

An interdepartmental program

Courses of Study:
Minor

History of Ideas

Objectives

Santayana put it well: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it." To understand the significance of our beliefs and commitments—even to understand the significance of the questions and problems that beset us—we need to trace their sources and their history. Because ideas are expressed in social and political institutions as well as in philosophical, scientific, religious, and literary works, the program in the History of Ideas (HOID) is distinguished by its multidisciplinary approach. Since political structures and institutions are themselves articulated in vigorous intellectual debates, we need to understand the ideas that have formed and that continue to form them. HOID proposes to provide students with the historical background of the issues and values that have shaped their interests. It is intended to provide students with the skills and the knowledge, the guidance and the freedom to construct a focused and rigorous course of study, one that explores the historical transformation of a set of ideas and institutions across several traditional disciplines.

The program encourages students to integrate their HOID courses with their major and to include a wide range of areas in the sciences as well as in the humanities and social sciences.

Students who complete the requirements of the program receive a history of ideas certificate in the history of ideas and notations on their transcripts.

How to Become a Minor

Students normally apply to the program in the history of ideas any time before the end of their junior year. They are strongly encouraged to consult with the advisor in their major as well as with the director of the program.

Committee

Michael Randall, Chair
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Richard Gaskins
(American Studies)

Mark Hulliung
(History)

Robin Feuer Miller
(German, Russian, and East Asian
Languages and Literature)

David Powelstock
(German, Russian, and East Asian
Languages and Literature)

Bernard Yack
(Politics)

Faculty

**Michael Randall, Chair and Undergraduate
Advising Head**
(Romance and Comparative Literature)

Requirements for the Minor

Students will work with the HOID advisor to form a plan of study that draws upon and develops their particular interests. Such a program might trace the history of a particular theme, problem, or tradition (e.g., Platonism; or the idea of revolution in politics, science, or the arts) or it might trace the mutual influence of distinctive approaches to a subject.

A. Students must have taken at least one course in each of the following areas:

1. Literature and the arts.
2. History, Near Eastern and Judaic Studies, and philosophy.
3. Social sciences.

B. Students must take at least five courses whose substantive theme falls within the history of ideas, as determined by the HOID advisor. These courses must meet the following distribution requirements:

1. At least two courses within the field of their major.
2. One course in a related field.
3. HOID 127a (Seminar in the History of Ideas: Case Studies, the topic varies annually).

Students are strongly encouraged to construct individual curricular programs and to include areas of study that are not presently listed (e.g., biology, chemistry, environmental studies, mathematics, physics). Since courses and faculty interests vary from year to year, the list of courses recommended for the program will change annually.

Members in the program are invited to participate in the History of Ideas Student Forum. The forum provides the opportunity to present a problem or issue for discussion. Working individually or in groups, students propose a discussion topic and a list of readings.

Students are encouraged, but not required, to present a senior thesis. They may register for HOID 98a or b (Independent Study) to prepare their thesis.

Courses of Instruction

HOID 98a Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.
Usually offered every year.
Staff

HOID 98b Independent Study

Signature of the instructor required.
Usually offered every year.
Staff

(100-199) For Both Undergraduate and Graduate Students

HOID 101a Thinking about Ethics with Socrates

[hum]
Enrollment limited to 20.
Conducts Socratic discussions—on friendship, virtue, piety, courage, sex, knowledge, poetry, and justice—between Socrates represented in Plato's early Socratic dialogues and later philosophers who addressed those topics (Kant, Aquinas, Nagel, Descartes, Rorty, Wilde). Using the evidence of the Platonic dialogues, we shall enact the Trial of Socrates. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.
Staff

HOID 108b Greek and Roman Ethics: From Plato to the Stoics

[hum]
Devoted to tracing the major issues of early Western ethics: Is there a general conception of human nature and the human good? What is the relation between pleasure, virtue, and happiness? What are the conditions of responsible agency? What distinguishes voluntary from non-voluntary actions? What is the relationship between ethics and politics, between "local" and "universal" ethical norms? Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.
Staff

HOID 120a Immorality: Its Sources, Varieties, and Charms

[hum]
Traces the history of negative ethics, tracking transformations in conceptions of immorality: prohibitions of pollution and impurity, sin, vice, evil, malevolence, waywardness, outrageousness, incivility, criminality, and psychological pathology. What are sources of immorality? What marks a state of character as vile or despicable? Who judges? Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the spring of 2002.
Staff

HOID 124a Stoicism Now and Then

[hum]
Why be a Stoic? What needs and fears does Stoicism address? What are the resistances to it? What are the beliefs and practices, the philosophic assumptions and consequences of classical Stoicism? How has it been transformed historically? A close study of Greek and Roman Stoics, Spinoza, Kant, and Freud; Stoic influences on contemporary political theory and literary works. Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2002.
Staff

HOID 127a Seminar in the History of Ideas: Case Studies

[hum]
Brandeis faculty present case studies in the history of ideas as they affect the current agenda of their research agenda. Topics vary annually. Past topics have included conceptions of liberty and choice; conceptions of social progress; the idea of the good society; varieties of evil. Usually offered every year. Last offered in the spring of 2003.
Mr. Hulliung

HOID 130b Varieties of Liberty, Freedom, and Choice

[hum ss]
Conceptions of public, political liberty affect ideas of individual "free will" and vice versa. Traces the history of the mutual influence of arguments for political/social liberty and those for the "inner freedom" of individual conscience. Readings range from Sophocles and Thucydides to Isaiah Berlin and include selections from Augustine, Jonathan Edwards, Rousseau, Kant, Jefferson, Constitutional Amendments, Mill, Dostoyevsky, Rawls. Usually offered every fourth year. Last offered in the spring of 1999.
Staff

HOID 140a What is Philosophy: Politics? Science? Poetry? Religion?

[hum]
Enrollment limited to 25.
The history of the aims, roles, and styles of philosophy: dialogues (Plato), investigations (Aristotle), letters (Cicero), poetry (Lucretius), spiritual and intellectual autobiography (Augustine, Rousseau), polemical articles (Aquinas), essays (Bacon and Hume), political programs (Locke, Bentham, Mill), and systematic treatises (Descartes, Kant). Usually offered every third year. Last offered in the fall of 2000.
Staff

HOID 169a Reconciling Justice and Ethics

[hum]
Enrollment limited to 20.
Focusing on historical transformations in the ideal of universal equality, this seminar traces shifts in the relation between conceptions of justice and those of other ethical ideals, contrasting "Olympian justice" (Plato, Augustine, Aquinas, Kant) with "naturalistic emergent justice" (Rousseau, Hume, Rawls, Williams). Usually offered every second year. Last offered in the fall of 2001.
Staff

Elective Courses

The following is a partial list of approved program courses. Other courses may be elected with the approval of the program advisor. The courses approved for the program are not all given in any one year and students are advised to consult the *Course Schedule* for each semester.

AMST 100a

Classic Texts in the American Experience: Through the Civil War

AMST 180b

Topics in the History of American Education

AMST 187a

The Legal Boundaries of Public and Private Life

ANTH 80a

World Religions

ANTH 166a

The Nature of Human Nature

ANTH 187a

Materials Research in Archeology, I

CLAS 115b

Topics in Greek and Roman History

CLAS 170

Classical Mythology

COML 102a

Love in the Middle Ages

COML 103b

Madness and Folly in Renaissance Literature

COML 106a

European Romanticism

COML 127a

Night, Death, and the Devil: The Fantastic and the Grotesque

COML 130a

Poetic Voices of Protest

COML 147b

The City: Metropolitan Glory and Urban Alienation

- COML 152a**
The Rise and Fall of Humanism
- COML 185a**
Dickens and Dostoevsky
- ENG 3a**
The Renaissance
- ENG 5a**
Nineteenth-Century Survey
- ENG 6a**
American Literature from 1832 to 1900
- ENG 7a**
American Literature from 1900 to 2000
- ENG 10a**
Canonical Precursors: Genesis, Homer, Sappho, Ovid, Virgil
- ENG 23a**
Domains of Seventeenth-Century Performance
- ENG 25a**
Romanticism I: Blake, Wordsworth, and Coleridge
- ENG 44a**
Rights: Theory and Rhetoric
- ENG 75b**
The Victorian Novel
- ENG 80a**
Readings in the Short Novel
- ENG 105b**
Nineteenth-Century Novel
- ENG 111a**
Theories of the Self
- ENG 116b**
Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Afro-American Literature
- ENG 117b**
The Autobiographical Imagination
- ENG 124a**
Reason and Ridicule: The Literature of Britain in the Enlightenment
- ENG 125b**
Romanticism II: Byron, Shelley, and Keats
- ENG 126a**
American Realism and Naturalism, 1865-1900
- ENG 134a**
The Woman of Letters
- ENG 135b**
Romanticism
- ENG 140a**
Satire and its Uses
- ENG 144b**
The Body as Text: Castiglione to Locke
- ENG 171a**
History of Literary Criticism
- FA 21b**
Survey of Western Architecture
- FA 41a**
Art and the Origins of Europe
- FA 42b**
The Age of Cathedrals
- FA 43a**
The Art of Medieval England
- FA 45a**
St. Peter's and the Vatican
- FA 51a**
Art of the Early Renaissance in Italy
- FA 54b**
Renaissance Art in Northern Europe
- FA 75a**
High Art/Low Art: Modern Art and Popular Culture
- FA 76b**
History of Photography
- FA 170b**
Nineteenth-Century European Painting and Sculpture
- FA 172a**
History of Modern Sculpture
- FA 174b**
Post-Impressionism and Symbolism 1880-1910
- FREN 120a**
The French Middle Ages
- FREN 122b**
The Renaissance
- FREN 130a**
The Seventeenth Century
- FREN 135a**
The Nineteenth Century
- FECS 145a**
Topics in French Fiction in Translation
- GECS 108a**
The German Tradition I: Lessing to Nietzsche
- GECS 183b**
A History of Death
- GER 120a**
German Enlightenment and Classicism
- HIST 80a**
Introduction to East Asian Civilization
- HIST 80b**
East Asia in the Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries
- HIST 110a**
The Civilization of the Early Middle Ages
- HIST 110b**
The Civilization of the High and Late Middle Ages
- HIST 123a**
The Renaissance
- HIST 123b**
Reformation Europe (1400-1600)
- HIST 124b**
Science in the Ancient Medieval World
- HIST 127b**
Household and Family in Late Medieval and Early Modern Europe (1300-1800)
- HIST 128a**
Ecological Imperialism: The Environmental Consequences of Early Modern Expansion
- HIST 131a**
The Scientific Revolution
- HIST 131b**
Science and Technology in the Twentieth Century
- HIST 132a**
European Thought and Culture: Marlowe to Mill
- HIST 132b**
European Thought and Culture since Darwin
- HIST 133a**
Politics of the Enlightenment
- HIST 152a**
The Literature of American History
- HIST 163a**
Socialism and Communism in American History
- HIST 169a**
Thought and Culture in Modern America
- HIST 183b**
Community and Alienation: Social Theory from Hegel to Freud
- HIST 192b**
Romantic and Existentialist Political Thought
- HIST 195a**
American Political Thought: From the Revolution to the Civil War
- HIST 195b**
American Political Thought: From the Gilded Age through the New Deal

HUM 10a The Western Canon	NEJS 136b (formerly NEJS 168b) History and Culture of the Jews in East-Central Europe, 1914 to the Present	RECS 130a Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature
IECS 140a Dante's <i>Divine Comedy</i>	NEJS 140a History of the Jews from the Maccabees to 1497	RECS 135a The Short Story in Russia
LAT 118b Roman Historians	NEJS 152b Anti-Judaism, Anti-Semetism, and Anti-Zionism	RECS 137a The Heroine in Nineteenth-Century Russian Literature
MUS 2a The Western Tradition as Seen through Chamber Music	PHIL 28a Introduction to Western Political Thought	RECS 146a Dostoevsky
MUS 38a A History of Music in the United States	PHIL 122a Classical Political Theory	RECS 147b Tolstoy
MUS 57a Music and Culture: From Romanticism to the Modern Era	PHIL 161a Plato	RECS 148a Russian Drama
NEJS 55a (formerly NEJS 132b) Ethics and the Jewish Political Tradition	PHIL 162b Aristotle	SOC 200a Contemporary Social Theory
NEJS 59b (formerly 105b) The Philosophy of Jewish Law	POL 10a Introduction to Political Theory	SOC 201a Classical and Critical Theory
NEJS 113b Law in the Bible and the Ancient Near East	POL 126b Seminar: Ideas and Intellectuals in Politics	SPAN 110a Introduction to Peninsular Spanish Literature
NEJS 116a (formerly NEJS 156b) Ancient Near Eastern Religion and Mythology	POL 184a Utopia and Power in Modern Political Thought	SPAN 170a Topics in Eighteenth- and Nineteenth-Century Spanish Literature
NEJS 136a (formerly NEJS 168a) History and Culture of the Jews in East-Central Europe to 1914	POL 186b Classical Political Thought	SECS 150a Golden Age Drama and Society
	POL 192b Seminar: Topics in Law and Political Theory	THA 100a Theater Texts and Theory I
	POL 194a Politics and the Novel	THA 100b Theater Texts and Theory II

Independent Interdisciplinary Major

In choosing a major, a student may propose a program that combines academic work in several departments. The proposal requires the support of at least two departments and one member of each supporting department who will agree to serve on the student's major committee. This program shall be limited to a total of about 30 students in the College of Arts and Sciences. An independent interdisciplinary major must be declared before the end of the student's junior year.

Students who wish to develop a proposal for an independent interdisciplinary major should consult the Office of Undergraduate Academic Affairs.