

Three functions of the literature division:

1. Close study of major literary works: emphasis on form, genre, aesthetic communication, literature as art, definition and application of this concept.
2. Familiarity with at least one foreign language, preferably French: e.g. ability to read and to understand oral French. This requirement would be satisfied by taking one course or one conference in French literature.
3. History of ideas: philosophical, ethical, religious background of Western civilization as particularly reflected in literary texts.

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Basic courses

Literature 1 Introduction to reading: Realist novel (Madame Bovary by Flaubert; prose satire (Voltaire or Swift); short story; tragedy (Anthony and Cleopatra or Bérénice by Racine); lyric poetry.  
(this is the already existing Freshman literature course)

Literature 1a History of Ideas

first term: Plato and the Platonic tradition:

Plato, Symposium

Plotinus, selections

Gospel according to St. John

Saint Augustine, On the nature of good

Dante, Vita Nuova

(aim: meaning of metaphysics and morals)

second term: Aristotle and his tradition

Aristotle, Ethics

St. Paul, Epistles to the Romans

St. Thomas Aquinas, God

Shakespeare, Hamlet

Racine, Phèdre

(aim: meaning of mediaevalism and humanism)

Literature 2 Detailed study of two major writers

first term: choice of one: Shakespeare, Dante,  
Racine, Goethe

second term: choice of one: Proust, Joyce, Mann,  
T.S. Eliot

Literature 2a History of ideas (continued)

first term: The Experimental tradition:

Montaigne, Essays

Descartes, Discourse on Method

Proust, Swann's Way

(aim: meaning of empiricism and classicism)

second term: The modern dilemma:

Baudelaire, the poet

Joyce, the novelist

Maritain, the philosopher

(aim: meaning of dualism, agnosticism, neo-thomism)

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Program for literature major:

first year: Literature 1 and 1a: four hours class meetings; one conference dealing with material in courses.

second year: Literature 2 and 2a: four hours class meetings; one conference dealing with material in courses.

third year: History of English or French literature and conference on special topic.

fourth year: elective; conference on thesis.

Program for non literature major:

each year one of the four required courses for literature major:  
i.e. Literature 1, 1a, 2, 2a.

Language requirement:

One of the four required courses should be taken in French.  
(More may be taken if student is interested.) If a ~~Freshman~~ Freshman is not able to understand and read French, she should take a language course destined to prepare her for this and substitute it for 1a. Thus she would take History of Ideas her second and third years.

Walter Fowle

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