

General education literature courses

Through the study of literature, students explore enduring human issues. In imaginative literature they encounter those issues from the perspective of another individual and consider how historical and cultural contexts influence human perception. They become more attentive readers, learning to analyze texts that make their point by indirection and induction and to frame coherent arguments in response to those texts.

Criteria:

Courses that qualify for literature credit will

1. focus primarily on helping students become competent in reading and analyzing works of imaginative literature*;
2. introduce students to a substantial body of literature;
3. include systematic instruction in literary analysis**;
4. situate each work in its historical, cultural and literary context;
5. require substantial analytical papers that develop coherent arguments.

Student learning outcomes:

As a result of their work in literature courses, students will be able to

1. read complex texts critically and with understanding;
2. recognize and appreciate a variety of literary genres;
3. frame questions that illuminate a text and its historical, cultural, and literary contexts;
4. use these questions to understand texts at a deeper level;
5. frame coherent written arguments about complex texts.

* “imaginative or creative writing; belles-lettres” (*American Heritage Dictionary* 2) in genres such as long and short narratives, poetry and drama, and other writings such as essays and epistles when considered primarily for their imaginative content, as opposed to “the body of written work produced by scholars or researchers in a given field” (*American Heritage Dictionary* 4).

** instruction in recognizing the formal features of literary texts—rhetorical devices such as rhyme, alliteration, metaphor, simile, irony, understatement, hyperbole, and other “uses of language which depart from customary construction, order, or significance in order to achieve special effects or meanings” (Harmon/Holman *Handbook to Literature*).