



UNIVERSITY OF ST. THOMAS

Master in Liberal Arts

MLA Seminars are often offered with the catalog number “MLMLA 6393”. The courses listed below are those that were offered in recent semesters with this designation.

MLMLA 6393 - Media and Society

As the mass media are ubiquitous, media effects on the audience, society, and culture are assumed. The amount of impact depends upon the prevailing political, social and cultural climate as well as individual audience member composition. The relationship between the medial and society is complex. Given these assumptions and the complexity of the subject matter, the course purposes are: to synthesize and evaluate past and current mass media theory and research; to explore the role of history on the state of mass media today; to debate key media issues; and to create a research paper of publishable quality.

MLMLA 6393 – Women from Classical Mythology

This literature course can be defined as an academic quest for “the female heroic” in Western literature, starting with the Homeric Hymns, moving through many of the classical tragedies about women, and concluding with a glance at the journey these characters or archetypes have made into contemporary literary culture.

MLMLA 6393 - Public Opinion in America

This course explores American public opinion and political behavior in a broad fashion, giving an exposure to the substance of that opinion and the context in which it occurs. The course will focus on several major areas: 1) key factors that influence individuals’ opinions, 2) the content of public opinions on racial, social, and foreign policy issues, 3) how opinion is organized through core values and partisanship, 4) the role of public opinion in elections and political participation, and finally, 5) questions of public trust and attempts by political elites to mold public opinion.

MLMLA 6393 - Psychology of Emotions

This multi-disciplinary course will explore research and theory related to emotion and emotion regulation. Additionally, we will explore biological, social and cultural influences on emotional development, as well as how researchers measure emotions. The course examines how the nature of emotional expression changes with age and emotion regulation strategies that support and maintain both positive and negative emotion including how these strategies change with age and how they can be practiced and applied to enhance your own well-being.

MLMLA 6393 - Pressure Politics: Interests Groups

This course explores patterns of participation and “pressure politics” in the American polity through the examination of the role interest groups, political parties and other organized forms of representation play. Special attention will be paid to lobbyists, party factions and their impact on public opinion and the political behavior of the American electorate.

MLMLA 6393 - The “American Girl” in Literature

This seminar will address the ways in which adult society desires to form the character of the American female as she transitions from childhood to adulthood through the books it provides for her. Accompanied by examination of such influential factors as law, social and public health policy, library services, education, religion, psychology, and etiquette, we will read both the Young Adult and the adult literature which presents the American Girl at her ideal. We will also read depictions of American girlhoods by women outside the societal norm because of ethnicity/race, economic background, immigration status, or education.

MLMLA 6393 - Genre Fiction

The term “Genre Fiction” refers to fiction written romance, detective, horror, science fiction, western, and fantasy, but there are several other genres. This course will: survey the history and development of the genre phenomenon and of the individual genres; identify the characteristics of the main genres; identify the social and individual needs and desires addressed by genre literature; assess the literary values of the genres and of individual authors writing within the genres; seek answers to the question whether it is possible for a genre author to produce “great” or “important” work. The reading list will include examples from the main genres, but individual, independent reading is essential to broaden the class’s attention to other examples.

MLMLA 6393 - Third World Politics

This course seeks to show the relation between democracy, social justice and the rule of law with the possibility of a more stable and economically booming future for a group of countries that only in the introduction and title of this course will be referred to as “Third World” Countries. Market-oriented changes inevitably produced resistance among dissenting groups and triggered new configurations of opposition. Yet, these configurations could be of enormous value for the process of democratization and economic integration, if they are incorporated to the equation through the development of social capital, education for all, and the respect and enforcement of fundamental human rights.

MLMLA 6393 - The American South

The South is the largest region in the United States. Its politics and culture have changed more than any other part of the nation. This course explores the major qualities that make the American South a distinct region. Themes include the role of race and class in the politics of the region, change and continuity in Southern society, and Southern cultural exceptionalism as seen through its music, politics, literature, art, and religion in historical and contemporary contexts. Upon completion, students should be able to identify the characteristics that distinguish Southern culture.

MLMLA 6393 - Consuming Culture

This course examines consumption as a cultural practice for creating meaning and presenting identities rather than addressing the economic transactions of consumerism. Looking at various consumptive practices in America and elsewhere, we ask how, what, when, and why do people consume? We will read articles on consumption from anthropology, sociology, cultural geography and other disciplines to examine the issues of class, gender, nationalism, globalization, and nostalgia that surround consumptive practices. We scrutinize how these issues motivate or limit individual consumption.

MLMLA 6393 - The Western in Literature and Film

This course will focus on the Western novels of Cormac MacCarthy, Zane Grey, Charles Portis, Jack Schaefer, and others, and consider the popularity of the Western as a literary genre in its role of creating the heroic figure of the cowboy. The course will also consider the Western as film in which the figure of the cowboy is further considered, perpetuated, metamorphosed, and sometimes parodied. Through a study of the existential and metaphysical aspects of westerns directed by John Ford, George Stevens, Fred Zinnemann, Sam Peckinpaw, Howard Hawks, Sergio Leone, Clint Eastwood and others, students will become literate in the complexities of the genre and develop an understanding of the Western's enduring popularity throughout the world.

MLMLA 6393 - Art of Being Human

This course reaffirms the liberal arts tradition that maintains that the humanities constitute the best and brightest expressions of all people. *The Art of Being Human* emphasizes the interaction among the arts, religion, and philosophy, believing that this approach helps us to see artists and philosophers at work, trying to solve real problems that we all know and care about.

MLMLA 6393 - Contemporary International Relations

This course will explore the role of power in contemporary world politics, the use of force in conflict resolution or humanitarian intervention campaigns, and multilateral governance and collaboration. Additionally, the course will address the current global economic situation with special attention to the circulating critical and alternative theories seeking to promote a new world order.

MLMLA 6393 – Health Communication

This course will explore social and cultural approaches to health communication and consider the nature and quality of messaging as it relates to personal health literacy and public health campaigns. Focus will also be on designing and implementing health assessments at a community level.

MLMLA 6393 - War Films and American Culture

As primary sources, motion pictures offer insight into the culture and values of the society that produced them. Through an examination of war films from World War II through the early 2000's, students will study images of soldiers and warfare in American culture and assess how the representations of the armed forces reflect the changing culture and values of American society. Particular emphasis is given to the tension between militarism and anti-militarism in American culture. Students will examine films on World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

MLMLA 6393 - International Psychology

This course will extrapolate and explore the current state of prevalent contention surrounding intercultural differences in The United States and globally. Topics such as acculturation, immigrations, media, prejudice, and personal identity will be covered—among many others. The course will focus on why these and other topics remain globally prevalent, while students engage in discussions and activities centered on methods of tackling and alleviating these issues.

MLMLA 6393 - Faith and Science

Objective of the course is for students to have a better understanding of how faith and science have come to be mutually affirming over a broad range of disciplines including physics, chemistry, biology, and psychology. Course will begin with assumptions and then propose convergence trends in: physics to metaphysics, chemistry to life, biology to consciousness and psychology to mysticism. Students will be encouraged to draw their own informed conclusions. Made accessible in language non-scientists can understand.