Special offerings of majors, minors, and centers in the School of Humanities

Many of our majors and minors offer special "perks" to the students enrolled in them. In addition, the Humanities Research Center and the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication (CLIC) have offerings for all Rice students. These special offerings open doors to new experiences, research, and careers.

Art History majors travel with faculty over Spring Break to New York City, and have the opportunity to take a Rice art history class in a number of cities across the globe, including Istanbul, Rome, Rio de Janeiro, Paris, and London. The department also hosts regular trips to Cuba in conjunction with the Department of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies. Majors can apply for paid internships and for scholarships at a number of local art museums, including the Menil Collection, the Museum of Fine Arts, Houston, and the Bayou Bend Collection.

Asian Studies majors gain a comprehensive overview of Asia through the four areas of geography, history, peoples and their movements, and culture and choose a specialized area. They receive strong language training that emphasizes cultural proficiency.

Classical Studies majors have the opportunity to study for a semester in Rome or Athens and to take courses at Rice that include travel to Rome. Students are also encouraged to apply to summer digs at archaeological sites in the Greco-Roman world. At Rice, majors enjoy the fellowship of the Classics Club, in which students and faculty gather to sight read Latin and Greek, watch Classics-themed movies, and learn or practice conversational Latin.

English majors are eligible to apply to annual writing competitions and to departmental funding for advanced research. They are also eligible to apply for the Minter Summer Research Awards for research or conference travel in the U.S. or overseas. In recent years, students have traveled for research to Amsterdam to study Charlotte Salomon’s paintings; to London to study Shakespeare’s plays and visit the Globe Theatre; and to Paris to study the context of modernist authors. Four or five Minter Summer Research Awards are granted each year, in amounts ranging from $1,700 to $3,700. English majors and others publish R2: The Rice Review, the award-winning student-run literary journal at Rice University. R2 publishes the best prose, poetry, and creative nonfiction by Rice undergraduate students, as well as interviews with renowned authors. Each year R2 presents awards in Fiction, Poetry, and Creative Nonfiction to those students whose work merits additional recognition.

English majors choosing to study abroad in the spring of their junior year have the exciting opportunity to experience the scholarly, historical and cultural richness of south-west England at the top-ranked University of Exeter. This pre-approved program of study at Exeter gives Rice students access to the same classes that Exeter students take. Now, under a new special transfer-credit arrangement, Exeter courses can be transferred back to Rice as English major electives and their grades are counted in the Rice GPA.

French Studies majors (and non-majors) are encouraged to spend a semester or a year or a summer studying in France. French Studies has an endowment that generously subsidizes a semester or a full year. The Alliance Française of Houston provides a scholarship for summer study. In addition, majors are eligible to write an honors thesis based on independent research during their senior year, in consultation with a faculty member.

German Studies majors at the intermediate level can receive funding to attend an eight-week, intensive language course at the University of Leipzig’s humanities.rice.edu
renowned Herder Institute. This course counts toward the German Studies major at Rice with 6 credit hours. German Studies majors can apply to the Berlin Consortium for German Studies. The Berlin Consortium allows students to spend a full semester or even an entire year in Germany.

History majors are eligible to apply for department funding for research trips. Recent destinations included Presidential Libraries in Missouri and Kansas and archives in Chile, London, and Paris. Additionally, majors can apply for the Garside Prize, which allows students to follow their serious non-academic travel dreams. Garside funds have supported student travel to Vietnam, China, Eastern Europe, and South Africa. In addition to these travel opportunities, our department offers summer Research Assistantships for our majors. Finally, history majors recently created the Rice Historical Review as a venue for undergraduate research.

Each year, the Medieval and Early Modern Studies program showcases outstanding undergraduate papers from our MDEM courses in a day-long conference aimed at giving students professional experience at presenting their research publicly—before faculty, students, family and friends. An invited scholar gives a reflective response to each student’s presentation and also presents a research paper. The conference is supported by the Neil J. O’Brien Endowment.

Philosophy majors are eligible to apply for funding to attend and present at undergraduate philosophy conferences around the US. They are also invited to participate in Philosophy Club meetings for informal discussion of philosophical issues, fueled by pizza and prompted by a thematically linked film. The Philosophy Department offers to majors a special undergraduate research seminar (PHIL 407), aimed at deepening their awareness of current work in philosophy, developing advanced skills, and fostering intellectual community. Each offering of the seminar is organized around a new theme or recent book, and involves student presentations and peer feedback.

Religion majors construct individualized concentrations of study close to students’ interests and faculty expertise. They talk regularly with faculty and graduate students at monthly teas, majors’ dinners, open houses, and alumni guest lectures; they can also participate in the graduate student led mentorship program, RELI@Rice. Majors are eligible to write a year-long thesis based on their research interests and to compete for university-wide Distinction in Research. Majors also vie for the Saba Prize (for outstanding work in the major) and the Aparicio Prize (for best paper in the psychology of religion). Opportunities for research practica, with organizations such as the Institute for Spirituality and Health, the Jung Center, and the McGovern Center for Humanities & Ethics, are also available and are coordinated with the Humanities Research Center.

The Department of Spanish, Portuguese, and Latin American Studies administers two undergraduate majors: Spanish & Portuguese and Latin American Studies. The department faculty are dedicated to the research and teaching of literatures, cultures, and languages of the Spanish and Portuguese speaking worlds. The curriculum for both majors is designed to promote opportunities in undergraduate research and experiential learning. Such opportunities include: creative writing, translation, a Spring Break research trip to Cuba, and an upper-level Internship program in Madrid, Spain. The internship program pairs students with professional opportunities in various fields, such as engineering, health services, and education. Our majors allow students to pursue an advanced degree or employment in areas as varied as the medical professions, literature, linguistics, politics, and business. In addition, the Latin American Studies major offers a unique opportunity to study abroad for a whole semester in Latin America, as well as an intensive capstone seminar to crystallize and polish research conducted abroad.

Visual and Dramatic Arts majors in the junior year take the department’s annual field trip to a U.S. or international city for an immersive experience in studio, film/photography and theatre. Majors are also eligible for thousands of dollars in academic prizes awarded annually. Prominent local and national artists and theatre professionals visit every semester to talk to majors about their own art, careers, to provide...
critiques of student work, and to direct theatrical productions. Senior Studio and Film majors have the opportunity to exhibit their work on campus in the spring and also showcase their work in the student-run Matchbox Gallery.

Majors in the Study of Women, Gender, and Sexuality carry out research projects that benefit community partner organizations and present their results publicly. Premedical students are prominent among our majors—they draw upon our coursework and engaged research experiences for their medical career plans. A competitive, paid summer internship is available to students who have completed SWGS 201 “Introduction to LGBT Studies.”

The Program in Jewish Studies offers minors and all Rice students the opportunity to enroll in seminars that travel to Jerusalem, Berlin, and New York City during spring break. All students are also eligible to apply for fellowships for undergraduate summer research and travel related to Jewish Studies, paid research assistantships with Jewish Studies faculty, and a study abroad program in Israel through the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. The Jewish Studies Student Association (JSSA) organizes a variety of programs during the academic year, including field trips to museums and cultural events in Houston as well as film screenings and faculty lunches on campus.

Students in the Politics, Law, and Social Thought minor had the opportunity in November to meet one on one with Professor Rainer Forst of Frankfurt, one of the leading theorists of political ethics and tolerance in the world today. They were also able to take advantage of our close connection to the courts in Houston: one student interned with Judge Evelyn Keyes at the Texas First Court of Appeals, and a second with Judge Nancy K. Johnson at the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Texas.

Ancient Mediterranean Civilizations majors take a broad look at the many cultures of the ancient Mediterranean world chronologically and geographically. They participate on archaeological digs, with financial support, from the Balkans to Spain, and they study abroad in Rome, Athens, and Jerusalem. They have the opportunity to interact with guest lecturers who are experts in various aspects of ancient life, and they organize meals and other activities for themselves and other students interested in antiquity.

Minors in Poverty, Justice, and Human Capabilities (PJHC) can receive funding for summer service internships, both at domestic sites and in developing countries. Recent interns have
served disadvantaged communities in India, South Africa, and Costa Rica, and closer to home in Houston, El Paso, and New York City. Returning interns make short digital stories about their experiences. See recent interns’ stories at pjhc.rice.edu/digital-stories/.

All humanities majors are eligible to apply to the Office of the Dean of Humanities for funding to enable them to accept an unpaid summer internship they have independently arranged at a for-profit or non-profit organization of their choice, through the HEDGE Program. Recent internships that have received funding include the Texas Historical Commission in Austin, the anti-poverty NGO Nourish International in Peru, a bird conservation organization in Australia, and a K-12 writing program in New York City schools. The Office of the Dean of Humanities also oversees internships with the Baylor School of Medicine through the Health, Humanism, and Society Scholars (HHASS) program.

And for all Rice students:

The Humanities Research Center offers credit-bearing research practica at institutions in the Texas Medical Center, Houston’s Museum District, the Houston Public Library, and other local institutions. Students work 10 hours on site per week and present their research at an end-of-year symposium. The HRC also awards competitive research funding to undergraduates interested in establishing workshops related to humanities research, attending conferences, or developing summer research projects. Preference is given to students who have some humanities coursework.

Students can demonstrate their language proficiency and intercultural communicative ability by earning a Certificate of Language and Intercultural Communication through the Center for Languages and Intercultural Communication (CLIC). The center also offers Rice in Country summer study abroad courses for direct Rice credit in Argentina, China, France, Germany, India, Korea, Japan, Russia, and Spain (third-year Spanish for medical professionals is offered in cooperation with a local medical school in Spain). CLIC students become global citizens by learning to communicate and interact in new languages, doing community service in their target language, and traveling the world! CLIC offers competitive grants to students interested in participating in the Rice in Country programs (based primarily on financial need).

Have questions about the School of Humanities?
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