

# INQUIRY AND RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES

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Department Website: <https://college.uchicago.edu/academics/ir-hum> (<https://college.uchicago.edu/academics/ir-hum/>)

## PROGRAM OF STUDY

The bachelor of arts degree program in Inquiry and Research in the Humanities (IRHUM) offers undergraduates the opportunity to pursue an individualized program of humanistic study in preparation of an independent, mentored research project, which will form the capstone experience of their College education at the University of Chicago. IRHUM is thus not defined by a particular discipline or field, but by the techniques and practices of humanistic inquiry and research. For individual students pursuing the IRHUM major, cohesion is provided by the program of humanistic study, formal research training, and the final research project they design in consultation with the Faculty Chair and Co-Chair of IRHUM, and their disciplinarily focused faculty mentor(s). While the IRHUM major can stand alone, it pairs well with other majors in the Humanities and Social Sciences Collegiate Divisions and beyond.

Admission to IRHUM is by an application, in which students must clearly articulate their interest in humanistic research and describe the area of humanistic inquiry and research that they plan to pursue. Students design their own program of humanistic study in close consultation with IRHUM's Faculty Chair and Co-Chair, and their individual faculty mentor (who will serve as the primary advisor of the student's BA research project). Centered in the humanities, the program of study may draw on subject areas, fields, and techniques from disciplines in the social, biological, and physical sciences. While IRHUM has no formal language requirement, students researching topics in other languages and cultures are highly encouraged to demonstrate proficiency in those languages by taking higher-level courses and pursuing Practical and Advanced Proficiency Certification (<https://languageassessment.uchicago.edu/flpc/>). For students whose research would be enhanced by secondary sources in another language, taking courses in reading a foreign language for research (e.g., GRMN 23333 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=GRMN%2023333>) Reading German for Research Purposes) early in their degree programs is highly recommended.

A student's program of inquiry culminates in a substantive, feasible research project, closely mentored by an IRHUM advisor and faculty member from a humanistic discipline (including the humanistic social sciences). To prepare students for their capstone research project, they will be trained in techniques and practices of humanistic research and given the opportunity to engage in genuine research in the context of a collaborative project or in a directed setting. Students are encouraged to take advantage of the various initiatives underway at the University of Chicago (College Summer Institute in the Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-research/college-summer-institute-csi/>), Smart Scholars Program (<https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/feitler-center-for-academic-inquiry/student-opportunities/smart-scholars/>), Archaeological Field School (<https://grad.uchicago.edu/fellowship/jane-c-waldbaum-archaeological-field-school-scholarship/>), etc.) or with our international partners (the UChicago and University of Sussex International Junior Research Associates Program (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-research/uchicago-usussex-international-jr-research-associates-program/>), etc.).

## CURRICULAR GOALS

IRHUM majors will:

- understand the nature of humanistic inquiry and research;
- understand its relevance for professional and academic careers, as well as global citizenship;
- learn how to design and conduct an individualized program of humanistic study and inquiry;
- learn the conventions and codes of the disciplines on which their study and research program draws;
- learn basic research techniques of humanistic inquiry and the more advanced research practices relevant to their chosen research program;
- learn how to search and find sources;
- effectively engage with primary materials of study and research (visual and material objects, archival materials, texts, theories, arguments, etc.) and evaluate their relevance;
- learn how to find, identify, and evaluate relevant secondary scholarly literature;
- experience the thrill of genuine discovery and the rewards of humanistic knowledge production;
- learn how to effectively design, structure, and write an extended research paper, as well as research abstracts, proposals, and program applications; and

- learn to present and communicate their knowledge and research in a variety of genres and media (conference presentation, conference poster, gallery or museum talk, research article, etc.), both to a discipline-specific audience and to the wider public.

## PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS

- **Six Courses** in the self-designed program of humanistic study, developed in consultation with the Faculty Chair of IRHUM and a discipline-specific faculty mentor.
- **Academic and Professional Writing** (ENGL 13000 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=ENGL%2013000>)), recommended in the Winter or Spring Quarters of Year 2, or in the Autumn Quarter of Year 3.
- **Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design** (IRHU 20100 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2020100>)), recommended in the Spring Quarter of Year 2. This seminar will introduce majors to the basic tenets of humanistic inquiry, including the formulation and testing of research questions and lines of inquiry, and expose students to best practices in research design. In partnership with the University Library, this course will train students in information literacy and introduce them to best practices in research design (feasibility, assessment of primary and secondary source material, collation of resources), as well as expose them to research ethics and the principles of culturally sensitive research practices. The course will also include training in data use and management, and introduce students to research tools and technology available to them through the University Library system, as well as other on- and off-campus resources.
- **Two Research Seminars** in the humanities or humanistic social sciences. This requirement may be fulfilled with Independent Study or Reading and Research courses, up to a maximum of three (3).
- **Applied Mentored Research Experience**, undertaken in the context of a collaborative, faculty- or discipline expert-mentored project. This experience will not necessarily correlate to the students' own research project but instead expose them to the work of knowledge production as "apprentices" to experts in a humanistic field. This could include opportunities within a structured research experience with College partners (Smart Museum of Art (<https://smartmuseum.uchicago.edu/>), Institute for the Study of Ancient Cultures (<https://isac.uchicago.edu/>), archaeological fieldwork, the UChicago and University of Sussex International Junior Research Associates Program (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/undergraduate-research/uchicago-usussex-international-jr-research-associates-program/>), etc.) or as a research assistantship for an individual faculty member. Majors will receive a stipend and, therefore, no course credit for this requirement. A mentored research experience in the biological, physical, or social sciences may count toward this requirement by petition.
- **Research Proposal Colloquium** (IRHU 29600 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029600>)) in the Spring Quarter of Year 3. Upon approval of their research proposal, students will receive the necessary financial support to pursue their research project over the summer between Years 3 and 4. Stipends cover living costs and may support travel and other necessary expenses in support of their research project.
- **BA Thesis Writing Colloquium** (IRHU 29800 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029800>)) in the Autumn Quarter of Year 4. Students are expected to complete their thesis by the end of the Autumn Quarter.
- In the Winter and Spring Quarters of Year 4, majors are expected to present their capstone research project to a wider audience by giving an **academic presentation** at the annual University of Chicago Undergraduate Research Symposium (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/uchicagoresearchsymposium/>) or at another academic conference, for which IRHUM will provide the necessary financial support, as needed.

Note: Students double-majoring can double-count up to three of the six courses in the self-designed program of humanistic study between the two majors and write only a single BA thesis (counting for both majors). IRHU 29600 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029600>) Research Proposal Colloquium and IRHU 29800 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029800>) BA Thesis Writing Colloquium cannot be replaced by similar courses or seminars from other majors.

## SUMMARY OF REQUIREMENTS FOR THE MAJOR

Six courses of self-designed study		600
ENGL 13000	Academic and Professional Writing (The Little Red Schoolhouse)	100
IRHU 20100	Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design	100
Two Humanistic Research Seminars		200
Applied Mentored Research Experience		000
IRHU 29600	Research Proposal Colloquium	100
IRHU 29800	BA Thesis Writing Colloquium	100
Total Units		1200

## BA RESEARCH PROJECT OR CREATIVE INQUIRY CAPSTONE TIMELINE

The final BA research project, which can take the form of a written thesis or creative inquiry capstone project, is carefully scaffolded. Students design their research project in consultation with their faculty mentor during the course of IRHU 29600 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029600>) Research Proposal Colloquium in the Spring Quarter of Year 3. Upon approval of their research proposal, students can receive financial support to conduct their research over the summer between their junior and senior years, as their research demands. IRHU 29800 (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/search/?P=IRHU%2029800>) BA Thesis Writing Colloquium in the Autumn Quarter of Year 4 provides a structured and collaborative setting in which students can complete their project in a timely and closely mentored manner.

This schedule is designed to avoid the usual Spring Quarter crunch of BA thesis writing and to make it easier for students to use their research thesis or capstone project as a writing sample for fellowship or graduate school applications. The intentional design of the BA research thesis or creative inquiry capstone experience ensures that students are fully equipped and able to put into practice the principles of academic research design. This elevates the value of the research thesis as a training experience, as well as a measurable academic output. Additionally, the enhanced structure of the thesis experience provides students with the opportunity to translate a portion of their project into a refined research and writing sample for the purposes of graduate school and/or any postgraduate experience that expects advanced research training (e.g., national fellowships like Fulbright, Beinecke, Rhodes, Marshall, etc.). IRHUM also aims to train students in the dissemination of their research through written and oral communication to both expert and non-expert audiences. The final two quarters of Year 4 are reserved for attending undergraduate research conferences and symposia, writing up their research for publication, or preparing other forms of dissemination.

## SAMPLE PROGRAMS

While the potential for developing individual BA programs in Inquiry and Research in the Humanities is as great as the combined ingenuity, imagination, and interest of each student in consultation with the student's advisors, we have identified sample program plans below:

### Understanding Climate Change through Literature and Art

ENGL 12520	Climate Change in Literature, Art, and Film	100
GEOS 24220	Climate Foundations	100
GEOS 24705	Energy: Science, Technology, and Human Usage	100
PBPL 24756	Exploring the Resilient City	100
PHSC 13400	Global Warming: Understanding the Forecast	100
ENGL 13000	Academic and Professional Writing (The Little Red Schoolhouse)	100
IRHU 20100	Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design	100
Two Humanistic Research Seminars		200
Applied Mentored Research Experience		000
IRHU 29600	Research Proposal Colloquium	100
IRHU 29800	BA Thesis Writing Colloquium	100
Total Units		1100

### The History of Print

ARTH 18700	The Arts of Arabic and Persian Manuscripts	100
CLCV 21500	Medieval Book: History, Typology, Function	100
ENGL 45433	Book History: Methods, Practices, and Issues	100
GRMN 22312	Reforming Religious Media: Martin Luther and the Protestant Reformation	100
HIST 12203	Italian Renaissance: Petrarch, Machiavelli, and the Wars of Popes and Kings	100
HIST 25425	Censorship, Info Control, & Revolutions in Info Technology from the Printing Press to the Internet	100
ENGL 13000	Academic and Professional Writing (The Little Red Schoolhouse)	100
IRHU 20100	Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design	100
Two Humanistic Research Seminars		200
Applied Mentored Research Experience		000
IRHU 29600	Research Proposal Colloquium	100
IRHU 29800	BA Thesis Writing Colloquium	100
Total Units		1200

## APPLICATION

Interested students should apply for admission into the IRHUM program as soon as possible upon completion of general education requirements (typically by the end of the second year and, except in extraordinary circumstances, no later than the end of Autumn Quarter of the third year). Transfer students in particular are urged to apply at the earliest point that they can. An application is initiated by consulting with the IRHUM Faculty Chair and/or Co-Chair, to discuss the feasibility of designing and implementing the planned study and research program. After consultation, students who wish to pursue an application to the IRHUM program must submit a recent course transcript (with a minimum B average in preceding course work) and a two-part written proposal according to the following guidelines. Applications must be written in error-free, succinct, and well-crafted language in order to receive full consideration. Application information is provided on the major website at [college.uchicago.edu/academics/ir-hum](http://college.uchicago.edu/academics/ir-hum) (<https://college.uchicago.edu/academics/ir-hum/>).

## MOTIVATION STATEMENT

The first part of the proposal consists of a 750-word motivation statement, explaining the student's intellectual motivation and academic preparation for embarking on an individualized program of humanistic inquiry, and describing in broad outlines the research interest(s), as well as the program of study to pursue those interests. While not required, a brief statement indicating the student's current plans for a BA project and potential mentor may be included. This will further clarify the student's intentions for the IRHUM major and its final research experience for the review committee.

## COURSE PROSPECTUS

The second part of the proposal consists of a list of courses that comprise the complete program of study described in the motivation statement. This list may include courses the student has already taken as well as courses the student intends to take. While a list of proposed courses is a required part of the application, it is understood that these will undergo modification contingent on the availability of courses from year to year. Any changes to the course prospectus must be discussed with and approved by the IRHUM Co-Chair and then forwarded to the student's College adviser.

After the application materials have been reviewed by the IRHUM Faculty Chair and Co-Chair, a twenty-minute interview will be scheduled with the IRHUM Faculty Chair and Co-Chair. The IRHUM Faculty Chair will inform the student via email of the result of the application.

## GRADING

All courses in the major must be taken for a quality grade, including ENGL 13000.

## ADVISING

Close contact with the faculty and staff relevant to the student's career in IRHUM—including the student's College adviser, the IRHUM Faculty Chair, the IRHUM Co-Chair, and the student's faculty mentor—is essential in a program that involves so much individual initiative and experimentation. Students are encouraged to seek their advice whenever they have an intellectual or practical concern about progress in the major.

## FACULTY

Since IRHUM is an interdisciplinary major whose field of study encompasses all the offerings in the various departments and programs of the University (particularly in the Humanities Division), all faculty members of these varied departments and programs are related to IRHUM. IRHUM students may approach any University of Chicago faculty member who works in the student's field of interest with a request to serve as faculty adviser for the BA paper. Similarly, IRHUM students may take courses with any faculty member from any department of the University.

## COURSES FOR IRHUM MAJORS

IRHUM majors can choose course offerings from across the College that fit into their program of study, provided they are approved by the IRHUM Faculty Chair and the student's faculty mentor. Methodology courses from other programs and departments may—upon petition—count toward the requirements of the IRHUM major.

## STUDY ABROAD

IRHUM majors are encouraged to study abroad through direct exchange programs, for language study and/or for international research. Students interested in pursuing international engagement during their undergraduate experience should include that in their proposal and plan to discuss this with the Faculty Chair and Co-Chair. Depending on the program, it can require some extra planning, and while IRHUM aims to accommodate international study, planning ahead will ensure that the major requirements are met.

## ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES

Majors are strongly encouraged to consider the curricular offerings of the Parrhesia Program for Public Discourse (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/parrhesiaprogram/>), as well as the resources and training offered through the College Center for Research and Fellowships (<http://collegecatalog.uchicago.edu/thecollege/researchopportunities/>). IRHUM majors are particularly competitive for major fellowship opportunities including, though not limited to, Fulbright (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/opportunity/fulbright->

us-student-program/), Beinecke (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/opportunity/beinecke-scholarship/>), Rhodes (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/national-fellowships/marshall-mitchell-and-rhodes-scholarships/>), Marshall (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/national-fellowships/marshall-mitchell-and-rhodes-scholarships/>), Ertegun (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/opportunity/mica-and-ahmet-ertegun-graduate-scholarship-programme-humanities/>), and Gates Cambridge (<https://ccrf.uchicago.edu/opportunity/gates-cambridge-scholarship/>).

## INQUIRY AND RESEARCH IN THE HUMANITIES COURSES

### **IRHU 20100. Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design. 100 Units.**

This seminar will introduce majors to the basic tenets of humanistic inquiry, including the formulation and testing of research questions and lines of inquiry, and expose students to best practices in research design. In partnership with the University Libraries, this course will train students in information literacy, introduce them to best practices in research design (feasibility, assessment of primary and secondary source material, collation of resources), as well as expose them to research ethics and the principles of culturally sensitive research practices. The course will also include training in data use and management and introduce students to research tools and technology available to them through the University Library system, as well as other on- and off-campus resources.

Instructor(s): N. Fazio Terms Offered: Winter

### **IRHU 27002. Compiling and Mediating Environmental History. 100 Units.**

How do audiovisual media archives inform both the research and presentation of environmental history? Social media posts, fiction film, photographs from geological surveys, and urban field recordings all index historical environmental conditions. Artists and scholars enlist such archives to reanimate lost and changed landscapes for contemporary audiences, raising historiographical questions about how research excavates, extracts, and assembles both image and sound. This course looks at a series of documentary films and online media projects that enlist media to narrate histories of socio-ecological interaction. These projects explore site-specific environmental crises as they were deliberately or inadvertently recorded by media, including the toxic legacies of U.S. Imperialism, the extraction economy of South African apartheid, or how Hollywood films unconsciously document the long-term impacts of climate change. Students will analyze these media objects alongside readings in media historiographical theory, environmental history, and documentary theory. The goal of this engagement is to guide students toward a final project that employs both research and creative practice to compile a report about an environmental historical case study that utilizes a media archive to make the argument. This course shows how humanistic inquiry into documentary media and the material conditions of media production can inform the assembly and presentation of environmental historical knowledge.

Instructor(s): Thomas Pringle Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): No production experience is required. This course partially fulfills the research seminar requirement for the IRHUM major.

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 26072

### **IRHU 27003. Violence and the State. 100 Units.**

Violence in modern states is at once exceptional and ever-present, thought of as aberration even as it is routinely employed. Focusing primarily on modern Europe and its colonial empires, this seminar will explore this contradiction in theory and practice. We will consider violence at the intersection of race, gender, and class. We will learn how various modern thinkers including Tocqueville, Weber, and Sorel theorized the place of violence in liberal society. We will read writers and activists like Frantz Fanon, Mohandas Gandhi, and Assia Djebar to understand the role of violence in empire and decolonization. Finally, we will connect this history to the present day by considering how it relates to police violence in the contemporary world.

Instructor(s): Yan Slobodkin Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): This course partially fulfills the research seminar requirement for the IRHUM major.

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 26068, HMRT 27003, GNSE 27005

### **IRHU 27006. Research in Archives: Human Bodies in History. 100 Units.**

How have we come to know and experience our bodies? This undergraduate seminar develops humanities research skills necessary to study the body in history. Spanning early modern cultural practices to modern medicine, science, and technology, this course explores how ideas and practices concerning the body have changed over time and how the body itself is shaped by culture and society. A major focus will be learning how to conduct different forms of historical research to produce cutting-edge humanities scholarship about the human body. Readings will introduce key themes and recent scholarship including work on disability, reproduction, race, gender, ethics, extreme environments, and identity. This dynamic research group will grapple with issues at the heart of our corporeal existence by combining perspectives from the history of science, medicine, and technology, cultural history, anthropology, and science and technology studies (STS).

Instructor(s): J. Bimm and I. Clever Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course partially fulfills the research seminar requirement for the IRHUM major.

Equivalent Course(s): KNOW 26076, GNSE 27006, HIST 25513, HIPS 27706

### **IRHU 27009. Normal People. 100 Units.**

Worrying about what's normal and what's not is an endemic feature of both our popular and scientific cultures. Is my intelligence above average? What about my height? Should I be feeling this way? Is there a pill for that? People seem to have always been concerned with fitting in, but the way of describing the general run of practices and conditions as "normal" is a rather recent phenomenon; testament to the vast influence of the modern

human sciences on how we understand ourselves and others. This research seminar will offer a broad historical overview of the ways that group behaviors and individual traits - bodily, moral, intellectual - were methodically described and measured in the past 200 years. We will become acquainted with the work of sociologists and anthropologists, psychiatrists and psychologists, polling experts and child development specialists, and ask about the kinds of people their efforts brought into being, from sexual perverts to the chronically depressed. The course will focus on the scientific theories and techniques used to distinguish the normal from the pathological, together with the new social institutions that translated this knowledge into forms of control. We will read Emile Durkheim on suicide rates and Cesare Lombroso on born criminals; learn about IQ tests and developmental milestones; and consider whether, with the advent of personalized medicine and self-data, we have indeed reached the "end of average."

Instructor(s): T. Arbel Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): This course partially fulfills the research seminar requirement for the IRHUM major.

Equivalent Course(s): HLTH 26074, KNOW 26074

#### **IRHU 29600. Research Proposal Colloquium. 100 Units.**

Building on the research skills majors have learned in Introduction to Humanistic Inquiry and Research Design [IRHU 20100], the two Research Seminars, and the mandatory Applied Mentored Research Experience, the Research Proposal Colloquium helps majors identify a relevant research topic/questions, design a feasible research project, establish a research timeline and formulate a clear and compelling proposal. The collaborative setting of the Research Proposal Colloquium complements the individual mentoring provided by the Faculty Advisor and the IRHUM Co-Chair. Upon approval of their research proposal by their Faculty Advisor, the IRHUM Faculty Chair, and Co-Chair, students are eligible to receive full financial support to conduct a portion of their research over the summer between their junior and senior years, as merited.

Instructor(s): TBD Terms Offered: TBD

Note(s): All IRHUM majors are required to take the Research Proposal Colloquium in the Spring Quarter of their third year.

#### **IRHU 29601. IRHUM Readings and Research Course. 100 Units.**

This course is primarily intended for students who are majoring in Inquiry and Research in the Humanities (IRHUM) and who can best meet program requirements by study and directed research under a faculty member's individual supervision. The subject, course of study, and requirements are arranged with the instructor, and must relate to the overall plan of the major and/or final research project. Prerequisite(s): Consent of Instructor and Director(s) of Undergraduate Studies and Major Advisor. Note(s): Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Form. Must be taken for a quality grade.

Terms Offered: Spring

#### **IRHU 29700. BA Thesis Writing Colloquium. 100 Units.**

Building on the Research Proposal Colloquium and the research undertaken over the summer, the BA Thesis Writing Colloquium provides a structured and collaborative setting, in which IRHUM majors receive instruction on effectively writing about their findings, workshop their efforts with their peers, and, ultimately, complete their mentored research project in a timely and productive manner. Like the Research Proposal Colloquium, the BA Thesis Writing Colloquium complements the individual mentoring provided by the Faculty Advisor and IRHU Co-Chair. Furthermore, IRHUM majors will receive support translating their research experience and output into competitive applications for graduate programs, research grants, and national fellowships.

Instructor(s): Nichole Fazio Terms Offered: Winter

#### **IRHU 29800. BA Thesis Writing Colloquium. 100 Units.**

Building on the Research Proposal Colloquium and the research undertaken over the summer, the BA Thesis Writing Colloquium provides a structured and collaborative setting, in which IRHUM majors receive instruction on effectively writing about their findings, workshop their efforts with their peers, and, ultimately, complete their mentored research project in a timely and productive manner. Like the Research Proposal Colloquium, the BA Thesis Writing Colloquium complements the individual mentoring provided by the Faculty Advisor and IRHU Co-Chair. Furthermore, IRHUM majors will receive support translating their research experience and output into competitive applications for graduate programs, research grants, and national fellowships.

Instructor(s): N. Fazio Terms Offered: Winter

Note(s): All IRHUM majors are required to take the Thesis Writing Colloquium in the Autumn Quarter of their fourth year.

