

Literary Studies

Learning Goals

1. To develop a broad awareness of general literary developments and significant individual works in multiple literary traditions from classical antiquity to the contemporary period.
2. To develop comprehensive knowledge of specific works of some 30 designated major authors, ranging (in the West) from Homer and Sophocles to Dante, Cervantes, Shakespeare, and Goethe; to Wordsworth, Melville, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy; to modern writers like Proust, Kafka, Mann, Joyce, Faulkner, and Borges; and (in the East) from Wang Wei and Lady Murasaki to Lu Xun and Natsume Soseki.
3. To demonstrate the ability to read works of literature in at least one language other than English.
4. To attain a reasonable mastery of a single body of literature (for example, works in a particular language, historical period, or literary genre, or linked by their preoccupation with a particular recurring theme or imaginative pattern).
5. To conceive and execute substantial independent projects, and to produce critical and interpretive writing of high quality.

About the major

The Program in Literary Studies is designed for students who wish to secure a comprehensive background in major works of world literature, as well as an ability to experience a literary text directly in a language other than English.

The program draws upon the combined resources of the individual language and literature departments and provides undergraduates with access to the literature curriculum as a whole, allowing them to count toward requirements for the major any literature course offered by any department—including programs at other institutions in the United States and elsewhere in the world. In sum, the Literary Studies Program enables students to achieve a broad awareness of a variety of major literatures of different periods, while at the same time encouraging them to demonstrate a mastery of a single body of literature (e.g., works limited to a particular language, period, or genre).

“In my work, I conduct research across my company and the market, I try to determine the value of different strategies, and I connect with people to understand their perspectives. The skills of close reading, critical thinking, and communication make it possible for me to do my job.”

—Rachel Liddell '15
Engagement Leader,
IBM Watson

Reasons you might choose this major

- You have a significant interest in literature—not just the literature with which you may already be familiar in your native language, but the imaginative achievements of authors whose works were conceived in other cultures, in other times and places.
- You want to broaden and deepen your literary awareness by engaging works of magnitude by designated authors from both the Western and Eastern Hemispheres.
- You are determined to develop your analytic and interpretive skills, and your ambitions and abilities as a writer.
- You look forward to a possible career in teaching, publishing, media communications, law, medicine, international relations, theater, the visual arts, or any of the other professional paths that literary studies graduates have been prepared for by their background and training to pursue successfully over the past few decades.



Translating Learning into Professional Competencies

Throughout your time at Middlebury, you will develop and enhance the following core professional competencies, skills, and dispositions highly valued by employers that will prepare you for leadership and success in any given field:

Critical Thinking: Exercise sound reasoning to analyze issues, make decisions, and overcome problems.

Oral/Written Communications: Articulate thoughts and ideas clearly and effectively in written and oral forms.

Teamwork/Collaboration: Build collaborative relationships with colleagues and customers from diverse backgrounds.

Leadership: Leverage the strengths of others to achieve common goals, and use interpersonal skills to coach and develop others.

Professionalism/Work Ethic: Demonstrate personal accountability and effective work habits.

Global/Intercultural Fluency: Value, respect, and learn from diverse cultures, races, ages, genders, sexual orientations, and religions.

Digital Technology: Leverage existing digital technologies ethically and efficiently to solve problems, complete tasks, and accomplish goals.

Career Management: Identify and articulate one's skills, strengths, knowledge, and experiences relevant to career goals, and identify areas necessary for professional development.

Where literary studies majors go

Applying your learning through internships . . .

Students pursue internships and research in a variety of fields, enabling them to apply their liberal arts learning in real-world settings. Internships, research, and self-directed projects enrich your academic experience and help prepare you for life after Middlebury. Students have interned or done research at the following:

American Museum of Natural History

McSweeney's Books

U.S. Department of Education

Centre for the Book

Wheelhouse Creative

Vermont Public Radio

Random House Inc.

Scholastic Inc.

GlobalPost

Bloomsbury Publishing

The Office of U.S. Senator Jeanne Shaheen

Stateless Media

Addison Independent

Emerging Asia Consulting Group

Magnum Foundation

Women's Health

Global Frontier Missions

The National Archives and Records Administration

Cosmopolitan

. . . leading to meaningful, dynamic, and engaging career paths.

See just some of the many interesting ways our graduates have applied their liberal arts learning to engage the world. If you want to see what other Middlebury alumni are doing now, log into Midd2Midd and search by major. go/midd2midd

Epiphany Magazine, Managing Editor

Authorea, Director of Business Development

California Academy of Sciences, Senior Exhibit Project Manager

Avalara, Vice President, Corporate Communications

Bloomberg View, Editorial Writer

Weathermob, Inc., Founder, CEO

Fairbanks Museum, Director, External Relations

Perseus Books Group/Hachette Book Group, Vice President, International Rights Manager

Little Green Light, President and Cofounder

The Field, Executive Director

Partners Healthcare System, Financial Analyst

Insight Partners and Insight Collaborative, President and Cofounder

HBO, Vice President, Corporate Affairs

Disney Interactive, Assistant Chief Counsel

Storyboard, Founder and Principal Writer and Communications Consult

Comcast, Senior Director, Applied Analytics, Enterprise Bus. Intel.

Ernst & Young, Partner and Principal

Albrecht Immigration Strategies, PC, Partner, Principal

PC Connection Inc., Engineer

ACLU of Colorado, Communications Associate

PBS NewsHour, Reporter-Producer, Science Unit

The MOTH, Storytelling Coach

Fox Broadcasting, Drama Programming and Development