SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES, ARTS, AND SOCIAL SCIENCES

MIT's mission of meeting the world's great challenges requires not only superb technical and scientific creativity, but also a deep understanding of the human complexities—cultural, political, and economic—in which the world's challenges are embedded.

The disciplines taught in MIT's School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences (SHASS) empower young students, thinkers, and citizens with historical and cultural perspectives, as well as language, critical thinking, and communication skills—capacities that enable projects rich in meaning and wisdom.

The school is made up of 11 units: Anthropology; Comparative Media Studies/Writing; Economics; Global Languages; History; Linguistics and Philosophy; Literature; Music and Theater Arts; Political Science; Science, Technology, and Society; and Women's and Gender Studies.

Each year hundreds of MIT students graduate with majors and minors in over 30 SHASS fields. In addition, the school provides the majority of subjects used to fulfill the Institute's Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences Requirement. The object of the requirement, broadly stated, is to ensure that every undergraduate at MIT is exposed to a wide range of interpretive and analytic approaches in the humanities, arts, and social sciences.

Research and Innovation

SHASS is home to research that has a global impact. The school offers five doctoral programs: Economics; History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology and Society (HASTS); Linguistics; Philosophy; and Political Science. These are among the leading graduate programs of their kind in the world. They prepare students for teaching and research careers in universities and colleges, but also for government service, industry, and finance. The school offers master's degrees in Comparative Media Studies, Economics, Political Science, and Science Writing.

Interdisciplinary Programs

Providing opportunities for interdisciplinary study is a priority at SHASS. Students can choose from among a number of interdisciplinary fields, including: Ancient and Medieval Studies, Applied International Studies, Public Policy, and five Regional Studies areas (African and African Diaspora Studies; Asian and Asian Diaspora Studies; Latin American and Latino/a Studies; Middle Eastern Studies; Russian and Eurasian Studies). In addition to more traditional departments, the school houses the multifaceted programs in Comparative Media Studies/Writing; Science, Technology and Society; and Women's and Gender Studies. The school offers two additional interdisciplinary degree programs: course 21E combines humanities and engineering; course 21S combines humanities and science. These unique degree programs allow students to explore emerging fields at the intersection of humanities and STEM. Some of the many SHASS programs and projects that combine humanities with the sciences include the Abdul Latif Jameel Poverty Action Laboratory, the Center for International Studies, the Hyperstudio, the Knight Science Journalism Program, and the MIT International Science and Technology Initiatives (MISTI), the school's flagship international education program. See the Research and Study section for further information on opportunities to engage in interdisciplinary research (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/research*).

Global Citizens

The school has a central role in international education at MIT, and in preparing students to be leaders and good global citizens. MISTI, located in the Center for International Studies, supports student internship, research, and teaching opportunities in Australia, Belgium, Brazil, Chile, China, Denmark, France, Germany, India, Israel, Italy, Japan, Jordan, Korea, Mexico, Morocco, Netherlands, New Zealand, Portugal, Russia, Singapore, Spain, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and various African countries. Through MISTI, MIT students develop practical intercultural skills via hands-on experience working beside international colleagues.

More locally, the Global Languages Section offers language and culture programs in Chinese, English Language Studies, French, German, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, Russian, and Spanish. Global Languages also offers subjects taught in English on cultural globalization, transnational media, arts, and literature, global migration, global ecology and social justice, and other contemporary and historical global phenomena. These subjects help prepare students to be engaged global citizens and leaders.

A Brief History of SHASS

The school was founded in 1950 as a response to the challenges that followed the Second World War. The 1960s was a period of rapid growth, in which the school was reorganized into most of its current departments and sections, and began to grant full-scale degrees. In the 1970s and 1980s, the school continued to define separate programs and rearrange sections. In 1990, the school replaced the generic SB degree in Humanities with SB degrees in specified areas of humanistic study: Anthropology, History, Literature, Foreign Languages and Literatures, Music, and Writing.

Degrees Offered in the School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Anthropology (Course 21A)

SB	Anthropology

Comparative Media Studies/Writing (Course CMS and Course 21W)

SB	Comparative Media Studies
SB	Writing
SM	Science Writing

Computer Science, Economics, and Data Science (Course 6-14)

SB	Computer Science, Economics, and Data Science [1]

Economics (Course 14)

SB	Economics
SB	Mathematical Economics
SM	Economics
MASc	Data, Economics, and Design of Policy
MEng	Computer Science, Economics, and Data Science [1]
PhD	Economics
PhD	Economics and Statistics [1]

Global Languages (Course 21G)

SB	Global Studies and Languages

History (Course 21H)

SB	History

Humanities (Course 21) [2]

SB	Humanities
SB	Humanities and Engineering
SB	Humanities and Science

Linguistics and Philosophy (Course 24)

SB	Linguistics and Philosophy
SB	Philosophy
SM	Linguistics
PhD	Linguistics
PhD	Philosophy

Literature (Course 21L)

SB	Literature

Music and Theater Arts (Course 21M)

SB	Music
SB	Theater Arts

Political Science (Course 17)

SB	Political Science
SM	Political Science
PhD	Political Science
PhD	Political Science and Statistics [1]

Science, Technology, and Society (STS)

SB	Science, Technology, and Society
SM	History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society
PhD	History, Anthropology, and Science, Technology, and Society

Notes

Many departments make it possible for a graduate student to pursue a simultaneous master's degree.

[1]　See Interdisciplinary Programs (*https://catalog.mit.edu/interdisciplinary*).

[2]　Students majoring in one of the designated interdisciplinary major fields within SHASS receive the generic SB degree in Course 21, Humanities.

Admissions

The selection process at MIT is holistic and student-centered; each application is evaluated within its unique context. Selection is based on outstanding academic achievement as well as a strong match between the applicant and the Institute.

Undergraduate applicants do not apply to a particular school, department, or program. Although the application asks about a preferred field of study, admitted undergraduates are not required to choose a major until their sophomore year. Admissions information for regular and transfer applicants (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education/admissions*) is provided in the Undergraduate section (*https://catalog.mit.edu/mit/undergraduate-education*), as well as on the undergraduate admissions website (*https://mitadmissions.org*).

Applicants for graduate study apply directly to their particular department or program of interest. See the individual department and program descriptions for specific requirements.

Office of the Dean

Agustín Rayo, PhD
Professor of Philosophy
Dean, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Keeril Makan, PhD
Michael Koerner (1949) Professor in Music Composition
Professor of Music
Head, Music and Theater Arts
Associate Dean, School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences

Sean DeBoer, MBA
Assistant Dean for Finance and Administration

Tracie Jones, MEd

Assistant Dean for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion

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Cynthia L. Reed Professor of French Studies and Language