

CORE (CORE-GG)

CORE-GG 2025 Proseminar: Theory and Methods in the Social Sciences: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This seminar, designed for incoming M.A. students, provides a broad introduction to theories and methods that have shaped the interdisciplinary terrain of the social sciences. The course emphasizes the reading of classic and more contemporary works of social theory and methodology, with a focus on key concepts and thinkers. How does one define a society? What is culture? How have social and cultural processes been understood? What is the relationship between a society or culture and a social group, an institution, or an individual? What is the nature of power, difference and identity? How do such foundational questions generate theories of modernity, capitalism, nationalism and globalization? How do such foundational questions orient the variety of disciplines within the social sciences? The course also surveys qualitative and quantitative methodologies, exploring the relationship between theory, methods, and the broader goals of research within the social sciences. Empirically grounded writings will explore the links between research frameworks, methodologies, data collection and theoretical claims. Readings will include classic texts by Karl Marx and Max Weber and more contemporary theorists such as Michel Foucault, David Harvey and Judith Butler, among others. Guest lectures by Gallatin faculty will introduce students to a range of methodologies (ethnography, quantitative data sets, the case study method, documentary analysis, interviewing and survey methods) and interdisciplinary research frameworks.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2026 Proseminar: Traditions of Interpretation (4 Credits)

This interdisciplinary seminar for incoming M.A. students introduces a series of key 20th- and 21st-century theoretical debates about interpretation in the modern humanities. The first half of the course will trace a broad chronology of theories of interpretation from the early 20th century to the first decades of the 21st. Beginning with thinkers like Marx and Freud who defined theories of interpretation in the early part of the century, we will then move into discussions concerning author, text, and context that took place within literary circles in the mid-century – clashes over the location of meaning that challenged the ways in which artists and critics conceived of their work. The course continues with close analysis of the so-called “high theory” of the 1970s and ’80s, such as structuralism, deconstruction, and cultural studies which both reflected and fomented broader shifts within the contemporary western world. We will finish our survey by looking at important theories of interpretation in the 21st century, including material culture, postcolonialism, feminist and queer theory, performance studies, and the concept of “theory after theory.” The second half of the course will turn to various fields and disciplines in the humanities to study how theories of interpretation have manifested within these fields. We will look at music, religion, gender and sexuality, visual art, theater, and media. Students will emerge from the course with a stronger historical grasp of the interpretive theory of the past century, and will be encouraged to use the course’s introductory framework to further develop the theoretical underpinnings of their own work. Readings will include Bhabha, Butler, Barthes, Bennett, Derrida, Felski, Hall, Halberstam, Spivak, and many others.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2027 Proseminar: Theory and Methods in the Arts: Interdisciplinary Perspectives (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Theory and critique are not only expected from so-called “serious artists”, they are also being produced and consumed at increasingly rapid rates by students, established artists, historians, critics, and others. This course will investigate the foundations and developments of art criticism and analysis. Emphasis will be placed on addressing what it means to be “critical” and how analysis has been influenced or shaped by critical theory, semiotics and psychoanalysis. The course will consider how these disciplines have been used in the writings and artworks by figures such as Nicolas Bourriaud, Julia Kristeva, Meyer Schapiro, Hans Haake, Mary Kelly, Dan Graham, and Andrea Fraser. In this instance artistic practice is viewed as involving both creating artworks and writing/theorizing. The course will stress the role of discourse in art while also allowing practitioners to produce and present art projects.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2029 Proseminar in the Arts: Why Do You Want to Make It, and How Can You Make It Better? (4 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

This course is intended for Gallatin graduate students in their first or second semester who will be pursuing an artistic thesis. Students who have advanced past their second semester are encouraged to contact the professor in advance of taking the class to be sure the parameters of the class will be appropriate. The class aims to pose difficult and productive questions that will help you understand your tendencies and priorities as an artist, the methods you employ, and where these are in the service of the work as opposed to where they stand in the way. The class requires rigorous and individualized research into your sources of artistic influence with an emphasis on analytical thinking about the methods and strategies employed by those artists or thinkers you consider key influences. The course includes assignments that explore your existing strategies and subject matter in order to understand what has motivated and generated the work thus far. Other assignments push students to work against the grain of their usual modes in order to discover new ways of working and to undermine default strategies. Towards the end of the term, the accumulated insights will be channeled into writing about your work that will be useful in the future context of an artist’s statement or artistic aims essay. In the personal and lab-like atmosphere that this course hopes to cultivate, the class also aims to connect Gallatin graduate students to each other’s work and practice, and to take advantage of the enormous importance that peer input and critique can have on work in progress. Possible side effects include: focused engagement, enhanced motivation, collaboration.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2030 Proseminar: Difference without Otherness (4 Credits)

In this class, we will investigate thorny issues such as peace, love and eros, genealogy, home and at-homeness, sovereignty and language, with the goal of exploring what it means to complicate, undermine, or even reject them as essentialist categories. How do we engage in the nuances of academic study without positioning differences as otherness? How does the confrontation of these themes pave the way for harmonious co-existence? Students from the humanities and social sciences will test and develop their interests with and against these concepts through critical reading, research and debating, writing and scholarly presentations. Many disciplines may be summoned in our project, including anthropology, art history, comparative literature, film, history, peace studies, philosophy, and politics.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2031 Proseminar in Humanities: Thinking Historically Theory and Methods in Contextualization) (4 Credits)

In a much-remarked 2008 speech on race relations, then-candidate Barack Obama drew on Faulkner to remind Americans of the continuing legacies of racism in the US: “the past is never dead,” he noted, “it’s not even past.” In doing so Obama called upon a familiar trope in critical thought – that history is just as dynamic and elusive as the present, each one (past and present) continuously shaping and informing the other. Which raises the question: what is history? What does it mean to think historically, to understand history not as an array of facts but as process, not as a field of study but as a sensibility, as a way to analyze the world around us? This course is designed for students seeking to add meaningful historical dimensions to their theses. We begin by surveying conventional approaches to historical analysis, from Herodotus to Hegel to Marx to Benjamin. Then we draw from Nietzsche, Foucault, Hayden White, and Michel-Rolph Trouillot to consider how history is constructed, used, and misused. We will then examine how jurists, anthropologists, novelists, sociologists, and human rights activists think historically to inform and deepen their craft, reading from Tolstoy, Justices Breyer and Scalia, Eric Wolf, Christopher Mele, and Daniel Wilkinson. We end with workshops that consider what it would mean to think historically about your own theses. What kinds of questions and materials would you include as you prepare for your prospectus, thesis, defense, and ultimately, life after NYU, armed with a sense of history?

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2034 Proseminar: From Suspicions to Surfaces: Critique & Post-Critique in the Contemporary Humanities (4 Credits)

This interdisciplinary seminar is designed to introduce central methods and debates in current humanistic scholarship. Many approaches to literary and cultural study have entailed forms of critique. We can briefly describe critique as interpreting texts and objects against the grain: Marxist, psychoanalytic, deconstructive, and Foucaultian theories seek, in a variety of ways, to expose the ideological underpinnings of power or the operations of unconscious desire or the ways in which language itself never quite says what, or all, it seems to say. Recently, some theorists have questioned the assumptions of these methods; they argue that the humanities have tarried too long with what the philosopher Paul Ricoeur called the “hermeneutics of suspicion.” The suspicious hermeneut is always on the hunt for concealed meaning and eager to expose the hidden workings of power. Some literary scholars have claimed that the priority given to “symptomatic reading” has come at the cost of attending to the surfaces of texts. Urging “reparative reading,” Eve Sedgwick wondered whether, in a world where violence and power are often happy to do their work in the light, how effective methods of exposure can be. Other thinkers have also wondered about the political efficacy of critique, seeing it as informed by a pessimism that risks reinforcing precisely the structures of power that these modes claimed to unveil. Has critique really “run out of steam,” as Bruno Latour famously claimed? In this course, we will examine these methodological debates in some detail. Readings will include selections from Marx, Freud, Foucault, Jameson, Spivak, Felski, Marcus, Moten, Assad, Ranciere, Latour, among others.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2036 Proseminar in the Humanities: Culture and Globalization (4 Credits)

This proseminar explores how to do interdisciplinary research in the humanities. To exemplify this approach, our subject is Africa-China relations. China’s controversial investment in Africa causes reactions ranging from accusations of a “new colonialism” to celebrations of a collaborative “win-win” for development. Also, immigration both by Africans to China and by Chinese to Africa signals a shift in global power dynamics and an opening of a new era of multi-polar globalization. Through an analysis of media, history, literature, political economy, sociology, film, and art this seminar examines the interdisciplinary nature of these relations. We ask what are the connections between the longue durée of history and the contemporary moment? How do different actors at state and individual levels engage with Africa-China relations? What are the symbolic dimensions of these relations? And finally, how does this shift to multi-polarity impact theories of globalization across disciplines?

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2037 Proseminar in the Humanities: Working with Found Objects/The Abandoned Copy Syllabus Graduate (4 Credits)

This course for incoming MA students is intended to lay the groundwork for inter- and trans-disciplinary research in the humanities. In the first half of the semester students will be asked to contend with a trove of essays that the professor has culled from abandoned copy baskets in this institution. Given the apparent randomness of these readings, what can we possibly learn from this syllabus? What connections, serious or spurious, speculative, or absurd can we make? Will different arrangements of these materials yield new or unexpected (ap)proximities and throughlines, relations or resonances? Guided by readings in the history of the humanities that suggest comparatism, pattern seeking, and storytelling as methods of meaning-making common to humanistic inquiry, we practice here a type of creative forensics that is as familiar to historians as visual artists—finding traces (archives and scraps, ruins, relics and artifacts), and deciding, quite literally, what to make of them. This thought experiment stages an encounter with found objects, and underlines the ways in which research involves a kind of thrownness into a world of always ongoing conversations. In the second half of the semester we turn to the work of scholars and artists in the inter- and transdisciplinary field of Black Studies, including Saidiya Hartman, Frantz Fanon, Arthur Jafa, Betye Saar, the quilters of Gee's Bend, Fred Moten, and Thelonious Monk, who model how to work with and against "the given." These engagements with found objects (and their transformations) are meant to spur students thinking about their own projects, clarify theoretical interests and methodological commitments and structure future individualized graduate study.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2038 Proseminar: Creative Writing Across Genres (4 Credits)

Typically offered Fall of even numbered years

This course is intended for Gallatin graduate students who will be pursuing an artistic thesis that incorporates creative writing (novel, poetry, screenplay, drama, memoir, etc.). The class aims to help you understand and develop the genres, methods, and research practices you will employ in your writing and in situating your work within literary traditions. By close reading across genres, you will learn to identify and critique your sources of writerly influence with an emphasis on thinking about the methods and strategies employed by these writers. The workshop approach of this course will connect you to each other's work and practice.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Graded

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2401 Thesis Proposal seminar (2 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

In this seminar, you will draft and complete your M.A. thesis proposal while establishing an ongoing, productive dialogue with your peers who are doing the same. You will learn about the structure and content of the thesis proposal as we (1) consider ways of articulating a core problem and well-defined research questions; (2) discuss the conventions of scholarly discourse, documentation, and argumentation; and (3) formulate goals that are ambitious but also achievable in a reasonable amount of time and in accordance with the availability of resources. Separate sections of this course are offered for students in the Social Sciences, the Humanities, and the Arts. In some weeks the course sections will meet separately, while in other weeks all sections will come together for plenary sessions that may include events and activities such as guest lectures, library visits, and human subjects research instruction. After completing this course, students must submit the final thesis proposal to the program by May 15. To learn more about the Approval Process for the Thesis Proposal, visit this webpage: <https://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/graduate/thesis/proposal.html>

Grading: Grad Gallatin Pass/Fail

Repeatable for additional credit: No

Prerequisites: CORE-GG 2025 or CORE-GG 2029 or CORE-UA 2036 or CORE-UA 2037.

CORE-GG 2402 Master's Thesis I (2 Credits)

Typically offered occasionally

Master's Thesis I Registration Form: <https://forms.gallatin.nyu.edu/node/377> In Master's Thesis I, students work under the supervision of the adviser and independently on the thesis research, project, or artistic work described in their thesis proposals. While students and advisers each work in their own ways, Master's Thesis I typically involves activities such as mapping the academic field, compiling an annotated bibliography, creating a draft outline, and completing a chapter draft or some equivalent portion of an artistic work. The goal for MT I is for students to advance significantly from the proposal stage into the drafting and execution stage of their project. Student and adviser (the grading instructor for this class) should plan to meet at least four times during the semester and students should plan to submit at least 15-20 pages of draft material to their adviser by semester's end. Students creating an artistic thesis should aim to have 15-20 pages of draft material of the research essay and to have made a firm start on the artistic work by the end of MTI. Master's Thesis I culminates in the RAW Forum (Research and Writing Forum) and the Works in Progress (for performance based theses) where students present their work on panels for comments from faculty. Participation in the RAW Forum and Works in Progress is optional but strongly recommended. Students will receive information about Raw Forum scheduling later in the semester. All students are required to attend a mandatory information session for Master's Thesis I during the first week of classes. For more information about registering for this course, see <https://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/registration/graduate/MTI-registration-instructions.html>

Grading: Grad Gallatin Pass/Fail

Repeatable for additional credit: No

CORE-GG 2403 Master's Thesis II (2 Credits)*Typically offered occasionally*

In Master's Thesis II, students continue to work in collaboration with the adviser to complete the research thesis, or, in the case of an artistic thesis, the artwork as well as the related research essay. While students and advisers work in their own ways, common activities for Master's Thesis II include revising draft material, clarifying and strengthening analysis, engaging in more direct dialogue with relevant research, and preparing the final project draft with full bibliography and citations for submission to the defense committee. Students must submit their work (including artistic projects), fully approved by their adviser, at least 4 weeks in advance of defense. Completion of the defense is required in order to pass Master's Thesis II. Please consult this timeline for the Thesis Defense – <https://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/graduate/thesis/calendars.html>. All students are required to attend the mandatory information session during the first week of classes. For more information about registering for this course, see <https://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/registration/graduate/MTII-registration-instructions.html>

Grading: Grad Gallatin Pass/Fail**Repeatable for additional credit:** No**CORE-GG 2999 Thesis Advisement (1 Credit)***Typically offered occasionally*

Students who do not defend the thesis successfully or have not completed the thesis during the semester in which they are registered for Master's Thesis II (CORE-GG 2403) are required to register for Thesis Advisement each semester (including the summer, for students graduating in September) until the thesis is defended. Credits earned through Thesis Advisement are not included in the 40-credit requirement for the master's degree. The special tuition rate for Thesis Advisement is \$400.00 plus a non-refundable registration and services fee.

Grading: Grad Gallatin Pass/Fail**Repeatable for additional credit:** Yes