

# DIRECTED STUDIES

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Directed Studies (DS), a selective program for first-year students, is a seminar-based interdisciplinary introduction to a wide selection of influential texts that have shaped many Western traditions and cultures. Spanning works from the ancient Mediterranean to the present, 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 across disciplinary boundaries. Students in Directed Studies learn to analyze challenging and urgent texts, to participate meaningfully in seminar discussions, and to write clear and persuasive analytic essays.

## PREREQUISITES

Directed Studies has no prerequisites and is designed for students with or without any background in humanities or Western thought, ancient or modern. Students must enroll in the full slate of Directed Studies courses in both semesters of the program. (In order to enroll for the second term, students must have completed the first term's courses.)

## UNIQUE TO THE PROGRAM

The Directed Studies program consists of three integrated full-year courses in Literature, Philosophy, and Historical and Political Thought. Approximately ten percent of the first-year class are accepted each year. Students entering the program must enroll in all three courses and are expected to enroll for both semesters. Students participating in DS become members of a close-knit and supportive intellectual cohort that endures well beyond the end of the first year.

Each of the three Directed Studies courses meets weekly for two seminars and one lecture. Seminars have a maximum of fifteen students and provide an opportunity to work closely with Yale faculty. The regular lectures and seminars are complemented by guest lectures that feature distinguished speakers from Yale and beyond. Our study of written texts is enhanced by special sessions at the Yale Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library.

Directed Studies fulfills 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 DS 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 DS Literature may be counted toward the Comparative Literature major. The program serves as a strong foundation for all majors in Yale College, including many STEM fields, and is an outstanding basis for careers in law, public policy, business, education, the arts, journalism, consulting, engineering, and medicine.

Directed Studies (DS), a selective program for first-year students, is an interdisciplinary introduction to influential texts that have shaped many Western traditions, spanning from ancient cultures in Greece and the Near East to the present. A coherent program of study, DS encourages students to put rich and complex texts into conversation with one another across disciplinary boundaries. Students in Directed Studies learn to analyze challenging and urgent texts, to participate meaningfully in seminar discussions, and to write clear and persuasive analytic essays.

Each of the three courses meets weekly for one lecture and two seminars. Lectures provide a general introduction to the works studied and situate them in their historical and cultural context. Seminars have a maximum of fifteen students and provide an opportunity to work closely with Yale faculty. For each course, students write three papers each semester and take one final examination. Assignments are coordinated among the courses so that only one paper is due in any given week.

The regular lectures and seminars are complemented by colloquia that feature distinguished speakers from Yale and beyond. Recent colloquia have included Harvard professor Henry Louis Gates, Jr., on W.E.B. DuBois, Poet Laureate Robert Pinsky on translating Dante's *Inferno*, and British classicist Mary Beard on reading Roman history. Our study of written texts is enhanced by special sessions at the Yale Art Gallery, the Yale Center for British Art, and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, as well as film screenings and theater visits.

Directed Studies has no prerequisites and is designed for students with or without any background in humanities or Western civilization, ancient or modern. While Directed Studies provides one of the most challenging intellectual experiences available at Yale College, DS students participate in the full range of activities at Yale.

Directed Studies fulfills a number of distributional requirements for Yale College, 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, DS courses can be counted toward several majors. For example, both semesters of DS Literature may be counted toward the Literature major, both semesters of DS Historical and Political Thought may be counted toward the History major and one semester can be counted toward the major in Political Science. Directed Studies is a strong foundation for all majors in Yale College, including those in the STEM fields, and is an outstanding basis for careers in law, business, public policy, education, the arts, journalism, consulting, and even engineering and medicine.

Approximately ten percent of each first-year class is admitted to Directed Studies. The Yale College Admissions Office offers some students admission to Directed Studies on the basis of their Yale College application. All other students who matriculate at Yale are invited to apply to Directed Studies. For more information about Directed Studies and a link to the application, please visit the Directed Studies website.

Students enrolled in Directed Studies must take *all three* of the following yearlong course sequences:

- **DRST 001 and 002, Directed Studies: Literature**, examines selected works of literature from classical antiquity to the twentieth century with the aim of exploring how authors build upon and innovate within the Western tradition. The fall

semester of DS Literature includes Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Sappho, Virgil, Near Eastern religious texts, and Dante. The spring semester explores works by Petrarch, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Goethe, Flaubert, Tolstoy, Virginia Woolf, and Derek Walcott.

- **DRST 003 and 004, Directed Studies: Philosophy**, examines major figures in the history of Western philosophy with the aim of studying approaches to urgent and enduring philosophical questions. DS Philosophy includes theories of the nature of knowledge, value, and reality. The first semester emphasizes works of Plato and Aristotle as well as Scholastic and medieval Arabic philosophers. The second semester includes thinkers from the modern era, such as Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, Hegel, Frederick Douglass, Friedrich Nietzsche, Simone de Beauvoir, and Iris Murdoch.
- **DRST 005 and 006, Directed Studies: Historical and Political Thought**, surveys major works of Western historical and political thought from the Greeks to the twentieth century. Writers considered in the fall semester include Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Livy, Tacitus, Augustine, Al-Farabi, and Thomas Aquinas, followed in the spring by Machiavelli, Luther, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Wollstonecraft, Tocqueville, Marx, Nietzsche, Arendt, and W.E.B. DuBois.

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