

Wesleyan Graduate Liberal Studies Fall 2026 course listings

Fall 2026 Term: September 7, 2026 – December 11, 2026

Presentations, exams, and make-up classes: 12/16/2026 – 12/19/2026

GLS Fall registration closes on 9/3/2026

Spring 2027 Term: January 21, 2027 - May 5, 2027

Presentations, exams, and make-up classes: 5/7/27 – 5/14/27

GLS Spring registration closes on 1/17/27

GLS Program Overview

Tuition & Fees:

- 3-credit GLS course: \$3,699
- Audited course (not for credit): \$1,233
- Registration fee (non-refundable): \$100
- Additional course fees may apply
- Note: Tuition and fees are subject to change.

Programs and Degrees:

- Master of Arts in Liberal Studies (MALS): Concentrations in arts, humanities, sciences, social sciences, or education and human development. Includes capstone option. No prerequisites or required courses.
- Master of Philosophy (MPhil) in Liberal Arts: Requires a prior master's or post-baccalaureate degree. Includes a final thesis.
- Graduate Certificate in Writing: Six-course certificate aimed at business professionals, aspiring writers, and others.
- Non-degree Enrollment: Anyone with a four-year degree may take GLS courses and use full academic resources.

Course Options:

- Online Courses: Some courses and the writing certificate can be completed online (no fully online degree).
- Schedules: Flexible offerings—fall/spring evening classes; summer includes morning, afternoon, evening, and immersion formats.

Student Life:

- Campus Housing: Available during the summer only.
- Facilities Access: Library and gym access provided for enrolled students.
- Class Observations: Prospective students may sit in on classes. Contact Glenn Knight at gknight01@wesleyan.edu for arrangements

Updated 7/23/26. All information subject to change.

Wesleyan University Graduate Liberal Studies Fall 2026 Course Schedule

FALL TERM: September 7, 2026 – December 11, 2026

Courses meet in person, unless indicated otherwise below. Any online courses offered will be fully- or partially synchronous.

For more information, please refer to the course descriptions on the GLS website – wesleyan.edu/masters

Time	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday
6:00PM – 8:30PM	SCIE6645 The Dark Side of the Universe – IN PERSON Instructor: Ed Moran	ARTS6155/EDHD6310 Attention as Creative Resource – IN PERSON Instructor: Samantha Topol		SOCS6275 The Soviet Union and the Cold War (Then and Now) – ONLINE Instructor – Alexander Brakel
6:30PM -9:00PM	HUMS6751/SOCS6210 Children's Literature – IN PERSON Instructor: Indira Karamcheti	SOCS6355 Mirroring the New Times: The New Hollywood Youth Quake (1960 – 1990) - ONLINE Instructor: Sandra Luckow	EDHD6410/SOCS6215/SCIE6330 Psychopathology and Society – IN PERSON Instructor: Noel Garrett	HUMS6321 Creative Writer's Workshop (Prose) – IN PERSON Instructor: Joseph Reynolds

All information subject to change. For full course syllabi, please contact Glenn Knight at gknigh01@wesleyan.edu

SCIE6645 - The Dark Side of the Universe

Instructor: Edward Moran

Monday | 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM - *In-Person*

Description:

The physical world we experience is one of normal matter, energy, and – if one looks up at night – stars. But on larger scales, the universe has an exotic and much less-well understood side dominated by things we call dark matter, dark energy, and black holes. What are these mysterious components, and what is the relationship between them and the world that is familiar to us? The answers lie at the frontier of modern astrophysics. In this course, we explore the evidence for the existence of these dark components and the current debates regarding their nature and origin. In different ways, each of them has a vital role in the evolution of the universe and its ultimate fate.

Not surprisingly, information about the “light side” of the universe is needed to understand its seemingly bizarre dark side. Thus, a wide range of topics are naturally covered in the course:

- A census of celestial objects and our observations of them
- Astronomical distances and the scale of the universe
- The interaction between light and matter
- Gravity and the evidence for dark matter
- Black holes — how they form and produce gravitational waves
- The observational clues essential to the Big Bang model of our universe
- The expansion of the universe and evidence for dark energy
- The future of the universe

This course is aimed at those who do not specialize in physical science. We focus on understanding the evidence we have about the nature of the universe, the tools and techniques we use to obtain that evidence, how we know the things we know — and how well we know them. Mathematics is necessary at times, but is used sparingly and is limited to arithmetic and basic algebra. No prior knowledge of physics is assumed — you will be introduced to the physics concepts most relevant to the topics we discuss. The goal is for each student to come away with a firm understanding of the universe and our place in it.

Assessments & Assignments:

Weekly readings (articles, textbook excerpts) provided by the instructor

3-4 short (1 page or less) take-home writing responses

2-3 take-home assignments/projects

One longer paper (8-10 pages) on a student-selected topic related to the course material

A short class presentation on the long paper topic

HUMS6751/SOCS6210 - Children's Literature

Instructor: Indira Karamcheti

Monday | 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM - *In-Person*

Description:

Probably the first literature we fall in love with, children's literature shapes individuals and cultures in profound ways, giving us ways of seeing and understanding the world, investing us with important mythologies, and guiding our identities and behaviors. But who or what is a child? Who creates "children's literature" and what is a child's relationship with it? "Literature," in this case, is often pictorial as much as literate. Beginning with early images of the child, this course will examine selected images and texts for how they suture ideologies of American identity—its relationship to empire, race, gender, capitalism, and the "Other"—through nostalgic revery about what adults think the child is and through "romantically falsified" memories of childhood. Fictional texts will be supplemented with various scholarly articles. Class meeting topics will include: Definitions of the child; Early education; Picture books; Fairy tales; The Golden Age of children's literature; Race, class, and gender; American exceptionalism; Empire; Consumerism/ Commercialization.

Booklist:

Once Upon a Time, ed. Jeff A. Menges
Folk & Fairy Tales, eds. Martin Hallett and Barbara Karasek
The Adventures of Tom Sawyer, Mark Twain
Little Women, Louisa May Alcott
Little Lord Fauntleroy, Frances Hodgson Burnett
A Little Princess, Frances Hodgson Burnett
Little House on the Prairie, Laura Ingalls Wilder
Chickadee, Louise Erdrich
A Light in the Forest, Conrad Richter
The Watsons Go to Birmingham, Christopher Paul Curtis

Assessments & Assignments:

Two essays of 3-4 pages in length (topics posted to Moodle one week in advance of due date), midterm and final

One class presentation with subsequent written essay (3-4 pages in length, due one week after presentation).

Engaged participation and faithful attendance; more than one unexcused absence will lower the class grade.

Additional required and recommended readings are included in the full syllabus.

EDHD6310/ARTS6155 - Attention as Creative Resource

Instructor: Samantha Topol

Tuesday | 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM - *In-Person*

Description:

What is attention? In this interdisciplinary course, we will begin by drafting our own definition, which we will then expand, challenge and refine. We will work together over the semester to build a framework for understanding how our attention influences what we do as cultural producers.

There is a growing field that views human attention as a valuable resource to be captured, harnessed, and commodified. The focus in this course will be to articulate that value on our own terms through observation, exploratory exercises, writing, reading, and discussion. We will look at the relationship between attention and idea generation, treating our attentional capacity as a form of creative agency that we can tune, tweak, and direct. We will read and listen to artists and writers, historians and psychologists, cognitive scientists and cultural theorists as we probe what this force is—as a quality we share as humans, and as something at work in our individual creative practices. Course readings will aim to build a broad foundation in the subject, including historical sources beginning in the late 19th-century and working toward present-day conversations around the attention economy and AI.

Booklist:

Robert Zaretsky, *The Subversive Simone Weil: A Life in Five Ideas*

Michael Pollan, *A World Appears*

Fanny Howe, *The Wedding Dress, Meditations on Word and Life*

Aldous Huxley, *The Doors of Perception*

Jenny Odell, *How to Do Nothing: Resisting the Attention Economy*

Ross Simonini, *Subject Object Verb* (Podcast)

Additional articles and selections will be provided by the instructor

Assessment:

- 35 % Class engagement and discussion around the readings
- 15% Select one reading in the semester to introduce to the class and lead discussion
- 20 % Select an exercise in attention to practice over the remainder of the semester, and report on at the end of the class. Examples of these exercises include: Lynda Barry's 4-minute Diaries, morning pages, artist dates, or weekly walks as described in *The Artists' Way* by Julia Cameron; an in-depth attention audit; or another activity proposed by students.
- 30 % Final paper/project, which can take the form of a research paper or the development of a body of creative work in relationship to the course material: 10-15 pages in length, with a 15-minute presentation. Final submission parameters for a creative practice can be determined together with the student

SOCS6355 - Mirroring the New Times: The New Hollywood Youth Quake (1960 – 1990)

Instructor: Sandra Luckow

Tuesday | 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM - *Online*

Description:

Between the collapse of the old studio system and the rise of the global blockbuster lay a 30-year window in which American filmmakers re-invented style, storytelling, and industry practice. This course surveys “New Hollywood,” roughly 1960–1990, asking how movies both mirrored and shaped shifts in U.S. politics, culture, and identity—from Civil-Rights turbulence to Watergate cynicism, Vietnam trauma, second-wave feminism, and the Reagan era. Weekly screenings, readings, and discussion will foreground auteur strategies, genre revisionism, and the evolving economics of production and exhibition.

Learning Objectives:

By the end of the term students will be able to -

Contextualize New Hollywood within broader American social history.

Apply auteur, genre, and industrial analysis to individual films.

Compare textual strategies across different directors and periods.

Produce graduate-level critical writing that integrates primary films and secondary scholarship.

Assessments & Assignments:

Participation / Discussion Leadership: 25%

Weekly Response Posts (≈500 words): 20%

Midterm Close-Reading Essay (5–7 pp): 20%

Final Research Paper (8–10 pp): 35%

Class Film Screenings:

Bonnie and Clyde (Penn 1967)

The Graduate (Nichols 1967)

The Godfather (Coppola 1972)

Chinatown (Polanski 1974)

Jaws (Spielberg 1975)

All the President’s Men (Pakula 1976)

Network (Lumet 1976)

Coming Home (Ashby 1978)

All That Jazz (Fosse 1979)

The King of Comedy (Scorsese 1982)

Blade Runner (Scott 1982)

Tootsie (Pollack 1982) & Sex, Lies & Videotape (Soderbergh 1990)

EDHD6410/SOCS6215/SCIE6330 - Psychopathology and Society

Instructor: Noel Garrett

Wednesday | 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM - *In-Person*

Description:

The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to mental disorders in adult humans. We will discuss diagnostic issues and methods used to study psychopathology. We will also examine a variety of mental disorders from several different theoretical and treatment perspectives. Focus will be on diagnosis, epidemiology, course of the disorder, etiology, and treatment issues. We will also briefly examine ethical and legal issues pertaining to psychopathology. The goals of the course include greater awareness and knowledge of psychopathology in hopes that we can reduce the suffering and stigma associated with mental disorders.

Assessments & Assignments:

Class Attendance and Participation: 30%

News Article Reviews: 30%

Long Paper: 40%

Booklist:

We will be using a series of primary source materials supplemented with relevant secondary sources. These materials will be available on the course Moodle site. Students also will be responsible for submitting primary source materials to support their final research project and presentation.

Texts Being Considered (TENTATIVE):

Oltmanns, T., Emery, R., Forbush, K., & South, S. (2024). *Psychopathology and Mental Health* (10th ed.). Pearson.

Primary source articles being considered:

Vogel-Hammen, A., Brotman, M.A., Roy, A., & Perlman, S. (2023). Defining positive emotion dysregulation: Integrating temperamental and clinical perspectives. *Journal of the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry*.

Habeb, M., Ciobanu, A. M., Al-Ani, M., & Mottershead, R. (2025). Stigma in mental health: the status and future direction. *Cureus*, 17(6).

Evans-Lacko, S. A. G. S., Aguilar-Gaxiola, S., Al-Hamzawi, A., Alonso, J., Benjet, C., Bruffaerts, R., ... & Thornicroft, G. (2018). Socio-economic variations in the mental health treatment gap for people with anxiety, mood, and substance use disorders: results from the WHO World Mental Health (WMH) surveys. *Psychological medicine*, 48(9), 1560-1571.

Paiva, U., Cortese, S., Flor, M., Moncada-Parra, A., Lecumberri, A., Eudave, L., ... & Arrondo, G. (2025). Prevalence of mental disorder symptoms among university students: An umbrella review. *Neuroscience & Biobehavioral Reviews*, 175, 106244.

NOTE - Students may wish to purchase a used text book outlining the various disorders and dysfunctions. I will add extra sources to describe and promote discussion on the key disorders we will be covering (schizophrenia spectrum disorders and severe personality disorders).

SOCS6275 - The Soviet Union and the Cold War (Then and Now)

Instructor: Alexander Brakel

Thursday | 6:00 PM - 8:30 PM - *Online*

Description:

The geopolitical and ideological conflict between the United States and the Soviet Union and their respective allies, known as the “Cold War,” dominated much of global politics for the four decades after World War II. Its legacy shapes large parts of the world today, more than thirty years after the end of the superpowers’ competition.

This class will examine the role of the Soviet Union as one of the key actors of the Cold War, beginning with the end of the wartime coalition to the collapse of the state itself. We will explore key events and turning points and how the Soviet alliance worked, as well as how it shaped its relationship with other countries in Europe, Africa, Asia, and the Middle East. We will analyze the driving forces of the conflict and the reasons for the eventual Soviet defeat.

Students will read and discuss recent research literature as well as original source material.

The class will commence with an analysis of the failed post-Cold War order and how the failure to implement a comprehensive European security architecture laid the root for the current Russo-Ukrainian war.

Assessments & Assignments:

Three short essays (1000-1500 words) based on primary sources or directed questions (after week 4, 8 and 13): 30% each

Attendance and engaged participation, including moodle discussion forums: 10%

Booklist:

Robert J. McMahon. *The Cold War: A Very Short Introduction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2021.

Vladislav M. Zubok. *A Failed Empire: The Soviet Union in the Cold War from Stalin to Gorbachev*. Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press: 2007.

All other course readings are accessible on moodle or e-reserve. (Any unlinked reading on moodle is on e-reserve, accessible from the top of the course moodle page.)

Many assigned articles are from Melvyn P. Leffler, and Odd Arne Westad. *The Cambridge History of the Cold War*. Vol. I-III. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2012 (CHCW).

Many primary sources are taken from Jussi M. Hanhimäki and Odd Arne Westad, eds., *The Cold War: A History in Documents and Eyewitness Accounts*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003 (CW).

HUMS6321 - Creative Writer's Workshop (Prose)

Instructor: Joseph Reynolds

Thursday | 6:30 PM - 9:00 PM - *In-Person*

Description:

Creative writing is often a helpless endeavor. A writer creates something, sends it out into the world, and most of the time, hears nothing back, never even knowing if the envelope was opened. A writer's workshop is a kind of balm against that, both by sharpening narrative skill and making your creations real. You become a writer when people read your work and participate in a debate about it. Your work exists when it is shared.

But this course isn't merely a forum for creative expression; it is an exercise in textual analysis as well. The ability to discuss text coherently is an art unto itself, and of course a crucial skill in basically every academic exercise. The discussion enhances the impact of the text, and also provides a less subjective manner in which to evaluate student performance.

Learning Objectives:

1. Develop your creative voice in a low stress environment (as detailed later in assessments, while a completed creative submission is a course requirement, qualitative grades will be earned via the critical analysis of your colleague's submissions and incisive essays on our published texts). Creative submissions may be fiction, creative nonfiction, memoir or essay.
2. Be capable of providing workshop style advice, inquisition, and suggestions to your classmates on their original submissions.
3. Analyze how foundational narrative elements (character, scene, conflict, setting, exposition) are appearing and being utilized in both published and unpublished text, and be able to compare narrative techniques between multiple texts.

Booklist:

Selected Short Fiction, Excerpted Memoir and Essay (all publicly available or given by handout) by both new and established writers.

Course Reading, Discussion, and Assignment Schedule:

The schedule oscillates between workshop of original submissions and study of published work in order to enhance the comparative element. How many meetings we devote to each will ultimately be decided by final enrollment and/or if some students want to submit a second original piece.

Assessments & Assignments:

Short Story/Memoir Essay (5-7 pages): 35%

Workshop Analyses—Choosing five of your classmates' original submissions, write separate 2-3 page reviews (Due Finals Week): 35%

Original Submission and Workshop Participation—All students will be submitting an original piece of prose for workshop discussion at some point during the semester (the schedule of submissions will be finalized at our first meeting): 15%

Reaction Journal: 15% - For everything we read, published or original submission, please write one paragraph, about one paragraph from the piece, focusing on anything you like