

WORLD LITERATURE, MA

Guilford House
 Phone: 216.368.2303; Fax: 216.368.2216
 Margaretmary Daley, Program Director
 margaretmary.daley@case.edu

More Information: <https://artsci.case.edu/world-literature>

Degree: Master of Arts (MA)
Field of Study: World Literature

Program Overview

"I don't know what literature is exactly, but I know it makes me feel like I'm soaring." – Unknown

The study of world literature, traditionally called comparative literature, involves a global approach to the art of literature in all its forms. "Literature" is a unique way of using language that seeks to express human wants and needs through poetic techniques, whether in prose, poetry, drama, or song. Cultures have always turned to literature—whether in oral or written form—to express basic values, concerns, despairs, dreams, and hopes. Literature comments on what "is," and reaches for what "might be." Cultural identity is created in part through literature, and literature is used to question—at times even undermine—that identity. Literature may be a conservative force, emphasizing traditions, or a revolutionary force, provoking change from within.

The interaction of literatures from various regions of the world also transforms the art, as authors influence each other in what we might call a "global writing experiment." World Literature redefines the concept of "minor" or "third world" literatures, as it considers "marginal" artistic expressions to be as worthy of study as any classical tradition of the West or East.

The World Literature Program maintains the comparative spirit of the discipline, offering courses on individual authors, literary periods, regional literatures, themes, and schools of criticism.

The World Literature Program is fundamentally interdisciplinary. Courses come mostly from the Departments of Modern Languages and Literatures, Classics, and English, but students may also take approved courses from the Departments of Theater and Religious Studies. The major in World Literature requires reading in at least one language other than English, thus emphasizing that language and literature are imbricated. Film, as a narrative art, is also included in World Literature, as are some courses in linguistics.

Graduate Policies

For graduate policies and procedures, please review the School of Graduate Studies section of the General Bulletin.

Program Requirements

The World Literature Program offers a master of arts degree. Students pursuing the MA take courses (consisting of 30 credit hours) from a variety of genres and regions of the world. They take an MA exam in lieu of writing a thesis. Students with an MA in World Literature may go on to a PhD program in a variety of fields, teach, conduct research for

humanities agencies or institutions, or work for global programs and institutions.