

MASTER OF LIBERAL ARTS (MLA)

MLA 4990 Independent Study

Please be in touch with the department for further details

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

MLA 5000 The Short Story

A workshop course devoted to the craft of short fiction. Assignments will include informal exercises as well as formal crafted pieces.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9000

1 Course Unit

MLA 5001 Fiction Workshop

A workshop course in the craft of fiction.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9001

1 Course Unit

MLA 5002 Memoir Workshop

A creative writing workshop devoted to the craft of memoir. Students will work with some of the forms of memoir, including personal narrative, dialogue, description, and character development, and will explore how memoir can expand our understanding of truth, imagination, memory, and why a story matters.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9002

1 Course Unit

MLA 5005 Finding Voice: Perspectives on Race, Class and Gender

This writing workshop explores the influence of identity, primarily race, class, gender, and sexuality, on the ways we convey our personal truths to the world.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 9005, ENGL 9005, GSWS 9005, URBS 9005

1 Course Unit

MLA 5006 Learning from James Baldwin

This class will examine the intellectual legacy that James Baldwin left to present-day writers such as Toni Morrison, Charles Johnson, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Thulani Davis, Caryl Phillips, and others. We will spend time reading and discussing Baldwin's novels, short stories, plays and essays, and students will research subjects of their own choosing about Baldwin's life and art.

Also Offered As: AFRC 9006, ENGL 9006, GSWS 9006, URBS 9006

1 Course Unit

MLA 5007 Writing through Music

This writing workshop will focus on the provocative interchanges between music and creative writing. We will consider music of all kinds, all genres (jazz, classical, hip-hop, ambient, folk, electronic, experimental, etc.), as a springboard for the imagination, as a counterpoint to forms of language, and as a tool for cultivating creative writing practices.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9007

1 Course Unit

MLA 5008 Writing Experiments

A workshop course devoted to cultivating experimental approaches in your writing. Practitioners of prose, poetry, and mixed-genre writing—as well as students who are new to any of these genres—are all welcome. We will test the boundaries of form and language as we hone our skills, experiment with new tools, read a number of writings by authors who break the rules, and explore what taking risks can teach us about our craft.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9008

1 Course Unit

MLA 5009 Creative Research: A Writer's Workshop

Many writers think of research as a "task" that is somehow separate from writing. In truth, it's as much a part of the process as waiting for le mot juste. Research is much more than gathering material and filling in the blanks. It is the process of discovering your material at its deepest source. Students in this course will adopt a mindset of discovery and playfulness as we explore a variety of innovative research methods and hone the fine art of looking right under your nose.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 9009

1 Course Unit

MLA 5010 Writing for Young Readers

A creative writing workshop devoted to writing for young readers. Young adult, middle-grade, and other kinds of writing will be addressed.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9010

1 Course Unit

MLA 5011 Screenwriting

This creative writing workshop is devoted to writing scripts for film, video, and television.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9011

1 Course Unit

MLA 5012 Journalistic Writing

This course is devoted to the art of journalistic writing and will address genres such as straight news, narrative longform, interviews, profiles, criticism, features, and more, as well as writing for a range of platforms, including newspapers, magazines, and websites.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9012

1 Course Unit

MLA 5013 Memoir Writing

This memoir workshop will shine light on the human experience as viewed through your personal lens. We'll see how memoir can illuminate larger cultural themes - from the inhumanity of war, to racism, misogyny, and economic inequality - as viewed through lived experiences.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9013, GSWS 9013, URBS 9013

1 Course Unit

MLA 5015 Writing and Place

In this creative writing workshop we will consider how writing about place - geography, architecture, landscape, cities, and so on - opens up both our imaginations and our ideas about literary form. Course offerings may include workshops devoted to poetry, fiction, travel writing, and cross-genre writing.

Also Offered As: ENGL 9015

1 Course Unit

MLA 5016 Being Human: A Personal Approach to Race, Class & Gender

In this workshop, we will address the ways race, class, and gender impact our lives, our work, and our culture. As a class, we will create connection and community by practicing deep listening, daily writing, deep reading, and the sharing of ideas and observations.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 9016, ENGL 9016, GSWS 9016, URBS 9016

1 Course Unit

MLA 5017 Considering Race, Class and Punishment in the American Prison System

This writing seminar will sharpen and expand our writing, while bringing to our hearts and minds a deeper understanding of the reality of imprisonment in the United States. This system never goes away. This year it is locking up more than 2,300,000 men, women and children—the highest per-capita rate of imprisonment in the world. Even when we know the statistics and watch shows about crime and jail on TV, what do we really know about life behind bars? For a year? Ten years? Life? As a young journalist, I saw how the criminal justice system was used to suppress Black leadership. I felt drawn to teach creative writing at Holmesburg Prison, to eventually investigate the state prison system, interview prisoners, make friendships, write a newspaper series, magazine articles, and my first book on the subject. For nearly five decades, I've observed the human cost of a prison system that connects and damages all of our lives and keeps people from poverty in place. In this course, we will seek insights in books and stories written from prisoners' personal experiences. We'll also read scholars—Michelle Alexander, Bryan Stevenson, Angela Davis and others—who shed light on the historical repetitions and political exploitations. Guest speakers will include public defenders, parolees, former prisoners, and those fighting for prisoners' rights and re-entry. Students will gain a more intimate understanding of how the legacies of slavery, racism, the prejudices of class, caste, and misogyny intersect and determine who goes to prison and who does not. Students will free-write for ten minutes a day, every day, and write personal reflections on readings, films, and guest speakers. Responses will lead to essays or stories that students write and present for class discussion. These key pieces may draw from observation, facts and imagination, and may traverse literary nonfiction, memoir, fiction, or poetry. We will present the best of your work in a reading at the end of the semester.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 9017, ENGL 9017, GSWS 9017, URBS 9017

1 Course Unit

MLA 5020 MLA Seminar: Topics in Liberal Arts

Reading and discussion course on selected topics in the liberal arts.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

MLA 5050 MLA Proseminar: Topics in Liberal Arts

Interdisciplinary faculty-lead reading and discussion course on selected topics in the liberal arts.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

MLA 5410 Academic Writing and Research Design in the Arts and Sciences

Have you ever noticed that scholars in different academic disciplines seem to speak different languages? Have you wondered how scholars put together a plan for their research, explain their findings, and organize and write their papers? The class is designed to introduce MLA students and other advanced students to the research and writing conventions used by scholars in the arts and sciences. With attention to disciplines in the humanities, social sciences, and sciences, we will identify and explore some of the theories, sources, language and qualitative and quantitative methodologies that scholars use as they conduct original research in their fields. Throughout the class, we will also discuss writing conventions across the arts and sciences, with special attention to the structure of argument; the use of evidence; voice and style in both traditional academic writing and more innovative forms of writing; and documentation conventions. Students will develop an original research project through incremental writing assignments, and will write a formal research proposal (15-20 pages), which can be used as their Capstone proposal if they wish.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

MLA 5990 Independent Study

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1 Course Unit

MLA 6990 Capstone

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Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

MLA 9900 Masters Thesis

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