Proposal for Individualized Major in Global Narrative Studies

My interest in storytelling and narrative art is elemental to me, a passionate interest that began in childhood. My personal narrative has been nonlinear: After receiving my Associate Degree from a community college in Chicago, I took a one-year break to establish myself as a financially independent young adult. I then transferred to DePaul University and paid my tuition with a combination of merit-based grants, need-based scholarships, and loans. I decided to pursue my interests in illustration art and visual communication and declared a Fine Art Major with a Graphic Design Concentration. Soon after my fourth and final year of undergraduate coursework would have begun, I accepted a job offer to work as a graphic designer for a corporate business and left my degree program unfinished.

In my time away from college, I developed my skills as an illustration artist and a graphic designer, while I also worked toward becoming an essayist and creative writer. Now living in Louisville and building personal and professional networks with diverse groups of people, I have a new understanding of storytelling as a significant part of our shared humanity.

As an adult student at University of Louisville, I propose a Bachelor of Arts Degree with an Individualized Major in Global Narrative Studies. My coursework will include studies in mythology and folklore, close readings of novels and graphic novels, and critical analyses of film from around the world. My concentration areas will be Visual Art, making efficient use of transfer credits earned from thematically adjacent coursework at DePaul University, and Film Studies, which will function as a bridge from purely visual art to narrative forms.

I propose a Minor in Asian Studies because many of the narrative forms that captivate me most have origins in Asia: The Mesopotamian poem *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, dated to 2000 BCE, is generally considered to be the oldest known work of literature in the world; The Tale of Genji by the eleventh-century Japanese lady-in-waiting Murasaki Shikibu is generally considered to be the first novel in the world; the Chōjū jinbutsu giga (“Scrolls of Frolicking Animals and Humans”), a set of four picture scrolls dated to mid-twelfth century Japan, are generally considered to be the oldest example of sequential art now known as manga; and anime since the 1980s has elevated animation from children’s entertainment to cinematic art that inspires socio-philosophical discourse.

I will examine the ways in which these and other narrative forms can help me better understand a diverse array of cultures, and how that understanding can help me share knowledge with my own community. My Individualized Major will guide a degree program that will take an interdisciplinary approach to studying the ways human cultures express ideas that are important to them.

I am also studying Mandarin as a way to better understand translated works originating in China, and to explore the possibility of a career in Mandarin-to-English translation. This will be my first bachelor’s degree, and I am committed to maintaining my current cumulative GPA of 3.90. I intend to follow this degree with a Master’s Degree in Literature or Literary Translation and to explore earning a PhD in Literature or Literary Translation. I anticipate a variegated career in writing, cultural criticism, and translation.

I am excited to become a part of the ongoing story of the University of Louisville, the College of Arts and Sciences, and the Humanities Department. Thank you very much for your advisory support.