

# Requirements: Integrated Program in Humane Studies

## Interdisciplinary

The Integrated Program in Humane Studies (IPHS) concentration is an interdisciplinary program that integrates all four branches of a liberal arts education. We believe that asking and answering many of our big questions requires moving beyond boundaries and combining ideas and approaches from multiple disciplines. What makes our interdisciplinary approach unique is the blending of disciplinary perspectives from all four branches of the liberal arts.

*The Kenyon College faculty voted to change from Kenyon units to semester hours. This change will go into effect for all students who start at the College in the fall of 2024. Both systems will be used throughout the course catalog with the Kenyon units being listed first.*

## The Curriculum

IPHS offers a range of courses, each of which explores the "humane" in the human experience from an interdisciplinary perspective. The 100-level class offers a blend of lecture, seminar, and tutorial. The 200-level and above courses often feature project-based learning by pairing interdisciplinary reflection with real-world application. Students choose from the range of offerings to create their own individual course of study.

Note: Completion of the first-year, introductory seminar in IPHS counts toward the IPHS concentration and may also fulfill up to one unit of diversification in humanities or social sciences.

More details are available in the [IPHS diversification credits table](#).

## Requirements for the Concentration

**The concentration in IPHS requires four courses**

The concentration consists of four IPHS courses followed by IPHS 484 (Senior Research Seminar), during which students pursue self-designed projects in a seminar setting. IPHS 111Y-112Y counts as two courses toward the concentration. IPHS 484 can be taken as a junior with permission from the IPHS director.

For one of the four core courses, students, in consultation with their IPHS advisor, may choose an elective drawn from outside the program. Typically, these courses are interdisciplinary offerings that inform their senior seminar project in a substantive way.

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## Courses in Integrated Program in Humane Studies

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### Odyssey: Pursuit of Wisdom and Understanding

IPHS 111Y CREDITS: 0.5/4

To know where to go, one needs to know where one has been. Join us on our intellectual odyssey as we trace the history of ideas, political revolutions and technological changes that have shaped our shared human culture. We begin with the earliest efforts to understand ourselves and the world around us. Through a highly diverse and inclusive conversation among philosophers and poets, historians and artists, scientists and humanists, we explore the vast system of interconnected ideas that makes us who we are. Focusing on texts, political movements, cultural changes, religious beliefs and scientific discoveries that have transformed the world, this course challenges students to ask some of life's most fundamental questions: What is a truly happy life? Is there an ideal human community? Why do we tell stories? When confronted with other ways of living, how do we evaluate our own life? We also consider the relative value of human reason and emotion: Which should guide our lives and the organization

of our political communities? In a secular world, does art replace religion as a way to make sense of and give value to life? And does the radical violence of revolutions and world wars challenge our very premise of human excellence and exceptionalism? Near the end of our odyssey, we touch on the origins of computer science in ideas borrowed from math, philosophy and linguistics. Do the sometimes centuries-old answers to life's fundamental questions still hold? With guest lectures by professors from a wide range of Kenyon departments and weekly seminars during which smaller groups of students debate the material with one another and their seminar leader, our unique course provides one of the best introductions to liberal education. Students enrolled in this course are automatically added to IPHS 112Y for the spring semester. IPHS 111-112Y fulfills the Humanities diversification requirement.

## Odyssey: Pursuit of Wisdom and Understanding

IPHS 112Y CREDITS: 0.5/4

To know where to go, one needs to know where one has been. Join us on our intellectual odyssey as we trace the history of ideas, political revolutions and technological changes that have shaped our shared human culture. We begin with the earliest efforts to understand ourselves and the world around us. Through a highly diverse and inclusive conversation among philosophers and poets, historians and artists, scientists and humanists, we explore the vast system of interconnected ideas that makes us who we are. Focusing on texts, political movements, cultural changes, religious beliefs and scientific discoveries that have transformed the world, this course challenges students to ask some of life's most fundamental questions: What is a truly happy life? Is there an ideal human community? Why do we tell stories? When confronted with other ways of living, how do we evaluate our own life? We also consider the relative value of human reason and emotion: Which should guide our lives and the organization of our political communities? In a secular world, does art replace religion as a way to make sense of and give value to life? And does the radical violence of revolutions and world wars challenge our very premise of human excellence and exceptionalism? Near the end of our odyssey, we touch on the origins of computer science in ideas borrowed from math, philosophy and linguistics. Do the sometimes centuries-old answers to life's fundamental questions still hold? With guest lectures by professors from a wide range of Kenyon departments and weekly seminars during which smaller groups of students debate the material with one another and

their seminar leader, our unique course provides one of the best introductions to liberal education. IPHS 111-112Y fulfills the Humanities diversification requirement.

## Programming Humanity

IPHS 200 CREDITS: 0.5/4 QR

This course equips students with computational methods spanning the humanities, social sciences, and data science. Through Python programming, data visualization, and modeling, students analyze everything from literary texts to social networks. The course examines how digital tools transform our understanding of human behavior and society while tackling crucial questions about AI, surveillance, automation, and transhumanism. By combining quantitative methods with critical analysis, the course prepares students to both understand and shape our increasingly algorithmic world. This course serves as the gateway course in the IPHS AI curriculum. We recommend that students without prior data science or programming experience take this course before enrolling in more advanced AI courses.

## Galileo to Einstein

IPHS 225 CREDITS: 0.5/4

In the early 17th century, Galileo's writings on physics and astronomy helped establish modern scientific thought. Three centuries later, Einstein's work on relativity and quantum theory helped transform it. The ideas of both men proved influential and ignited controversy far beyond the bounds of their scientific disciplines. In this class, we read essential works by Galileo and Einstein (among others) and explore not only their discoveries, but also their wider views of nature and the human striving to understand her. What principles guide the scientific quest? Are there limits to scientific knowledge? What are the relationships between observation and imagination, between genius and ethics, between science and religion? This course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. Offered every other year.

## Cultural Analytics

IPHS 290 CREDITS: 0.5/4

Cultural analytics is the study of culture using diverse sources and data-driven methods. We analyze language from texts to tweets and social networks from film to the Twitterverse. In this

project-based course, students code ways to explore phenomena like the social networks in "Game of Thrones" and the classification of tweets as Trump or Trudeau. They apply what they have learned for a final project of their choice. Students new to coding should contact the instructor for information on how to complete a self-paced mini coding course before the start of the semester. This course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Offered every other year.

## AI for Humanity

IPHS 300 CREDITS: 0.5/4 QR

This course explores artificial intelligence through both technical implementation and humanistic inquiry. Building on the programming foundations from IPHS 200, students learn to build and critically evaluate AI systems, from classical machine-learning approaches to cutting-edge deep neural networks and large language models. Through hands-on projects, students create AI systems that generate music, analyze text, classify images and more. The course pairs technical training with readings from philosophy, ethics and critical theory to examine fundamental questions about creativity, intelligence, and what it means to be human in an age of artificial minds. The course emphasizes both technical competency and critical thinking, preparing students to be thoughtful practitioners and critics in our AI-driven future. Prerequisite: COMP 118, IPHS 200 or IPHS 391 (fall 2025).

## Aristophanes: Politics and Comedy

IPHS 423D CREDITS: 0.5/4

Today, political comedians are a mainstay of our culture, some of the most famous being Jon Stewart, Trevor Noah and John Oliver. But while their insights are often astute, they are rarely profound and never add up to a comprehensive political teaching. To see the heights and depths that are possible in comedy, we study four plays by Aristophanes, the unrivaled master of combining comic vulgarity with a wisdom equal to that of the philosophers. Through a close examination of these plays, we find and consider Aristophanes' insights on such obviously political and some not so obviously political topics as the founding of cities, father-beating, the tension between the private good and the public good, the Muses and the other gods, the respective power of nature and convention, the danger of philosophy, war and peace, property

and the political role of women. Throughout, we also consider Aristophanes' view of the political purpose of comedy. Prior coursework in political science is not required. This counts as an upper-level seminar for the political science major. This course is the same as PSCI 423D and must be taken as PSCI 423D to count toward the social science diversification requirement. This counts toward the IPHS concentration. No prerequisite. Sophomore standing.

## Senior Research Seminar

IPHS 484 CREDITS: 0.5/4

This course, designed as a research and/or studio workshop, allows students to pursue their own interdisciplinary projects. Students are encouraged to take thoughtful, creative risks in developing their ideas and themes. Those engaged in major long-term projects may continue with them during the second semester. This course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement. No prerequisite. Junior standing.

## Individual Study

IPHS 493 CREDITS: 0.5-0.63/2-4

Individual study in the Integrated Program in Humane Studies is reserved for juniors and seniors who have completed at least one course in the program. Individual study projects are designed to offer the opportunity for directed reading and research in areas not generally covered by the regular offerings of the program, or by the regular offerings of other programs or departments. Alternatively, such projects may offer the opportunity for more advanced research in areas already addressed in program offerings. In some instances, they may offer the possibility of studying languages not otherwise available, or not available at an advanced level, in the College curriculum (e.g., Old Icelandic, Old English). Students undertaking an individual study project are expected to meet with their advisors on a regular basis, ordinarily at least once a week. Individual study projects are expected to embody a substantial commitment of time and effort, which, at the discretion of the project advisor, may result in a major essay or research report. Students wishing to undertake such a project should first gain, if possible a semester in advance, the permission of a potential advisor or mentor and then submit a written prospectus of the project for the approval of both the prospective advisor and the program director. Because students must enroll for individual studies by the end of the seventh class day of each semester,

they should begin discussion of the proposed individual study by the semester before, so that there is time to devise the proposal and seek departmental approval. This course does not count toward the completion of any diversification requirement.