

Yale University

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Dear Directed Studies Student:

Greetings from New Haven!

Freshman Orientation is about seven weeks away, and together with the rest of the Directed Studies faculty, I look forward to welcoming you to the upcoming year in DS. This letter conveys the times and locations of two important meetings to attend during “Opening Days” before fall classes begin, as well as what to read this summer in preparation for the first class meetings. You’ve worked hard to enter Yale and join Directed Studies, and we hit the ground running!

Meetings to add to your calendar:

- 1) Please join your fellow Directed Studies classmates at an informal social gathering **Monday, August 29, 1-2p.m.**, in the Whitney Humanities Center, 53 Wall Street, room B-04. This event is hosted by former Directed Studies students (the “DS Ambassadors”) and is an opportunity to speak with them about what it is like to be in DS.
- 2) Plan to attend a mandatory orientation session for all students in Directed Studies on **Tuesday, August 30, 11 a.m. to 12 noon**, in the auditorium of the Whitney Humanities Center. At the orientation session, you will receive your seminar assignments for each of the three DS courses, the paper-writing schedule, the schedule for the late-afternoon Colloquia, and general information about the program.

The location of these two meetings, the Whitney Humanities Center, is a nexus of events and activities here at Yale, as well as home to the Humanities Program, the academic “umbrella” that includes both Directed Studies and the Humanities major. The WHC is a marvelous older building that houses the Film Studies Program and the Film Study Center, Medieval Studies, Renaissance Studies, and hosts a number of the most exciting and cutting-edge interdisciplinary seminars and symposia on campus, such as the Franke Program in Science and the Humanities and the prestigious Tanner Lectures on Human Values. As you can tell from this list, the “Whitney” or “WHC” is interdisciplinary from top to bottom: there is always a lot going on, and Directed Studies is part of the action in untold ways. (To learn more about programs and events at the Whitney, see <http://whc.yale.edu>.) You are going to be spending a lot of time in the Whitney this year, and I invite you to consider it one of your “homes” here on campus.

Summer Reading Assignment

In preparation for the first class meeting in each course, you will want to complete the following summer reading assignments before you arrive on campus:

DS Historical and Political Thought

From Herodotus, *The History*, trans. David Grene. University of Chicago Press, 1987, please read: Book 1, chapters 1-91; Book 3, chapters 27-38, 61-89; Book 6, chapters 94-140; Book 7, chapters 1-60; 99-124.

DS Literature

Please read: Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin)

DS Philosophy

From *Plato: Complete Works*, John Cooper, ed. Hackett Publishing, 1997, please read: *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras*, *Meno*, and *Euthyphro*,

Your Questions

I've been fielding recently a number of questions about DS and I thought it might spare you time and worry if I addressed them in this letter.

Do I need to use the same editions/versions that are listed on the syllabus?

Each of your three DS courses requires a stack of books (welcome to college!) We do ask that students use the specific editions we have chosen. The faculty debates the merits of various translations every year, and the books we specify are the books we deem the best translations for DS at the most reasonable price. Every work we study first semester we read in translation, and because every translation—no matter how literal it claims to be—is nonetheless an interpretation, students using different translations or editions may find themselves disadvantaged in seminar discussion. So, please, do try to obtain the translations/editions the faculty has specified.

All of the books we study in DS this semester will be available for you to purchase at the World Language Center (WLC), located in the same building as the Yale Bookstore, very close to Old Campus, where most of you will be living this year. The WLC is a small independent bookstore with whom we are very pleased to work. For your convenience, all the books for all three DS courses are located together in one location in the store and it will be very easy for you to find exactly what you need. Prices at the WLC are competitive with other booksellers; moreover, the WLC also stocks used copies for as many DS titles as they can. They keep our books there on the shelves all semester long, from beginning to end, giving you the option to buy one book at a time without purchasing them all at once. The owner/manager, Cecile Cohen, is extremely competent and can help you not only with books for DS, but books for many other subjects in which you might be interested. **With the exception of the books assigned for the summer reading, you may find it much easier to wait and purchase your books once you arrive on campus rather than to haul or ship them all to New Haven** (and your purchases will help support a small, independent bookseller).

Regarding the DS Summer Reading Assignment (the works listed above that you'll be discussing in seminar the first weeks of classes): if you have difficulty obtaining the books for the summer reading assignment, I have a few suggestions.

The History of Herodotus, translated by David Grene, is a paperback, which any local bookstore can order for you. Or, you could read the assigned chapters on-line and purchase the physical book when you arrive on campus.

Homer, *Iliad*, trans. Robert Fagles (Penguin).

This is another paperback, which any local bookstore can order for you. For this one I would recommend purchasing your own copy of the physical book to read (on the beach? on the bus?) before you arrive on campus. Otherwise, you can find and read this as an ebook and purchase the physical book when you get to campus.

Plato: Complete Works, ed., John Cooper, Hackett (1997) is a big, hardcover book that we use for a number of readings in throughout the first semester, in both DS Philosophy and in DS Historical and Political Thought. The dialogues *Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, and *Meno* are translated G.M.A. Grube, and the *Protagoras* by Stanley Lombardo and Karen Bell. You could read the assigned dialogues (*Euthyphro*, *Apology*, *Crito*, *Protagoras*, and *Meno*) on-line (Google Books, for example) and then purchase the heavy physical tome after you arrive on campus August.

You could find quite similar translations as reproduced in the Hackett hardcover, accessible by dialogue title at

<http://classics.mit.edu/Browse/browse-Plato.html>

Freshman Advising and DS

Every incoming freshman is assigned a freshman advisor, either a member of the faculty or of the university administration, who, along with the Dean of your residential college, will help guide you academically through your freshman year, including helping you select courses. You'll meet your freshman advisor during orientation week, Monday, August 29, 2–3pm, and then by appointment once or twice before the deadline to submit your course schedule (Monday, September 12).

Freshmen are advised to take four courses during the first semester. For students enrolled in DS, that means, for the fall semester, that you'll take one course in addition to your three DS courses. Many of our students take a foreign language or begin a math or science sequence as their fourth course in the fall semester, but there are no restrictions on what you might take.

Potential STEM majors: I've been in touch with many of the Directors of Undergraduate Studies (DUS) for the engineering majors and other fields, and this is what I've learned: planning to major in one of the STEM disciplines does not preclude you from taking DS freshman year. The DUSes of STEM departments do encourage you, however, to make an appointment to meet with the DUS of the STEM major(s) you are considering, so that he/she can help you make a long-term plan for course selection. All the DUSes I've contacted have warmly welcomed my questions about DS and STEM, and they will welcome yours, too.

Heads-up for the First Week!

The first week is hectic—all new freshmen will have many required meetings, optional activities, and then classes begin Wednesday, August 31. As noted above, you will receive the schedule for your DS seminar discussions at the DS Orientation meeting Tuesday, August 29, 11am–12 noon.

If you are scheduled for DS seminar discussions that meet MW, your first DS classes will meet on Wednesday, and your professors will expect you to have completed the summer reading assignment and be prepared to discuss the texts. Bring your books with you to seminar.

Because Monday, September 5, is the Labor Day holiday, all Yale classes Friday, September 2, will be held according to a Monday schedule. Consequently, if you have MW seminar discussions, you will have your second seminar discussion Friday, September 2, just as if it were Monday (and no classes will be held Monday, September 5). The summer reading assignment, above, will prepare you for this adjustment to the regular schedule.

Seminar discussion section conflicts: Our administrative assistant, Constance Pascarella, will begin assigning you to seminar discussion sections in August. If you are planning to play a varsity sport, or are engaged in ROTC, or another program that restricts your class schedule, please let her know as soon as possible constance.pascarella@yale.edu.

I hope these remarks cover most of the DS-related topics on your mind, and will enable you to get to the serious—and seriously fun—work of actually reading the terrific texts for which you've signed up. In the meantime, while I am working on some other projects over the summer, I will do my best to respond to your questions as soon as possible. Again, best wishes for the remainder of the summer, and I look forward to personally welcoming you to Directed Studies at the end of August.

Sincerely,



Kathryn E. Slanski
Director of Undergraduate Studies