COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

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M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.
Chair
Martin Hägglund

Director of Graduate Studies
Ayesha Ramachandran

Professors Dudley Andrew, Rüdiger Campe, Katerina Clark, Roberto González Echevarría, Martin Hägglund, Hannan Hever, Pericles Lewis, David Quint, Katie Trumpener, Jing Tsu

Associate Professor Moira Fradinger

Assistant Professors Robyn Creswell, Marta Figlerowicz, Ayesha Ramachandran

Lecturers Peter Cole, Jan Hagens

Emeritus Peter Brooks, Peter Demetz, Carol Jacobs, Rainer Nägele

Affiliated Faculty Rolena Adorno (Spanish & Portuguese), R. Howard Bloch (French), Francesco Casetti (Film & Media Studies), Kang-I Sun Chang (East Asian Languages & Literatures), Michael Denning (American Studies), Wai Chee Dimock (English), Paul Fry (English), Alice Kaplan (French), Tina Lu (East Asian Languages & Literatures), John MacKay (Slavic Languages & Literatures), Giuseppe Mazzotta (Italian), Christopher Miller (French), Joseph Roach (English), Maurice Samuels (French), Henry Sussman (Visiting; German), Ruth Bernard Yeazell (English)

FIELDS OF STUDY

The Department of Comparative Literature introduces students to the study and understanding of literature beyond linguistic or national boundaries; the theory, interpretation, and criticism of literature; and its interactions with adjacent fields like visual and material culture, linguistics, film, psychology, law, and philosophy. The comparative perspective invites the exploration of such transnational phenomena as literary or cultural periods and trends (Renaissance, Romanticism, Modernism, postcolonialism) or genres and modes of discourse. Students may specialize in any cultures or languages, to the extent that they are sufficiently covered at Yale. The Ph.D. degree qualifies candidates to teach comparative literature as well as the national literature(s) of their specialization.

SPECIAL ADMISSIONS REQUIREMENTS

Applicants must hold a B.A. or equivalent degree and should normally have majored in comparative literature, English, a classical or foreign literature, or in an interdepartmental major that includes literature. They must be ready to take advanced courses in two foreign literatures in addition to English upon admission. The GRE General Test is required. A ten- to twenty-page writing sample, written in English, should be submitted with the application.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE PH.D. DEGREE

Students must successfully complete fourteen term courses, including the departmental proseminar (CPLT 515) and at least six further courses listed under the departmental heading. The student’s overall schedule must fulfill the following requirements: (1) at least one course in medieval or classical European literature, philology, or linguistics (or their equivalents in other cultures); one course in the Renaissance or Baroque (or equivalents); and one course in the modern period; (2) three courses in literary theory or methodology; (3) at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; (4) course work that deals with texts from three literatures, one of which may be English or American; and (5) a substantive focus on one or two national or language-based literatures. Any course may be counted for several requirements simultaneously.

Languages Literary proficiency in four languages (including English, at least one other modern language, and one classical or ancient language, such as Latin, Greek, Biblical Hebrew, Classical Arabic, Classical Chinese, Provençal). The fulfillment of this requirement will be demonstrated by a written exam consisting of a translation of a literary or critical text, to be held by the end of the sixth term; or by an equivalent level in the student’s course work.

Orals An oral examination to be taken in the third year of studies, demonstrating both the breadth and specialization as well as the comparative scope of the student’s acquired knowledge. The examination consists of six topics that include texts from at least three national literatures and several historical periods (at least one modern and one before the Renaissance). The texts discussed should also include representatives of the three traditional literary genres (poetry, drama, narrative fiction).

Ph.D. dissertation Supervised by a dissertation director (or directors) – at least one from the core or affiliate departmental faculty – and approved by the departmental faculty at large, the dissertation completes the degree. Its initial step is a dissertation prospectus, to be submitted and approved by the dissertation director and a standing faculty committee no later than halfway through the seventh term.
of study. Admission to candidacy for the Ph.D. is granted after six terms of residence and the completion of all requirements (courses, languages, orals, prospectus) except the dissertation.

Teaching Training in teaching, through teaching fellowships, is an important part of every student’s program. Normally students will teach in their third and fourth years.

COMBINED PH.D. PROGRAMS

Comparative Literature and Classics

Course work Students concentrating in Comparative Literature and Classics are required to complete fourteen graduate term courses (including the proseminar in Classics and in Comparative Literature). In Classics, at least seven courses, including the Classics proseminar, four courses (two yearlong sequences) in the history of Greek and Latin literature (usually taken in successive years, each to be followed by the respective oral in that field), and two 800-level Classics seminars. In Comparative Literature, the departmental proseminar and at least five further Comparative Literature courses, including at least four courses in postclassical European literature. The course work across the two programs should also include at least two courses in literary theory or methodology, and at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama. At least two courses, excluding directed readings, need to receive the grade of Honors. At least twelve of the fourteen required courses are to be taken in the first two years; the last two, which must be Classics 800-level seminars, are to be taken in the third year, normally one in each term, as necessary.

Languages To assess each student’s proficiency and progress in both key languages, two diagnostic sight translation examinations each in Greek and Latin are to be taken before the beginning of the first and third terms. Literary proficiency in German and one other modern language must be passed by the end of the second year. Literary proficiency in English, Greek, and Latin must be demonstrated by course work.

Orals Classics: oral examinations in Greek and Latin literature, based on the Classics Ph.D. reading list. These are to be taken closely following the surveys in the respective literatures, as follows: the first, at the end of the second term (May of the first year), the second at the end of the fourth term (May of the second year). By the end of the fifth term, translation examinations in Greek and Latin literature, based on the Classics Ph.D. reading list. Comparative Literature: oral examination (six topics appropriate to both disciplines, balancing a range of kinds of topics and including poetry, narrative fiction, and drama, and at least one significant cluster of postclassical texts), to be taken by the middle of the sixth term, usually in mid-January. Lists will be worked out with individual examiners, primarily under the guidance of the Comparative Literature DGS, but also with the approval of the Classics DGS, and must be submitted by the end of the fourth term. One of the topics studied will be relevant to the student’s planned dissertation topic.

Prospectus and dissertation The prospectus must be approved by the DGS in each department (and by the Comparative Literature prospectus committee) by the end of the sixth term in residence. At least one dissertation director must come from the Comparative Literature core faculty. At the end of each term, each dissertation student will presubmit, then discuss their work in progress in a Classics “chapter colloquium” discussion with interested faculty.

Comparative Literature and Film and Media Studies

Applicants to the combined program must indicate on their application that they are applying both to the program in Film and Media Studies and to Comparative Literature. All documentation within the application should include this information.

Course work Students in the combined program are required to complete fifteen graduate term courses. In Comparative Literature, the proseminar and at least five further courses, including at least one course in literary theory or methodology beyond the proseminar; at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; two courses before 1900, including at least one before 1800; a wide range of courses with a focus on one or two national or language-based literatures; and at least two courses with the grade of Honors. In Film and Media Studies, two core seminars (FILM 601 and FILM 603) and four additional seminars.

Languages At least two languages (besides English) with excellent reading ability (normally one of these languages is French).

Orals Students must pass the Film and Media Studies oral examination. They must also pass the six-field Comparative Literature oral examination, with at least one examiner from the core Comparative Literature faculty; at least three fields involving literary topics, and readings including poetry, fiction, and drama; the other topics may be on film or film-related subjects; some lists may combine film and literature.

Prospectus and dissertation At least one dissertation director must be from Comparative Literature and at least one from Film and Media Studies (in some cases, a single adviser may fulfill both roles). The prospectus must be approved by the Comparative Literature subcommittee and ratified by the Film and Media Studies faculty. The dissertation must pass a presubmission Public Defense of Work (with at least one examiner from the graduate Film and Media Studies committee, and at least one member from Comparative Literature).

Comparative Literature and Renaissance Studies

Course work Students are required to complete sixteen graduate term courses, at least seven of these (including the Comparative Literature proseminar) in the Department of Comparative Literature. Students must take at least ten courses in the field of Renaissance
Studies (offered in several departments), including two terms of the Renaissance Studies core seminar and three courses in two disciplines other than literature (such as history, history of art, or religious studies). At least three of a student’s overall list of courses must be in literary theory, criticism, or methodology; at least one course each in poetry, narrative fiction, and drama; and at least one course each in ancient or medieval literature and Enlightenment or modern literature. At least two courses must be completed with the grade of Honors. In general, students should take a wide range of courses with a focus on one or two national or language-based literatures.

Languages Latin and Italian, as set by Renaissance Studies—one hour of Renaissance Latin prose; one hour of sixteenth-century Italian prose, one of modern Italian scholarship—and two additional languages, at least one of them European.

Orals The joint oral examination will consist of seven twenty-minute questions (two topics in Renaissance literature from a comparative perspective; three on non-Renaissance literature, including at least one theoretical or critical question; and two questions on Renaissance topics in nonliterary disciplines). Orals should be completed no later than the end of the sixth term.

Prospectus and dissertation The prospectus should be completed in September of the fourth year. Procedures regarding the dissertation will follow departmental practice, although the final readers will normally include at least one member of the Renaissance Studies Executive Committee.

MASTER’S DEGREES

M.Phil. See Degree Requirements under Policies and Regulations.

M.A. (en route to the Ph.D.) Students enrolled in the Ph.D. program may receive the M.A. upon completion of ten courses with at least two grades of Honors and a maximum of three grades of Pass, and the demonstration of proficiency in two of the languages, ancient or modern, through course work or departmental examinations. No student is admitted to a terminal M.A.

Program materials are available upon request to the Director of Graduate Studies, Department of Comparative Literature, Yale University, PO Box 208299, New Haven CT 06520-8299, or stacey.hampton@yale.edu.

COURSES

CPLT 547b / ANTH 531b / ARCG 531b / CLSS 815b / HIST 502b / JDST 653b / NELC 533b / RLST 803b, Slavery, Dependency, and Genocide in the Ancient and Premodern World Noel Lenski and Benedict Kiernan
Covers the subject of class and ethnic repression from the third millennium B.C.E. to the mid-second millennium C.E. Analyzes textual, epigraphic, and iconographic sources for slavery, dependency, and genocide in Assyrian, Egyptian, Greek, Roman, Han, Germanic, Angkorian, Vietnamese, Burmese, Malay, Mayan, and Aztec cultures.

CPLT 561a / GMAN 663a, Performance and Postdramatic Theater Katrin Truestedt
This course explores the "postdramatic theatre" (Hans-Thies Lehmann) of Heiner Müller, Elfriede Jelinek, René Pollesch, and others. In close readings of Hamletmaschine, Die Schutzbefohlenen, and Kill Your Darlings we trace how the appearance of bodies and media on stage is foregrounded instead of the dramatic plot, and how the emphasis on the theatrical apparatus questions the primacy of dramatic personae and the theatrical illusion. Readings of dramatic texts and analyses of performance videos are accompanied by discussions of theoretical texts on performativity, theatricality, and subjectification. Topics include the history of theater, play, and drama; conceptions of performance and theatricality; subjectivity and authority; and the reentry of the text within the theatrical play.

CPLT 584a / GMAN 713a, World Literature Kirk Wetters and Hannan Hever
The concept of world literature, from its origins in eighteenth-century cosmopolitanism represented by Herder and Goethe up to contemporary critical debates (Apter, Casanova, Cheah, Damrosch, Dharwadker, I. Hesse, Moretti, Mufri, Pollock, Said, Spivak). World literature in relation to national literature, German-language, and Jewish literature; translation, untranslatability, the effect of markets, diaspora, politics. Literary critical readings supplemented by exemplary literary texts in multiple genres. Student contributions based on individual linguistic backgrounds.

CPLT 589a / GMAN 645a, Walter Benjamin and the Modernization of Nineteenth-Century Paris Henry Sussman
The radical modernization of Paris under the Second Empire (1851–70) as seen through the eyes of Walter Benjamin. Focus on Benjamin’s Arcades Project, a compendium that charted developments such as Parisian mass transit and streamlined traffic, the construction of apartment houses, and the dissemination of mass media. Readings from other literary texts on the same events include works by Balzac, Zola, and Aragon.

CPLT 591a, Vergil’s Aeneid Christina Kraus and David Quint
A close reading of selected books of the epic, concentrating on Vergilian poetics. Particular themes include intertextuality; figures of speech and thought; narrative structure and meaning; repetition; ekphrasis and simile; the relationship between poetics and politics. Weekly readings include key secondary material that has shaped the interpretation of the poem. Students should read the whole poem in Latin before the seminar begins.

CPLT 620a, Apocalypticism: Ancient and Modern Abbas Amanat and John Collins
This seminar reviews the origins of apocalyptic thought in the three great monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) and also considers the modern adaptations of apocalypticism in each tradition.

Comparative Literature
CPLT 621a / GMAN 602a, Books, Displays, and Systems Theory  Henry Sussman
A status report on the book as a medium in an age of cybernetic technology and virtual reality. The contentious no-man’s-land between books and contemporary systems.

CPLT 622a / AMST 622a and AMST 623b, Working Group on Globalization and Culture  Michael Denning
A continuing collective research project, a cultural studies "laboratory," that has been running since the fall of 2003. The group, made up of graduate students and faculty from several disciplines, meets regularly to discuss common readings, to develop collective and individual research projects, and to present that research publicly. The general theme for the working group is globalization and culture, with three principal aspects: (1) the globalization of cultural industries and goods, and its consequences for patterns of everyday life as well as for forms of fiction, film, broadcasting, and music; (2) the trajectories of social movements and their relation to patterns of migration, the rise of global cities, the transformation of labor processes, and forms of ethnic, class, and gender conflict; (3) the emergence of and debates within transnational social and cultural theory. The specific focus, projects, and directions of the working group are determined by the interests, expertise, and ambitions of the members of the group, and change as its members change. There are a small number of openings for second-year graduate students. Students interested in participating should contact michael.denning@yale.edu.

CPLT 639b / ITAL 709b / WGSS 740b, Gender and Genre in Renaissance Love Poetry  Ayesha Ramachandran
This course interrogates a persistent theme in the literature of the European Renaissance: the love for a much-desired, frequently unobtainable beloved. How and why does love — erotic yearning, sexual passion, unfulfilled desire, religious devotion — become a key subject and metaphor from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century? Focusing on two main poetic genres of the Renaissance — the lyric and the epic-romance — we investigate how questions of desire, love, and gendered subjectivity become a potent means for articulating psychological, social, political, philosophic, and spiritual concerns. Engaging with normative views of gender, erotic discourse, and romantic love from a long historical perspective, this course investigates the development of modern poetry and sexuality in conjunction with each other.

CPLT 646b / ENGL 723b, Rise of the European Novel  Katie Trumpener
In the eighteenth century, the novel became a popular literary form in many parts of Europe. Yet now-standard narratives of its “rise” often offer a temporally and linguistically foreshortened view. This seminar examines key early modern novels in a range of European languages, centered on the dialogue between highly influential eighteenth-century British and French novels (Montesquieu, Defoe, Sterne, Diderot, Laclos, Edgeworth). We begin by considering a sixteenth-century Spanish picaresque life history (Lazarillo de Tormes) and Madame de Lafayette’s seventeenth-century secret history of French court intrigue; contemplate a key sentimental Goethe novella; and end with Romantic fiction (an Austen novel, a Kleist novella, Pushkin’s historical novel fragment). These works raise important issues about cultural identity and historical experience, the status of women (including as readers and writers), the nature of society, the vicissitudes of knowledge — and novelistic form. We also examine several major literary-historical accounts of the novel’s generic evolution, audiences, timing, and social function, and historiographical debates about the novel’s rise (contrasting English-language accounts stressing the novel’s putatively British genesis, and alternative accounts sketching a larger European perspective). The course gives special emphasis to the improvisatory, experimental character of early modern novels, as they work to reground fiction in the details and reality of contemporary life. Many epistolary, philosophical, sentimental, and Gothic novels present themselves as collections of “documents” — letters, diaries, travelogues, confessions — carefully assembled, impartially edited, and only incidentally conveying stories as well as information. The seminar explores these novels’ documentary ambitions; their attempt to touch, challenge, and change their readers; and their paradoxical influence on “realist” conventions (from the emergence of omniscient, impersonal narrators to techniques for describing time and place).

CPLT 653a, Comparative Creole Literatures: Indian Ocean, North Africa, Caribbean  Shawkat Toorawa
This course brings the literary and linguistic-political development of Creole literatures in the Indian Ocean, principally Mauritian, into conversation with similar developments in the Caribbean, especially Martinique. We also juxtapose North African literature, where French coexists with literary Arabic and colloquial Arabic.

CPLT 654a / NELC 556a, Classics: The Arabic-Islamic World  Shawkat Toorawa
Survey of the literary tradition of the Arabic-Islamic world (West Asia, North Africa, and Muslim Spain). Prose and poetry from the Qur’an to the Arabian Nights; attention to the interdependence of the works and their cultural setting, the agendas authors pursued, and the characters they portrayed.

CPLT 673a / SPAN 629a, Golden Age Theater  Roberto González Echevarría
The development and apogee of the Spanish *comedia*, as well as contemporary minor subgenres such as the *auto sacramental* and the *entremés*. Exploration of how the theater synthesizes post-Garcilaso lyric, the *commedia dell’arte*, renaissance epic, the *romancero*, Spanish history, and the European renaissance literary tradition. Works by Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Tirso de Molina, Guilleón de Castro, Mira de Amescua, Juan Ruiz de Alarcón, Luis Quiñones de Benavente, Pedro Calderón de la Barca, and Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz. Comparison with English and French theater is encouraged.

CPLT 675a / SPAN 660a, El Quijote en español  Roberto González Echevarría
A detailed and contextualized reading of Cervantes’s masterpiece conducted entirely in Spanish. The study of this iconic text familiarizes students with its literary and cultural values and Cervantes’s language.
CPLT 683a, Jewish History and Thought to Early Modern Times  Ivan Marcus
A broad introduction to the history of the Jews from biblical beginnings until the European Reformation and the Ottoman Empire. Focus on the formative period of classical rabbinic Judaism and on the symbiotic relationships among Jews, Christians, and Muslims. Jewish society and culture in its biblical, rabbinic, and medieval settings.

CPLT 686b / J DST 866b, Jewish Literary Masterpieces  Hannan Hever
Exploration of the nature of Jewish identity through a literary prism, focusing on novels, stories, poetry, and homilies. Study of texts written over a three thousand year period by Jews living in the Middle East, Europe, and America, from biblical writings through modern works composed by Franz Kafka, Philip Roth, as well as Israeli literature. Special attention given to the role of gender, minority identities, and the idea of nationalism. Taught in translation, readings in English.

CPLT 699a / G MAN 603a / PHIL 602a, Heidegger’s Being and Time  Martin Hägglund
A systematic, chapter-by-chapter study of Heidegger’s *Being and Time*, arguably the most important work of philosophy of the twentieth century. All the major themes of the book are addressed in detail, with a particular emphasis on care, time, death, and the meaning of being.

CPLT 705a / ITAL 781a, The Decameron  Milcent Marcus
An in-depth study of Boccaccio’s text as a journey in genre in which the writer surveys all the storytelling possibilities available to him in the current repertory of short narrative fiction— ranging from ennobling example to flamboyant fabliaux, including hagiography, aphorisms, romances, anecdotes, tragedies, and practical jokes—and self-consciously manipulates those forms to create a new literary space of astonishing variety, vitality, and subversive power. In the relationship between the elaborate frame-story and the embedded tales, theoretical issues of considerable contemporary interest emerge— questions of gendered discourse, narratology, structural pastiche, and reader response among them. *The Decameron* is read in Italian or in English. Close attention is paid to linguistic usage and rhetorical techniques in this foundational text of the vernacular prose tradition.

CPLT 706a / ITAL 700a, The New Map of the World: Vico’s Poetic Philosophy  Giuseppe Mazzotta
This course examines Vico’s thought broadly and in the historical context of the late Renaissance and the Baroque. Starting with Vico’s *Autobiography*, working to his University Inaugural Orations, *On the Study of Methods of Our Time*, the seminar delves into his juridical-political texts and submits the second *New Science* (1744) to a detailed analysis. Some attention is given to Vico’s poetic production and the encomia he wrote. The overarching idea of the seminar is the definition of Vico’s new discourse for the modern age. To this end, discussion deals prominently with issues such as Baroque encyclopedic representations, the heroic imagination, the senses of “discovery,” the redefinition of “science,” the reversal of neo-Aristotelian and neo-Platonic poetics, the crisis of the Renaissance, and the role of the myth.

CPLT 725a / AFAM 846a / AFST 747a / FREN 946a, Postcolonial Theory and Its Literature  Christopher Miller
A survey of theories relevant to colonial and postcolonial literature and culture. The course focuses on theoretical models (Orientalism, hybridity, métissage, créolité, “minor literature”), but also gives attention to the literary texts from which they are derived (francophone and anglophone). Readings from Said, Bhabha, Spivak, Mbembe, Amselle, Glissant, Deleuze, Guattari. Conducted in English.

CPLT 809b / ITAL 668b, Translating the Renaissance  Jane Tylus
Would there have been a Renaissance without translation? We approach this question by beginning with the first modern treatise on translation, by the Florentine chancellor Leonardo Bruni, and moving on to consider the role of translation in Florence’s and Tuscany’s growing cultural and political mastery over the peninsula—and in Italy’s cultural domination of Europe. We go on to explore the translation of “medieval” into “early modern” Europe, the translation of visual into verbal material, and the role of gender in the practice of translation. Students engage in their own translation projects as we dedicate the last part of the seminar to the diffusion of the Petrarchan sonnet tradition in early modern Europe.

CPLT 822b / AMST 623b, Working Group on Globalization and Culture  Michael Denning
A continuing collective research project, a cultural studies "laboratory," that has been running since the fall of 2003. The group, made up of graduate students and faculty from several disciplines, meets regularly to discuss common readings, to develop collective and individual research projects, and to present that research publicly. The general theme for the working group is globalization and culture, with three principal aspects: (1) the globalization of cultural industries and goods, and its consequences for patterns of everyday life as well as for forms of fiction, film, broadcasting, and music; (2) the trajectories of social movements and their relation to patterns of migration, the rise of global cities, the transformation of labor processes, and forms of ethnic, class, and gender conflict; (3) the emergence of and debates within transnational social and cultural theory. The specific focus, projects, and directions of the working group are determined by the interests, expertise, and ambitions of the members of the group, and change as its members change. There are a small number of openings for second-year graduate students. Students interested in participating should contact michael.denning@yale.edu.

CPLT 832a / H IST 614a, Methods in Book History: The Early Modern Book in Manuscript and Print  Kathryn James
This course offers a collections-based introduction to the material culture of the early modern book in print and manuscript, while exploring questions of evidence, canonicity, disciplinary formation, and the social construction of knowledge. Focusing primarily on early modern Britain and Yale’s British collections, the course offers students a detailed understanding of English paleography and bibliography, early modern manuscript and print culture, and the disciplinary histories that have informed the collection and study of early modern British texts.
CPLT 855a / ENGL 884a, Modernism, Realism, Imperial Crisis  Joseph Cleary
An investigation of the connections between the crises of realism and the historical novel, the emergence of high modernism, magical realism, and various forms of postcolonial historical narrative considered in the wider global context of inter-imperial conflict, anti-imperial struggle, and the restructuring of the world capitalist system. The seminar combines literary readings, critical theory, and contemporary studies on "world literature" to explore ruptures and developments in modern fiction and the politics of empire in Europe, the Caribbean, Latin America, and Asia.

CPLT 868b / GMAN 620b, Speaking for Others: Advocacy and Representation in Law and Literature  Rüdiger Campe
Speaking for others (representing others) before a third party (judge or audience) is a basic constellation in Western literature rooted in legal, political, and religious practices. Speaking for others has been an alternative to and can function as reinterpretation of our usual dual idea of communication (Me speaking to You about Something in the world, G.H. Mead). Readings address the history and structure of speaking for others in three major sections: (1) ancient rhetoric and the Christian figure of speaking-for (Christ, the "paraclete"): Aristotle and Quintilian on rhetoric; Aeschylus, Eumenides; the Gospel of St. John; (2) political representation and speaking for others in (early) modern times: Hobbes and Rousseau on representation; Schiller, Don Carlos; Hölderlin, Empedocles; and (3) the critique of speaking for others in contemporary theory and literature: the Deleuze-Foucault debate on advocacy in the public space; Kafka, The Trial and related texts; Celan, The Meridian and related poems; Canetti on literature as art of becoming-the-other.

CPLT 882a / ENGL 790a / RUSS 882a, What Happened to Race, Class, and Gender? Keywords of Recent Critical Theory  Ayesha Ramachandran and Marta Figlerowicz
What did happen to race, class, and gender? This course examines the persistence of older theoretical frameworks such as Marxism or feminism in current critical discourse. It also explores new critical keywords—biopolitics, affect, the Anthropocene, and others—that now help structure theoretical debates in the humanities. Intended as a fast-paced, reading-heavy introduction to recent critical theory, the course will help graduate students in literature acquire a better sense of their field of study and reflect upon the methodologies they will use in their dissertation projects. Readings include the work of older theorists such as Jacques Derrida, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Judith Butler, and Donna Haraway, as well as recent ones such as Jasbir Puar, Siânne Ngai, Tziporah, Paolo Virno, and Dipesh Chakrabarty.

CPLT 900a, Directed Reading  Staff
CPLT 901a, Individual Research  Staff

CPLT 904a, Psychoanalysis: Key Concepts and Their Circulation among the Disciplines  Moira Fradinger
Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of psychoanalytic theory, ending with an exploration of the afterlife of these concepts in other disciplines, focusing on one or two concrete examples. Students gain proficiency in what has been called "the language of psychoanalysis," as well as the tools to assess how these concepts have been translated into the language of disciplines such as political theory, film studies, gender studies, sociology, etc. Concepts to be studied include the unconscious, the ego, identification, the drive, the death drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and jouissance. Depending on the interests of the group, others can be added (such as the difference between neurosis, perversion, and psychosis). Main examples from other disciplines are the theory of ideology and theories of sexual difference and gender. Commentators and readers of Freud and Lacan are consulted as secondary sources (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gauy, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others).

CPLT 907a / FILM 796a / GMAN 678a, Media Archaeologies: The Visual and the Environmental  Francesco Casetti and Rüdiger Campe
The seminar aims at retracing two divergent cultural processes: how and why, starting from the discovery of artificial perspective, an increasing number of cultural practices were devoted to making the world visible; and correlatively how and why, starting from the first half of the nineteenth century, visibility increasingly met with the resistance of other modes of accessing the world through the human body and the role of the environment? These two trajectories are retraced through a special attention to the media that were on the forefront of these cultural processes: from Brunelleschi’s mirror to Alberti’s window and grid, from camera obscura to Galileo’s telescope, from Panorama to Phantasmagoria, from the optical toys of the nineteenth century to the increasing implication of art into social and political questions. The seminar privileges the cultural practices that underpin both the trust in visuality and the discovery of environmentality, and it gives due attention to the political questions that the changing fortunes of the optical media imply. The seminar is the first part of a two-year project and will be followed next year by an analysis of the prevalence of the environmental dimension in contemporary media.

CPLT 913a / FILM 690a, Radical Cinemas of Latin America  Moira Fradinger
An introductory overview of Latin American cinema, with an emphasis on post-World War II films produced in Cuba, Argentina, Brazil, and Mexico. Examination of each film in its historical and aesthetic aspects, and in light of questions concerning national cinema and "third cinema." Examples from both pre-1945 and contemporary films. Conducted in English; knowledge of Spanish and Portuguese helpful but not required.

CPLT 917b / FILM 610b, Foundational Texts in Film and Media Studies  Dudley Andrew
The course sets in place some undergirding for students who want to anchor their film interest to the professional discourse of this field. A coordinated set of topics in film theory is interrupted first by the often discordant voice of history and second by the obtuseness of the films examined each week. Films themselves take the lead in our discussions.
CPLT 925b, The Practice of Literary Translation  Peter Cole and Robyn Creswell
Intensive readings in the history and theory of translation paired with practice in translating. Case studies from ancient languages (the Bible, Greek and Latin classics), medieval languages (classical Arabic literature), and modern languages (poetic texts).

CPLT 932b / FILM 839b / GMAN 653b, Scandinavian Cinema and Television  Katie Trumpener
Contemporary Scandinavian film and television examined in relation to earlier cinematic highpoints. Europe’s first art cinema, early Scandinavian film was catalyzed and sustained by modernist breakthroughs in theater, literature, and painting. Contemporary cinema and television (Dogma films; Nordic Noir television; experimental music and genre film) continue to develop innovative aesthetic, funding, and exhibition models. The course explores regionally specific ideas about acting, visual culture, and the role of art; feminism and the social contract; historical forces and social change. Films by Bergman, Dreyer, Sjöström, Sjöberg, Vinterberg, von Trier, Östlund, Kaurismäki, Kjartansson; as well as contemporary television series selected by students.

CPLT 935b / FILM 755b, French Cinema through the New Wave  Dudley Andrew
This seminar uses a sample of twenty films (with clips from many others) to survey four decades of the tradition of French cinema crowned by the privileged moment of the New Wave. Graduate students are asked to challenge the idea of "national cinema" by reporting on some non-canonical or marginal film before midterm. Keeping the culture industry in view, we question the extent to which such a consistently robust cinema has been bound to—or remained partly independent of—a nation that from 1930 to 1970 underwent a depression, a socialist experiment, an occupation, a liberation, and the humiliations of decolonization abroad and social unrest (May ’68) at home. In addition to the midterm contribution, graduate students write a substantial term paper.

CPLT 940b / SPAN 913b, Magical Realism and Its Sequels in Modern Latin American Fiction  Roberto González Echevarría
The course concentrates on the major writers who practiced what is called "magical realism" — Alejo Carpentier, Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, and others — after studying the trend’s antecedents in the colonial, post-independence, and early twentieth century. The role of Jorge Luis Borges in the beginnings of magical realism, the works of writers such as Miguel Ángel Asturias and Juan Rulfo, and those of more recent writers who rejected the trend, such as Roberto Bolaño and Fernando Vallejo. The considerable critical corpus on the topic is studied. In Spanish.

CPLT 953b / EALL 823b, Topics in Sinophone and Chinese Studies  Jing Tsu
This seminar examines the current state of the field of Chinese and Sinophone studies from different geographical and theoretical perspectives. It is a research seminar and colloquium, and we use texts in the original as well as translated languages. Topics vary.

CPLT 958a and CPLT 959b, Dissertation Workshop  Ayesha Ramachandran
Dissertation preparation course.

CPLT 986b / AFST 942b / FREN 942b, Decolonizing Memory  Jill Jarvis
This seminar introduces students to theories of memory, testimony, and trauma by bringing key works on these topics into dialogue with literary texts by writers of the former French and British empires in Africa. Literary readings may include works by Djebar, Ouolougoum, Farès, Salih, Head, Aidoo. Theoretical readings by Arendt, Adorno and Horkheimer, Agamben, Césaire, Derrida, Fanon, Foucault, Mbembe, Spivak.