

INTRODUCING SUA'S HUMANITIES FACULTY
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Students taking courses in the Humanities concentration this fall at Soka University of America, Aliso Viejo will be expected to be active learners both in and outside of the classroom. The Humanities concentration will challenge students to understand and explore the difficulties and problems of achieving diversity within the world community.

In addition, the students will examine how and why different perspectives about the world have arisen in different cultures and historical periods. Students in the Humanities will also be required to take at least two courses in the other concentrations, Social and Behavioral Sciences and International Studies.

“The Humanities will have a crucial role to play at SUA for at least two reasons,” mentions Jay Heffron, Professor of History. “As the name suggests, the central object of study in the Humanities is the human being and in particular the role of human agency in the world. While the social sciences tend to focus on large, overarching structures, systems and institutions, the Humanities are more interested in understanding how human beings experience those structures. How do they think about and reflect about their lives? What have they done and said—in art, literature, philosophy and religion—that places them within but also outside of and beyond their changing circumstances? The Humanities seeks to understand the so-called eternal verities while rooting them in particular times and places.”

Students will be able to choose to work alone or in groups. Through a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches, students will synthesize, interpret and communicate knowledge and information through a variety of resources throughout the concentration.

“Just as science seeks universal principles in the midst of endless physical variety, so the humanities seek common themes in the diversity of cultures, ethnic groups and human individuality,” says David Chappell, Professor of Comparative Religion. “This search to cherish variety while trying to build commonality applies equally to teaching and to how the Soka community conducts its own human relationships internally and with the wider communities.”

The faculty has put together a curriculum that allows the student to explore the various ways in which the traditional disciplines of art history, history, literary studies, philosophy, religious studies and the creative arts address common topics and concerns through a number of disciplinary and interdisciplinary approaches.

“I think what we want in the Humanities is essentially to throw humanity into the balance, exposing our students to the dizzying heights but also the depressing lows of human achievement,” says Heffron. “We hope to do this by exposing them to a variety of materials from history, literature, philosophy and the arts—primarily to raise their self-knowledge.”

Within the Humanities, the concentration will be divided into two categories: 1) Time and Places; and 2) Human Condition. The division is designed to assist the student in selecting courses that are of interest as well as completing core and general education requirements.