Renaissance and Early Modern Studies

The Program in Renaissance and Early Modern Studies (REMS) encourages students to pursue interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary approaches to the study of Europe and its relation with the Americas and Asia in the early modern period. Students focus on the late fourteenth through the late eighteenth centuries—a time marked by scientific and agricultural revolutions, the Reformation, the development of capitalism, and the rise of cultural forms such as the novel, opera, Grub Street journalism and the art market. Concentrators examine the development of new cultural and political forms through the imitation and reworking of those of classical antiquity, the restructuring of patriarchal society, and the emergence of the sovereign nation state. Students take courses in more than a dozen departments affiliated with REMS.

Sponsoring departments include: Africana Studies, Archaeology and the Ancient World, Classics, Comparative Literature, English, French Studies, Hispanic Studies, History, History of Art and Architecture, History of Mathematics, Italian Studies, Judaic Studies, Music, Philosophy, Portuguese and Brazilian Studies, Slavic Languages, and Theatre Arts and Performance Studies. Students are invited to take advantage of this breadth of offerings in order to enhance their understanding of the period, as well as to gain a sense of the uses, limitations, and interrelationships of particular disciplinary approaches.

Requirements

Concentrators are required to take a minimum of 8 courses. These include the following:

1. Three courses on Renaissance and/or early modern topics in one field in which the student has primary interest or training, (for example, literature, history of art and architecture, or history).

2. Three courses related to the Renaissance and/or early modern period chosen from two other fields.

3. A senior project. (Credit will be granted through registration for Independent Study in the department in which the topic of research lies.)

4. Another relevant course of the student's choosing.

In addition, the student must be able to demonstrate a reading knowledge of a relevant modern or ancient language other than English. This language requirement does not count as one of the 8 courses.

Honors

Interested and eligible students will petition to write a thesis and the faculty will choose the Honors group for that year from the applications, making every effort to accommodate all eligible proposals. Selection is based upon the quality of the application, the preparedness of the student to undertake the project, and the availability of appropriate advisors for the subject. Applications will be due to the Director of REMS in mid-April of the student's junior year.

For those accepted, the Honors program will be administered as follows:

Students will sign up for REMS 1980 in the Fall and again in the Spring, with the section number of their advisor. Students must meet regularly with their advisors and second readers throughout the year according to a schedule determined by each student and advisor. Finished drafts of the thesis (which will be about 35 pages in length, not counting bibliography and visual or other supporting materials) will be due to the advisor and second reader on April 1 of the Spring semester. Comments will be returned to the students for final polishing and corrections at that point. Students will receive Honors when both their primary advisor and their second reader have provided written statements in support of the finished project. The finished paper, which should be a polished and revised, edited, professional work of original research, will be made available to the entire REMS faculty at the Annmary Brown Memorial, with a folder for leaving constructive comments on the finished thesis for the concentrator. This is an optional engagement that we hope will become part of the culture of the program. There will be a public presentation of the Honors work at the end of the Spring semester.

Students planning a December graduation will not be eligible for the Honors Thesis program, although as always they are welcome to work out other ways to pursue projects of independent interest in consultation with an academic advisor.

Students wishing to write an honors thesis must have an A average in the concentration, which means that they will not have received more than one “B” or “S” in any course used for the concentration. Classes taken S/NC may be considered as qualifying the student for Honors if they are marked “S with distinction,” meaning that had the student taken the course for a grade, the grade would have been an “A.” It is advisable for them to have taken at least one class with the person who will advise the thesis, and have already written a research paper before choosing to undertake this year-long writing project. Honors students are strongly encouraged not to take more than 4 classes either semester of their senior year—the Honors class being considered one of the four classes.

Application process:

Each application shall consist of:

1. A very brief (one or two paragraph) cover letter identifying the most appropriate advisor and second readers, and stating also the student's preparation is for the project. Second readers may be professors who work in areas related to the topic, or in some very special cases (and with advisor's approval) may be practitioners with whom the student already worked closely, for example.

2. A 2 page double-spaced abstract stating and explaining the topic (subject and argument) of the research to be undertaken, written as clearly as possible.

3. A one-page working bibliography of the most relevant books and major articles to be consulted for the project.

4. A current résumé.

5. A printout of the most recent transcript.

The senior project constitutes the capstone for all concentrators. Examples of possible senior projects are: a senior thesis (roughly equivalent to a senior seminar paper), the staging of an early modern play, the performance of early modern music, or an exhibition. The final project will be developed in consultation with two REMS faculty advisors who work closely with the student. Credit is granted through registration for Independent Study in the department for which the topic of research lies.

Liberal Learning

This concentration will help develop your aesthetic awareness, close reading skills, collaborative skills, cultural understanding, facility with symbolic languages, historical awareness, and your speaking and writing.