

COMPARATIVE HUMANITIES (HUMN)

Faculty

Associate Professors: John C. Hunter, James Mark Shields (Director)

Visiting Assistant Professor: Nicholas K. Kupensky

Lecturer: Diane Jakacki

The Comparative Humanities program approaches global traditions of ideas, history, literature, music, and art in an interdisciplinary fashion. Designed to reflect contemporary trends in humanistic scholarship, it teaches students how to compare, analyze, and integrate materials from different cultures, media, and/or historical periods; these are vital skills for the 21st century world that conventional undergraduate disciplinary boundaries often exclude. These include the various ways in which, for example, digital technology has changed our relations to knowledge; the categories “Asia” and the “West” have been constructed and represented; how translation works in a globalized world; how science and the humanities interact; and the historical and cultural shifts in the way knowledge has been classified. Our courses, taught by faculty from Comparative Humanities and from other humanities departments, are designed to help students develop a set of intellectual tools that can be applied in any professional or academic context. Classes are limited in size so that students may share through discussion their reactions to the works studied, relate them to their own lives, and attempt to judge their relevance to the contemporary “globalized” world. Inasmuch as language and culture are central to this interdisciplinary project, students who declare a major in the comparative humanities are required to satisfy a language requirement.

The major is especially suitable for students interested in broad study of the humanities and comparative studies, e.g., individuals otherwise focusing their education in the sciences and other non-humanities disciplines or students interested in advanced study of the humanities in graduate programs and seeking a balance of disciplinary and interdisciplinary studies for this purpose.

Students interested in the major are encouraged to contact the program director listed above as soon as possible to begin the advising process.

Comparative Humanities Major

The **major** consists of eight courses, a pass/fail oral examination and a demonstration of reading proficiency in a foreign language. The courses include:

HUMN 128	Myth, Reason, Faith ¹	1
HUMN 150	Enlightenments ¹	1
HUMN 250	Modernism and Crisis (May also be taught as UNIV 200) ¹	1
Two courses in Humanities or related disciplines, one of which must be at the 200-level or above.		2
Two 300-level interdisciplinary humanities seminars ²		2
HUMN 350 or HUMN 351	Senior Thesis Workshop ⁴ Honors Tutorial and Senior Thesis	1
Oral examination ⁵		

¹ These courses ground students in the broad outlines of world intellectual traditions. As W2 courses, HUMN 150 Enlightenment and HUMN 250 Modernism and Crisis teach analytical writing skills. All three courses teach information literacy skills through mandatory research assignments in close consultation with the instructor and library staff. Public-speaking skills are taught through the preparation for oral reports in HUMN 128 Myth, Reason, Faith and HUMN 150 Enlightenment and an oral exam following the completion of HUMN 150 Enlightenment.

² Courses encourage comparative studies across cultural, historical, and formal boundaries.

³ Approved by the student’s major adviser or program director.

⁴ Course gives students a chance to pursue focused research on a subject of particular interest to them. Discussion of the thesis topic must begin in the spring of the student’s junior year and the topic must have attained final approval by the faculty adviser by the end of September of the senior year. The thesis project may be submitted to the Honors Council for consideration as an honors thesis but this is not required in order to complete the major. Successful completion of the thesis requirement (including an oral defense) counts as the Culminating Experience in comparative humanities.

⁵ Intended as an integrative discussion covering all of the material in HUMN 128 Myth, Reason, Faith and HUMN 150 Enlightenment, must be taken after completing both of these courses. It is graded on a pass/fail basis and offered at the end of every spring semester. Students who fail the exam may re-take it when it is next offered.

In keeping with the program’s goal of exposing students to different modes of thought, the program asks students to demonstrate work in a foreign language in addition to the eight courses required for the major. Such competency can be attained by passing a one-credit course at the level of the fourth course or higher in a particular language sequence. Students also are encouraged to develop language competency elsewhere, as in

summer school or abroad; however, all such programs must first be approved by the comparative humanities program director. Students whose native language is not English, or who are bilingual, are exempted from the language requirement.

Minor in Comparative Humanities

A **minor** in comparative humanities consists of five courses.

Select at least two of the following:

HUMN 128	Myth, Reason, Faith	
HUMN 150	Enlightenments	
HUMN 250	Modernism and Crisis	
300-level Humanities seminar ⁶		1
Humanities course ⁷		1

⁶ At least one 300-level Humanities seminar is required.

⁷ Remaining courses may be selected from all Humanities courses.

College of Arts & Sciences
Department and Program Learning Objectives

Majors in Comparative Humanities will be able to:

Understand the central movements of the Western tradition and the ways in which that tradition has been constructed. (2, 3)

Understand all cultural norms as provisional positions in a historical process of change and conflict. (2, 5)

Compare and evaluate cultural differences in a non-hierarchical manner across boundaries of all kinds:

Historical (including situations, intellectual products, and material remains of different periods);
Cultural (including race, gender, nationality, religion, and sexual orientation); and
Formal (between different modes of thought and expression). (2, 5, 6)

Meaningfully compare intellectual materials of different or opposing types: textual with material artifacts; narrative with non-narrative texts; artistic with analytical modes of thought. (6, 8)

Appreciate the benefits, problems, and intellectual challenge of comparative study across historical, cultural, or generic boundaries. (5, 6)

Demonstrate effective expository skills, both orally and in writing. (7, 8)

Understand the intellectual and personal benefits of knowing and using a foreign language. (3)

Numbers in parentheses reflect related Educational Goals (<https://www.bucknell.edu/interested-in-bucknell/who-we-are/recent-strides-future-plans/goals-and-educational-outcomes/educational-goals.html>) .

Courses

HUMN 100. The Humanities Now!. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable

A multi-section course in the humanities that introduces students to the humanities world through use of latest tools and methods of analysis. Open to first-years and sophomores only.

HUMN 128. Myth, Reason, Faith. 1 Credit.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:3

An introduction to the most significant works in the Western and Asian intellectual traditions, extending from ancient Mesopotamia through late medieval Europe and/or East Asia. Not open to students who have completed RESC 098 "Myth, Reason, Faith" or a crosslisted equivalent. Seniors by permission only.

HUMN 150. Enlightenment. 1 Credit.

Offered Spring Semester Only; Lecture hours:4

An interdisciplinary study of selected works in art, music, literature, science and philosophy from European Renaissance through the early 20th century. Crosslisted as ENGL 150.

HUMN 215. Hebrew Bible and Modern Literature. 1 Credit.

Offered Alternate Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

The course examines how materials from the Hebrew Bible are reworked in modern literature and culture, focusing on Hebrew and American traditions. Crosslisted as HEBR 215.

HUMN 250. Modernism and Crisis. 1 Credit.**Offered Fall Semester Only; Lecture hours:3**

An interdisciplinary study of major texts, figures, and concepts of the 20th century. Designed to follow HUMN 128 and HUMN 150. Crosslisted as ENGL 230 and UNIV 230.

HUMN 260. Introduction to Translation Studies. 1 Credit.**Offered Spring Semester Only; Lecture hours:3**

An introduction to the history, theories, and development of the field of Translation Studies. Facility in one language other than English is strongly recommended. Crosslisted as EAST 205.

HUMN 266. Chinese Philosophy. 1 Credit.**Offered Alternate Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

Major philosophical schools of the classical age, Buddhist philosophy, Neo-Confucianism. Crosslisted as EAST 266 and PHIL 266. Prerequisite: PHIL 100 or permission of the instructor.

HUMN 270. Data Visualization for the Digital Humanities. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An introduction to the techniques and issues of data visualization for the humanities. interdisciplinary and comparative study, using both theoretical study and concrete examples.

HUMN 271. Advanced Text Analysis: Redefining How We Read. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course will teach students how text analysis allows digital humanists to interpret textual data in new ways. Students will learn how computer languages (such as XML-compliant TEI) help to pursue analysis of literary and historical texts and reveal new ways words signify.

HUMN 272. Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities. 1 Credit.**Offered Alternating Fall Semester; Lecture hours:3**

Comparative study investigating different cultures, historical epochs, narrative forms, media and traditions. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

HUMN 275. Greece and Turkey: East and West. 1 Credit.**Offered Summer Session Only; Lecture hours:Varies**

This course is based around a three-week summer study abroad experience in Greece and Turkey. Themes and materials will vary from year to year. Prerequisites: interview and permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as CLAS 275 and ENGL 275.

HUMN 280. Buddhist Philosophy in Comparative Perspective. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An introduction to Buddhist thought in comparative perspective, through a close reading and discussion of primary texts of the classical, medieval, modern and contemporary traditions. Prerequisite: PHIL 100. Crosslisted as PHIL 280.

HUMN 290. Susquehanna Country. 1 Credit.**Offered Alternate Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An investigation of the place of the environment in the humanities from a variety of academic perspectives. May also be taught as UNIV 241. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as ENST 225 and ENGL 225 and UNIV 241.

HUMN 301. Brain, Mind, Culture. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An interdisciplinary study of the intersections between the humanities and neuroscience in the history of thought and contemporary culture. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

HUMN 303. Buddhism in American Culture. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

An examination of the transmission of Buddhism to the U.S., with focus on the literature and cultural impact of the writers of the Beat Generation. Prerequisites: RELI 200 or permission of the instructor.

HUMN 304. Narrative and Media. 1 Credit.**Offered Spring Semester Only; Lecture hours:3; Repeatable**

A seminar featuring narrative in several forms and contexts of representation. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

HUMN 305. Utopias: Past, Present, Future. 1 Credit.**Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3**

This course aims to investigate the utopian imagination as manifested in various influential texts throughout Asian and Western history, and to consider the problems and possibilities of utopian thinking with regard to the present and future.

HUMN 306. US: Fever/Fantasy/Desire. 1 Credit.**Offered Fall Semester Only; Lecture hours:3**

Seminar on American literature between 1770-1861 with an emphasis on psychoanalytic approaches to literary and cultural study. Authors may include Brown, Sansay, Poe, and Melville. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as ENGL 306 and ENGL 606.

HUMN 310. Dante and Milton. 1 Credit.

Offered Alternating Fall Semester; Lecture hours:3

An intensive comparative study of Dante's "Comedy" and Milton's "Paradise Lost" as exemplars of medieval and late Renaissance understanding of human experience. Crosslisted as ENGL 350.

HUMN 319. Independent Study. .5-1 Credits.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:3; Repeatable

Individual project of study supervised by instructor. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as HUMN 619.

HUMN 320. History of Sexuality. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A cross-cultural and interdisciplinary examination of the signification of sexuality in literature, philosophy, scientific discourse, and the visual arts. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor. Crosslisted as ENLS 394 and WMST 325.

HUMN 325. Dostoevsky and Tolstoy: Literary Philosophy. 1 Credit.

Offered Alternate Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

An introduction to the major philosophical ideas of the great Russian writers Fyodor Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy. In English. Crosslisted as RUSS 325 and HUMN 625.

HUMN 330. Studies in Autobiography. 1 Credit.

Offered Either Fall or Spring; Lecture hours:3

A critical, cross-cultural and trans-historical examination of the "writing of the self". An examination of inflections of race and gender in the writing of autobiography. Readings from Augustine, Rousseau, Olaudah Equiano, Ruth Klüger, Christa Wolf, Simone de Beauvoir, and Marjorie Shostak, among others.

HUMN 340. Seminar in Translation Studies. 1 Credit.

Offered Spring Semester Only; Lecture hours:3

Advanced seminar in the history, theory, and practice of translation, including investigation of the role of translation in intercultural communication and comparative studies. Facility in a language other than English is strongly recommended. Crosslisted as ENLS 362.

HUMN 350. Senior Thesis Workshop. 1 Credit.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:3; Repeatable

A colloquium on issues arising from the writing of a scholarly thesis. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

HUMN 351. Honors Tutorial and Senior Thesis. 1 Credit.

Offered Both Fall and Spring; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:3

Independent study and research leading to the writing of a thesis as approved by the Honors Council. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.

HUMN 3NT. Humanities Non-traditional Study. 1 Credit.

Offered Fall, Spring, Summer; Lecture hours:Varies,Other:3

Non-traditional study in Humanities. Prerequisite: permission of the instructor.