

Colby College

Manifesto of the Humanities

The Humanities

- explain ourselves to ourselves.
- connect us to those who came before, as well as to our contemporaries.
- facilitate cross-cultural understanding, by helping us to hold difficult conversations about race, class, gender, and difference.
- demand critical reading, thinking, and writing.
- remain rooted in the rigor of distinct disciplines, but depend on multidisciplinary inquiry and collaboration.
- tackle the big questions humans have asked for millennia: how do we make sense of existence?
- employ qualitative methods to learn how humans have documented and expressed themselves over time and space.
- provide tools for resolving challenges we face in the present, from climate change and political instability, to growing inequality and the increasing centrality of technology to everyday life.
- connect past and present thought and expression while also considering the possibilities of the future.
- teach visual literacy.
- explore personal artistic expression, from verbal to visual to performative, from static to time-based, from two-dimensional to three.
- explore the institutions, belief systems, and other frameworks people have used to make sense of their worlds.
- expand creativity in written, digital and analog mediums.
- embrace technology, while also interrogating humans' relationships with and use of that technology.
- foster social justice, equality, and empathy.