MASTER’S IN WORLD LITERATURE
(EQUIVALENT TO MA IN ENGLISH)

CONCEPTUALIZED AND CONFIGURED BY

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NALANDA UNIVERSITY
“saraswatam kimapi tatsu maha rahasyam”
— Rajasekhara, Kavyaminamsa

“When I look back, I am so impressed again with the life-giving power of literature.”
— Maya Angelou

“Literature always anticipates life. It doesn't copy it but moulds it to its purpose.”
— Oscar Wilde

“The struggle of literature is in fact a struggle to escape from the confines of language; it stretches out from the utmost limits of what can be said; what stirs literature is the call and attraction of what is not in the dictionary.”
— Italo Calvino
MASTER’S IN WORLD LITERATURE
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Our understanding of “literature” has expanded beyond the classic canon of Euro-American texts and entered a far-reaching inquiry into the diversity of the world’s literary cultures and their distinctive reflections and refractions in multiple domains. The two-year full time MA programme in World Literature is envisioned by Madam Vice-Chancellor, Prof. Sunaina Singh, to initiate students to play a positive and creative role in today’s multi-polar world. As she states, “Perceived as a symbol of Asian Renaissance and resurgence, the overriding objective of Nalanda today is to serve as a ‘bridge and foundation’ in linking India with the world through the knowledge route.” The new Master’s programme in World Literature is yet another step in this direction. It is an explorative journey through literature and culture across languages, and it posits the intersections among literatures, cultures, philosophy, media, and disciplines. Drawing on the interdisciplinary tradition of Nalanda University, the programme encourages students to integrate the concerns of other fields into their studies.

The two-year full time programme MA in World Literature is offered by the School of Languages and Literatures/Humanities, Nalanda University. The programme lays a broad knowledge foundation for further research in literary and cultural studies. It aims to equip students with the phenomenon of World Literature by providing an avenue for the best writings and best minds. The idea is to rationalize and to understand the meaning that we engage in our knowledge domain in connection with life and death; love and loyalty; truth and perspective; and religious interpretation and regional cultures. The mission of the curriculum is to comprehend these matters and issues in a regional/local and global perspective. The aim is also to bring the comprehensive corpus of World Literature into one frame by providing segments of thought in the literary, cultural, and philosophical traditions.
The innovative courses and research will aim at helping address global and national concerns as well regarding making the lived lives more humane.

The programme is designed to serve both as an autonomous degree and as a foundation for those who wish to pursue more advanced research at Nalanda University or elsewhere. The courses will be offered under the cafeteria model, with a central emphasis on interdisciplinarity in learning and research. Keeping in line with the University norms, the programme is open for students and professionals, with a Bachelor’s degree in any stream.

As a research-intensive programme, the Master’s curriculum is aimed to offer robust training in cutting-edge research in the field of literary and cultural studies, with the central focus on traditions and contemporary debates in the fields of literary and cultural expressions, i.e. the broader field of Humanities. An important goal is to promote an understanding of the works — creative and reflective expressions across the media — and practices in their cultural/historical contexts as well as of the singular nature of diverse reflective and literary traditions. This makes the programme unique, and it stands out compared to the similar programmes offered by other universities.

Each semester is designed to provide the best of cannons and emergent fields. Reflecting on the increased hybridity, each unit of each semester focuses on different geographic area and regional cultures from first civilizations to the postmodern epoch, including: Babylonia, Mesopotamia, Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Rome; India; China and Japan; Arabia, and its impact on Spain, Africa, and the Americas. The courses are identified from the fundamentals of World Literature involving the whole gamut of literary texts across cultures.
**Mandate**

The two-year full-time residential M.A. programme in World Literature shall:

- cover a wide range of literary traditions and emergent areas of research.
- explore literary and cultural traditions across the world.
- emphasize on the singular nature of diverse reflective and literary traditions.

**Outcome of the Programme**

Students completing Master’s in World Literature shall gain a sound knowledge of the field of literature and culture from across the world. They will also develop deep insights into the cultural, social and historical contexts in which various literary works have been written. Further, they will acquire research skills and improve their competence for advanced research in the field.

**Eligibility Criteria for the Programme for Indian and International Students**

Minimum criteria are 55% or 2.2/4.0 GPA or equivalent Grade Point Average (GPA) in Undergraduate Degree.

Students from any stream, i.e., Humanities / Sciences / Engineering / Management / Law, etc. can apply for the programme. Students have to submit the following:

1. Self-introduction / Bio-Note Statement (Not more than 250 words)
2. Statement of Purpose (SoP)
   - Why do you want to study at Nalanda University (100 words)
   - The reason for choosing the programme (300 - 500 words)
3. Proof of proficiency in English is required for students hailing from non-English speaking countries/medium. TOEFL/IELTS or any other standard certification in English is accepted. The candidate having full-time degree-level course entirely taught and assessed in English need not submit any certificate.
Indicative List of Courses

- Introduction to Literature
- Introduction to World Literature
- Literature and Philosophy
- Genre Fundamentals: Poetry
- Genre Fundamentals: Drama
- Genre Fundamentals: Fiction
- Literary Criticism and Theory
- Epic Traditions: Homer, Dante & Milton
- Classical Continuities: Sophocles, Kalidasa and Shakespeare
- Reason, Faith and Imagination: Donne, Blake & Hölderlin
- Nature, Science and Literature
- Romanticism and Literature
- Texts and the Screen: Adaptations
- Digital Humanities
- Ramayana Traditions in Southeast Asia
- Devotional Literature
- Troubadours of Knowledge: Myths, Legends and Folktales
- The Representation of Consciousness in Dostoevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Camus & Coetzee
- Creative Writing
- Critical Thinking
- Academic Writing
- Literary Translation
- Individual Author/Text
- Reading Seminar
- Dissertation
Course Requirements

Structure of Master’s Degree: 64 Credits

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<th>Semester-I (Foundation Courses)</th>
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<th>4 Core Courses (3 Credits each)</th>
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<td>1 Elective Course (3 Credits)</td>
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<td>Reading Seminar 1 (1 Credit)</td>
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<td>Additional Credit Course: Academic Writing (1 Credit)</td>
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<th>Semester-II (Bridge Courses)</th>
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<td>Reading Seminar 2 (1 Credit)</td>
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<td>Additional Credit Course: Translation Workshop (1 Credit)</td>
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<th>Semester-III (Advanced Courses)</th>
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<td>Reading Seminar 3 (1 Credit)</td>
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<td>Additional Credit Course: Creative Writing (1 Credit)</td>
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<th>Semester-IV (Specialized Courses)</th>
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<td>Reading Seminar 4 (1 Credit)</td>
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<td>Dissertation  (9 Credits)</td>
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The courses are categorized into core, elective, and seminar courses. Additionally, there is a dissertation component in the 4th Semester. In the final semester, a student would work on a dissertation/project on the topic of his/her choice within the area of study under the expert guidance of a supervisor. The broad structure of each semester is given above. The MA World Literature programme requires a student to gain a minimum of 64 credits from 4 semesters to obtain the degree. The students may accumulate additional credits in their existing bank of credits as per the University rules.
COURSES FOR THE PROGRAMME

Semester - I (Foundation Courses): Minimum 16 Credits

- **4 Core Courses** (3 Credits each)
  - I. Introduction to Literature
  - II. Introduction to World Literature
  - III. Literature and Philosophy
  - IV. Genre Fundamentals: Poetry
- **1 Elective Course** (3 Credits)
  1. Critical Thinking
- **Reading Seminar 1** (1 Credit)
- **Additional Credit Course**
  - Academic Writing (1 Credit)

Semester - II (Bridge Courses): Min. 16 Credits

- **3 Core Courses** (3 Credits each)
  - I. Epic Traditions: Homer, Dante & Milton
  - II. Classical Continuities: Sophocles, Kalidasa and Shakespeare
  - III. Reason, Faith and Imagination: Donne, Blake & Hölderlin
- **2 Elective Courses** (3 Credits each)
  1. Romanticism and Literature
  2. Devotional Literature
  3. Troubadours of Knowledge: Myths, Legends and Folktales
- **Reading Seminar 2** (1 Credit)
- **Additional Credit Course**
  - Translation Workshop (1 Credit)
Semester - III (Advanced Courses): Min. 16 credits

- **2 Core Courses** (3 Credits each)
  I. Genre Fundamentals: Drama
  II. Genre Fundamentals: Fiction

- **3 Elective Course** (3 Credits each)
  1. The Representation of Consciousness in Dostoevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Camus & Coetzee
  2. Texts and the Screen: Adaptations
  3. Ramayana Traditions in Southeast Asia
  4. Individual Author/Text

- **Reading Seminar 3** (1 Credit)
- **Additional Credit Course**
  o Creative Writing (1 Credit)

Semester - IV (Specialized Courses): Min. 16 credits

- **1 Core Course** (3 Credits each)
  I. Literary Criticism and Theory

- **1 Elective Course** (3 Credits each)
  1. Digital Humanities

- **Reading Seminar 4** (1 Credit)
- **Dissertation** (9 Credits)
Course Descriptions

❖ Introduction to Literature
The course aims to introduce the concept of literature, literary process and the faculty of imagination which is at the core of literary studies. The course will explicate literature from across the world: from classical to modern, East to West, and India to China. It will explore selected texts from the perspectives of art, aesthetics and imagination.

❖ Introduction to World Literature
This reading intensive course will focus on selected works of world literature. The course combines classical paradigms of literature with its evolving traditions. Covering a wide spectrum of literature from around the world and across centuries, it introduces the students to some of the finest literary works that have been produced in different languages.

❖ Literature and Philosophy
This course offers an introduction to selected philosophers whose ideas have had a significant impact on literature. Philosophy and literature have provided different perspectives, insights and wisdom across the centuries through the works of philosophers and literary artists. The course provides an overview of chosen philosophers, together with an in-depth discussion of the basic tenets of their philosophy.

❖ Genre Fundamentals: Poetry
The course introduces students to the world of poetry across nations, languages and cultures. It pays special attention to the nature and function of poetry. It familiarizes the students with the various poetic forms and traditions. The course seeks to focus on the universal appeal of poetry ranging from the hymns of Rig Veda to Maya Angelou.
❖ **Genre Fundamentals: Fiction**

Introducing the genre of fiction, the course provides a comprehensive overview of the development of the genre. Select texts will be introduced for a close reading and critical engagement. Critical scholarship on these writers/texts, as well as theories of fiction and narrative, will also be studied.

❖ **Genre Fundamentals: Drama**

Introducing the genre of drama, the course offers a historical overview of the genre. The focus of the course is on familiarizing the students with a wide range of the fascinating dramas that has been composed during the past century. Select plays will be considered for close engagement textually and/or as performances. Critical scholarship on these compositions, as well as theories associated with them, too form part of the course.

❖ **Literary Criticism and Theory**

This course offers a concise historical and theoretical overview of literary theory and criticism. Over the course of literary history, literary theory and criticism have shaped the way we read literature, and how we understand language, identity, and society as well. Introducing the foundational ideas and texts from the history of literary criticism and theory, the course aims to demystify literary theory, showing how it illuminates literary texts and enriches our understanding and enjoyment of literature.

❖ **Epic Traditions: Homer, Dante & Milton**

The course familiarizes the students with the epic traditions. Introducing the epic genre, the course involves close reading of selections from Homer’s Odyssey, Dante’s Divine Comedy, and Milton’s Paradise Lost. Students will be acquainted with the evolution of the genre over a millennia, along with situating the compositions within the intellectual and cultural contexts.
Classical Continuities: Sophocles, Kalidasa and Shakespeare

This course introduces certain classical dramatic texts to the students. Students will be acquainted with the genre of drama and its evolution, and learn to examine the texts from a cross-cultural perspective. The course would include contextualization, reception history and close reading of select texts from Sophocles, Kalidasa, and Shakespeare.

Reason, Faith and Imagination: Donne, Blake & Hölderlin

The course familiarizes the students with the way the faculty of literary imagination engages with the thematic of faith and rationality. Introducing the select writings of three key literary figures—John Donne, William Blake and Friedrich Hölderlin—the course enables the students to carry out exploration of certain key topics such as imagination and feeling, creative expression, and meditative and visionary experience.

Nature, Science and Literature

This course examines the interrelationship among nature, science and literature. Focusing on how literatures have perceived, conceptualized and responded to the nature across cultures, the course will consider how certain historical trends continue to influence our feelings towards, and understandings of, the more-than-human world. It will also identify strategies that writers have used to address environmental questions by considering both the form and content of their works. Through close reading students will investigate the extent to which literary and cultural forms shape the ways in which people see and relate to nature and the environment: that is, to the places where they live, work, travel, and the ways they understand themselves in relation to others and to the natural world.

Romanticism and Literature

The course is an introduction to the concept of Romanticism in literary history. Exploring the roots of romanticism, the course will familiarize the
students with the important Romantic poetics. The students will also explore how Romantic writers used experiments with literary form both to respond to the social and historical contexts, and to address more intimate concerns of love and loss, and memory and desire. Readings would include selections from Goethe, Schlegel, Fichte, Wordsworth, Coleridge, PB Shelley, Keats, Mary Shelley, Hölderlin, Novalis and Hoffmann.

**Texts and the Screen: Adaptations**

This course examines the relationship between writing and cinema by focusing on the select literary texts and their film adaptations. Introducing the field of adaptation studies, the course includes an introduction to a close reading of select literary texts and analysis and interpretation of the representation of printed text on the screen. The course is an exploration of medium-specific potential of the faculty of imagination.

**Digital Humanities**

The intersection of the computational technologies and the traditional humanities disciplines has given rise to the field of Digital Humanities. In the last two decades, the field has not only gained increased attention, but also expanded rapidly. Introducing the field, the course examines the history, theory and practice of Digital Humanities. It introduces the fundamental elements that constitute Digital Humanities, with a focus on text analysis and networks.

**Ramayana Traditions in Southeast Asia**

Attempting to map the historical and civilizational linkages between India and Southeast Asia, this course explores the reception of the Ramayana in the Southeast Asian region. One of the markers of this integration is its creative manifestation in multiple forms and media—textual, sculptural, iconographic, and performances. The course familiarizes the students with
the reception history as well as historical and cultural conditions that have shaped the creative manifestation of the *Ramayana* in the region.

**Devotional Literature**

This course provides an introduction to the traditions of compositions that engage with the transcendentalism and mysticism across cultures. Exploring the intersection between literature, bhakti and theology, students will gain familiarity with the literary context of the formative centuries.

**Troubadours of Knowledge: Myths, Legends and Folktales**

This course will introduce students to the most fundamental types of traditional stories across cultures: myths, legends and folktales, with special attention to sources, interpretation and written analysis. The focus of the course on exploring the role these forms have played as repositories and disseminators of knowledge in human history.

**The Representation of Consciousness in Dostoevsky, Kafka, Beckett, Camus & Coetzee**

In this course, the students will be exposed to the representation of human consciousness in the select texts of world literature. Understanding the nature of human consciousness has been one of the vital questions literature is concerned with. One can locate a wide spectrum with regard to characterization and representation of human consciousness in literary narratives. The course would focus on select texts by Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Albert Camus and JM Coetzee.

**Critical Thinking**

The course is an introduction to the field of Critical Thinking. Martin Heidegger, one of the significant philosophers of twentieth century, provocatively says, “We are still not thinking.” Do we think? Do we think in a way that responds to culture and reflective tradition, and ways of life one is
rooted in? What are our grounds of thinking? The course tries to answer these questions.

Critical thinking is learning to think in a disciplined and evaluative manner, to analyze and interpret the processes by which various claims are made and reliable conclusions are reached. The course is structured around the rubrics of thinking, reading, and writing. These are the acts which are not limited to any specific disciplines; instead, with its interdisciplinary orientation, the course is designed as an elective for entry level students across the disciplines.

❖ **Academic Writing**

This is an additional 1-credit course offered to the students in the first semester. Close and critical reading, and academic writing play a crucial role in preparing students for research-oriented higher education. Structured as a workshop, this course provides an orientation to the students in this direction, by enabling them to work with the fundamental concepts of academic writing that all researchers and scholars use: reading closely to analyze texts and question sources, reasoning with evidence, organizing persuasive and well-structured arguments, and communicating ideas in clear and effective prose. Key concepts of academic argument such as thesis, motive, evidence, and structure, will be introduced and reviewed. Students will also learn strategies for reading and analyzing complex texts.

❖ **Creative Writing**

This 1-credit course is meant to spark literary interests, talents, and inclinations among the students who are interested in becoming creative writers. Following a workshop-based approach with practical sessions, supplemented by guided reading and critical feedback, the course instructs students in the elementary approach to the process of production of literary works. The aim of this course is to increase students’ awareness and
competence as writers and to allow for practice and appreciation of various forms of creative writing.

❖ **Literary Translation**

This 1-credit course provides an introduction to the practice of literary translation. Translation is one of the most fundamental human activities. It has been perceived both as an art and a science. Literary translation forms the basis of most readers’ acquaintance with world literature. The course is meant for the students who aspire to pursue literary translation. Taught through a workshop model, the course will involve exposing students to various samples of translations in order to familiarize the techniques and nuances involved, in addition to the practical sessions, supplemented by discussion, peer-review and critical feedback.

❖ **Reading Seminars**

Reading Seminar is a compulsory 1-credit course across the semesters. It is an interdisciplinary course designed for students to enrich their research, writing and presentation skills. Guided reading, critical engagement with faculty, peers will help them to chart out topics for their research, and dissertation. One of the aims of this course is to make them aware of the methodology of their select topics.

❖ **Individual Author/Text/Topic**

This is an elective course. The course will address the topics from the emergent areas. These courses can also examine the works of an individual author or a significant individual work so as to offer a comprehensive understanding and research competence among the students. The course will identify certain key topics that will be explored by taking recourse to literary texts and critical scholarship as well as any other relevant sources.
Dissertation

In the final semester of the programme, students shall write the dissertation/undertake a project that will be an original piece of research. Students will select a topic of their academic interest in consultation with supervisor/s. In the dissertation, students shall demonstrate their capacity to carry out independent research based on the primary and secondary sources. It is expected that the dissertation will have academic rigour and originality so that it can potentially be published in a peer-reviewed research journal. In view of these considerations, the maximum word limit of the dissertation will be 10,000 to 12,000, including notes (but excluding bibliography).