HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

Humanities Institute

Humanities Institute Director: Jason Schlude

A Good Life for the Common Good

The humanities are essential for living lives of purpose that lead to success and fulfillment. At the Humanities Institute (HI), we help students find this purpose and understand the relationships that are the fabric of human life. As they transform themselves, so they transform our world—for the better.

Mission:

The Humanities Institute (HI) is a team of faculty, staff, students, alumni, and volunteers dedicated to the audacious: how to revitalize liberal arts education by re-engaging students with the human experience to promote their lifelong growth, success, and joy. We help students to cultivate curiosity and creativity, find meaning in their own stories and the rich record of human ideas, and exercise sound judgment when solving problems in any sphere and of every scale. Through the humanities they discover their purpose and hone skills necessary to achieve it. They learn the shared endeavor to understand humanity is a powerful catalyst for positive action.

Seminars for Life

How important is it to live The Good Life, know The Price of Liberty, have a Grand Strategy? In our Seminars for Life, students will find out. Each of our seminars offers opportunities to study subjects essential for success, resilience and legacy. This seminar experience guides students to become change-makers in a world that needs them.

Each course is a team-taught, interdisciplinary seminar centered on the human experience and integrating the unique perspectives of two teachers and the student. The result is a three-dimensional worldview and treasure trove of experience that shows the true power of a liberal arts education.

Every day, across both campuses, we see that Bennies and Johnnies are curious, understand the power of imaginative thinking and seek to make an impact with their lives. Through Seminars for Life in the Humanities Institute, we're remaking the humanities for modern students, one life-changing class at a time.

Course Offerings

HUMN 300D The Good Life (4 Credits)
What is the good life? What is a good life? As a student at a liberal arts college, you're probably asking yourself both questions, and more. We'll explore them from a variety of angles, using concepts and tools from economics and philosophy. What counts as success? Is it bad to want to make money? Is love really all you need? What makes life meaningful? This class is a space to read, write, discuss, argue, ponder, and dig around in the sandbox created by these questions and start to develop your own vision of the good life.
Prerequisites: None
Restrictions: Students with the 2026-2027 Registration Cohort attribute may not enroll.
Attributes: Human Experience (HE), Social World (SW), Thematic Encounter3 - Justice

HUMN 300E The Price of Liberty (4 Credits)
This course is about democracy—and you. How has it shaped you, and how will you shape it? Democracies offer citizens degrees and types of freedom. This informs your political identity as an individual and as a member of groups. Here we are not speaking of political party, though that does affect us. We are interested in something more fundamental—your identity as a citizen in a democracy. What has given form to that identity? What are its consequences and responsibilities? What is your future in that role? As a history course, "The Price of Liberty" explores how ancient history influences your political identity today, and in it we engage some of the most powerful political literature ever written. As a political science course, it examines the theoretical and applied reasons for expanding as well as limiting democracy. We study what makes democracies work well and what weakens or destroys them. This course invites you to consider your role as a citizen not only in the classroom, but also in the wider polity. Here you will convert your study to citizenship in action. Ambitious? Maybe. But let's be honest: so is democracy.
Prerequisites: None
Restrictions: Students with the 2026-2027 Registration Cohort attribute may not enroll.
Attributes: Human Experience (HE), Social World (SW), Thematic Encounter3 - Justice