Bachelor's

Literary and Cultural Analysis

uva.nl/ba-literary-and-cultural-analysis
Central to the programme is the hands-on engagement with concrete objects — novels, films, poems, operas, television series, art installations, websites, performances, and so on. The detailed analysis of those objects is combined with wide-ranging philosophical, political, and social approaches of culture and the arts. In this way, the programme enables you to interpret and evaluate particular texts, images, and objects in relation to larger philosophical explorations and cultural developments.

Literary and Cultural Analysis highlights philosophical, political, and social perspectives on contemporary issues like globalisation, ecology, and gender. It offers you the intellectual knowledge and skills to interpret and reflect on literature, art, and popular culture. You learn to understand the crucial channels through which meaning is circulated and maintained in society.

Reasons to study Literary and Cultural Analysis in Amsterdam

- Unique, interdisciplinary programme: the degree combines the best of two disciplines - Cultural Studies and Comparative Literature - offering philosophical and political insights into art, literature and popular culture;
- Springboard to an academic career: Literary and Cultural Analysis is the perfect springboard to our Master’s or Research Master’s degree in Cultural or Literary Studies;
• Vibrant community with an international outlook: you will be taught by leading intellectuals focused on contemporary global developments in a student community made up of more than 60 nationalities;
• Tailor-made programme: you will be able to combine our core courses with electives in Media Studies, Philosophy, Comparative Literature, Art History and History;
• Gateway to Europe: Amsterdam offers a uniquely liberal, cosmopolitan and intellectual environment, boasting an amazing number of museums, cinemas, theatres and concert halls. It has been a haven for free thinkers and creative minds for centuries, from 17th century philosopher Spinoza to contemporary artist/filmmaker Steve McQueen.

Charlie Taylor, student

'I really liked the courses about analysis and interpretation. Rather than jumping straight into the deep end, we first learned basic methods. So, for example, we learned things like narratology, how to unpick a poem, how to unpick a story, a film, a piece of art, and how to use compositional techniques. The biggest lesson was that cultural objects, like media or film, are all representations of how we perceive reality and ourselves. We get a better understanding of ourselves by examining the products that humans have created. What do these products say about who we are? And, more importantly: what can we learn from this?'
Kalliope Bournias, student

'I first looked at this programme because of my love for literature. But what's great about LCA is that it includes so much more than just literature. It sounded broad enough to cover all of my interests, and it did! While studying I found my interests shift from literature toward theory; this bachelor's very much theory-based – I love it! My perspective on my own position in the wider scheme of things has changed drastically. It has involved really growing to understand that we as people are "made up of" other people, societal structures, representations and cultural objects – that we never leave encounters unchanged. We are constantly being redefined by everything that we're reading and writing, looking at, and the roles we perform.'

Study programme

The programme combines core courses with electives in a range of subjects, such as: ‘Cultural Conflicts: From the Berlin Wall to the Anthropocene,’ ‘Islam Art Across the Mediterranean World’, ‘Media Activism’ or ‘Bodies in Public’. Throughout the programme, you will have the opportunity to develop your own ideas and hone your skills through interactive case studies, focused on concrete cultural issues. You are also encouraged to pick an additional minor (in a subject of your choice), learn another language, study a semester abroad or do an internship.

- The first year consists of compulsory courses introducing the fields, various methods of analysis and interpretation, and key theoretical concepts. In the course ‘Literary Worlds’, for example, you will familiarise yourself with world literature and film in a time of globalisation.
- The second year will provide you with an overview of Cultural and Literary Theory. You will have the opportunity to choose your own minor and elective courses in a wide range of subjects, as well as having the option to study abroad or do an internship.
- The third and final year is partly dedicated to Philosophy of Science. In addition, you will participate in a research seminar, have the opportunity to work with fellow students on concrete case studies on diverse subjects ranging from installation art to theatre and write your thesis on a topic of your choice.
Career prospects

As a graduate of the Literary and Cultural Analysis Bachelor's programme, you will have the skills and knowledge required for a wide range of intellectual and creative careers. You will have broad knowledge of cultural phenomena and processes, and you will be able to write clear, informative, and well-structured texts. These are all vital skills for the cultural sector, education, journalism and the commercial field. Graduates have secured employment in the following sectors:

• Cultural institutions: curators or programmers for institutions like De Balie or the Van Gogh Museum;
• Journalism and media: editors, writers, and researchers;
• Commercial writing and editing: writers and copy editors for various businesses requiring textual and linguistic expertise;
• Publishing: published authors or editors at Boom Amsterdam, De Geus or Penguin. One graduate has even started his own publishing house;
• Education: teachers at all levels from primary school to university.

Master's programmes

Students seeking broader or more specialised academic knowledge and skills may enrol in one of the UvA Master’s programmes, most of which are taught in English, including:

• Comparative Literature
• Comparative Cultural Analysis
• Literary Studies (Research Master’s)
• Cultural Analysis (Research Master's)

Annelot Prins, alumna

‘After studying Political Sciences for a while I decided to switch to Literary and Cultural Analysis. My love for literature was a huge incentive. But LCA was especially interesting to me because it gives students the opportunity to analyse other cultural objects like film, photography, television and music as well. I enjoyed the freedom to almost limitlessly expand my theoretical knowledge and apply this knowledge to all objects I found interesting. During my studies, I researched feminist conspiracy theories in The Stepford Wives, loss of virginity-narratives in MTV’s Virgin Territory, gender images in Disney films, and the star text of Beyoncé. I have to warn you, though: thanks to Literary and Cultural Analysis I am no longer able to uncritically consume cultural objects. I see research papers everywhere.’
Visit us

Come and see what it’s like to study at the University of Amsterdam. Visit an Open Day, schedule a Campus Visit, and make sure you are well-informed about the programme.

Please see: uva.nl/international