

Humanities Class:

A Pre-Collegiate Humanities Research Program Applicant Packet for Summer 2020

Program Overview

- Approximate dates: June 29-September 4 (exact dates to be determined after surveying student availability)
- Two 90-minute sessions weekly for 10 weeks

Part 1: The Seminar (Weeks 1-3):

- Six introductory modules: instructor-led seminars, preparatory readings and assignments, and group discussions to introduce students to various humanistic disciplines and methodologies

In addition to the initial session, these modules may include:

1. **The world in translation.** The act of translation is as essential to how we approach the increasingly globalized world today as it is oftentimes invisible. We are all constrained by our cultural upbringings, languages, and educational backgrounds. How we make sense of the world beyond our own depends on how translators make them intelligible to us. But can the foreign always be made intelligible? Is there such a thing as a perfect translation? Can the act of translating be a creative or political one in itself? By thinking critically about translation, we will begin to reexamine concepts of language, meaning, and political belonging.
Instructor: Elvin Meng
2. **An introduction to historiography.** Through this seminar, students will begin to think about historical epistemology: How do certain paradigms structure the acquisition of knowledge? How might we become better critics of existing frameworks and narratives without veering too far into relativism and skepticism? We will discuss historiography as a practice from Greco-Roman antiquity to the present day, with an emphasis on the work of such intellectuals as Carlo Ginzburg, Arnaldo Momigliano, and Aby Warburg. A crucial part of our discussion will be the historical rupture between “humanistic” and “scientific” study, and how methodologies from each can inform and shape the other.
Instructor: Taylor Yoonji Kang
3. **Is surveillance a violation of privacy?** The contemporary question of how we should respond to the Internet and globalization’s apparent threat to our right to privacy makes critical texts from the Enlightenment and the early 20th century urgently relevant today. We will put side by side John Locke’s conceptualization of the right-bearing self defined by his submission to the father and Sigmund Freud’s comparison between the role of Christ in Christianity and the role of the father in the child’s development to find out whether the liberal idea of the private, inviolable self provides sufficient grounds for a critique of authority.
Instructor: John Yoon

4. **What does it mean to mean?** Students will be asked to engage critically with the question of how words, texts, and images mean what we take them to mean. Does a poem “mean” in the same way as a painting, or an opera, or a film? Are these meanings stable and self-contained, or do they assume that the audience belongs to a particular background or cultural tradition? To answer these questions, students will engage with foundational problems in critical theory, philosophy of language, musicology, and media theory. This investigation will help students develop a critical attention to how researchers approach objects of study, understand competing methodologies, and determine the basis and bounds of their field.

Instructor: John Hoffmeyer

5. **Literary theory and the law.** This session will engage with the work of the literary critic Barbara Johnson to show the complexity - and the difficulty - of reading narratives and testimonies in and beyond the courtroom. It will ponder the relationship between animate and inanimate, life and death, conscious and unconscious, and literal and figurative, among other seemingly binary oppositions, to consider the implications of witnessing the truth that remains at the heart of literary and legal debates alike.

Instructor: Eliana Rozinov

Part 2: The Research Paper (Weeks 4-10)

- **Weeks 4-6** will be centered on literature review. Students will define a field of inquiry and formulate a question that they will then explore through relevant existing scholarship, with guidance from their assigned instructor(s).
- **Weeks 7-9** will be focused on the writing process. Each week, students will send drafts of their essay to their instructor for comments and suggestions. In Week 9, they will receive detailed feedback on a completed draft prior to submitting their final paper.
- **Week 10** will be dedicated to students' presentations of their findings to peers, parents, and instructors.
- Throughout **Weeks 4-10**, students will attend semiweekly, one-on-one sessions with their assigned instructor(s) to discuss their research projects and progress.
- Optional courses will also be offered throughout these weeks, including directed reading groups to help students acquire greater reading proficiency in their secondary languages; seminars exploring topics such as “Medical Humanities,” the “Philosophy of Mathematics,” and “Witnessing in the Age of Instagram,” to be decided based on demonstrated student interest; and various other workshops and pre-college panel discussions.

What makes us different?

- **A sophisticated, college-level research paper.** After the program, students will have completed a rigorous research project that can be submitted to a number of student competitions and journals. We are also happy to feature our students' work on the Humanities Class website.
- **A Certificate of Completion and recommendation letter.** Instructors can provide letters of recommendation upon successful completion of the course and research paper.

- **Real, individualized attention.** On average, our instructors mentor three students each. At comparable summer programs, a single instructor will have upwards of 15 students at a time. We want to engage with students' ideas, talk them through concepts, and help them think through problems.
- **Improved college admissions profile.** In addition to the research paper, Certificate, and recommendation letter, the program will be a meaningful experience for students to discuss in their college applications and interviews. We are happy to provide guidance on how to incorporate the research project into college apps.
- **Office Hours.** Students will be able to request additional Office Hours outside of regular sessions to meet and discuss their projects.
- Our instructors will host **writing workshops and optional lectures.** The writing workshops will help students develop, organize, and communicate their ideas at the college level, as well as listen actively and offer productive criticism to the ideas of others.
- **Library resources.** Through our instructors, students will have access to materials from databases and university libraries that usually require annual subscriptions or institutional affiliations.
- **Competitive prices.** Similar precollegiate programs cost around \$3,000 to \$6,000, without the tangible benefits of the research project, recommendation letter, and the same degree of intellectual rigor.

Preparing for the future

- **College interviews and beyond.** Interviewers want to see that applicants can speak clearly and thoughtfully about their intellectual motivations, yet many high school students do not know how to articulate their interests. This program will give students a better understanding of themselves and their future goals.
- **Setting you up for future success.** Students who major in humanistic fields such as Classics, Philosophy, and History consistently score higher on the LSAT. More and more pre-medical students are majoring in the humanities, as medical schools seek students from diverse intellectual backgrounds. Top-tier consulting firms recruit from elite institutions based not on applicants' majors but on cumulative GPA and exam performance. Whether a student's postgraduate plans involve professional school, a PhD, or a wide variety of professional fields, a humanities degree helps students develop a diverse skill-set applicable to a wide variety of fields. This course will introduce students to those skills earlier on, giving them a head start and setting them up for future success.

Student expectations

- **Classroom conduct.** Students are expected to be respectful toward their instructors and classmates. We encourage students to challenge and question ideas and arguments, so long as it is done courteously and with the aim of furthering class discussion and learning.
- **Attendance and time commitment.** Students are expected to attend all of the planned sessions and should be able to commit to 5-10 hours of work between sessions toward their research project. The exact dates and times of the sessions will be determined based on the availability of students and instructors.

- **If a student misses a session without a legitimate reason**, they will forfeit the session and will not be refunded. In the case of medical, personal, or family emergency, however, students can request a recording of the missed session. For the individual sessions in Weeks 4–10, students can request the instructor to reschedule the session, so long as the request is made with sufficient notice.
- **Student commitment.** Student success is contingent on the amount of work and effort they put into their research project. We expect all students to be motivated to complete their projects and adhere to the deadlines specified by their instructor(s). Students will receive support from their instructors based on their individual needs.

Sliding scale tuition

- Our base rate is \$1,800. Students with financial need can request a reduced price during the informational interview and/or in the follow-up form (see below). We do not want price to be a barrier to anyone!
- Students can opt for split payments, whereby they would pay 50% of the agreed upon tuition before the first session and the remaining amount before Week 4.

Selection Process

- After the informational interview with the prospective student and their guardian(s), we will send out a follow-up form within the week, due **48 hours** after receipt.
- The form will ask how much the student is able to pay. This will have no bearing on whether or not the student is selected.
- Based on the interview and follow-up form, we will select students based on their commitment to and demonstrated interest in the humanities.
- Selected students will receive an offer and an invoice via Paypal on **June 19**. Students will have **72 hours** to accept the offer by submitting payment.

For more information, visit us at <https://humanitiesclass.org>

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