

Literary Studies (MA)

Master



Universiteit
Leiden

Discover the world at Leiden University

Specialisations

- English Literature and Culture (MA)
- French Literature and Culture (MA)
- German Literature and Culture (MA)
- Italian Literature and Culture (MA)
- Literature in Society. Europe and Beyond (MA)

The MA Literary Studies at Leiden University offers you a specialised qualification in one of four languages and cultures or a comparative perspective on literature and culture, with each programme offering considerable scope for individual customisation.

Why study Literary Studies at Leiden University?

As a student of Literary Studies, you will have access to the vast amount of knowledge that is present at the renowned Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS). Every class you attend is taught by

scholars of international standing who are true experts in their fields. An important objective is to teach you the value of questioning: you will acquire a broad, investigative and critical approach to problem solving that can be applied to any challenge in any role.

A unique selling point of the programme is the freedom to tailor your degree to suit your ambitions and interests. Your curriculum could include a single or combined major and electives from other specialisations – even other programmes. You are also free to go abroad for a specific university course or do an internship to deepen or widen your focus.

[Learn more about the study programme](#)

What are your career prospects?

This Master's prepares you to become an expert at your respective language and its culture. Our graduates work at different types of organisations, such as education, communication and marketing, government and cultural institutions. Jobs include language teacher, author, content marketer and speech writer.

[Find out more about your career prospects](#)

Is Literary Studies the programme for you?

Do you want to become an expert on language and culture? Or do you want to study literature and culture from a comparative perspective? Then Literary Studies at Leiden University is the right Master's programme for you. Find out if you are eligible for this Master's programme by checking the admission requirements.

[Check the admission requirements](#)

In which sector do students find jobs?

- 36 Education
- 14 Communication and marketing
- 9 Government and semi-government organisations
- 8 IT
- 6 Financial institutions
- 5 Publishing
- 5 Media and Journalism
- 3 Research
- 3 Consultancy
- 3 Business services
- 8 Other

The graph above is based on alumni data from the MA Literary Studies 2016-2020.



Why Leiden University

Leiden University offers students a rich environment in which to reach their potential.

The right location to study Literary Studies

Leiden University's Faculty of Humanities is consistently ranked among the top 30 Humanities faculties worldwide in the THE World University Ranking. At Leiden University, the oldest university in The Netherlands, you can access the best teaching staff, the latest research, and a wealth of resources found nowhere else in the world. With Leiden's world famous collections of original manuscripts and periodicals, you have literature at your fingertips.

Research expertise

The Leiden University Centre for the Arts in Society (LUCAS) is a leading European centre for research and teaching in languages, literature, art and culture. The Master's programme in Literary Studies makes full use of the centre's academic range, with a high-level of individual supervision and the flexibility to customise programmes that is to the benefit of all students.

Preparing your career

Our reputation means that your qualification is respected by organisations worldwide. Our graduates enjoy successful careers thanks to their broad and global mind-sets, specialised and in-depth knowledge, and strong critical-thinking skills. Our graduates are equipped to solve the challenges facing society now and in the future.

Diversity and inclusion

We are convinced that our education can only flourish if everyone within the programme feels supported, respected and empowered to do their best work. We find it important to offer a learning environment that allows for different perspectives and points of view that students bring with them, depending on their ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, health, religion, age or socio-economic background. Every new generation sees the world from a new perspective – and our students are the newest generation. [We look forward to hearing more about your perspective.](#) Leiden University has been pursuing diversity policy since 2014, with the aim of creating a diverse and inclusive learning and working environment for all staff and students.

Due to the selected cookie settings, we cannot show this video here.

[Watch the video on the original website or](#)

Accept cookies

About the programme

Learn the newest insights from established scholars.

The master's programme in Literary Studies offers five specializations or tracks. The tracks that focus on literature in a particular language cover a wide range of subjects, from medieval to 21st-century literature. The 'Literature in Society' track focuses on modern and contemporary literature and culture, with a focus on how works of literature engage with a broad spectrum of societal issues. You will have the opportunity to customize your programme by including electives from other specializations and master's programmes, or by taking an internship or a course at a university abroad.

Programme structure

The master's programme in Literary Studies is a one-year, full-time programme taught across two semesters. It consists of compulsory courses (depending on what specialization you choose), elective courses, and an MA thesis.

For detailed information about the curriculum, please check the five specialisations.

The programme offers five specialisations:

- [English Literature and Culture](#)
- [French Literature and Culture](#)
- [German Literature and Culture](#)
- [Italian Literature and Culture](#)
- [Literature in Society. Europe and Beyond](#)

The courses that you will follow depend on the specialisation of your choice. Generally, you will follow several core courses, elective courses and finally a Master's thesis.

For a detailed programme, see the [Prospectus](#) of the specialisations of your interest. Please note that the programme in the Prospectus shows the content of the current academic year.

Full-time and part-time

All Literary Studies specialisations are offered both in full-time and part-time. Please note that the part-time study mode does not offer any evening classes.

Extra-curricular

Community-building

A few times a year, activities are organised by the programme to encourage community building. Examples include the annual session where alumni are being interviewed about their careers and the information session about internships, specifically tailored to students of the master in Literary Studies.

Moreover, the student associations of the German, English, French and Italian departments regularly organise cultural and social activities.

Masterlanguage

As a literature student, you will be able to take optional courses via Masterlanguage, a national network of courses for language and literature students. The network offers courses in German, English, French, Italian, Classics (Greek and Latin) and Dutch literature and culture. All courses are taught in the language of instruction (German, English, French or Italian) and take place at one of the participating universities in The Netherlands. For more information, please visit the [Masterlanguage website](#) (in Dutch).

Leiden Leadership Programme

Are you interested in developing your leadership potential? The [Leiden Leadership Programme](#) (LLP) is an Honours Programme specifically developed for ambitious master's students at Leiden University and the

Delft University of Technology who recognise the importance of leadership abilities. The LLP offers in-depth training sessions, assessments, seminars, and the creation of a Personal Leadership Roadmap – a five-year plan for reaching and developing your leadership potential.

Study at the Academy of Creative and Performing Arts

The Academy of the Creative and Performing Arts (ACPA) is a research institute and part of the Faculty of Humanities. The ACPA offers education such as electives, and talent programmes such as the Practicum Artium (PA), which gives you the opportunity to study photography, graphic design or drawing, and the Practicum Musicae at the Royal Conservatoire The Hague, where you can study classical music, singing, early music or jazz.

[Find out more about ACPA.](#)

Career prospects

Where do our graduates work?

Because of the extensive curriculum and specialisations, the career opportunities after completing the Master's programme in Literary Studies are broad. Our graduates have landed jobs in various sectors of the job market, such as education, communication and marketing, government and cultural institutions. Examples of the diverse roles of our graduates include:

- Language teacher
- Author
- Content marketer
- Speech writer

Laura den Boer

Graduated in French Literature and Culture (MA Literary Studies)



"I very much enjoyed doing the Master's in French Literature and Culture of the Literary Studies degree programme. I chose this master's because the selection of subjects on offer appealed to me enormously."

Personal

"I took the master's together with a small group of students, which encouraged me to take an active role in the tutorial discussions. Taking part in the discussions helped to improve my French oral skills, as well as giving me personal contact with the teachers."

A teaching position

"After my master's I am going to work in Lille for 6 months, where I will be a language assistant in a secondary school, helping French pupils with their Dutch. After those 6 months I plan to do the Educational Master's in French Literature and Culture, which will afterwards hopefully provide me with a teaching position in a Dutch secondary school, in which I will be able to apply the knowledge I have gained during my French studies. In all, the degree programme at Leiden has given me a superb grounding for a job in education, because studying the many and varied subjects allowed me to acquire interesting and in-depth knowledge."

Ratna Lachmansingh

Graduated from the MA Literary Studies



Lachmansingh's love for film runs deep. As a student, she wrote all her papers and theses on films – even though her degree was actually in Literary Studies. 'During my gap year after high school, I went with a friend to a lecture by Frans Willem Korsten. He asked us to write down who we were. Then he said, "You probably wrote down your name, your age and your study programme, but those things aren't what you are." I thought that was wonderful, but also crazy. This was Literary Studies, wasn't it? So why was it about identity? Then I started looking more closely at the curriculum.'

The Literary Studies programme turned out to be broader than she expected. 'Through books, films and paintings, you have the chance to look at biology, philosophy, economics. I thought it was fantastic to be able to study society in this way and not have to choose just one subject. This was even encouraged.' In Lachmansingh's case, that meant a thesis on horror films, like *Night of the Living Dead*, *The Fly* and *Alien Resurrection*. 'It was so much fun!'

Alongside her studies, she was also involved in film. She soon started volunteering at what was then called the Leids Filmfestival. 'It was a kind of exploration of what I was good at and what I enjoyed. It turned out that I really liked production: making sure that everything works out fine.'

Lachmansingh was eventually advanced to the position of general director of the Leiden International Film Festival (LIFF). 'It's interesting to think more broadly about the festival. Who are we? Where do we want to go? And what do we need to achieve it?'

The graphs below are based on alumni data from the MA Literary Studies 2016-2020.

In which sectors do students find jobs?

- 36 % Education
- 14 % Communication and marketing
- 9 % Government and semi-government organisations

- 8 % IT
- 6 % Financial institutions
- 5 % Publishing
- 5 % Media and journalism
- 3 % Research
- 3 % Consultancy
- 3 % Business services
- 8 % Other

Teacher qualification

If you are interested in a career in teaching, you can apply for the Dutch-taught teacher-training MA at the ICLON Graduate School of Education after graduating from the master's programme. To be admitted, you need to have a master's degree in the relevant discipline. Fluency in Dutch is mandatory, and additional entry requirements may apply.

Career preparation

Find out how this programme prepares you for your future career and check our career preparation activities.

The Master's programme in Literary Studies at Leiden University equips you with a range of transferable skills and knowledge that will help you stand out in your future career. Your specialised knowledge is complemented by a broad and contextual understanding as well as critical-thinking skills that can be applied to complex conceptual problems. Other skills you may encounter in the various Literary Studies courses are:

- Analysis
- Oral and written communication
- Research
- Intercultural skills
- Creative thinking

You have the opportunity to do an internship at an organisation in the Netherlands or abroad. Internships are a great way to gain first-hand experience in your area of interest and deepen your expertise. Organisations that our students have interned at include:

- Royal Library The Hague, Koopman Collection
- Dutch Embassy in Paris
- Royal Brill Editions

Please note that you will need to find your own internship and have to follow an internship procedure for approval. Pursuing an internship may have consequences for the date of your graduation.

The Literary Studies Career Colloquium enables you to actively prepare your future career by providing you with information and inspiration. This programme, specially tailored for Literary Studies students, consists

of a series of meetings over the year on your personal profile, academic and practical skills. It includes two career events where you can meet professionals and alumni, in order to clarify your personal career prospects and start building your network.

Our staff can help you identify both the career that is right for you, and the necessary steps to get you there. Our team at [Humanities Career Service](#) provide all Leiden University humanities students with professional advice and guidance on everything from internships and career planning to job applications. Humanities Career Service also organises regular workshops on topics such as effective interview skills and creating a successful CV.

The Humanities Career Service offers you various (online) workshops, webinars and info sessions. [Check our overview of career activities](#).

The [Leiden University Career Zone](#) is an online career portal that helps you to prepare for the job market. Here you can find information, tools and tips to help you gain more personal insight, learn about the job market, develop your application skills, plan your academic and professional career, find job vacancies and discover what the [Career Service](#) can do for you.

Join the [Mentor Network](#) to contact alumni with experience on the labour market and ask them for advice. More than 1200 alumni are happy to help you!

Jelle on finding an internship via Leiden University's Mentor Network

Due to the selected cookie settings, we cannot show this video here.

[Watch the video on the original website or](#)

Accept cookies

Admission and Application

We invite motivated students from around the world to apply for the Master of Arts in Literary Studies. Admission requirements may vary per specialisation, please visit the specialisation of your interest to find out more about the entry requirements.

- [English Literature and Culture](#)
- [French Literature and Culture](#)
- [German Literature and Culture](#)
- [Italian Literature and Culture](#)
- [Literature in Society. Europe and Beyond](#)

Student life

Your time at Leiden is about more than just studying. Some of your best experiences will stem from being a part of our lively and diverse student community, as well as from life in the beautiful city of Leiden.

Welcome and orientation programme

In August and February each year, Leiden University hosts the English-language [Orientation Week Leiden \(OWL\)](#), which welcomes both international and Dutch students. The OWL is an excellent way to get to know Leiden University, the city, and other students.

Life in Leiden

Picturesque and the perfect size, Leiden is the ideal place to spend your university days. The Faculty of Humanities is located within the heart of the city, where dozens of cafes, shops and bars line its historic laneways and leafy canals. Small enough to run into familiar faces, but big enough to keep offering surprises – you will treasure your time at Leiden. And for adventures further afield, the major cities of The Hague and Amsterdam are a short train ride away, along with Schiphol Airport, which is just half an hour away by train.

Our study and student associations organise a huge variety of social, cultural, and study events to keep you busy all year round. You can also join the University Sports Centre, which offers scheduled group sports and fitness classes, amongst other activities.

International Student Associations

Leiden has several student organisations that specifically cater for international students. These associations organise regular social events and activities that help create the strong sense of community that exists within our international student body. The main two organisations are:

Erasmus Student Network Leiden (ESN)

[ESN Leiden](#) is an international student organisation which hosts a range of activities and programmes. They also have a buddy programme which provides new students with the right support to assimilate into Leiden and the university.

AEGEE Leiden

[AEGEE](#) is a leading European student association with sister organisations in over 40 countries across Europe. AEGEE organises many activities in Leiden, from dinners and pool nights to boat trips and guest lectures.

For an overview of all of our student associations, please visit our [Student associations page](#).

Humanities Master's Buddy Programme

The Humanities Master's Buddy Programme has been set up by the Faculty of Humanities to help all students who are new to the university to integrate quickly and easily into university life. You will be matched to a buddy who can help you out with your academic and practical questions. Additionally you will be able to attend fun monthly activities and make friends from all over the world.

For more information about the Buddy Programme, please visit the [Humanities Buddy Programme page](#).

Information activities

Get to know us through our online and in-person events for prospective students!



Two speakers at the open day

Are you thinking about joining this Master's programme, and want to determine if it will be the right fit for you? Below, you can browse the events that we have coming up, and sign up to experience Leiden University and the programme for yourself. Alternatively, take a look at the Master Talks videos to find out more about the programme or check out our virtual campus tours!

Upcoming events

Master's Open Days

The next [Master's Open Day](#) will take place on 16 February 2024. You can also still watch the recordings of all the presentations from the last Online Open Days. The videos can be found on the [Master Talks page](#).

Master Talks: Programme videos

On the [Master Talks: programme videos platform](#) you can find videos for each master's programme. This includes a video which gives a short introduction to the programme. You can also find the recording of the Master's Online Open Days of 5-6 October and watch the programme presentation on the platform.

Get to know the campus

Check out our virtual campus tours, filmed in 360 degrees – by dragging the video, you can look around at the surroundings yourself. Below is the video recorded at the Humanities faculty, where most of your lectures will take place; you can also view other 360 campus tours of the various university faculties [here](#).

360 Campus tour: the Humanities faculty

Due to the selected cookie settings, we cannot show this video here.

[Watch the video on the original website or](#)

Accept cookies

Contact

If you have a question, there are various ways to get in touch with us.

This website and our [Frequently Asked Questions](#) are the quickest ways to find an answer to many of your questions.

Questions about the Programme

Coordinator of studies

Laura Kouters

Email: stuco-ma-literarystudies@hum.leidenuniv.nl

Questions about the application procedure, tuition fees and scholarships

Student Affairs Front Office

Phone: +31 (0)71 527 80 11

Email: [Contact form](#)

Or visit their [website](#)

Visiting address

Leiden: Plexus Student Centre

Kaiserstraat 25, ground floor

2311 GN Leiden

Monday to Friday between 11.00 and 16.00, Tuesday between 11.00 and 17.30.