

DEPARTMENT OF HUMANITIES

The Department of Humanities consists of six autonomous sections and programs, each with its own headquarters: Anthropology, Comparative Media Studies/Writing, Global Languages, History, Literature, and Music and Theater Arts. There are also two programs affiliated with the Department: Science, Technology, and Society, and Women's and Gender Studies.

In addition to the degrees offered in the six sections, other undergraduate degree programs are available, either in combination with a field in engineering or science (the 21E and 21S joint majors) or as interdisciplinary options within the Bachelor of Science in Humanities degree (Course 21). Students interested in any of these degree programs should consult an advisor in the field, as well as the section or program office.

Undergraduate Study

Bachelor of Science in Humanities (Course 21)

The interdisciplinary Bachelor of Science in Humanities (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-course-21>) degree provides an option for students who wish to pursue their humanistic studies extensively and at an advanced level. All options in this major are by special arrangement, requiring approval by the dean of the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences. Some options are as follows:

- African and African Diaspora Studies
- American Studies
- Ancient and Medieval Studies
- Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies
- Latin American and Latino/a Studies
- Russian and Eurasian Studies
- Women's and Gender Studies

Humanities and Engineering / Science

Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Engineering (Course 21E) / Bachelor of Science in Humanities and Science (Course 21S)

These joint degree programs combine humanities with scientific/engineering studies. Groups of subjects from the humanistic and technical areas are conjoined to yield a basic command of each mode of inquiry. One part is a selection from the undergraduate degree curriculum of a science or engineering department approved by a faculty member in the field. The other part consists of subjects in a humanities field, chosen by the student in consultation with an advisor from the appropriate humanities faculty. In most cases, a senior thesis or sequence of advanced seminars is also required.

This arrangement yields a humanities program of considerable depth while allowing for continued serious commitment to a scientific or engineering interest. Available humanities fields include:

- African and African Diaspora Studies
- American Studies
- Ancient and Medieval Studies
- Anthropology
- Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies
- Comparative Media Studies
- Global Languages (in French, German, or Spanish)
- History
- Latin American and Latino/a Studies
- Literature
- Music
- Russian and Eurasian Studies
- Science, Technology, and Society
- Theater Arts
- Women's and Gender Studies
- Writing

Faculty advisors in each discipline help students to arrange programs suited to both their interests and professional objectives. Any one of these fields may be joined with any science or engineering field to form a major. Some combinations naturally lend themselves not only to an understanding of each field but also to an integrative and comparative view of the relationship between the two. The approval process requires students to design their curriculum in their two proposed programs of study and have their selections approved by a faculty member in each field at the time they submit their proposal for review.

Students may take Course 21E (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-engineering-course-21e>) or Course 21S (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/humanities-science-course-21s>) as part of the double major program outlined in the section on Undergraduate Education. However, because 21E and 21S are composite degrees, a second major is not allowed in either field of a student's chosen program. For example, if a student pursues a 21S degree with the Science portion in Course 8, the student would not be permitted to apply for a second major in Course 8. Similarly, if the Humanities portion of the 21S degree were in Course 21L, the student could not apply for a second major in Course 21L.

Research subjects are also offered by programs within the Department of Humanities: Anthropology (21A), Comparative Media Studies/Writing (CMS/21W), Global Studies and Languages (21G), History (21H), Literature (21L), Music and Theater Arts (21M/21T), Science, Technology, and Society (STS), and Women's and Gender Studies (WGS). Consult those listings for details.

21.00 SHASS Exploration

Prereq: None

U (Fall)

Not offered regularly; consult department

1-0-0 units

Provides a better understanding of what the humanities, arts, and social sciences at MIT are all about. Each week, a different faculty member from a SHASS unit discusses their research, giving students a sense of what they might expect from a major, minor, or concentration in their field. Subject can count toward the 6-unit discovery-focused credit limit for first year students.

Consult A. Rayo

21.01 Compass Course: Moral and Social Questions about the Human Condition (New)

Prereq: None

U (Spring)

3-0-9 units. HASS-E; CI-H

Provides an introduction to analytic inquiry and active debate about persistent moral and social questions concerning the human experience; a shared conversation on these questions across the diverse students and departments at MIT; and a collective engagement with historical and contemporary work in the humanities, arts, and social sciences. The main objectives of this subject are to provide students with opportunities to begin developing and practicing the skills and habits of mind needed for lifelong reflection and conversations with others on the normative foundations of social and human life. Lectures are offered online; in-class time is dedicated to recitations, exercises, and group discussion. Limited to 18 per section.

Tsai, Silbey, Pollock, Levenson, Kaiser, Jones, Haslanger, Duflo, Byrne, Black, Bennett, Bahr, Albright

21.THT Humanities Pre-Thesis Tutorial

Prereq: As specified for particular field

U (Fall, IAP, Spring)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Definition of and early-stage work on thesis project leading to 21.THU Undergraduate Thesis in Humanities. Taken during the first term of the student's two-term commitment to the thesis project. Student works closely with an individual faculty tutor. Required for all students in Course 21, and those doing 21-E and 21-S degrees, for whom the thesis is a degree requirement.

Information: SHASS Dean's Office

21.THU Undergraduate Thesis in Humanities

Prereq: 21.THT

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Completion of work on the senior major thesis under supervision of a faculty tutor. Includes oral presentation of thesis progress early in the term, assembling and revising the final text, and meeting at the close with a committee of faculty evaluators to discuss the successes and limitations of the project. Required for most students in Course 21 and those doing 21-E and 21-S degrees.

Information: SHASS Dean's Office

21.UR Undergraduate Research in Humanities

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged [P/D/F]

Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

Information: SHASS Dean's Office

21.URG Research in Humanities

Prereq: None

U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)

Units arranged

Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

Information: SHASS Dean's Office