The Humanities Division

Independent thinking in pursuit of understanding, analyzing and constructing the human experience

"We are preparing students to construct meaningful lives in a cosmopolitan world of rapid technological change. Engagement with the humanities that develops understanding of other cultures and perspectives, habits of critical analysis, and creative imagination prepare them well for productive careers and lifelong learning."  
-- William A. Ladusaw, Dean of Humanities

What does it mean to be human, to analyze and construct the human experience?

These are the fundamental questions that guide and unite the learning, teaching, and scholarship conducted in UC Santa Cruz's Humanities Division. The exploration and discussion of this query has culminated in some of humanity's most deeply and widely valued beliefs and teachings about ourselves and the world in which we live. We recognize the humanities as the bedrock of a liberal arts education, where students develop their capacity for the reading, writing and reasoning that prepares them for understanding, analyzing, and constructing the human experience.

Focused discussions and intensive writing.

Our faculty engage students directly in critical thinking, challenging students to examine fundamental assumptions and systems of thought. As the division charged with administering the university's Writing and Language programs, the Humanities Division plays a lead role in upholding the university's core standards of excellence in undergraduate education.

Success of our Graduates in Humanities at UCSC.

Our graduates pursue lives and careers in banking, business, diplomacy, education, entertainment, healthcare, law, medicine, public policy, public service and social entrepreneurship. Research and scholarship conducted by Humanities trained graduates and faculty inform the policies, products, and plans of governments, institutions, corporations, and communities.
Extraordinary accomplishments of our alumni.

Our alumni reflect the broadly applicable values that a strong understanding of the humanities imparts. They are college presidents and cultural critics. They include military historian and National Humanities Medal winner Victor Davis Hanson, two-time Polk-award winning writer Lawrence Weschler, genre mega-novelist Jayne Ann Krentz, acclaimed American West historian Richard White, and winners of the MacArthur “Genius” Award and Marshall

Humanities houses some of UCSC’s most celebrated and innovative departments. They include:

• **Linguistics**, which consistently ranks among the top ten programs nationally, focuses distinctively on combining theoretical and experimental work with particular attention to minority languages.

• **Literature**, which has from its beginnings approached both literary and cultural studies from a comparative and transnational perspective.

• **Feminist Studies**, founded in 1974, is today one of the oldest, largest and most well regarded departments in the nation focusing on gender and sexuality studies.

• **History**, a leader in developing a global perspective on “world history” with its focus on underrepresented and transnational areas such as East Asia, the Americas, and women’s and environmental history.

• **Philosophy**, which has trained students and fostered research in fundamental historical and contemporary ideas about logic, analytics and perspectives that frame a philosophical view of the human world including new lines of inquiry in medicine, science, environmentalism and human rights.

• **History of Consciousness**, a field founded at UCSC. For nearly 40 years it has operated at the intersection of established and emergent disciplines and fields, acquainting students with leading intellectual trends in the Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences.

Faculty accomplishments.

Our faculty accomplishments in a diverse range of disciplines speak to the intellectual breadth and flexibility that distinguishes our division’s work. Feminist Studies Professor **Bettina Aptheker**, who along with Literature Professor and National Book Award finalist **Karen Tei Yamashita** was awarded an esteemed UC Presidential Chair in the emerging field of Feminist Critical Race and Ethnic Studies in 2012. Another UC Presidential Chair, Professor Emeritus **Edmund Burke**, founded the Center for World History, which is having a dramatic impact on the way we understand and teach that discipline. Literature Professor Emeritus **Nathaniel Mackey** took the 2010 Guggenheim Fellowship for poetry.

**Contact Us:**

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