

## Interest in the Program

My greatest intellectual interest is the study of world literature, particularly European literature in translation. I have grown to love the beautiful and often enigmatic prose of the late modern and contemporary periods, especially the works of Franz Kafka, Fyodor Dostoevsky, and Albert Camus. However, in my undergraduate studies I have come to understand that literature is a deeply interdisciplinary area of study. Great works such as *The Trial*, *Crime and Punishment*, and *The Stranger* were created for reasons that can only be understood once framed within their respective historical and societal contexts. For instance, how can one be expected to understand the plight of Dostoevsky's Underground Man without first recognizing the influences which led to his creation? This is why the study of literature is also necessarily the study of law, politics, history, philosophy, and culture. Unfortunately, no single academic program within the College of Arts and Sciences sufficiently encompasses this level of nuance and complexity. While the majors in Comparative Literature and English address some of these disciplines, I believe they are too singular in their focus on the texts themselves and neglect key contextual aspects. PST would uniquely empower me to explore multiple areas of study as equally important facets of the same intellectual prism. Having spoken to several former and current students, I am also excited at the opportunity to participate in the PST core seminars, which would allow me to engage in critical discourse in a small, intimate classroom setting.

My first chosen area of study, literary criticism, is integral to pursuit of my primary interest in literature. While coursework in specific novels, plays, poems, and short stories would certainly be stimulating, it is important to study method in conjunction with substance. Literary criticism is less about considering particular works than it is about exploring *how* one might evaluate literature more broadly. Although important, literary criticism must be supplemented by contextualizing disciplines, which I have selected as my second and third areas of study. European intellectual history would provide background on a continent which has produced some of mankind's most influential literary, artistic, political, and philosophical works. I believe these courses would allow me to study the prevailing intellectual conditions under which great works were produced. Finally, the area of Germanic cultural studies would allow me to focus narrowly on the German context, which I have grown to love ever since I began studying the German language as a first year student. I am fascinated by German history and culture because they encapsulate many of the underlying political, economic, and social themes central to the development of twentieth century Europe — economic turmoil, fascism, war, communism, and eventual democratization.