

English Major Plan

Upon declaring my English major, I would especially like to pursue my interests in Asian American literature, cultural theory, and film. In consideration of the five English courses I've taken so far as well as courses outside the major, I noticed that the courses already tend to cluster around those interests. I've also realized how often they can and do speak to each other. For instance, I've taken an English class titled, "Introduction to Cultural Theory," which opened up my eyes to seeing literature as part of a culture that also encompasses other cultural forms such as music, art, and film. Especially interested in the aspect of film, I proceeded to take a class on nonfiction film/video from the Art Department and an English class (also cross-listed as anthropology) titled, "Visible culture: Documentary & Nonfiction." Both classes built upon my first English class by providing me with a more in-depth knowledge about the specific cultural form of film. Also, an introduction class to Asian American Literature sparked my interest in the subject, which I incorporated with the English class (called, "Culture and Empire") I took the following semester by applying the cultural theories we read in class to Korean culture within the socio-historical context of the colonization of Korea by the Japanese Empire. The interaction between these courses reveals the direction I can take to complete the major: the study of Asian American literature as the core body of material may be integrated with the theoretical perspective of culture, especially examining film – along with writing – as one of the cultural forms.

Given the specific interests I plan to pursue in depth, I also hope to extend beyond my comfort zone to explore the wide range of English literary studies. One such attempt so far is my venture into the British Romantic Literature class this semester, and I am enjoying the diversity in geography (from Asia to Europe) and form (prose to mostly poetry). I plan to enrich this diversity by taking a course that explores the genre of travel writing in context of Italian images and culture while I study abroad in Rome, Italy during the spring semester of my junior year. Regarding studying literature over different historical periods, I was fortunate to have this aspect built into the structure of many classes I have taken – such as the Intro to Asian American Literature class that chronologically followed the evolution of Asian American literature over time. In addition, classes such as British Romantic Literature helped me focus on one specific time period in light of the entire literary history.

As for the remainder of my English major, I hope to continue pursuing all my interests in depth while gaining a broad perspective on how my interests fit in the entire field of English literary studies.