

# College of Liberal Arts

## Faculty

### Jenn Cianca,

B.A. (Bishop's), M.A. Ph.D. (Toronto);

Full Professor

Chair of the department (after Jan, 2025)

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Coordinator for the Minor in

Social Justice and Citizenship

Chair of the Department (until Dec. 2024)

## Program Overview

The Bishop's College of Liberal Arts offers a dynamic, interdisciplinary major for particularly motivated students interested in the intensive study of the great themes and texts of Western civilization. The heart of the program is the Liberal Arts Foundation Courses (LIB 210–218), each of which engages, in an interdisciplinary and historical way, with a key theme in the history of the human condition. Liberal Arts majors also complete a series of requirements from other departments (see below), for a total of 63 credits. Students in the Liberal Arts Program are encouraged to complete a second Major in a discipline of their choice. Up to two courses may be counted towards the requirements of both Majors. The Liberal Arts Program also offers an Honours degree, which requires the completion of a comprehensive research thesis.

## Programs

### Liberal Arts Honours

(69 credits)

HONLIB

Liberal Arts students may opt to complete an Honours Degree. In addition to fulfilling the normal requirements for a Major (see below), an Honours student must register in the fall of his or her final year for LIB 400 (fall) and LIB 401 (winter), the requirement of which is to write a supervised, interdisciplinary Honours thesis. In keeping with Faculty regulations, at least a 70% average, calculated on the best 60 credits in the program, would be necessary for graduation with an Honours degree.

**LIB 400 Honours Thesis I** 3-3-0

Each student researches, writes, and publicly defends a comprehensive thesis proposal under the supervision of at least two faculty members who are from different departments. Students must receive a grade of 75% or higher in this course in order to be permitted to register for LIB 401.

**LIB 401 Honours Thesis II** 3-3-0

Based on the proposal completed in LIB 400, students draft, revise, and defend an honours thesis, as examined by all members of the Liberal Arts Program and relevant supervisors.

*Prerequisite: LIB 400*

### Liberal Arts Major (63 credits)

MAJLIB

#### Required Courses

##### 1. Liberal Arts Foundation Courses

Normally Liberal Arts students are enrolled in one Liberal Arts Foundation Course in each semester of their degree. Majors must complete at least four Foundation Course credits. Each course has a “culture” or “social change” component that requires students to attend and discuss a selection of plays, musical performances, art exhibitions, social justice events, or lectures each semester.

LIB 210	Eros, Love and Desire
LIB 212	In Search of Justice
LIB 213	The Use and Abuse of Beauty
LIB 214	Ecological Crisis and the Struggle for Environmental Justice
LIB 215	Causation and Creativity
LIB 216/ RSC 208	The Divine and Ultimate Concern
LIB 217	Space, Place & the Human Experience
LIB 218	The History and Philosophy of Science

##### 2. First Year Requirements

- All Liberal Arts Majors must take CLA 100 or CLA 101 along with a Liberal Arts Foundation Course and two electives in their first semester at Bishop's.
- All Liberal Arts Majors must take an Introduction to Philosophy and an Introduction to Religion, Society and Culture course, as well as a Liberal Arts Foundation Course and two electives in their second semester at Bishop's.
- All Liberal Arts Majors must take FIH 101 or FIH 102 in their first or second year at Bishop's. These courses help students get a sense of the broad scope of Western history (as opposed to more specialized historical topics).

##### 3. Graduating Year Seminar

**LIB 300 Interdisciplinary Seminar** 3-3-0  
A team-taught seminar which will explore a selected theme of interdisciplinary interest.

##### 4. Language Requirement

Liberal Arts Majors are required to take three courses in any single language (ancient or modern) and must have begun their language requirements by their second year.

##### 5. Social Sciences Requirement

Any two Social Science courses (6 credits).

##### 6. Natural Sciences/Mathematics Requirement

At least one course (3 credits) from Natural Sciences or Mathematics.

##### 7. Humanities Breadth/Depth Requirements

Liberal Arts Majors are required to take 6 credits from two of the following three departments: Drama, English, Music.

Liberal Arts Majors are also required to take three 300-level courses in the Humanities (including LIB capstone course).

# List of Courses

## Liberal Arts Foundation Courses

**LIB 210 Eros, Love and Desire 3-3-0**  
When Plato wrote that eros is “giving birth in beauty” he sparked a debate that has lasted millennia. Does the erotic lead us upwards toward wisdom, truth, and love of thy neighbour? Or is eros the chaotic, anti-social, and even destructive force of Dionysian rapture? This course will explore these and other classic theories of eros, love and desire.

**LIB 212 In Search of Justice 3-3-0**  
“Let justice roll down like water, and righteousness like an ever flowing stream.” So cried the prophet Amos, echoed thousands of years later when Martin Luther King insisted that “Power at its best is love implementing the demands of justice!” This course will explore the changing and always contested meaning of justice in its many forms in Western history. Is justice little more than the ancient Greek claim that one should “do good to one’s friends, and harm to one’s enemies”? Or is there a universal form of justice that recognizes civil rights and social justice for the poor, women, racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, and other marginalized peoples?

**LIB 213 The Use and Abuse of Beauty 3-3-0**  
French writer Stendhal said in the 19th century that “beauty is the promise of happiness” and, upon seeing the beauty of Florence, he wondrously proclaimed, “I was in a sort of ecstasy... absorbed in the contemplation of sublime beauty... Everything spoke so vividly to my soul.” Yet only decades later his compatriot, poet Arthur Rimbaud, claimed that he wanted to “abuse” beauty, for he found it “bitter.” Dadaist and surrealist artist Tristan Tzara went even further, “I have a mad and starry desire to assassinate beauty...” Does Tzara signal not only a dramatic change in Western art, but the claim that all forms of harmony and beauty, including the personal and the political, are conservative? Or is the beautiful in some important sense still of “transcendent” importance to human life? This course will explore the fate of the beautiful, from the Greeks to 21st century life.

**LIB 214 Ecological Crisis and the Struggle for Environmental Justice 3-3-0**  
Global warming, mass extinction and runaway pollution by toxic waste, plastics and other contaminants are only the most widely publicized aspects of what scientists agree is an ecological crisis that affects everyone and everything on the Earth. Paradoxically, nature and wilderness are not only necessary conditions for human well-being, but also have been amongst the greatest sources of our spiritual and artistic inspiration for centuries. Given that new generations will play a decisive role in addressing this crisis, this course will explore international dimensions of the historical, philosophical and cultural background of various forms of the human relationship with Nature, as well as examine some of the theories (agro-ecology, eco-feminism, deep ecology, emergence, etc.) and kinds of social movement organizing (Greenpeace, 350.org, Leap, etc.) that reply to the ecological crisis. The course will also introduce certain aspects of the experience and struggle of Indigenous peoples (e.g. Idle No More, Dakota Access, socio-environmental rights in Brazil, etc.), including of the Abenaki First Nation, upon whose unceded land Bishop’s University is built.

**LIB 215 Causation and Creativity 3-3-0**  
This course explores the emerging thesis that contingency, improvisation and creativity characterize not only human freedom but also nature as well. Reality, according to this diverse family of theories, continually transcends itself in unexpected and unpredictable ways. This course will thus require a detailed philosophical study of the relationship of causation, contingency, improvisation and creativity in specifically human spheres, like poetry, music, and ethics, but also as potentially operative in both inanimate and animate nature as well. We will test the idea, moreover, that even space and time are the products of contingency. Students will study philosophers, artists, historians, physicists, chemists and biologists who both explore and contest this thesis.

**LIB 216 / RSC 208 The Divine and Ultimate Concern 3-3-0**  
The divine is that about which we are “ultimately concerned”—so said 20<sup>th</sup> century German philosopher and theologian Paul Tillich. Is this just a last-ditch attempt to salvage faith and spirituality in the midst of charges that religion is, at best, an “opiate of the masses” (Marx) and, at worst, “patently infantile” (Freud)? Or again, is the role of religion being taken over by its long time sister in spirit—art? This course will explore the troubled and passionate place of religious experience and the aesthetic in Western civilization.

**LIB 217 Towards Spatial Justice 3-3-0**  
Building a just society is not only an ideological concern. Our bodies, our landscapes, and our built environments all participate in the production of just and unjust spaces. Inclusion and exclusion, belonging and exile, power and disenfranchisement, home and homelessness: all of these modes of being play out on the canvas of our place and our body. In this course, we will examine cultural and social theories of placemaking and investigate the powerful relationship between our politics and our places, with a view to understanding how we can build justice into our environments.

**LIB 218 The History and Philosophy of Science 3-3-0**  
Modern science has given us an unprecedented understanding of Nature - and with it, the power to transform our natural environment irrevocably. This interdisciplinary course will explore some key themes in the history and philosophy of science: the origins and evolution of Modern science; its roots in pre-Modern philosophy of Nature; its flowering in the Scientific Revolution; the Modern era, in which science and scientific method is often taken for granted as the authoritative paradigm for all knowledge; the enormous contribution of science to society, economy and culture; as well as some important criticisms of the extent and character of scientific exploration of nature and human beings.

## Liberal Arts Thematic Seminar Courses

These courses are in-depth, interdisciplinary seminar courses on topics relevant to the program of study of Liberal Arts majors. Instructors and topics are determined each year.

**LIB 222 Citizenship and Democratic Practice I 3-3-0**  
Students learn not only the role and importance of civil society organizations, such as social movements, community groups, NGOs, churches and so on, but also commit themselves to an ongoing supervised internship in one or more of these organizations in Lennoxville, Sherbrooke, the wider Eastern Townships or indeed in other parts of Canada or the world. At least one or both of these internship courses (depending on the demands of each internship) is required for the Minor in Social Justice and Citizenship.

**LIB 223 Citizenship and Democratic Practice II 3-3-0**  
Students learn not only the role and importance of civil society organizations, such as social movements, community groups, NGOs, churches and so on, but also commit themselves to an ongoing supervised internship in one or more of these organizations in Lennoxville, Sherbrooke, the wider Eastern Townships or indeed in other parts of Canada or the world. At least one or both of these internship courses (depending on the demands of each internship) is required for the Minor in Social Justice and Citizenship.

**ITA 270 Venice And Its Mystique 3-3-1\***  
“As the Twentieth century draws to a close, no one knows quite what to expect, if anything, of the future. There is a strong need for magic, for a place that is outside of time, for a postponement of reality. For Venice.” —Gore Vidal  
Once the crossroad of western and eastern civilizations, over the centuries Venice has been seen as the symbol of freedom and cosmopolitanism, but also as the city where artistic and cultural production can thrive. Venice surreal setting and the lushness of its artifacts have become emblematic of the cultural production of Western civilization, creating a unique landscape of unsurpassed aesthetic richness. It is in this exceptional urban scenery, that blends together water, art and culture, that this five-week course will take place. This language and culture course will provide students with a basic knowledge of Italian and familiarize them with the history and culture of one of the few cities that can fulfill our “need for magic,” the “Serenissima.” This course will be taught in English. Students who wish to count the course for Italian credit will submit their assignments in Italian and participate in certain additional activities in Italian.

**LIB 290 / GER 290 (De) constructing Identity in Vienna 3-3-1**  
In this course, we will examine how intellectuals and artists associated to Austria’s capital have been, ever since the advent of Freudian psychoanalysis, enlightened witnesses to their nation’s identity construction. Our interdisciplinary approach will enable us to investigate our topic from a variety of angles, focusing on two periods of Austrian history, namely the period around 1900 and the aftermaths of WWII. Starting with a brief introduction not only to Freud’s psychoanalytical theories but also to his sociological observations (Civilization and its Discontents), we will look at how literature (Schnitzler, Hofmannsthal, Zweig) and visual arts (Klimt, Schiele, Kokoschka), in the Vienna of 1900, portrayed the individual’s unconscious desires and torments. We will then turn to the aftermaths of WWII and study literary texts (Bachmann, Bernhard, Jelinek) and films (Haneke) which engage with Austrian history and culture, with a nation’s repressed feelings of anger and guilt.

*No prerequisite*

**GER 292 /**

**LIB 292      The Problem of Education      3-3-1**  
 For Madame de Staël, a French contemporary of Goethe's, Germany was das Land der Dichter und Denker, whereas for many of our contemporaries, Germany is but the land of National-Socialism. How could the people who gave the world the humanistic ideal of Bildung also be the people who devised concentration camps and the final solution? It is impossible to avoid this question when engaging with German Studies. This course will examine the pedagogical intent, philosophy of education and critique of German education present in the works of some of the most important German writers from the Enlightenment to the post-war period. By means of discussions of fiction and non-fiction, we will explore the German discourse on education, from the early bourgeois ideal of Bildung (Lessing, Humboldt, Goethe, Schiller) to Nietzsche's critique of educational institutions, from Musil's depiction of the joyless life of a Gymnasium to later explorations (by Brecht, E. Mann, Arendt – but also in films by Riefenstahl, Schlöndorff and Haneke) of the perversion of the ideal of education in 20th century Germany, namely under National-Socialism.

**GER 293 /**

**LIB 293      In Sickness and in Health      3-3-1**  
 This interdisciplinary course will explore representations of sickness and health in the German cultural tradition. Literary masterpieces from various epochs will be analyzed: Hartman von Aue's Poor Heinrich (ca. 1190) will serve as springboard for discussion of the human body's vulnerability to sickness and ultimate mortality. Poetical, philosophical and medical texts of the Romantic era (Novalis, Heine, Schelling, Hahnemann) displaying how pathology opens the path to self-knowledge and creativity will be examined. Seminal essays such as Nietzsche's The Case of Wagner and Susan Sontag's Illness as Metaphor will serve as theoretical framework for the study of 20th and 21st centuries' key examples of narratives dealing with the topics of tuberculosis (Thomas Mann's Tristan, Thomas Bernhard's The Cold), cancer (Christa Wolf's The Quest for Christa T.), anorexia (Franz Kafka's A Hunger Artist), depression (Christine Lavant's Memoirs from a Madhouse) and dystopian state surveillance of humans' health (Juli Zeh's The Method). Social and political movements that have helped shape German mentality towards health (Freikörperkultur, Lebensreform) as well as their darker fascists counterparts (degenerate art, Aktion T4) will also be exposed.

**GER296 /**

**LIB296      Goethe's Faust      3-3-1**  
 In this course, students will read THE masterpiece of German literature: Goethe's Faust, in Walter Kaufmann's celebrated translation. We will read all of part I and excerpts of part II. We will look at Goethe's sources – from the early Historia von Dr. Johann Fausten (based on a true story – that of a magician) to travelling puppet shows about Faust which Goethe enjoyed as a child. This discussion of sources will enable us to see just how modern Goethe's Faust is – in its (for the time) subversive depictions of God, the devil, the quest for knowledge and the pleasures of the flesh. We will also examine how the story of Faust never ceased to inspire artists who created countless variations on the theme – from Gounod's opera to Murmou's expressionist film, from Mann's novel Doktor Faustus to Kurosawa's film Ikiru, to name but a few.

**GER297 /**

**LIB297      From Cosmos to Chaos:  
 The Discourse on Nature in German Culture      3-3-1**  
 The aim of this interdisciplinary course is twofold: to introduce students to the emergence and evolution of ecological thought in German culture from the Middle Ages to the present, and to reflect on the resonance of such thought in 21st century's most pressing preoccupation: the destruction of our planet and the extinction of species. Particular attention will be given to the spiritual, artistic, and literary expression of humans' relationship to nature. Among the famous thinkers and artists whose works will be studied are Hildegard von Bingen, Alexander von Humboldt, Joseph Beuys, W. G. Sebald.

**LIB 303 /**

**CLA 303/  
 RSC 303      On the Road Again: Pilgrimage in Theory and Practice      3-3-0**  
 This course will examine pilgrimage as embodied experience, with a special focus on contemporary pilgrimage. Cross-cultural approaches and historical context will be key to understanding the current fascination with walking as transformative practice. Theories of identity, community, and belonging will also be discussed. Students will have an opportunity to participate in a short pilgrimage.

**LIB 384 /**

**ITA 384      Dante's Divine Comedy      3-3-1**  
 According to Dante Alighieri, none of us can salve the wound in our souls without undertaking our own pilgrimage to hell, without purging our sins, and without letting go of ourselves so as to experience ecstatic union with the foundations of all reality. This is perhaps what James Joyce meant when he said that Dante is his "spiritual food" and that reading Dante is like "looking at the sun." This course will unfold some of the philosophical, poetic, religious, political and historical richness of Dante's allegorical masterpiece and lead each student on a personal journey through Inferno, Purgatorio and Paradiso.

**ITA 385      Giovanni Boccaccio's Decameron      3-3-0**

One of the most enjoyable, beloved and imitated literary works of all time, the Decameron by Giovanni Boccaccio (1313-1375) is among the great texts whose influence transcends the written word and expands into almost every area of the Western cultural tradition. A book on love according to Boccaccio himself, this masterpiece is in reality an audacious and sophisticated human comedy that brings to the reader the richness of life. Through an in-depth reading of the short stories that comprise the work, this course will explore the philosophical, historical, political, social, and gender related issues that arise from this literary masterpiece. We will also examine the enormous influence this text had on future visual and performative arts, literature and music

**LIB 386      Montaigne's Essays and Early Modern Humanities      3-3-0**

This course is an exploration of Michel Montaigne's Essays, published in three volumes between 1580-1588. Framed by his celebrated phrase "What do I know?" (Que sais-je?), these writings examine the human condition with the fresh outlook of early modern skepticism. As Montaigne searches for moral examples that can assist us in the conduct of our lives, he gives surprising new inflexions to traditional wisdom on topics such as love, friendship, education, conversation, health, and dying.

**Liberal Arts Independent Studies****LIB 230      Independent Study I      3-3-0**

Students pursue a course of directed, independent study on an interdisciplinary theme under the supervision of a faculty member.

**LIB 231      Independent Study II      3-3-0**

Students pursue a course of directed, independent study on an interdisciplinary theme under the supervision of a faculty member.

**LIB 232      Independent Study III      3-3-0**

Students pursue a course of directed, independent study on an interdisciplinary theme under the supervision of a faculty member.

**LIB 233      Independent Study IV      3-3-0**

Students pursue a course of directed, independent study on an interdisciplinary theme under the supervision of a faculty member.

**Social Justice and Citizenship Minor  
(24 credits)****MINSJC**

A healthy democracy requires that its citizens have the insight and skills to freely govern themselves. The university is therefore a vital institution to democracy. Accordingly, Bishop's University is committed to help its students learn "to practice the respectful and informed dialogue that sustains democracy [and] to exercise the rights and responsibilities of good citizenship."

While each department and program in the university implements this principle in its own way, the Social Justice and Citizenship Minor takes this goal as its explicit aim. Each student enrolled in this minor completes eight courses (24 credits) made up of a mandatory theory course (LIB 212 or LIB 217), an internship of either one or two semesters (LIB 222 and LIB 223) and a further five or six courses chosen from the elective list below. In LIB 212, "In Search of Justice," students seek to understand the nature of human freedom, the institutions and cultural practices that seek to cultivate it, and the forms of power and manipulation that threaten and undermine it. In LIB 217, "Space, Place, and the Human Experience," students explore questions of social justice inside a spatial framework, in an attempt to understand

how place making and spatial structures play into the formation of society & culture. In LIB 222 and LIB 223, “Citizenship and Democratic Practice,” students not only learn about the agents of democratic practice in civil society (individuals, artistic and cultural communities, social movements, NGOs, churches, etc) but are also required to participate in supervised internships in local and regional community and civil society organizations.

## Elective Course List for the Social Justice and Citizenship Minor:

Students must take any five or six courses from this list, albeit no more than three from any one department (depending on their internship).

CLA 325	The Classical Tradition: the Use and Abuse of Classics
CLA/HIS 201	Ancient Slavery and its Legacy
CLA/POL 223	Democracy in the Ancient World
EDU 305	Multicultural Education
ENG 239	Feminist Literary Theory
ENG 342	Romanticism and Revolution
ESG 224	Human Impact on the Environment
ESG 248	Geography of Food
ESG 266	Environmental Policy
ESG 268	Global Environmental Change
ESG 350	Environmental Justice
ESG 366	Ethical Perspectives on Environmental Problems
HIS 108	A Global History of Indigenous Peoples
HIS 217	The United States Since 1945
HIS 269	First Nations/Settler Relations in Canada
LIB 214	Human Will and Nature
PHI 100	On the Way to the Good Life
PHI 104	The Hopes and Conflicts of Social and Political Life
PHI 349	Topics in Feminist Philosophy
PHI 324	The Philosophy and Politics of Karl Marx
PHI 240	Topics in Ethics
PHI 342	Seminar in Social and Political Philosophy
PHI 366	Critical Theory
RSC 200	Politics and Religion
SOC 207	Sociology of Indigenous-Settler Relations
SOC 208	Criminology
SOC 235	Women and Penal System
SOC 250	Social movements
SOC 260	Community
SOC 292	Social Policy
SOC 298	Social Problems
SOC 309	Advanced Seminar in Global Colonization and Decolonization
SOC 340	Women: Theory and Ideology
SOC 396	Post-Colonial Theory
WOM 101	Introduction to Women’s Studies
WOM 201	Women and Feminism in Canada
WOM 305	Women and Feminism: Selected Topics

# Modern Languages, Literatures and Cultures

## Faculty

*Modern Languages,  
Literatures and Cultures  
German Studies*

**Sophie Boyer,**  
B.A., M.A., Ph.D. (McGill); Professor

*Hispanic Studies*

**Gilberto D’Escoubet,**  
B.A., M.A. (U de Montréal),  
Senior Instructor

**Jordan Tronsgard,**  
B.A., M.A. (Calgary), Ph.D. (Ottawa) Professor  
*Chair of the Department*

## Program Overview

The Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures offers an Honours program in Hispanic Studies, Modern Languages Majors and Hispanic Studies, German Major (Exchange), as well as Concentrations/Minors in German Studies, Hispanic Studies, and Japanese Studies (Exchange).

## Modern Languages Major (60 credits)

MAJMLA

This major is equally divided between two language Concentrations (30/30), which will be specified on the student’s final transcript. The languages available for Concentrations are German, Japanese and Spanish, as well as English Language Studies or French (offered by the Département des études françaises et québécoises). Students may choose one of their Concentrations in English or French, but completing Concentrations in English and French is not permitted for the Modern Languages Major. The requirements and courses for the Concentrations within the Modern Languages Major are listed under each specific language.

### \* Please note:

- 1) *MLA 101 is a graduation requirement for all Majors in the MLA department and will normally be taken in the first year of studies. The following students are exempt from this requirement: Students with an Hispanic Studies Honours, students taking the Hispanic Studies Major on a part-time basis, students with more than one major. Other students may request an exemption if there is not sufficient space in their curricula.*
- 2) *Students registered in the Modern Languages Major must declare their two languages by the end of their first year.*