

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.

Courses

*** DRST 001a, Directed Studies: Literature** Staff

An examination of major literary works with an aim of understanding how a tradition develops. In the fall term, works and authors include Homer, Aeschylus, Sophocles, Virgil, the Bible, and Dante. In the spring term, authors vary somewhat from year to year and include Petrarch, Cervantes, Shakespeare, Milton, Wordsworth, Goethe, Tolstoy, Proust, and Eliot. WR, HU

*** DRST 003a, Directed Studies: Philosophy** Staff

An examination of major figures in the history of Western philosophy with an aim of discerning characteristic philosophical problems and their interconnections. Emphasis on Plato and Aristotle in the fall term. In the spring term, modern philosophers include Descartes, Berkeley, Hume, Kant, and Nietzsche. WR, HU

*** DRST 005a, Directed Studies: Historical and Political Thought** Staff

A study of works of primary importance to political thought and intellectual history. Focus on the role of ideas in shaping events, institutions, and the fate of the individual. In the fall term, Herodotus, Thucydides, Plato, Aristotle, Augustine, and Aquinas. In the spring term, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Locke, Rousseau, Burke, Tocqueville, Emerson, Marx, Nietzsche, and Arendt. SO