

**Department of Languages and Literatures
Literature Element**

**General Education Program
Pacific Lutheran University**

Framing Language and Program Goals

That literature courses in the Department of Languages and Literatures satisfy the literature element of General Education needs no explaining. But why study literature? The interpretation of literary texts, especially when read in the original, is a source of wisdom and the foundation of a deep understanding of the glory and tragedy of the human condition. Literature courses in Chinese, Classics (Greek and Latin), French, German, Norwegian, Scandinavian Area Studies, or Spanish embark students on journeys that explore in imaginative ways important cultural traditions while developing the student's sensibility, insight, and ability to think, feel, interpret, and understand with critical sophistication.

General Education Element Description

Interpreting Living Traditions for a Humane Future

Drawing on the rich traditions of languages and literatures, religion, and philosophy, the Humanities cultivates an intellectual and imaginative connection between a living past and the global challenges of our future. Humanities courses engage the complex traditions that shape the ways we think about and act in the world.

Literature (4)—Literary study explores how writers from a vast array of cultural traditions have used the creative resources of language—in fiction, poetry, drama, and non-fiction prose—to explore the entire range of human experience. The practice of reading literary texts exercises the imagination, cultivates a capacity for understanding ambiguity and complexity, and instills a sensitivity to the diversities of human existence. Literary study builds skills of analytical and interpretive argument, helping students become creative and critical writers.

General Education Element Learning Outcomes

The student will:

1. know important authors, name notable literary works, recall constitutive features of works such as character and plot, recognize rhetorical figures like metaphor and irony and literary allusions that contribute to literary meaning, and identify historical periods in which works of literature originated;
2. understand conventions and symbols and how they function in literary works, distinguish different genres of literature and cite examples of them, differentiate form from content in literary works and explain how these are interrelated, and describe the formal characteristics of works;
3. apply critical perspectives to literary works and relate general cultural and social movements and structures to the form and content of literary works;
4. appraise specific works, analyze their structure, debate critical interpretations, and compare their merits;
5. evaluate the ways literary works convey and subvert meaning at multiple levels, choose appropriate critical terminology to grapple with problems of interpretation, and assess changes in critical paradigms; and,
6. compose interpretive critical responses to works of literature and develop arguments to support them.

Alignment to the ILOs

Critical reflection

- Select sources of information using appropriate research methods, including those employing technology, and make use of that information carefully and critically;
- Consider issues from multiple perspectives;
- Evaluate assumptions and consequences of different perspectives in assessing possible solutions to problems;
- Understand and explain divergent viewpoints on complex issues, critically assess the support available for each, and defend one's judgment.

Expression

- Communicate clearly and effectively in both written and oral forms;
- Adapt message to various audiences using appropriate media, convention, and styles.

Interaction with Others

- Work creatively to identify and clarify issues of concern;
- Acknowledge and respond to conflicting ideas, principles, and traditions, identifying common interests where possible.

Adopted April 6, 2009