1) rigorous training in the interpretation of important texts, supported by (2) extensive training in at least one foreign language, and by (3) the acquisition of the knowledge, approaches, and skills of conventional disciplines: historical, religious, literary, scientific, political, and philosophical.

RATIONALE

A richly informed question or concern formulated by each student guides the reading of texts. Classic texts are also informed by such questions; for example, Socrates asks: What is virtue? What is the good? What is justice? Aristotle and Cicero explore the relation of civic friendship to society. Freud asks: What is happiness? Can humans be happy? Milton investigates how poetic vocation may be related to political responsibility.

Students who are engaged by these questions and others like them, and who find them both basic and urgent, may wish to continue to explore them more thoroughly and deeply within the structure of the program which provides the wherewithal to address them on a high level.

That wherewithal is to be found in the fundamental or classic texts (historical, religious, literary, scientific, political, and philosophical) in which the great writers articulate and examine questions in different and competing ways. These books illuminate the persisting questions and speak to contemporary concerns because they are both the originators and exacting critics of our current opinions. These texts serve as colleagues who challenge us to think that something else might actually be the case than what we already think. The most important questions may, at bottom, be the most contested, and those most susceptible to, and most requiring, sustained, probing engagement.

This program emphasizes the firsthand experience and knowledge of major texts, read and reread and reread again. Because they are difficult and complex, only a small number of such works can be studied. Yet the program proposes that intensively studying a profound work and incorporating it into one's thought and imagination prepares one for reading any important book or reflecting on any important issue. Read rapidly, such books are merely assimilated into preexisting experience and opinions; read intensively, they can transform and deepen experience and thought.

Studying fundamental texts is, by itself, not enough. Even to understand the texts themselves, supporting studies and training are necessary: a solid foundation in at least one foreign language and in disciplines and subject matters pertinent to the main questions of students are essential parts of the major. Students benefit from knowledge of the historical contexts out of which certain problems emerged or in which authors wrote; knowledge of specific subject matters and methods; knowledge of the language in which a text was originally written, as well as an understanding of the shape a given language imparts to a given author; fundamental skills of analysis, gathering evidence, reasoning, and criticism; different approaches and perspectives of conventional disciplines. All these are integral parts of the educational task.

INDIVIDUAL PROGRAM DESIGN

Genuine questions cannot be assigned to a student; they must arise from within. For this reason, a set curriculum is not imposed upon students. Each student's course of study must answer to his or her interests and concerns, and must begin from a distinctive concern. One student may be exercised about questions of science and religion; another about freedom and determinism; another about friendship and conversation; another by prudence, romance, and marriage; a fifth about distributive justice. Through close work with a suitably chosen faculty adviser, a student determines texts, text and author courses, and supporting courses as appropriate to address the student’s Fundamentals question. Beginning with a student’s questions and interests does not, however, imply an absence of standards or rigor; this program is most demanding.

ACTIVITIES OF GRADUATES

The Fundamentals program serves the purposes of liberal education, regarded as an end in itself, and offers no specific pre-professional training; yet Fundamentals graduates have successfully prepared for careers in the professions and in scholarship. Some are now pursuing work in law, medicine, journalism, ministry, government service, business, veterinary medicine, and secondary school teaching. Others have gone on to graduate schools in numerous fields, including classics, English, comparative literature, Slavic, history, philosophy, social thought, theology, religious studies, clinical psychology, political science, development economics, mathematics, film studies, and education.

FACULTY

The faculty of the Fundamentals program comprises humanists and social scientists, representing interests and competencies in both the East and the West and scholarship in matters ancient and modern. This diversity and pluralism exists within a common agreement about the primacy of fundamental questions and the centrality of important books and reading them well. The intention is for the students to see and work with a variety of
schrers presenting their approaches to and understanding of books that they love, that they know well, and that are central to their ongoing concerns.

APPLICATION TO THE PROGRAM

Students should apply in Spring Quarter of their first year to enter the program in their second year; the goals and requirements of the program are best met if students spend three years in the major. Students are interviewed and counseled in order to discover whether or not their interests and intellectual commitments would be best served by this program. Admissions are decided on the basis of the application statement, interviews, and previous academic performance.

PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

The Fundamentals program comprises (a) 13 courses, (b) the Junior Paper, and (c) the Senior Exam, for a total of 1500 units.

A. Course Work

Gateway Course (1 course) (Autumn Quarter or Winter Quarter): This course is specifically designed for the incoming cohort of Fundamentals students and is a mandatory part of the program. It is devoted to the close reading of one or two texts or the works of a single author, chosen because they raise challenging questions and present important and competing answers. Through this course, students will study a variety of ways in which a text can respond to their concerns and can compel consideration of its own questions.

1. Text/Author Courses (7 courses). The seven Text/Author courses are devoted to the study of one or two particular texts or the work of a particular author. Text/Author courses are generally cross-listed as FNDL courses in Class Search (http://registrar.uchicago.edu/classes/); if a relevant course is not cross-listed, the student should contact the coordinator to see if it can be counted towards the major. In years when the Gateway Course is offered in Autumn Quarter, entering students are required to take at least one Text/Author course in Winter Quarter; in years when the Gateway Course is offered in Winter Quarter, entering students are expected to take at least one Text/Author course in Autumn Quarter.

The Text/Author Courses and the Gateway Course—eight courses total—give each student the opportunity to develop a list of six texts that will become the basis of his or her Senior Exam (see below). This list should contain works in the area of the student’s primary interest that examine that interest from diverse perspectives. One of the six must be studied in an original language other than English, the same language in which the student establishes competency (any exceptions must be approved by the chair).

2. Supporting Courses (4 courses). These are courses that complement the student’s program, providing historical context, theoretical and methodological training, or other complements. They do not have to be listed as FNDL to satisfy this requirement, but they must be explicitly identified as supporting courses in consultation with the student’s adviser.

3. Foreign Language (1 course). Students in the program are expected to achieve a level of proficiency in a foreign language sufficient to enable them to study in the original language (other than English) one of the texts on their examination list. Such training ordinarily requires two years of formal language instruction or its equivalent. The third quarter of the second year of the language is counted toward the major. In addition, students are required to take a course where they study a text in that language; the instructor of the course may be asked to provide an evaluation of the student’s linguistic proficiency on the basis of this work. Students and instructors should work closely together in determining how the student will demonstrate competency in the language. As the achievement of proficiency may differ vis-à-vis length of study from language to language, it may prove harder for students of some languages to read a text in its entirety even after completing two years of instruction. Any students who believe that their language is so difficult that doing so is unrealistic may petition to have the requirement met by reading a clearly marked-out portion of the text—perhaps a chapter or two, or series of smaller sections. To be considered, the petition must set out a clear plan and must be signed by the instructor of the text in question.

B. The Junior Paper

In the Winter or Spring Quarter of their junior year, students write an extended essay called the Junior Paper. This project provides the opportunity for students to originate and formulate a serious inquiry into an important issue arising out of their work and to pursue the inquiry extensively and in depth in a paper of about twenty to twenty-five pages (roughly 8,000 to 10,000 words). At every stage in the preparation of the paper, students work closely with their Fundamentals faculty adviser. Students register in the independent study course FNDL29901 in the quarter in which they write the paper; they are also expected to participate in the Junior Paper Colloquium that takes place in the Winter Quarter. Acceptance of a successful Junior Paper is a prerequisite for admission to the senior year of the program.

C. The Senior Examination

At the end of Week Six in the Spring Quarter of their senior year, students are examined on six texts they have studied in the context of their Text/Author courses and approved independent study courses. Preparation for this examination allows students to review and integrate their full course of study. During a three-day period, students write two substantial essays on questions designed for them by the associated faculty. The examination
has a pedagogical intention, more than a qualifying one; its purpose is to allow students to demonstrate how
they have related and integrated their questions, texts, and disciplinary studies. To take the examination,
students register in FNDL 29902 in the Spring Quarter (or, with the consent of the chair, in the Autumn or Winter
Quarters if there are scheduling issues).

**SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>Units</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Gateway Course</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seven Text/Author Courses</td>
<td>700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Four Supporting Courses</td>
<td>400</td>
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<tr>
<td>Third quarter of second-year foreign language</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNDL 29901 Independent Study: Junior Paper</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FNDL 29902 Independent Study: Senior Examination</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total Units</td>
<td>1500</td>
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* or credit for the equivalent, determined by petition

**GRADING, ADVISING, AND HONORS**

**Grading.** The Junior Paper and Senior Examination (FNDL 29901 and FNDL 29902) are graded Pass/Fail; all
other courses within the major must be taken for quality grades. Independent study courses must include a term paper, and students should be prepared to request statements of reference or evaluation from faculty with whom they have worked in this capacity.

**Advising.** Each student has a faculty adviser who is assigned to the student on the basis of their mutual interests and areas of expertise. The adviser closely monitors the student’s choice of texts, courses, and language studies, allowing for the gradual development of a fitting and coherent program. The faculty adviser may also oversee the student’s Junior Paper and is responsible for approving the final list of texts for the Senior Exam. In addition, the program coordinator is available for advice and consultation on all aspects of the program.

**Honors.** Honors are awarded by the Fundamentals faculty to students who have performed with distinction in the program. An overall GPA of 3.5 is necessary to be considered for honors, and special attention is paid to both the Junior Paper and the Senior Exam.

**ACADEMIC YEAR 2020–21 COURSES**

**Gateway Course (required for all incoming Fundamentals majors)**

**FNDL 21408. Vico’s New Science. 100 Units.**

This course offers a close reading of Giambattista Vico’s masterpiece, New Science (1744)-a work that sets out to refute ‘all opinions hitherto held about the principles of humanity.’ Vico, who is acknowledged as the most resolute scourge of any form of rationalism, breathed new life into rhetoric, imagination, poetry, metaphor, history, and philology in order to promote in his readers that originary ‘wonder’ and ‘pathos’ which sets human beings on the search for truth. However, Vico argues, the truths that are most available and interesting to us are the ones humanity ‘authored’ by means of its culture and history-creating activities. For this reason the study of myth and folklore as well as archeology, anthropology, and ethnology must all play a role in the rediscovery of man. The New Science builds an ‘alternative philosophy’ for a new age and reads like a ‘novel of formation’ recounting the (hi)story of the entire human race and our divine ancestors. In Vico, a prophetic spirit, one recognizes the fulfillment of the Renaissance, the spokesperson of a particular Enlightenment, the precursor of the Kantian revolution, and the forerunner of the philosophy of history (Herder, Hegel, and Marx). The New Science remained a strong source of inspiration in the twentieth century (Cassirer, Gadamer, Berlin, Joyce, Beckett, etc.) and may prove relevant in disclosing our own responsibilities in postmodernity.

Instructor(s): R. Rubini
Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 32900, CMLT 22501, CMLT 32501, ITAL 22900

**Independent Study (for registering for the Junior Paper and Senior Examination)**

**FNDL 29901. Independent Study: Junior Paper. 100 Units.**

Students who are on campus will be required to attend a series of colloquium meetings in Winter Quarter, but should enroll in the quarter that they will write the Junior Paper. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Must be taken for P/F grading.

Terms Offered: Autumn, Winter, Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open only to Fundamentals students with consent of faculty supervisor and program chair.
FNDL 29902. Independent Study: Senior Examination. 100 Units.
Students should expect to register for this independent study in the Spring of their final year, the quarter in which they will take their Senior Exam. Exceptions to this can only be made with the consent of the program chair. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Must be taken for P/F grading.
Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open only to Fundamentals students with consent of faculty supervisor and program chair.

AUTUMN QUARTER COURSES

FNDL 21404. Shakespeare II: Tragedies and Romances. 100 Units.
This course explores mainly major plays representing the genres of tragedy and romance; most (but not all) date from the latter half of Shakespeare’s career. After having examined how Shakespeare develops and deepens the conventions of tragedy in Hamlet, Othello, Macbeth, King Lear, and Antony and Cleopatra, we will turn our attention to how he complicates and even subverts these conventions in The Winter’s Tale and The Tempest. Throughout, we will treat the plays as literary texts, performance prompts, and historical documents. Section attendance is required. This course is part of the College Course Cluster, The Renaissance. (Pre-1650, Drama)
Instructor(s): Timothy Harrison
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 16600, TAPS 28406

FNDL 22001. Foucault and The History of Sexuality. 100 Units.
This course centers on a close reading of the first volume of Michel Foucault’s ‘The History of Sexuality’, with some attention to his writings on the history of ancient conceptualizations of sex. How should a history of sexuality take into account scientific theories, social relations of power, and different experiences of the self? We discuss the contrasting descriptions and conceptions of sexual behavior before and after the emergence of a science of sexuality. Other writers influenced by and critical of Foucault are also discussed.
Instructor(s): A. Davidson
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): One prior philosophy course is strongly recommended.
Equivalent Course(s): HIPS 24300, CMLT 25001, KNOW 27002, PHIL 24800, GNSE 23100

FNDL 22200. Marx’s Capital, Volume I. 100 Units.
We will study the first volume of Karl Marx’s Capital, attempting to understand the book on its own terms and with minimal reference to secondary literature. (A) (I)
Instructor(s): A. Ford
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 32220, PHIL 22220

FNDL 24003. Kieslowski: The Decalogue. 100 Units.
In this class, we study the monumental series ‘The Decalogue’ by one of the most influential filmmakers from Poland, Krzysztof Kieślowski. Without mechanically relating the films to the Ten Commandments, Kieślowski explores the relevance of the biblical moral rules to the state of modern man forced to make ethical choices. Each part of the series contests the absolutism of moral axioms through narrative twists and reversals in a wide, universalized sphere. An analysis of the films will be accompanied by readings from Kieślowski’s own writings and interviews, including criticism by Zizek, Insdorf, and others.
Instructor(s): Bozena Shallcross
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 26705, REES 27026, REES 37026, CMST 36705

FNDL 24106. Readings in Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed. 100 Units.
A careful study of select passages in Maimonides’ Guide of the Perplexed, focusing on the method of the work and its major philosophical-theological themes, including: divine attributes, creation vs. eternity, prophecy, the problem of evil and divine providence, law and ethics, the final aim of human existence.
Instructor(s): James Robinson
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 45400, HREL 45401, JWSC 21107, HIJD 45400, MDVL 25400, RLVC 45400, RLST 21107, NEHC 40470

FNDL 24500. The Ethics of War: Reading Michael Walzer’s Just and Unjust Wars. 100 Units.
Questions about war, the taking of human life, the obligations of citizenship, the role of state power, and international justice are among the most pressing topics in ethics and political life. This class will examine these matters through a close reading of Michael Walzer’s Just and Unjust Wars: A Moral Argument with Historical Illustrations, first published in 1977 and now in its 5th edition. Widely considered a classic in the ethics of war, JUW develops a theory for evaluating whether to enter war as well as decisions within war—what are known as the jus ad bellum and the jus in bello. Walzer applies his theory to a number of actual cases, ranging from military interventions to reprisals to terrorism to insurgencies to nuclear policy, all informed by the history of warfare and arguments in the history of Western thought. We will critically examine Walzer’s theory, his use of cases, and the conclusions to which his arguments lead. Along the way, we’ll examine core ideas in political morality, e.g., human rights; state sovereignty; morality, necessity, and extremity; liability and punishment, nonviolence, and killing and murder.
Instructor(s): Richard B. Miller
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 24110
FNDL 24920. Primo Levi. 100 Units.

Witness, novelist, essayist, translator, linguist, chemist, and even entomologist. Primo Levi is a polyhedral author, and this course revisits his work in all its facets. We will privilege the most hybrid of his texts: The Search for Roots, an anthology that collects the author’s favorite readings—a book assembled through the books of the others, but which represents Levi’s most authentic portrait. By using this work as an entry point into Levi’s universe, we will later explore his other texts, addressing issues such as the unsettling relationship between survival and testimony, the ‘sinful’ choice of fiction, the oblique path towards autobiography, and the paradoxes of witnessing by proxy.

Instructor(s): M. Mariani
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Open to advanced undergrads with consent of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 24920, JWSC 24920, ITAL 34920

FNDL 25200. Early Daoist Texts. 100 Units.

In this course, we will focus primarily on reading (in English) the Laozi and Zhuangzi, paying attention both to philosophical and historical issues. We’ll also read several ancillary texts, such as the ‘Nei ye’ chapter of the Guanzi and the ‘Yu Lao’ and Jie Lao’ chapter of the Han Feizi, as well as such unearthed manuscripts as the Tai Yi sheng shui and Heng xian. In all cases, we will be concerned first of all with what these texts may have meant to people in the Warring States period, and then only incidentally with how they have been understood in subsequent periods and places.

Instructor(s): E. Shaughnessy
Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): EALC 25200

FNDL 25721. Literature as Self Help: The Poetry of Rainer Maria Rilke. 100 Units.

Rainer Maria Rilke’s writing is famous for its lyrical intensity. The pathos of his poetic language appears to ‘move’ and ‘touch’ readers in an unparalleled way. Soldiers going to fight in the Second World War carried volumes of Rilke’s poetry in their knapsacks and letters of fallen soldiers contained quotes from his verse (‘Who talks of victory? To endure is all.’). Recent editions of his writings, such as Rilke on Love and Other Difficulties(1994), Rilke for the Stressed(1998) or Words of Consolation(2017), attest to Rilke being viewed as someone from whom readers expect insight into the value or vanity of life. In this course, we will read selections of Rilke’s poetry and correspondence alongside excerpts from his writings on art to critically examine his language’s purported ability to express our innermost feelings and to offer solace. Along the way, we will also pay attention to situating his work in the context of ‘modernism.’ Other readings by: Paul de Man ‘Tropes (Rilke),’ Rita Felski ‘Uses of Literature,’ Beth Blum ‘Self-Help Compulsion: Searching for Advice in Modern Literature,’ among others. Readings and discussions in English. Those who read German will read the texts in the original.

Instructor(s): Margareta Ingrid Christian
Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 35721, GRMN 25721

FNDL 25802. Philosophical Petrarchism. 100 Units.

This course is a close reading of Petrarch’s Latin corpus. Readings include the Coronation Oration, The Secret, and selections from Remedies for Fortune Fair and Foul, On Illustrious Men, On Religious Leisure, and The Life of Solitude. Special attention is devoted to Petrarch’s letter collections (Letters on Familiar Matters, Letters of Old Age, Book without a Name, etc.) and his invectives. The aim of the course is to familiarize the student with the new and complete Petrarch that emerged in 2004 on the occasion of the 700th anniversary of his birth. Discussion will focus on Petrarch’s self-consciousness as the ‘father of humanism,’ his relationship to Dante, autobiographism, dialogical inquiry, anti-scholasticism, patriotism, and Petrarch’s ‘civic’ reception in the Quattrocento as well as on a comparative evaluation of the nineteenth-century Petrarchs of Alfred Mézières, Georg Voigt, and Francesco De Sanctis.

Instructor(s): R. Rubini
Terms Offered: Autumn
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 36002, MDVL 26002, ITAL 26002

FNDL 25910. Racine. 100 Units.

Racine’s tragedies are often considered the culminating achievement of French classicism. Most famous for his powerful re-imaginings of Greek myth (Phèdre, Andromaque), his tragic universe nevertheless ranged considerably wider, from ancient Jewish queens to a contemporary Ottoman harem. We will consider the roots (from Euripides to Corneille) of his theatrical practice as well as its immense influence on future writers (from Voltaire to Proust, Beckett, and Genet).

Instructor(s): L. Norman
Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): At least one French literature course, 21700 or higher.
Note(s): Course taught in French; all work in French for students seeking FREN credit; written work may be in English for those taking course for TAPS or FNDL credit.
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28476, FREN 35910, FREN 25910, TAPS 35910
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FNDL 27301. Weimar Political Theology: Schmitt and Strauss. 100 Units.
This course is devoted to the idea of ‘political theology’ that developed during the interwar period in twentieth-century Central Europe, specifically Germany’s Weimar Republic. The course’s agenda is set by Carl Schmitt, who claimed that both serious intellectual endeavors and political authority require extra-rational and transcendent foundations. Along with Schmitt’s works from the period, such as Political Theology and the Concept of the Political, we read and discuss the related writings of perhaps his greatest interlocutor, Leo Strauss.
Instructor(s): J. McCormick Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Consent of instructor.
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 37301, PLSC 27301

WINTER QUARTER COURSES

FNDL 21403. Shakespeare I: Histories and Comedies. 100 Units.
An exploration of some of Shakespeare’s major plays from the first half of his professional career when the genres in which he primarily worked were comedies and (English) histories. Plays to be studied include The Comedy of Errors, The Taming of the Shrew, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Twelfth Night, Richard III, Richard II, Henry IV Parts 1 and 2, and Henry V. A shorter and a longer paper will be required. (Pre-1650, Drama)
Instructor(s): Ellen MacKay Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): general education requirement in the humanities
Equivalent Course(s): TAPS 28405, ENGL 16500

FNDL 21820. Italo Calvino: the Dark Side. 100 Units.
An intense reading of Italo Calvino’s later works: We will contemplate the orbital debris of Cosmicomics and t zero, and we will follow the labyrinthine threads of The Castle of Crossed Destinies and Invisible Cities. After stumbling upon the suspended multiple beginnings of If on a winter’s night a traveler, we will probe the possibilities of literature with the essays collected in Una pietra sopra. Finally, we will encounter Mr. Palomar, who will provide us with a set of instructions on how to neutralize the self and ‘learn how to be dead.’ The approach will be both philosophical and historical, focusing on Calvino’s ambiguous fascination with science, his critique of the aporias of reason and the ‘dementia’ of the intellectual, and his engagement with the nuclear threat of total annihilation.
Instructor(s): M. Mariani Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taught in Italian.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 31820, ITAL 21820

FNDL 22010. The Cinema of Miloš Forman. 100 Units.
The films of Miloš Forman (1932-2018) reflect the turbulence of the 1960s, ’70s, ’80s and ’90s, and 2000s by focusing on the underdog, the pariah, the eccentric. The subject matter to which Forman was drawn translated into his cinema with a signature bittersweet tone, emphatic narrative cogency, and lush spontaneity. This course is an intensive study of Forman’s work from his ‘New Wave’ work in Czechoslovakia (Loves of a Blonde, The Fireman’s Ball) to his U.S. studio successes (One Flew Over the Cuckoo’s Nest, Amadeus), to his idiosyncratic and parabolic last films (Man on the Moon, Goya’s Ghosts). Among other topics, the course contemplate the value of a dark sense of humor, cinematic gorgeousness, and artistic dissidence.
Instructor(s): Malynne Sternstein Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): REES 22010, CMST 26603, REES 32010, CMST 36603

FNDL 22417. Greek Comedy. 100 Units.
We will read in Greek Menander’s Dyskolos, with an eye to understanding ‘New Comedy’ and its robust afterlife in Renaissance Europe and modern sitcoms. We will also devote some time to reading and assessing fragments from Menander’s contemporaries. Coursework will include translation as well as secondary readings.
Instructor(s): Sofia Torallas Tovar Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): GREK 20300
Equivalent Course(s): GREK 22417, GREK 32417

FNDL 26510. The Films of Alfred Hitchcock. 100 Units.
This course focuses on the films of Alfred Hitchcock, one of the greatest filmmakers of the 20th century. We study both his films and a variety of approaches to them. We investigate the enduring power of his movies; his contributions to genre and popular cinema; his storytelling techniques; his stylistic command; his approach to romance, suspense, and action; his status as a master and auteur; and his remarkable control over the audience’s thoughts and feelings.
Instructor(s): Maria Belodubrovskaya Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 36500, CMST 26500, ARTH 28405, ARTH 38405
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FNDL 27200. Dante’s Divine Comedy 1: Inferno. 100 Units.
This is the first part of a sequence focusing on Dante’s masterpiece. We examine Dante’s Inferno in its cultural (i.e., historical, artistic, philosophical, sociopolitical) context. In particular, we study Dante’s poem alongside other crucial Latin and vernacular texts of his age. They include selections from the Bible, Virgil’s Aeneid, Augustine’s Confessions, Ovid’s Metamorphoses, and the stilnovist and Siculo-Tuscan poets. Political turmoil, economic transformation, changing philosophical and theological paradigms, and social and religious conflict all converge in the making of the Inferno.
Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 31900, ITAL 21900, MDVL 21900

FNDL 27716. Exemplary Leaders: Livy, Plutarch, and Machiavelli. 100 Units.
Cicero famously called history the ‘schoolmistress of life.’ This course explores how ancient and early modern authors—in particular, Livy, Plutarch, and Machiavelli—used the lives and actions of great individuals from the Greek and Roman past to establish models of political behavior for their own day and for posterity. Such figures include Solon, Lycurgus, Alexander, Romulus, Brutus, Camillus, Fabius Maximus, Scipio Africanus, Julius Caesar, and Augustus. We will consider how their actions are submitted to praise or blame, presented as examples for imitation or avoidance, and examine how the comparisons and contrasts established among the different historical individuals allow new models and norms to emerge. No one figure can provide a definitive model. Illustrious individuals help define values even when we mere mortals cannot aspire to reach their level of virtue or depravity. Course open to undergraduates and graduate students. Readings will be in English. Students wishing to read Latin, Greek, or Italian will receive support from the professors.
Instructor(s): J. McCormick, M. Lowrie Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): PLSC 27703, CLCV 27716, PLSC 47703, CLAS 37716

FNDL 27950. The Declaration of Independence. 100 Units.
This course explores important intellectual, political, philosophical, legal, economic, social, and religious contexts for the Declaration of Independence. We begin with a consideration of the English Revolution, investigating the texts of the Declaration of Rights of 1689 and Locke’s Second Treatise and their meanings to American revolutionaries. We then consider imperial debates over taxation in the 1760s and 1770s, returning Benjamin Franklin’s Autobiography to its original context. Reading Paine’s Common Sense and the letters of Abigail Adams and John Adams we look at the multiple meanings of independence. We study Jefferson’s drafting process, read the Declaration over the shoulders of people on both sides of the Atlantic, and consider clues to contemporary meanings beyond the intentions of Congress. Finally, we briefly engage the post-revolutionary history of the place and meaning of the Declaration in American life. (1650-1830, 1830-1940) This is a 2018-19 College Signature Course.
Instructor(s): Eric Slauder Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): This was a 2018–19 College Signature Course.
Equivalent Course(s): LLSO 27950, HMRT 17950, ENGL 17950, HIST 17604, SIGN 26039

FNDL 28202. Introduction to the New Testament: Texts and Contexts. 100 Units.
An immersion in the texts of the New Testament with the following goals: 1. through careful reading to come to know well some representative pieces of this literature; 2. to gain useful knowledge of the historical, geographical, social, religious, cultural and political contexts of these texts and the events they relate; 3. to learn the major literary genres represented in the canon (‘gospels,’ ‘acts,’ ‘letters,’ and ‘apocalypses’) and strategies for reading them; 4. to comprehend the various theological visions and cultural worldviews to which these texts give expression; 5. to situate oneself and one’s prevailing questions about this material in the history of research, and to reflect on the goals and methods of interpretation; 6. to raise questions for further study.
Instructor(s): Margaret Mitchell Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Interest in this literature, and willingness to enter into conversation with like-minded and non-like-minded others on the texts and the issues involved in their interpretation.
Note(s): This course counts as a Gateway course for RLST majors/minors.
Equivalent Course(s): MDVL 12500, RLST 12000, BIBL 32500

Spring Quarter Courses

FNDL 20905. Walter Benjamin: 1935-1938. 100 Units.
[Volume 3 of] Harvard’s majestic annotated edition of the essays and fragments includes reflections on Brecht, Kafka and the collector Eduard Fuchs, an early version of the famous analysis of art in the age of mechanical reproduction (here more accurately translated as ‘technological reproducibility’) and the equally exhilarating inquiry into the nature of narrative, ‘The Storyteller.' You feel smarter just holding this book in your hand.’—Michael Dirda, The Washington Post. In this course, we hold the book in our hands for extended periods of time to read it and discuss its contents. Extracurricular carriage of the book is encouraged.
Instructor(s): Malynne Sternstein Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Open to Fundamentals students and upperclass students in other majors.
Equivalent Course(s): REES 20905
FNDL 21201. Milton. 100 Units.
A study of Milton's major writings in lyric, epic, tragedy, and political prose, with emphasis upon his evolving sense of his poetic vocation and career in relation to his vision of literary, political, and cosmic history. Graduate students will be expected to do additional secondary reading. (Pre-1650, 1650-1830, Poetry), (Med/Ren)
Instructor(s): Joshua Scodel Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 25405, ENGL 17501

FNDL 21300. James Joyce: Ulysses. 100 Units.
This course considers themes that include the problems of exile, homelessness, and nationality; the mysteries of paternity and maternity; the meaning of the Return; Joyce's epistemology and his use of dream, fantasy, and hallucinations; and Joyce's experimentation with and use of language.
Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 21301

FNDL 21703. Plato: The Republic. 100 Units.
This course will guide students through a careful reading of Plato's Republic. Among questions we shall consider: What is justice and why think of it as a human excellence? What is the relation between politics, human psychology and metaphysics? Why does Plato write in dialogue form and why does he use myths, allegories and images in the course of his argument? What are the problems with democracy as Plato understood it? (A)
Instructor(s): B. Reece Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Those who are not Philosophy majors or Fundamentals majors should seek instructor permission to enroll.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 25704

FNDL 21804. Dante's Divine Comedy III: Paradiso. 100 Units.
An in-depth study of the third cantica of Dante's masterpiece, considered the most difficult but in many ways also the most innovative. Read alongside his scientific treatise the Convivio and his political manifesto the Monarchia.
Instructor(s): J. Steinberg Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Completion of the previous courses in the sequence not required, but students should familiarize themselves with the Inferno and the Purgatorio before the first day of class.
Note(s): Taught in English.
Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 32101, MDVL 22101, ITAL 22101

FNDL 21812. Pascal and Simone Weil. 100 Units.
Blaise Pascal in the seventeenth century and Simone Weil in the twentieth formulated a compelling vision of the human condition, torn between greatness and misery. They showed how human imperfection coexists with the noblest callings, how attention struggles with distraction and how individuals can be rescued from their usual reliance on public opinion and customary beliefs. Both thinkers point to the religious dimension of human experience and suggest unorthodox ways of approaching it. We will also study an important text by Gabriel Marcel emphasizing human coexistence and cooperation.
Instructor(s): T. Pavel Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): Undergraduates must be in their third or fourth year.
Note(s): Taught in English. For French undergraduates and graduates, there will be a bi-weekly one-hour meeting to study the original French texts.
Equivalent Course(s): RLST 24910, SCTH 38201, CMLT 29101, FREN 29100, FREN 39100, CMLT 39101

FNDL 23518. Colloquium: How to Be Good. 100 Units.
Medieval Christians understood virtue as both a habit and a gift of grace. In this course, we will test this understanding by comparison with the definitions of virtue found in three complementary traditions: Greek, Jewish, and Confucian. Readings will be taken from the New Testament, Thomas Aquinas, Aristotle, Plato, the Torah, the Talmud, and the Analects. Our purpose will be to discover how each of these systems of training the soul works, along with their similarities and differences.
Instructor(s): R. Fulton Brown Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HIST 33518, HIST 23518, MDVL 23518

FNDL 23599. Christian and Anti-Christian: Kierkegaard and Nietzsche on Religion and Morality. 100 Units.
This course explores two radically different assessments of religion and morality, one by the Protestant thinker Søren Kierkegaard, and the other by an arch-critic of religion and morality, Friedrich Nietzsche. The course will focus on their assessments of Christian faith and its relation to morality and the human good. Both thinkers wrote in complex and confusing styles: Kierkegaard used pseudonyms; Nietzsche wrote in aphorisms. In order to explore their styles of writing and their critiques of religion and morality we will read Kierkegaard's Fear and Trembling as well as Nietzsche's On the Genealogy of Morals. The general aim of the course, then, is to explore two seminal minds in the development of Western thought with the question in mind of their possible contribution to current theological and ethical thinking.
Instructor(s): William Schweiker Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): RETH 33599, THEO 33599, RLST 23599
FNDL 24612. Dostoevsky. 100 Units.
Dostoevsky was an inveterate risk-taker, not only at the baccarat tables of the Grand Casino in Baden-Baden, but in his personal life, his political activities, and his artistic endeavors. This course is intended to investigate his two greatest wagers: on the presence of the divine in the world and on the power of artistic form to convey and articulate this presence. Dostoevsky’s wager on form is evident even in his early, relatively conventional texts, like The Double. It intensifies after his decade-long sojourn in Siberia, exploding in works like The Notes from Underground, which one-and-a-half centuries later remains an aesthetic and philosophical provocation of immense power. The majority of the course will focus on Dostoevsky’s later novels. In Crime and Punishment Dostoevsky adapts suspense strategies to create a metaphysical thriller, while in The Demons he pairs a study of nihilism with the deformation of the novel as a genre. Through close readings of these works we will trace how Dostoevsky’s formal experimentation created new ways of exploring realms of existence that traditionally belonged to philosophy and theology. The results were never comfortable or comforting; we will focus on interpreting Dostoevsky’s metaphysical provocations.
Instructor(s): R. Bird Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): HUMA 24800, RLIT 39501, RLST 28204, REES 30013, REES 20013

FNDL 24921. Robert Musil: Altered States. 100 Units.
This course is an introduction to the work of Robert Musil, one of the major novelists of the twentieth century. We will focus on Musil’s idea of the ‘Other Condition’ [der andere Zustand], which he once described-in contrast to our normal way of life-as a ‘secret rising and ebbing of our being with that of things and other people.’ What is this ‘Other Condition’: what are its ethics and aesthetics, and how can it be expressed in literature? We will begin with readings from Musil’s critical writings and early narrative prose, then devote the majority of the quarter to his unfinished magnum opus, The Man without Qualities. Particular attention will be paid to Musil’s experiments with narrative form and his development of the genre of ‘essayism. Readings and discussion in English.
Instructor(s): Sophie Salvo Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 24921, GRMN 34921

FNDL 25300. Nabokov: Lolita. 100 Units.
Lolita, light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul, Lolita: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate, to tap at three on the teeth.’ Popular as Nabokov’s ‘all-American’ novel is, it is rarely discussed beyond its psychosexual profile. This intensive text-centered and discussion-based course attempts to supersede the univocal obsession with the novel’s pedophiliac plot as such by concerning itself above all with the novel’s language: language as failure, as mania, and as conjuration.
Instructor(s): M. Sternstein Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 24900, SIGN 26027, ENGL 28916, REES 20004

FNDL 26614. T.S. Eliot. 100 Units.
With the major new edition of Eliot’s poems by Jim McCue and Christopher Ricks, the new volumes of Eliot’s letters, and two separate new editions of Eliot’s complete prose, we are in a position to rethink the meanings and force of Eliot’s life work. The class will be devoted to careful reading of his poems, essays, plays, and correspondence, with attention to his literary, cultural, and political contexts.
Instructor(s): Rosanna Warren Terms Offered: Spring. Course will be taught spring 2021
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 36014, ENGL 34850, ENGL 26614

FNDL 27213. The Philosophy of Stanley Cavell. 100 Units.
The aim of this first course will be to offer a careful reading of three quarters of Stanley Cavell’s major philosophico, The Claim of Reason. The course will concentrate on Parts I, II, & IV of the book (with only very cursory discussion of Part III). We will look at other writings by Cavell insofar as they directly assist in an understanding of this central work of his. In particular, we will focus on Cavell’s treatment of the following topics: criteria, skepticism, agreement in judgment, speaking inside and outside language games, the distinction between specific and generic objects, the relation between meaning and use, our knowledge of the external world, our knowledge of other minds, the concept of a non-claim context, the distinction between knowledge and acknowledgment, and the relation between literary form and philosophical content. We will read background articles by authors whose work Cavell himself discusses in the book, as well as related articles by Cavell. We will also discuss several of the better pieces of secondary literature on the book to have appeared over the course of the last three decades. Though no separate time will be given over to an independent study of Wittgenstein’s philosophy, we will take the required time to understand those particular passages from Wittgenstein to which Cavell himself devotes extended attention in his book and upon which he builds his argument.
Instructor(s): J. Conant Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): One previous course in philosophy.
Equivalent Course(s): PHIL 27213, PHIL 37213
FNDL 29020. The Shadows of Living Things: The Writings of Mikhail Bulgakov. 100 Units.

What would your good do if evil did not exist, and what would the earth look like if all the shadows disappeared? After all, shadows are cast by things and people. Do you want to strip the earth of all the trees and living things just because of your fantasy of enjoying naked light? asks the Devil. Mikhail Bulgakov worked on his novel The Master and Margarita throughout most of his writing career, in Stalin’s Moscow. Bulgakov destroyed his manuscript, re-created it from memory, and reworked it feverishly even as his body was failing him in his battle with death. The result is an intense contemplation on the nature of good and evil, on the role of art and the ethical duty of the artist, but also a dazzling world of magic, witches, and romantic love, and an irresistible seduction into the comedic. Laughter, as shadow and light, as the subversive weapon but also as power’s whip, grounds human relation to both good and evil. Brief excursions to other texts that help us better understand Master and Margarita.

Instructor(s): A. Ilieva Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): REES 39021, REES 29021

FNDL 29133. Benjamin Franklin and The Arts of Persuasion. 100 Units.

An examination of Franklin’s lifelong attempts to persuade people to change their behavior without appearing to do so.

Instructor(s): Ralph Lerner Terms Offered: Autumn. Course will be taught in Autumn 2020
Prerequisite(s): Open to undergrads.
Equivalent Course(s): SCTH 39133

FNDL 29501. Mary Wollstonecraft and Mary Shelley. 100 Units.

This course examines the major works-novels, political treatises, letters, travel essays—of two of Romanticism’s most influential women writers. We will attend to historical, intellectual, and cultural contexts as well as matters of literary concern, such as their pioneering development of modes like gothic and science/speculative fiction, Wollstonecraft’s stylistic theories, and Shelley’s scenes of imaginative sympathy. (Fiction, 1650-1830).

Instructor(s): Alexis Chema Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): GNSE 19500, ENGL 19500

Possible Supporting Courses

Supporting Courses are intended to provide further methodological training, historical context, and conceptual frameworks to enrich the student’s engagement with the texts, topics, and ideas relevant to his or her project; the selection of such courses will therefore vary considerably from person to person. The list below is a selection of what Fundamentals students might consider as their Supporting Courses, but it is by no means an exhaustive or prescriptive list. Students are encouraged to make a habit of reading the catalogs of other relevant departments and to comb through Class Search (https://coursesearch.uchicago.edu/) to locate courses that speak to their interests. The program coordinator and the student’s advisers are also valuable resources to consult when planning out the academic year.

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<td>Embodiment: Governance, Resistance, Ethics</td>
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<td>Lab, Field, and Clinic: History and Anthropology of Medicine and the Life Sciences</td>
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<td>Thinking Psychoanalytically: From the Sciences to the Arts</td>
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<td>Fate and Duty: European Tragedy from Aeschylus to Brecht</td>
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<td>Introduction to Drama</td>
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<td>ENGL 12300</td>
<td>Poetry And Being</td>
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<td>The Literature of Disgust, Rabelais to Nausea</td>
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RLST 11030  Introduction to the Qur’an  100
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SALC 20902  Indian Philosophy II: The Classical Traditions  100
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SPAN 21803  Introducción a las literaturas hispánicas: textos españoles contemporáneos  100
SPAN 21903  Intro. a las lit. hispánicas: textos hispanoamericanos desde la colonia a la independencia  100
SPAN 21910  Contemporary Catalan Literature  100
SPAN 22003  Introducción a las literaturas hispánicas: del modernismo al presente  100
SPAN 22218  De capa y espada: Martial Arts Culture in the Spanish Golden Age  100
SPAN 26210  Witches, Sinners, and Saints  100