

## LITERATURE

### Undergraduate Study

The Literature curriculum is arranged in four graduated categories:

- **Introductory** subjects (21L.000[J] to 21L.024) focus on major literary texts grouped in broad historical and generic sequences; all introductory subjects carry HASS and Communication-Intensive credit.
- **Samplings** (21L.310[J] to 21L.338, 21L.345 to 21L.355) are 6-unit subjects that provide both an alternative route into literary and filmic study and a less intensive means for students to sustain a commitment to reading and textual interpretation. Their focus is on critical exploration, comprehension, and group discussion, with less sustained attention to analytic writing skills. Students can combine most 6-unit Samplings subjects to count as a HASS subject in the Humanities category and the equivalent of a subject in the Intermediate tier. However, no more than four 6-unit subjects may be combined in this manner. See the HASS Requirement website for information about samplings (<https://registrar.mit.edu/registration-academics/academic-requirements/hass-requirement>) or contact Literature Headquarters ([lit@mit.edu](mailto:lit@mit.edu)) for details.
- **Intermediate** subjects (21L.400 to 21L.639[J]) explore literary and visual forms as well as critical analysis in greater depth. Some subjects center on historical periods, literary themes, or genres; others focus on media studies, comparative cultural studies, or national literatures.
- **Seminar** subjects (21L.640 to 21L.715) are usually restricted to students who have taken at least two previous subjects in Literature and encourage a greater degree of independent work, such as oral reports and other special projects. Enrollment in seminars is strictly limited to a maximum of 12 students.

The Literature Section also offers a few subjects in languages other than English (21L.607 to 21L.640[J]) for students with adequate preparation. If appropriate, they may count toward the Literature major and minor requirements after consultation with the major/minor advisor.

In addition, the Literature Section often offers 6-unit special subjects for credit during IAP. Students may also choose to take special subjects (21L.S88 to 21L.S97) and independent study or research supervised by a faculty member (21L.900 and 21L.901) during the fall and spring terms.

Concentrations in Literature are available in particular genres (e.g., poetry, drama, fiction) and in historical periods (e.g., ancient studies, 19th-century literature, modern and contemporary literature), as well as in media and film studies, world literatures and

cultures, popular culture, minority and ethnic studies, literary theory, and a range of national literatures.

### ***Bachelor of Science in Literature (Course 21L)***

The program in Literature leading to the Bachelor of Science in Literature (<https://catalog.mit.edu/degree-charts/literature-course-21l>) is equivalent to the curricula in English (or literary studies) at major liberal arts institutions. The Literature curriculum is notable also for its integration of materials drawn from film and media, popular culture, and minority and ethnic cultures.

The major consists of at least 10 subjects, including no more than three introductory subjects, at least three intermediate subjects, and at least three seminars. A minimum of three subjects in the overall degree program must focus primarily on material prior to 1900.

### ***Joint Degree Programs***

Joint degree programs are offered in Literature in combination with a field in engineering or science (21E, 21S). See the joint degree programs (<https://catalog.mit.edu/schools/humanities-arts-social-sciences/humanities/#undergraduatetext>) listed under Humanities.

### ***Minor in Literature***

The minor aims to lay a foundation for advanced study and to enhance a student's appreciation of major narrative, poetic, and dramatic texts in relation to the cultures that produced them. Students may opt either to pursue a minor centered on literary texts or one focused on film.

### **Literature Focus**

A minor centered on literary texts consists of six subjects arranged into three levels of study as described below; at least two subjects (chosen in consultation with the minor advisor) must focus primarily on material prior to 1900.

#### **Tier I: Introductory Level**

Select at least one and no more than two subjects from the following: 9-24

21L.000[J]	Writing About Literature
21L.001	Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante
21L.002	Foundations of Western Literature: From Shakespeare to the Present
21L.003	Reading Fiction
21L.004	Reading Poetry
21L.005[J]	Introduction to Drama
21L.006	American Literature
21L.007	World Literatures
21L.008[J]	Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies
21L.009	Shakespeare
21L.010[J]	Writing with Shakespeare

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21L.011	Introduction to Film Studies
21L.012	Forms of Western Narrative
21L.013[J]	The Supernatural in Music, Literature and Culture
21L.014[J]	Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies
21L.015	Children's Literature
21L.017	The Art of the Probable
21L.018	Introduction to English Literature
21L.019	Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction
21L.020[J]	Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-Between
21L.021	Comedy
21L.024	Literature and Existentialism
21L.025	A History of the Book from Papyrus to Pixel
21L.040[J]	Foundations of East Asian Literature and Culture: From Confucius to the Beats
21L.044	

**Tier II: Intermediate Level**

Select two or three subjects from the following: <sup>1</sup> 21-36

21L.430	Popular Culture and Narrative
21L.431	Shakespeare on Film and Media
21L.432[J]	Understanding Television
21L.433	Film Styles and Genres
21L.434	Science Fiction and Fantasy
21L.435	Literature and Film
21L.449	The Wilds of Literature
21L.451	Literary Theory
21L.455	Ancient Authors
21L.458	The Bible
21L.460	Arthurian Literature
21L.471	Major Novels
21L.473[J]	Jane Austen
21L.475	Enlightenment and Modernity
21L.485	Modern Fiction
21L.486[J]	Modern Drama
21L.487	Modern Poetry
21L.488	Contemporary Literature
21L.489[J]	Interactive Narrative
21L.490[J]	Introduction to the Classics of Russian Literature
21L.501	The American Novel
21L.504[J]	Race and Identity in American Literature

21L.512	American Authors
21L.590[J]	The Spanish Incubator
21L.601[J]	Old English and Beowulf
21L.638[J]	Literature and Social Conflict: Perspectives on the Hispanic World
21L.639[J]	Globalization and its Discontents: Spanish-speaking Nations

**Tier III: Seminar Level**

Select at least two of the following: 24

21L.640[J]	The New Spain: 1977-Present
21L.701	Literary Methods
21L.702	Studies in Fiction
21L.703[J]	Studies in Drama
21L.704	Studies in Poetry
21L.705	Major Authors
21L.706	Studies in Film
21L.707	Problems in Cultural Interpretation
21L.709	Studies in Literary History
21L.715	Media in Cultural Context

**Total Units** 66-72

<sup>1</sup> In most cases, two 6-unit Samplings subjects (<https://lit.mit.edu/curriculum/samplings>), or two 6-unit Literature subjects taught in Greek or Latin (<https://lit.mit.edu/curriculum/subjects-taught-in-a-foreign-language>), may be combined to substitute for an intermediate-level subject. In addition, 6-unit Greek or Latin Reading subjects may be repeated once to substitute for an intermediate-level subject.

**Film Focus**

A film-centered minor in Literature consists of three required subjects arranged into three levels of study, and three restricted electives.

**Tier I: Introductory Level**

21L.011	Introduction to Film Studies	12
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**Tier II: Intermediate Level**

Select one of the following: <sup>1</sup> 12

21L.431	Shakespeare on Film and Media
21L.433	Film Styles and Genres
21L.435	Literature and Film

**Tier III: Seminar Level**

21L.706	Studies in Film	12
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**Restricted Electives**

In consultation with the minor advisor, select three subjects from the Literature curriculum, including at least one complementary subject that does not focus on film but ties into the student's interests with regard to film. <sup>1</sup> 27-36

**Total Units** 63-72

<sup>1</sup> *At most, two subjects in which film analysis is the primary focus may be taken in a section outside of Literature or transferred in from a program outside MIT.*

***Inquiries***

For further information on subjects and programs, contact Literature Headquarters ([lit@mit.edu](mailto:lit@mit.edu)), Room 14N-407, 617-253-3581.