DIRECTED STUDIES

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Directed Studies, a selective program for freshmen, is an interdisciplinary introduction to some of the most influential texts that have shaped Western civilization. Spanning works from ancient Greece to the twentieth century, Directed Studies is a coherent program of study that encourages students to put rich and complex texts into conversation with one another across time and to make connections across traditional disciplinary boundaries. Students in Directed Studies learn to analyze challenging and urgent texts, become valuable members of seminar discussions, and write clear and persuasive analytic essays.

The Directed Studies program consists of three integrated full-year courses in Literature, Philosophy, and Historical and Political Thought. One hundred twenty-five members of the freshman class are accepted each year. Students entering the program must enroll in all three courses and are expected to enroll for both terms.

Each of the three courses meets weekly for one lecture and two seminars. Seminars have a maximum of eighteen students and provide an opportunity to work closely with Yale faculty. The regular lectures and seminars are complemented by a series of colloquia that feature distinguished speakers from within and without Yale. Study of written texts is enhanced by sessions at the Yale Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Prerequisites: Directed Studies has no prerequisites and is designed for students with or without any background in humanities or Western civilization, ancient or modern. (In order to enroll for the second term, students must have completed the first term’s courses.) Directed Studies enables students to fulfill a number of Yale College distributional requirements, including the two required course credits in the humanities and arts (HU), the two required course credits in the social sciences (SO), and the two required course credits in writing (WR). Moreover, courses taken in Directed Studies can be counted toward satisfying requirements in a variety of majors. For example, both terms of DRST 005, 006, Historical and Political Thought, may be counted toward the History major, and one term may be counted toward the major in Political Science; both terms of DRST 001, 002, Literature, may be counted toward the Literature major. The program serves as a strong foundation for all majors in Yale College, including those in any of the STEM fields, and is an outstanding basis for careers in law, public policy, business, education, the arts, journalism, consulting, engineering, and medicine.