

For More Information Contact:

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What is PAL?

PAL stands for “Philosophy, Arts, and Literature.” “Arts” includes theater, painting, film, music, and other arts. PAL exists to encourage and promote work that places literature, theater, painting, film, and other arts in conversation with philosophy without reducing them to mere illustrations of philosophical paradigms. It seeks to foster conversation between writers and artists and scholars and critics by organizing or co-sponsoring conferences, symposia and more informal working groups.



Graduate Certificate Program
Fall 2014 - Spring 2015



PAL Website:
dukepal.org/

PAL Certificate Website:
dukepal.org/certificate/

Our Mission

PAL's mission is to show that literature and the arts think as deeply as philosophy, and to encourage dialogue between literature and the arts, and philosophy in ways that don't subordinate the former to the latter, but rather acknowledge them as equal contributors to human knowledge. Underpinning this mission is a vision of human language as use, action, and expression, and thus of every human utterance, including every work of art, literature and philosophy, as a specific intervention in time, and history.

The Program

The Graduate Student Certificate in Philosophy, Arts, & Literature seeks to connect the study of specific works of art and specific art forms (such as literature, music, theater, painting, film, and so on) to questions concerning creativity, the nature of specific art forms, the relationship between knowledge and art, and between ethics and aesthetics. The Certificate aims to make students conversant with philosophical reflections on literature and the arts. The Certificate seeks to foster an understanding of the historical nature of different art forms, and of aesthetics and philosophy, and to encourage exploration of philosophy, art and literature from different historical periods.

The Certificate is designed to provide graduate students with a firm grounding in the research skills required to enable them to intervene in contemporary debates within the field and to encourage them to consider their own field of study from an inter- or cross-disciplinary approach.

The Requirements

Five Graduate Level Courses from at least three different departments at Duke University. The courses must be approved by the Steering Committee. A list of approved courses will be made available on our website.

Completion of a research paper and presentation of that research paper at a workshop at Duke.

Regular attendance at PAL Forums and PAL events strongly encouraged.

Fall 2014 Courses

XTIANTHE 980:
“Incomprehensible Certainty”: Iconic Vision and Theological Aesthetics. The Divinity School. Prof. Thomas Pfau.

LIT 681S: Wittgensteinian Perspectives on Literary Theory. Prof. Toril Moi.

Spring 2015 Courses

ENG 545S: Romantic Aesthetic Theory and Aesthetics. Prof. Robert Mitchell

ENG 890S: Shakespeare, Philosophy, Tragedy: Value, Suffering and the Human. Prof. Sarah Beckwith.

Steering Committee



Sarah Beckwith
Professor of English and Theater Studies; Chair of Theater Studies



Owen Flanagan
James B. Duke Professor of Philosophy; Professor of Neurobiology



Neil McWilliam
Walter H. Annenberg Professor of Art History



Toril Moi
James B. Duke Professor of Literature and Romance Studies; Professor of Philosophy, English and Theater studies; Director of the Center for Philosophy, Arts and Literature (PAL)



Thomas Pfau
Alice Mary Baldwin Professor and Eads Family Professor of English and German; DGS-German Studies



Jacqueline Waeber
Associate Professor of Music