

Dear BTBARS folks,

5/22/25

Hello, hope this finds all readers well. Enclosed is 4 pages of Interdisciplinary Humanities Program = Certificate + letters from the Programs staff.

Also WANNA SHARE how you can contact me if you'd like...

- 1) go to: gettingout.com
 - 2) download Apps
 - 3) go to R.J. DONOVAN (prison inmate)
 - 4) enter my info: ^{NAME} Michael M. Singh + ^{color #} T-22165
- = it will put you on my list of people approved to text.

Hope 2 hear from you!

Have A Great Day!

OR
WRITE
ME
AT :

M. Singh, T-22165
RSD/A4-126
480 Alta Rd.
SAN Diego, CA 92179

Respectfully
Michael



May 12, 2025

Mr. Michael Singh, T22165
RJ Donovan Correctional Facility, A4-126
480 Alta Road
San Diego, CA 92179

Dear Mr. Singh,

Congratulations on your completion of the 2024-25 Foundations in the Humanities I course! Thank you for your thoughtful, dedicated participation in the course. Included in this envelope is your Certificate of Completion and a description of the course. This certificate, along with the course description, the work you completed and your instructor's feedback will serve as evidence of the value of the course and the progress you have made in accordance with the goals outlined in the course description.

If you have any interest in enrolling in Foundations in the Humanities II, which we will start next fall and will focus on reading selected works of American literature, please respond with a letter of interest and we would be happy to put your name on the waitlist.

Sincerely,

Susan Derwin

Susan Derwin
Director
Foundations in the Humanities
Interdisciplinary Humanities Center
University of California, Santa Barbara



Foundations in the Humanities I

**A correspondence course offered by the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center
University of California, Santa Barbara**

"Foundations I: Introduction to Literary Studies" is the first of three courses in the Foundations in the Humanities program. The goal of this correspondence course is to introduce students to works of literature. Each reading presents situations in which fictional characters confront and respond to significant life situations and challenges of universal relevance. Reading and responding to questions about these literary works enables participants to expand their insight into themselves and their society, for the purpose of building better lives in prison and after their release.

This course consists of six units. The content of each unit is a poem, short story, excerpt from a novel, or an essay, and a worksheet with questions about the reading. The completion of each unit requires reading the text, answering each question in paragraph form, and returning the worksheet to the Interdisciplinary Humanities Center at UC Santa Barbara, where it is read and evaluated by a university instructor. The worksheet and evaluation are then returned, so that students may keep their work and the instructor's feedback as a permanent record of their participation.

Answers to assignment questions must each be at least 200 words. Please take extra care to write legibly: if we cannot read your writing, we cannot respond to it. Participants are expected to return their answers within one week of receiving each packet of materials. We understand that there are delays in the mail. We request that participants please take care to complete and mail each assignment promptly.

The program does not offer college credit. Participants do, however, receive a certificate of completion attesting to the fact that they are actively pursuing an academic program.

Sincerely,

Susan Derwin, Director
Foundations in the Humanities
Interdisciplinary Humanities Center
University of California, Santa Barbara

May 9, 2025

Foundations in the Humanities, Assignment #6

Michael,

Throughout the duration of this course, your critical reading abilities have flourished alongside your keen analytical sense for detecting the meaning and importance of each question you have answered.

For your first response, you highlight Macdonald's beginnings as a "bird-obsessed child" and how she used her knowledge of the natural world to self-soothe in times of distress. There is a certain cyclical nature to the way in which Macdonald would take stock of the natural world, cataloging the Earth and atmosphere, taking a "count in [her] head of all the layers between [her] and the centre of the Earth" and then "think[ing] upwards in expanding rings of thinning air." Similarly, *cyclicity* is a focal point of this essay; it begins with a dead swift, reminding us of our shared fragile mortality, and ends with an image of swifts rising high through the sky "to look clearly at the things that are so easily obscured by the everyday." In your second response, you note how the factual information contained in Macdonald's essay lends it a richness that it would not otherwise have. For instance, Macdonald reveals that the scientist Luit Buurma discovered that swifts make their vesper flights not once, but twice, a day – rising to "the apex of their flights at nautical twilight." She also mentions their diminutive, or tiny, size: "[s]wifts weigh about forty grams" (about one-tenth of a pound). These factual details could serve to disenchant swifts by taking away some of their mystique, but instead they have the opposite effect – the reader is left with a feeling of enchantment with these seemingly ordinary birds. For your third response, you dwell on the various symbolic meanings that swifts carry for Macdonald throughout her essay. One particularly powerful theme invoked in the essay is "collectivity." Macdonald intimates that swifts "follow each other" in their flights. In exploring the behavior of swifts, she reflects on how humans do not exist as individuals, but form a pattern of collective behavior that relies on "pay[ing] attention to what other[s]...are doing." In your fourth response, you connect the vesper's connotation as an "evening prayer" to the manner in which swifts soar far into the sky. Since vesper means "evening" in Latin, "vespers" are both evening songs, and religious prayers spoken in the evening. Macdonald draws upon these connotations of spirituality and the unknown when she compares the swifts to special, other-worldly beings like "angels or aliens," which can reach heavenly planes of air. In another place in the essay, Macdonald writes that the swifts are "of their nature unintelligible, which makes them more akin to angels." For your final response, you relate your own lived experiences to Macdonald's "fable of community." Much akin to a swift, you do your best to profile your surroundings, extracting information where possible to inform your decisions. It also sounds like you are able to heed Macdonald's advice to, when possible, rise outside of one's "protective structures" of ideology and comfort in order to gain a better perspective.

It has been a pleasure corresponding with you during this course.

-Tom



CERTIFICATE

OF COMPLETION



This certificate is proudly presented to

Michael Singh

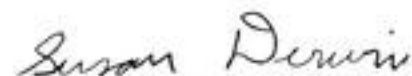
For completion of *Foundations in the Humanities I*, a correspondence course sponsored by the
Interdisciplinary Humanities Center, University of California, Santa Barbara.

May 8, 2025

Date



INTERDISCIPLINARY
Humanities
CENTER



DR. SUSAN DERWIN
Director, Interdisciplinary Humanities Center
UC Santa Barbara