

**A Doctoral Program in the Humanities, with Concentrations in
Aesthetics and Creativity and Studies in Culture:
A Distance Education Model.**

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Abstract

Many international exchanges, particularly at the doctoral level, are fueled by national priorities in the participating countries, which emphasize science and medicine. Consequently, opportunities in other disciplinary areas have often languished for lack of resources. Hence, we propose a model for the Humanities disciplines based upon focused study that distributes the typical residency requirement of most Ph.D. programs and relies upon fairly “low-tech” accessible support systems to accommodate the candidate in one country and the mentor in another. We call this model “the Consortium.” Initially, it involves three countries: China, Japan, and the United States. It has numerous implications for the education of the global professorate of the 21st Century: cross-cultural communication, new contributions to a growing body of knowledge, sensitivity to issues of diversity, exchanges of faculty among these institutions, and related bilateral consortia arrangements.

Introduction

The concept of the university has been restructured several times over the past two centuries. There was a time when the terminal degree from higher institutions of education was limited to the awarding of a Master of Arts degree, the British Model. With the advent of the German Model of higher education, these terminal degrees were replaced by doctorates. When this new framework was established, only the Universities of Leipzig and Berlin offered doctorates. Ferdinand de Saussure, for example, the father of structuralism, received his doctorate from Germany in Indo-European Linguistics at the age of nineteen. It took a while for this new model of higher education to develop in other countries. It was adopted

quite early in the United States, particularly with the founding of Johns Hopkins University, which granted the first Ph.D. in 1878. In Asia, there is a great disparity in the awarding of college degrees. Many of the older scholars who followed the British Model only have Master of Art degrees. The younger scholars who were educated under the German Model possess doctorates. This disparity has led to several problems among Asian universities. Many noted Asian scholars who lead their academic fields only possess a Master of Arts degree. They desire to rectify this problem by seeking a doctorate in their own fields of specialization, but their goals are curtailed by numerous problems relating to both time and finances. Such scholars are not able to leave their positions in order to enter graduate school in another country for an extended period of time. They do not have the time nor the money to accomplish these goals. It is with this focus in mind that we wish to share with you our emerging proposal for a new doctorate in the Humanities at the University of Louisville with a component based on distance education, a web-based curriculum. Hence, we propose a program to pursue Ph.D. programs focused on Euro-American scholarship in the Humanities for potential students from many areas of the world where distance and financial resources for extended stays in the United States are factors. As global universities plan for future faculty for the 21st Century, the lack of accessibility to doctoral preparation, particularly in the Humanities, is a liability.

The University of Louisville and Its College of Arts and Sciences

Universities in the United States are typically composed of Schools and Colleges. At the University of Louisville, I am the Dean of one of those colleges. As an administrator, I oversee the operation of the College of Arts and Sciences. The College is the largest academic unit of the University and is home to the majority of undergraduate and graduate students. Of the total university enrollment of 22,000 students, the College supports over 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students. The College offers programs of study through 35 departments and programs organized in three academic divisions: Humanities, Natural Sciences, and Social Sciences. The College supports students at all levels, from introductory courses in general education to highly specialized seminars for advanced students. Most importantly, students get the benefits of the best of all worlds: superb teachers in the best traditions of a liberal arts college, situated at the cutting edge of scholarship in a major research university.

In Asia, there is no real equivalent to our college of Arts and Sciences. The Faculty of Humanities, for example, is separate from the Faculty of Science, although that distinction often occurs in American universities as well. At the University of Louisville, we combine these areas of education into a single college because it is part of our focus to provide a balance between the humanities and arts, on the one hand, and the Natural and Social Sciences on the other.

Our Academic Quest

At the same time, the academic quality of potential students for a Ph.D. in areas of the Humanities and Euro-American Studies is quite high in many countries throughout the world. More specifically, many students have obtained strong preparation in the Humanities at the master's degree level in their home countries or through single year visits to American or European universities. Many of these masters' graduates are employed as productive faculty and teach in Humanities programs and are ideal candidates for doctoral preparation and academic careers. Their teaching has led them to the point where they would like to pursue doctoral level research projects, which could lead them to career paths as teachers and scholars.

At many universities in the United States, including my own, there is pressure from institutional forces to refrain from expansion into doctoral programs unless a clear national need is present. In the case of the Humanities, this issue is significant because the typical employment placement is the academic job market, and this area has not seen growth over the last two decades in the United States. Moreover, a new degree program in the Humanities, broadly defined, might compete with existing disciplinary programs in the Humanities, in art, literature, languages, philosophy, and religion. That is, aggressive recruitment for a new doctoral Program could hurt existing ones, since the job placement prognosis remains fixed and limited. Accordingly, in a sense, some universities have "unused capacity" because they support productive faculty quite capable of doctoral dissertation mentorships, but restrained in the feasibility of attracting advanced students.

The Emerging Model

The model is very simple. Students who fit certain characteristics of personal maturity, professional accomplishments, and academic discipline would be invited to apply to an individualized program described as a Ph.D. Program in Humanities from the University of Louisville. The application process itself largely consists of a fairly detailed research proposal, somewhat similar to what we might expect a first draft of a dissertation proposal to resemble. A committee at the University of Louisville reviews the application in terms of traditional kinds of academic measures, but especially in terms of the applicant's research promise.

For the successful applicant, the committee's admission notice is essentially an academic plan. The committee may suggest specific coursework in preparation for the research project, such as in a subject field or in a methodology. Indeed, in the version we are considering for China, a local professor at a university might be helpful as a liaison for those preparatory experiences (courses/readings) which the committee agreed would be helpful to the student's dissertation research. The Chinese professor in turn would receive an adjunct appointment with the University of Louisville.

The remainder of the student's program involves the research itself. Presumably, the research is done locally because the major benefit of this model is to support student engagement of a research problem of relevance (and indeed value). The Ph.D. residency is distributed over one semester and possibly smaller units of 4-6 weeks at the American University, in this distributed residency model.

The Structure of the Program

This is a graduate program in which entering students already possess a Master of Arts in one of the following academic areas: Humanities, Art History, Linguistics, Literature, Language and Literature, Theater Arts, History of Ideas, Gender Studies, Religious Studies, and Pan African Studies. The Master of Arts will be accepted as an entrance degree into the program and students will earn an additional 45 credits towards the doctorate in Humanities. The incoming student will create an interdisciplinary prospectus for a doctorate that includes another major area of scholarly investigation. For example, English and Linguistics may be combined with a specific focus on the social and historical developments that led to creation of Middle English grammar.

Once a student has created a prospectus he or she will be interviewed by a graduate committee and assigned a faculty member as a mentor. It is the duty of the mentor to maintain open contact with the student and keep in touch with the student about progress in the program. Students accepted into the program must take at least one semester of coursework on campus at the University of Louisville. Normally, academic residency requirements commit students to one full year of on campus attendance. The remainder of this requirement will be done through distance education. Graduate faculty members in the Humanities program will be flown to Consortium sites in China, Japan, and Africa to do on site classes in some of the foundation courses. After meeting the core requirements, the student will continue coursework in conjunction with the mentor and the graduate team of professors.

Students in the Humanities doctorate program will be required to take certain core courses before specializing in one of the related academic tracks of cultural studies or aesthetics and creativity. A very hard working faculty committee, under the leadership of Prof. Annette Allen of our Humanities Division has developed a curricular outline.

Four Core Courses (3 credits each)

- **Humanities 605 Humanistic Studies I: Ancient to Baroque**
Introduction to interdisciplinary critical analysis of the arts and the humanities with a focus on the interrelationships between culture and the arts and humanities in their historical context. Through a close examination of individual works representative of specific periods, students will consider the distinctive styles of expression and creativity of the period as well as the key

concepts that link works of one period with those of another. Students will explore the relationships between their specialized areas or disciplines and other area and disciplines as well as the relationship between their specialized areas and the cultural context.

- **Humanities 606 Humanistic Studies II: Early Modern to Post Modern**

Introduction to interdisciplinary critical analysis of the arts and humanities with a focus on the interrelationships between culture and the arts and humanities in their historical contexts. Through a close examination of individual works representative of specific periods, students will consider the distinctive styles of expression and creativity of the period as well as the key concepts that link works of one period with those of another. Students will explore the relationships between their specialized areas and the cultural context.

- **Humanities 607: Interdisciplinary Seminar**

- **Humanities 608: Interdisciplinary Seminar**

- **Humanities 609: Interdisciplinary Theory - Arts and Humanities**

The course will provide an integrative, interdisciplinary experience that will balance and complement the emphasis on specific disciplines or cultural periods in the Humanities program and will seek to define the Humanities as well as to consider a number of different critical approaches to the study of the Humanities. The course will demonstrate how the interrelationships between disciplines and specialized areas of interest and meaning can give shape to a cultural period. In addition, it will focus on methods and theories in interdisciplinary thinking and research and will emphasize (1) the interrelationships of the disciplines, (2) art, theatre, literature, music, philosophy, and religion in a cultural context, and (3) the significant impact on and synergy with the Humanities.

Upon completion of the core courses, students will follow a series of topic courses that relate to the concentrations of (I) Creativity and Aesthetics or (II) Studies in Culture.

Humanities 671: Topics in Aesthetics (Concentration I)

Humanities 672: Topics in Creativity (Concentration I)

Humanities 673: Topics in Cultural Interpretation (Concentration II)

Humanities 674: Topics in Period Cultures (Concentration II)

Humanities 675: Topics in Language and Translation (Concentration I)

Humanities 676: Topics in World Literature and Criticism (Concentration I)

Humanities: 677 Topics in Ethics and Cognition (Concentration II)

Humanities: 678: Topics in Race or Gender (Concentration II)

Unlike most graduate programs in the Humanities, this program of studies is not limited to the study of the Classics, the European Middle or the Modern Ages, but includes selected examples of the rich traditions of Asia, Africa, the Near East, and numerous indigenous groups around the world. The focus is on the human condition and human expressions of self. Furthermore, students with a concentration in one area of the Humanities will be encouraged to complement that information with exposure to philosophy, art, or music of the period that will greatly enhance their understandings of their chosen fields of study. The doctorate is meant to take the student beyond their experiences at the Master of Arts level and provide them with new paradigms of investigation, new experiences, new quests for knowledge, new levels of human consciousness, and new means of symbolic expression.

Conclusion

This model addresses a real need in many countries that have not been able to invest in the preparation of the professorate in fields of Euro-American Humanities as they have in science and medicine. The American University leverages its influence by preparing a new generation of faculty in partner countries. For the American faculty, the entrée to international collaborations represents a unique opportunity through access obtained by the student. Given the individualized character of this program, with minimal coursework sponsored by the American University, the overhead and resources to support this kind of program are rather modest. Indeed, major costs would be travel and per diem for faculty occasionally traveling to the country of the student's residence and for students traveling to the U.S.A. for the distributed residency.

In this age of exploding amounts of information and technological innovation, the job opportunities of the future are difficult to predict. An education in the liberal arts and sciences best prepares students for these new opportunities by fostering critical and creative thinking, effective written and oral communication, and knowledge of the cultural heritages along with the scientific advances. It is this type of education that helps to navigate the world of work of the 21st Century and serves as the springboard to graduate study and professional training in business, the health professions, and law.

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Related Internet Resources

Official Web Page of the University of Louisville. <http://www.louisville.edu/>

Distance Education at the University of Louisville. <http://distance.louisville.edu/>

University Task Force Report on Distance Education:

http://distance.louisville.edu/Task_Force_Report.pdf

Distance Education through Online Lectures:

<http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A3562.cfm>

The Technological Classroom:

<http://www.thejournal.com/magazine/vault/A3577.cfm>

Black Board 5.0 Distance Management System.

<http://www.blackboard.com/>

Kentucky Virtual University Online, KCVU:

<http://kcvu.eduprise.com/home.nsf?Open>

Blackboard 5.0 Distance Courses at the University of Louisville:

<http://louisville.eduprise.com/>

