

This course is considered a “Humanities Elective” What are the Humanities?

The **humanities** are **academic disciplines** that study human culture, using methods that are primarily **critical**, or **speculative**, and have a significant historical element[1]—as distinguished from the mainly **empirical** approaches of the **natural sciences**. [1] The humanities include **ancient and modern languages**, **literature**, **philosophy**, **religion**, and **visual and performing arts** such as **music** and **theatre**. The humanities that are also sometimes regarded as **social sciences** include **history**, **anthropology**, **area studies**, **communication studies**, **cultural studies**, **law** and **linguistics**.

Scholars in the humanities are "humanities scholars" or *humanists*. [2] The term "humanist" also describes the philosophical position of **humanism**, which some "**antihumanist**" scholars in the humanities reject. Some **secondary schools** offer humanities classes, usually consisting of **English literature**, **global studies**, and **art**.

Human disciplines like **history**, **cultural anthropology**, and **psychoanalysis** study subject matters that the **experimental method** does not apply to—and instead mainly use the **comparative method**[3] and **comparative research**.

Why are Humanities classes important?

Insights Into Everything

Through exploration of the humanities we learn how to think creatively and critically, to reason, and to ask questions. Because these skills allow us to gain new insights into everything from poetry and paintings to business models and politics, humanistic subjects have been at the heart of a liberal arts education since the ancient Greeks first used them to educate their citizens.

Understanding Our World

Research into the human experience adds to our knowledge about our world. Through the work of humanities scholars, we learn about the values of different cultures, about what goes into making a work of art, about how history is made. Their efforts preserve the great accomplishments of the past, help us understand the world we live in, and give us tools to imagine the future.

Bringing Clarity to the Future

Today, humanistic knowledge continues to provide the ideal foundation for exploring and understanding the human experience. Investigating a branch of philosophy might get you thinking about ethical questions. Learning another language might help you gain an appreciation for the similarities in different cultures. Contemplating a sculpture might make you think about how an artist's life affected her creative decisions. Reading a book from another region of the world, might help you think about the meaning of democracy. Listening to a history course might help you better understand the past, while at the same time offer you a clearer picture of the future.