

SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

OFFICE OF THE VICE-PRESIDENT, ACADEMIC

MEMORANDUM

To: Senate

From: D. Gagan, Chair *David Gagan*
Senate Committee on Academic Planning

Subject: Proposed Humanities Major Program
(SCUS Reference: SCUS 98-27)
(SCAP Reference: SCAP 98-62)

Date: December 11, 1998

Action undertaken by the Senate Committee on Undergraduate Studies and the Senate Committee on Academic Planning gives rise to the following motion:

Motions:

"that Senate approve and recommend to the Board of Governors as set forth in S.99 - 3 , the proposed Humanities Major Program."

The Humanities Major - Full Program Proposal

The Humanities Program at Simon Fraser University has developed steadily from its relatively modest beginnings in 1979 to become one of the fastest growing academic units in the Faculty of Arts. Starting with the offering of a minor, the program now includes an extended minor, a post baccalaureate diploma and joint majors with the departments of History, English, French, and Philosophy. In recent years the Program has been offering over 34 courses per year with enrolments averaging 900 students. Alongside these accomplishments, the Program has worked closely with the Institute for the Humanities, founded in 1983, in encouraging interdisciplinary approaches to research, social issues, and community development. This proposal to establish a major in the Humanities is the culmination of this record of activity and anticipates the eventual creation of a Department of Humanities.

1. The Humanities Undergraduate Program

The calendar entry describes the Humanities Program at Simon Fraser University as follows:

The humanities is the study of a broad range of ideas and subjects drawn from philosophy, art, literature, history, religion, science, and social and political thought. Through a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to classical, medieval, renaissance and modern culture, the study of the humanities raises critical questions about the achievements and controversies associated with the concept of civilization itself.

Of special importance in this description is the Program's intention that students be encouraged to integrate ancient, medieval and modern perspectives and the determination to provide an academic environment at the University for the nurturing of both Classics and Religious Studies. It is this focus on the integrative process - the purposeful bringing together of historical, literary, philosophical, religious and aesthetic perspectives in the analysis of human cultures and contemporary society - that gives courses in the Humanities their unique and important role in the University's curriculum.

In the current Three-Year Plan for the Humanities, this description is further refined by stressing that the humanities as envisaged by faculty at Simon Fraser is the study of human values and human experience grounded in historical, literary, philosophical and religious content and utilizing comparative and cross-cultural perspectives. With the recent addition of courses focusing on Asian culture and civilization and the inclusion of faculty from the Asia-Canada Program in the proposed new Department of Humanities, this cross-cultural dimension of the Humanities Program will be an increasingly important component of the Program. Likewise, the addition of several new faculty members from Interdisciplinary Studies with expertise in various European cultural traditions will enhance the comparative perspectives implicit in a humanities approach to culture.

2. The Humanities Program and Cognate Disciplines

With its mandate of integration and inclusivity in the study of human cultures, the Humanities Program is necessarily highly dependent on curricular support from the disciplines that form the core of other departments in the Faculty of Arts. From its inception the Humanities Program has either required or recommended that students pursuing the minor or other Humanities accreditation complete at least one History course (HIST 105 or 106) and one Philosophy course (PHIL 150 or 151). While no longer required for completion of the Minor, these courses are required for the extended minor and for the proposed major.

At the upper division, students are required to complete 32 semester hours in upper division Humanities courses (the equivalent of eight courses). Recognizing that students pursuing the Humanities major may have specialized interests and acknowledging the interdisciplinary nature of the Program, up to two humanities related upper division courses from other academic units may be utilized in meeting this requirement. Such substitutions are to be arranged in consultation with the Humanities advisor and will normally be drawn from course lists provided by departments during the consultation process leading up to this proposal.

Finally, the interdisciplinary nature of the Humanities at Simon Fraser and its corresponding strong links with neighbouring disciplines is sustained by the number of joint and cross appointments of faculty in the Humanities. Currently faculty in the Humanities have shared teaching responsibilities in History, Sociology and Anthropology, English, Liberal Studies, Spanish, and the Asia-Canada Program. Through associate members the Humanities has additional links with Psychology, French and Contemporary Arts. These highly personal horizontal linkages help ensure that the Humanities maintains its role as an integrative and inclusive academic program within the Faculty of Arts.

3. The Structure of the Major

As a relatively small program the Humanities has in the past chosen to avoid being overly prescriptive in its curriculum requirements, relying instead on formal and informal advising to ensure students breadth of experience within the Program. At the lower division, therefore, students must complete the introductory level course on Mythology (HUM 102), one of both History 105/106 and Philosophy 150/151, and one of the Humanities 'Great Texts' courses. Their remaining two lower division Humanities requirements could be filled by courses in Greek or Latin or by choosing from amongst the other 200-level Humanities courses. It is possible in this scheme for students to focus somewhat their lower division studies in thematic areas (e.g. Classical Studies, Contemporary Issues, Religion and Culture) or to opt for greater diversity.

At the upper division the same choices apply, students being able to choose concentration or diversity in their course of study. We acknowledge that a strong case can be made for a more structured approach, including perhaps a set of 'core' requirements common to all students pursuing the Humanities major. At this time in our development, however, we prefer the more open-ended approach which has fewer

specific requirements, allows more opportunity for Humanities majors to utilize courses from other academic units, and relies more heavily on student advising. As well, we anticipate that a large number of Humanities students will in fact continue to opt for the joint major. This approach will, of course, be evaluated on an on-going basis.

In reviewing past course offerings it is clear that students could easily complete the requirements for such a major within a four-year degree. All lower division Humanities courses are offered at least one to two times each calendar year (with the exception of Greek and Latin which are offered bi-annually) and with an average of 18 upper division courses offered each year and liberal provision for course substitution, students would have no difficulty in meeting the proposed eight courses required at the upper division.

4. Academic Resources

The Humanities Program as currently constituted consists of:

- Ten academic appointments: two full-time cfl positions, six joint appointments, one lecturer and one endowed chair;
- Ten lower division and thirteen upper division courses along with special topics and directed studies courses;
- Administrative and advising support currently provided through Interdisciplinary Studies.

In the projected new Department of Humanities, three additional cfl faculty will join the Humanities and the Humanities will act as 'home department' for the Graduate Liberal Studies Program and the Asia-Canada Program.

The Humanities major requires no new resources. All the courses required to implement the major are currently in place and in combination with current levels of Temporary Instruction funds there are sufficient faculty in the Humanities Program to offer the full curriculum on a regular basis.

Humanities Major Program Proposal

Proposed Calendar Entry

This entry is to be placed before the description for the Joint Major in English and Humanities

MAJOR PROGRAM

Students completing the major in Humanities are expected to include a breadth of Humanities courses in fulfilling the upper division requirement. Therefore, they must consult the student advisor to plan their upper division course selection. Major students must also consult the advisor if they wish to enhance their major program interest by selecting humanities related upper division electives from other departments.

Lower Division Requirements:

Students are required to complete 18 lower division semester hours including:

HUM 102-3 Classical Mythology

plus one of

HIST 105-3 Western Civilization from the Ancient World to the Reformation Era

HIST 106-3 Western Civilization from the Reformation Era to the 20th Century

plus one of

PHIL 150-3 History of Philosophy I

PHIL 151-3 History of Philosophy II

plus one of

HUM 201-3 Great Texts in the Humanities I

HUM 202-3 Great Texts in the Humanities II

HUM 203-3 Great Texts in the Humanities III

plus two further lower division Humanities courses.

Upper Division Requirements:

Students are required to complete a minimum of 32 semester hours in upper division Humanities* courses.

*In support of the interdisciplinary approach to the study of the humanities, students may, with prior approval of the Humanities advisor, substitute up to two humanities related upper division courses from other academic units towards the upper division Humanities requirement. Note that the same upper division course may not be used toward more than one program (honors, joint honors, major, joint major, minor or extended minor). See the first paragraph of the Humanities calendar entry above for a definition of humanities related topics. A list of suggested courses is available from the advisor.