COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

451 College Street, Rm. 202, 203.432.2760
http://complit.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
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Assistant Professors Robyn Creswell, Marta Figlerowicz

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), Alice Kaplan (French), Tina Lu (East Asian Languages & Literatures), John MacKay (Slavic Languages & Literatures), Giuseppe Mazzotta (Italian), Christopher Miller (French), Maurice Samuels (French), 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 a faculty committee, 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 By October 1 of the third year, students must have fulfilled an assignment related to foundational texts and films. During this third year 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 Executive Committee. The dissertation must pass a presubmission defense of method (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 515a, Proseminar in Comparative Literature Katie Trumpener
Introductory proseminar for all first- and second-year students in Comparative Literature (and other interested graduate students). An introduction to key problems in the discipline of Comparative Literature, its disciplinary history, and its major theoretical and methodological debates (including philology; Marxist, structuralist, and poststructuralist approaches; world literature; translation). Emphasis on wide reading and intense discussion, in lieu of term paper. Graded Satisfactory/Unsatisfactory; offered every other year.

CPLT 554b / ENGL 827b, Novel Minds: The Representation of Consciousness from Austen to Woolf Ruth Yeazell
Close study of selected novels by Jane Austen, George Eliot, Henry James, and Virginia Woolf, with particular attention to the representation of consciousness and the development of the free indirect style. Our reading of fiction is supplemented by narrative theory drawn from James, Wayne Booth, Käte Hamburger, Ann Banfield, Gérard Genette, Dorrit Cohn, and others.

CPLT 556a / CLSS 877a / RLST 613a, Rhetorics of the Ancient World Michal Beth Dinkler and Irene Peirano
This interdisciplinary course takes as its starting point Greco-Roman rhetoric as a codified system and explores its relevance for contemporary interpretation of ancient texts. Moving back and forth between rhetoric as a set of norms and rhetoric as a condition of discourse, we engage with contemporary rhetorical studies in Classics and Biblical studies. Topics include rhetoric and narrative, exemplarity and imitation across the literary and spiritual realms, “anti-rhetoricism,” embedded rhetorical performances (e.g., speeches, oratory, etc.), and nonverbal forms of persuasion (e.g., visual, emotional, etc.).

CPLT 558a / EALL 593a / EAST 554, Hiroshima to Fukushima: Ecology and Culture in Japan Stephen Poland
This course explores how Japanese literature, cinema, and popular culture have engaged with questions of environment, ecology, pollution, and climate change from the wake of the dropping of the atomic bomb on Hiroshima in 1945 to the ongoing Fukushima nuclear power plant disaster in the present. Environmental disasters and the slow violence of their aftermath have had an enormous impact on Japanese cultural production, and we examine how these cultural forms seek to negotiate and work through questions of representing the unrepresentable, victimhood and survival, trauma and national memory, uneven development and discrimination, the human and the nonhuman, and climate change’s impact on imagining the future. Special attention is given to the possibilities and limitations of different forms—the novel, poetry, film, manga, anime—that Japanese writers and artists have to think about humans’ relationship with our environment.

CPLT 562b / GMAN 654b, Living Form: Organicism in Society and Aesthetics Kirk Wetters
Starting with Kant, the organic is defined as a processual relation of the part and the whole, thereby providing a new model of the individual as a self-contained totality. We explore the implications of this conception in Goethe’s writings on morphology (The Metamorphosis of Plants, “Orphic Primal Words”), the Romantics’ Athenaeum, Hanslick’s On the Beautiful in Music, Oswald Spengler’s cultural morphology, the concept of autopoiesis in Maturana and Varela, Luhmann’s systems theory, and Canguilhem’s critique of the analogy of organic life and society.
CPLT 622a / AMST 622a and AMST 623b, Working Group on Globalization and Culture  Michael Denning
A continuing yearlong collective research project, a cultural studies “laboratory.” The group, drawing on several disciplines, meets regularly to discuss common readings, develop collective and individual research projects, and 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 642b / NELC 616b, Modern Arabic Poetry and Poetics  Robyn Creswell
Poetry was the preeminent art of the Arab world for much of the twentieth century. Poets served as the region’s public intellectuals, framing and shaping debates about the most urgent events and topics of communal concern. The post-WWII period was also a moment when the very definition of Arabic poetry — formally as well as historically — was subject to important transformations. This course serves as an introduction to the major Arab poets of the postwar period — including Badr Shakir al-Sayyab, Nazik al-Mala’tika, Adonis, Mahmoud Darwish, Sargon Boulus, and Iman Mersal — as well as central debates about the nature and scope of poetry. Topics include the poetics of exile, “committed literature,” poetry and myth, the dialectic of tradition and modernity, the prose poem, and translation. Primary readings are in Arabic, with occasional secondary readings in English. Prerequisite: Arabic L5 or higher, or permission of the instructor.

CPLT 655a / MDVL 662a / NELC 615a, Medieval Baghdad  Shawkat Toorawa
The founding of Baghdad in the mid-eighth-century by the ascendant 'Abbasid dynasty (ruled 750–1258) ushered in a period of intense scholarly, administrative, and artistic activity. The rulers patronized poets and prose writers and supported translation from Greek, Persian, and other languages into Arabic; learned individuals hosted intellectual discussions (and meals and drinking sessions) late into the night at their homes; the literati spent entire nights in bookstores voraciously reading everything they could lay their hands on; theologians and philosophers debated the nature of reality and of God; scientists tested theories in engineering, medicine, and mathematics; and travelers reported their discoveries from China and India. We read works by and about Baghdadis, including how they overthrew the preceding Umayyad dynasty and how they built the legendary Round City. We read travel accounts, geographies, and graffiti; and we read tales from the *Arabian Nights*. We see how paper, books, and writing changed Baghdad, Islamic society, and human knowledge; and how Arab-Islamic society’s contributions changed the world.

CPLT 672b / ENGL 672b, Milton  David Quint
This course studies Milton’s poetry and some of his controversial prose. We investigate the relation of the poetry to its historical contexts, focusing on the literary, religious, social, and political forces that shaped Milton’s verse. We survey and assess some of the dominant issues in contemporary Milton studies, examining the types of readings that psychoanalytic, feminist, Marxist, and historicist critics have produced. A brief oral report and a term paper (as well as a prospectus and preliminary bibliography for the term paper) required.

CPLT 676a / SPAN 688a, Law and Literature in Modern Latin America  Roberto González Echevarría
A study of major modern narrative works in Latin America from the independence and post-independence period in the nineteenth century to the age of drug trafficking and the AIDS epidemic today. The course begins with the Cuban Cirilo Villaverde’s antislavery novel *Cecilia Valdés* (1880); moves on to the regionalist classic *Doña Bárbara* (1929) by the Venezuelan Rómulo Gallegos and the dictator novel *El señor presidente* (1946) by the Guatemalan Miguel Ángel Asturias; peaks with Gabriel García Márquez’s total novel *Cien años de soledad* (1967); and ends with the Colombian Fernando Vallejo’s *La virgen de los sicarios* (1994) and the Mexican Mario Bellatin’s *Salón de belleza* (2009). The course follows the thematics of the law, particularly Roman Law, and the way in which the characters are controlled or driven by civil and criminal law issues that constitute the plots of the novels. In Spanish.

CPLT 677b / RUSS 690b, The Performing Arts in Twentieth-Century Russia  Katerina Clark
Covers ballet, opera, theater, mass spectacle, and film. Theory of the performing arts, including selections from the writings of some of the most famous Russian directors, such as Stanislavsky, Meyerhold, Eisenstein, and Balanchine. Their major productions and some of the major Russian plays of the twentieth century (e.g., by Chekhov, Mayakovsky, Bulgakov, and contemporary dramatists). No knowledge of Russian required. Students taking the course for credit in Comparative Literature can write their papers on texts in other languages.

CPLT 679b / JDST 686b, Major Modern Jewish Poets  Peter Cole
This course introduces students to a diverse group of modern Jewish poets, from Gertrude Stein, Moyalsh-Leyb Halpern, and Adrienne Rich to Muriel Rukeyser, Yehuda Amichai, Paul Celan, Edmond Jabès, Leonard Cohen, and others. Writing in English, Yiddish, German, Hebrew, and French, these poets gave seminal expression to Jewish life in a variety of modes and permutations, and in the process produced poems of lasting and universal value. The class explores work as art and considers pressing questions of cultural, historical, and political context. All readings are in English. Permission of the instructor required.

CPLT 684a / ENGL 574a / ITAL 720a / RNST 684a, Renaissance Epic  Jane Tylus and David Quint
This course looks at Renaissance epic poetry in relationship to classical models and as a continuing generic tradition. It examines epic type scenes, formal strategies, and poetic architecture. It looks at themes of exile and imperial foundations, aristocratic ideology, and the role of gender. The main readings are drawn from Vergil’s *Aeneid*, Lucan’s *De bello civili*, Dante’s *Purgatorio*, Tasso’s *Gerusalemme liberata*, Camões’s *Os Lusíadas*, and Spenser’s *Faerie Queene*. 
CPLT 688a / JDST 842a / RLST 775a, Political Theology  Hannan Hever
This course investigates the theological aspects of modern political ideologies. Subjects include sovereignty, universalism, law, election, commandment, and messianism. Primary readings include Carl Schmitt, Martin Buber, Alain Badiou, Slavolj Žižek, Daniel Boyarin, and Giorgio Agamben.

CPLT 699b / GMAN 603 / PHIL 602, 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 704a / GMAN 682a, Antigone after Hegel: The Ambiguities of Ethical Life and Action  Dirk Setton
The course is dedicated to three interrelated interpretations of Sophocles' Antigone, which present divergent accounts of the central conflict of the tragedy and of the ethical character of its heroine's act of burying her brother Polyneices, against the edict of the ruler of Thebes, her uncle Creon. In the Phenomenology of Spirit, Hegel conceives of Antigone as embodying the natural (or "divine") law of the family that opposes the instituted (or "human") law of the polis. According to Hegel, both laws represent legitimate ethical claims, which is why their violent confrontation marks the demise of the very concept and reality of (ancient) ethical life. Both Jacques Lacan (in Seminar on the Ethics of Psychoanalysis) and Judith Butler (in Antigone's Claim) develop their readings of Sophocles' tragedy in critical debate with Hegel's influential interpretation. While Lacan holds that Antigone does not represent first and foremost the unwritten laws of kinship relations but rather an ethical subject whose action reveals the essential connection between desire and death, Butler insists against Hegel and Lacan that Antigone should be understood neither as an embodiment of the "divine laws" of the family nor of the "symbolical" law of desire. To the contrary, Antigone's own troubled family history suggests that she is the very figure of a critical destitution of the normativity of kinship relations. The course aims at both understanding and discussing the controversial constellation of these three approaches to Sophocles' tragedy. Three questions are at the center of the debate: What does Antigone stand for? How should we conceive of the central conflict of the tragedy? And how should we conceptualize the ethical character of Antigone's act to bury her brother? Particular emphasis is put on three insights that Antigone articulates: the tragic irony of ethical life; the deep ambiguity of individual autonomy; and the paradoxes of the normativity of kinship relations and the gender identities that lie within it.

CPLT 708a, Age of Disenchantment  Giuseppe Mazzotta
This course focuses on the literary debates, theological arguments, and scientific shifts taking place between the Council of Ferrara-Florence (1457–38) and the Council of Trent and beyond, by reading key texts by Valla, Cusa, Pulci, Luther, Erasmus, Ariosto, Campanella, Bruno, Galileo, and Bellarmino. It examines issues such as crisis of belief, the authority of the past, the emergence of freedom, new aesthetics, and the effort to create a new theological language for modern times.

CPLT 715b / ITAL 940b, 1492: Before and After: Geographical and Linguistic Itineraries  Jane Tylus
Not simply the date of Columbus's landing, 1492 also marks Lorenzo de' Medici's death, the banishment of Jews from Spain and Sicily, the election of a Borgia pope—Alexander VI, celebrated by Machiavelli—and the birth of Pietro Aretino. We briefly consider the shared cultural and religious history of Italy and Spain, even as most of our attention will be focused on Italy’s role as precursor: the Florentine Vespucci was the first to use the phrase “nuovo mondo,” and Columbus was inspired by the stories of Marco Polo and travels of Italian pilgrims to the Holy Land. We start with Columbus and his contemporary Savonarola and move into the “new worlds” of the early sixteenth century as represented by four topics: the rise of print; the burgeoning pastoral genre; the (brief) reaffirmation of the Florentine republic with cameo appearances by Michelangelo, Leonardo, and Machiavelli; and the otherworldly (but also very much of this world) romance of Ariosto. We spend time in the Beinecke Library with maps, Savonarola’s sermons, and early sixteenth-century Sienese pastoral plays, and also spend an afternoon at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with Renaissance paintings. In English.

CPLT 735b / AFST 885b / FREN 885b, Modern French Poetry in the Maghreb  Thomas Connolly
A survey of twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetry written in French by authors from North Africa, including works by Amrouche, Sénac, Khair-Eddine, Laâbi, Nissaboury, Djäout, Jabès, Farès, Ben Jelloun, Meddeb, Acherchour, Negrouche, Dib, and Bekri. Readings in French, discussion in English. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.

CPLT 782b / GMAN 742b, Being a Person  Rüdiger Campe and Katrin Truestedt
The course explores the notion of personhood as a context for contemporary debates on human, animal, and environmental rights. The social and legal notion of a “person” in modernity has been deeply informed by how “persons” are formed and performed on stage and in narration, and vice versa. Readings focus on two areas: (1) basic texts on the history of the notion of “person” and “character” in legal, poetical, and philosophical contexts from Hobbes to contemporary debates in environmental law; (2) the performance of personhood on the stage and the narrative evocation of a new modern character in the rise of the modern novel. Gender, race, and social class are of relevance throughout, as well as the question of being a nonperson (a witch, a monster, an outcast). With the opening cases of Shakespeare’s Tempest and Goethe’s Werther, we discuss what it means to appear as a person on stage and as a character in a novel. We pursue the discussion into modernity with modernist and contemporary narratives and how they test the limits and conditions of individual personhood (Woolf, Kafka, Handke, Sebald). We end with contemporary post-migrant theater (Jelinek, Ronen) and eco-poetics (Spahr).

CPLT 788a / GMAN 571a, Robert Musil's Man without Qualities: The End of the Novel  Rüdiger Campe
Musil's unfinished, gigantic novel Man without Qualities (published 1930–33) is one of the quintessential modernist (interwar) European novels. Close (i.e., selective) reading of the novel is introduced by examples from Musil’s earlier highly experimental narratives (Unions; The Blackbird), and it is accompanied by looking into Musil’s widespread scientific and sociolegal interests, which are relevant for the
novel (statistics and probability; the Vienna Circle and the modern science of philosophy; theories of accountability and the case study; Wagner and Romantic music; the theory of the image in the age of cinema). Taking as its point of departure the intertwining of essayistic writing and narration that characterizes Man without Qualities, the reading centers on the self-theorization of the novel and, even more fundamental, the question of prose as literary form and method of notation. Readings in English or German. Discussions in English.

CPLT 822b / AMST 623b, Working Group on Globalization and Culture  Michael Denning
A continuing yearlong collective research project, a cultural studies “laboratory.” The group, drawing on several disciplines, meets regularly to discuss common readings, develop collective and individual research projects, and 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 828a / ARBC 173a / ARBC 598a / LITR 303a / NELC 338a / NELC 614a, Tracing the Image of the Arab “Other”  Jonas Elbouisy
This course places the modern Arabic novel in conversation with the west in an effort to uncover both dominant narratives regarding Arab identity, as well as counter narratives that present a challenge to these dominant narratives. We study the tradition of modern Arabic literature, looking specifically to the ways in which the image of the “other” is presented in Arabic narratives as well as the ways in which the image of the Arab is constructed through the others’ literature. Prerequisite: ARBC 140.

CPLT 872a, 1968@50: Latin American Languages of Liberation  Moira Fradinger
On the occasion of the fiftieth anniversary of the upheavals of 1968, this seminar looks at the Latin American cultural and political discourses of liberation throughout the sixties, with an eye on assessing their aftermath and their legacy today. While the language that characterized the foundation of the nation-states in the nineteenth century was emancipation, in the second part of the twentieth century, and particularly around 1968, Latin America embraced the world discourse of liberation. This seminar looks at languages of liberation in an array of disciplines and artistic practices from South and Central America as well as the Caribbean. We explore regional debates that were also inserted in the larger discourse of the anticolonial struggles of the global South. Topics include philosophy of liberation (Dussel), theology of liberation (the 1968 Council of Bishops in Medellin, Colombia), theater of the oppressed (Boal), pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire), cinema of liberation (manifestos of third cinema), the New Song protest movements across the region (from Violeta Parra in Chile to Tropicalismo in Brazil), anticolonialism in the Caribbean (Fanon), anti-neocolonialism (dependency theory, internal colonialism), Indigenous liberation (from the Barbados declarations to the Lacandon Jungle declarations), experimental “boom” literature (Cortázar), etc.

CPLT 881a / ENGL 960a / WGSS 960a, Literary Theory  Marta Figlerowicz and Jonathan Kramnick
What is literary theory today, and what is its history? The aim of the course is to introduce students to central concepts in theory and explore their relation to method. We examine the variety of approaches available within the field of literary studies, including older ones such as Russian formalism, New Criticism, deconstruction, Marxism, and psychoanalysis, as well as newer ones like actor-network theory and digital humanities research. We explore the basic tenets and histories of these theories in a way that is both critical and open-minded, and discuss their comparative advantages and pitfalls. The focus is on recurrent paradigms, arguments, and topics, and on transhistorical relations among our various schools of literary-theoretical thought. Readings might include work by René Wellek, Paul de Man, Jacques Derrida, Gayatri Spivak, Bruno Latour, Judith Butler, Northrop Frye, Fred Moten, and many others.

CPLT 898a / FREN 898a, Fin-de-siècle France  Maurice Samuels
The course examines major French literary and artistic movements of the last decades of the nineteenth century (Naturalism, Decadence, Symbolism) in their cultural context. Weekly reading assignments pair literary texts with contemporary theoretical/medical/political discourse on such topics as disease, crime, sex, poverty, colonialism, nationalism, and technology. Literary authors include Barbeau, Mallarmé, Maupassant, Rachilde, Villiers, and Zola. Theorists include Bergson, Freud, Krafft-Ebing, Le Bon, Nordau, Renan, and Simmel. Some attention also paid to the visual arts. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.

CPLT 900a, Directed Reading  Staff

CPLT 905b / FILM 760b / GMAN 760b, Intermediality in Film  Brigitte Peucker
Film is a hybrid medium, the meeting point of several others. This course focuses on the relationship of film to theater and painting, suggesting that where two media are in evidence, there is usually a third. Topics include space, motion, color, theatricality, tableau vivant, ekphrasis, spectatorship, and new media. Readings feature art historical and film theoretical texts as well as essays pertinent to specific films. Films by Fassbinder, Bergman, Murnau, von Trier, Rohmer, Godard, Kiarostami, and others, concluding with three films by Peter Greenaway.

CPLT 912b, Media Theory, Capitalism, and Japanese Modernity  Seth Jacobowitz
This course introduces students to key aspects of Western media theory and media history through readings by leading thinkers such as Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, Friedrich Kittler, Lewis Mumford, Martin Heidegger, and Marshall McLuhan. It then brings these works into dialogue with recent critical studies of Japanese modernity, capitalism, and contemporary information society by Naoki Sakai, Karatani Kojin, Akira Lippit, Azuma Hiroki, and others. All readings are in English.
CPLT 916a / FILM 830a / ITAL 590a, Literature into Film  Millicent Marcus
When watching a film based on a book we have read and loved, the usual response is one of disappointment, if not outright anger at the liberties taken in adapting a text to the screen. This course aims to challenge that approach by vindicating the filmmaker’s freedom to interpret the textual source, and to question the thinking that places literature above cinema in the hierarchy of artistic forms. Our curriculum involves case studies of adaptations that pose ingenious solutions to the problem of transforming written texts into audiovisual spectacles. With one exception, we screen films on Monday evenings and do a comparative study in the Wednesday class period, developing an overall approach to the filmmaker’s adaptive strategy and making extensive use of video clips to do detailed visual analysis of scenes in the light of their corresponding textual sources. Rather than develop a general theory of adaptation, we apply methodologies on a case-by-case basis, taking each literature-into-film example as a response to a sui generis set of requirements. In the process, we use a variety of analytical tools, including those deriving from psychoanalysis, feminism, ideological criticism, historiography, genre study, semiotics, etc. There are two papers—a shorter one of a critical nature (approximately 5 pages) and a final research paper (approximately 20 pages). Conducted in English. Texts are available in Italian and English, and all films are subtitled.

CPLT 921a / FILM 800a, Styles and Techniques in Recent Art Cinema  Dudley Andrew and Oksana Chefranov
How much does the art of cinema in the twenty-first century resemble that of the previous half-century? Have massive changes visible in production, distribution, and exhibition also affected the goals and ambitions of film artists? Or do today’s auteurs and cinematographers work as their counterparts did decades ago, deploying whatever techniques current technology permits in a quest for a style that may bring out something authentic about themselves, the world, or the medium? Analyzing films by such contemporary auteurs as Olivier Assayas, Claire Denis, Carlos Reygadas, Lav Diaz, David Lynch, and Hong Sang-soo, we measure new styles against techniques deployed by classic and modern auteurs like Mizoguchi, Welles, Cocteau, and Hitchcock. What new aesthetic (and practical) issues face filmmakers as they conceive their projects? We look at screen format, including 3-D; elastic temporality, especially slow motion; special effects, including forms of animation; superimposition, including multiple screens; long-takes and camera movement; montage and alternatives to cutting; advances in sound design. Have the new narrative forms and the new types of subject matter associated with our century’s most difficult films (L’Intrus, Werckmeister Harmonies, La Mort de Louis XIV, Twin Peaks) given rise to the styles of major directors, or are they the by-product of these styles? Does style matter in the way it did during cinema’s first century?

CPLT 925a, The Practice of Literary Translation  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 942a / SPAN 912a, The Borges Effect  Roberto González Echevarría
Since the publication of Ficciones in 1944 and especially since achieving worldwide acclaim after receiving ex-aequo with Samuel Beckett the Formentor Group’s Prix International in 1961, Jorge Luis Borges has become one of the most influential modern writers. He is a recognizable and often acknowledged presence in the work of novelists and short-story writers, as well as in that of philosophers and literary theorists. A Borges “effect” can be perceived in John Barth, Julio Cortázar, Gabriel García Márquez, Italo Calvino, and Umberto Eco, and in Maurice Blanchot, Michel Foucault, Gérard Genette, and Jacques Derrida, among others. That effect is also projected retrospectively in Borges’s particular way of reading classics like Homer, Dante, and Cervantes. An elegant, playfully ironic skepticism, together with a fondness for aporias, enigmas, puzzles, and labyrinths as well as for minor genres such as the detective story, are the most recognizable components of Borges’s style and thought. Taken together these components suggest theories about writing and reading. We read closely Borges’s most influential stories, such as “Tlon, Uqbar, Orbis Tertius,” “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quijote,” and “The Garden of Forking Paths,” as well as his essays on Homer, Dante, and Cervantes. We then follow his track in the writers mentioned. Class discussions in English; readings in English or the French, Spanish, or Italian originals.

CPLT 952a / EALL 586a, Modern Novel in Japan and Brazil  Seth Jacobowitz
Brazilian and Japanese novels from the late nineteenth century to the present. Representative texts from major authors are read in pairs to explore their commonalities and divergences. Topics include nineteenth-century realism and naturalism, the rise of mass culture and the avant-garde, and existentialism and postmodernism.

CPLT 954a / GMAN 593a, Reading Theory  Katrin Truestedt
From the new form of literary theory taking shape in romanticism to recent German media studies, this course examines the relation of close readings of singular texts to larger theoretical claims. We reflect on the eminent status that literary readings have attained for broader theoretical and philosophical projects. We specifically focus on a certain theoretical milieu in which far-reaching theoretical claims were not merely exemplified or illustrated by, but in fact developed from distinct practices of (close) reading of particular literary texts. The aim is to analyze this distinct type of theory by investigating the scenes of reading that major theoretical endeavors depended upon, in order to trace the trajectory of theory and turn to more recent theoretical endeavors, to discuss the changed status that reading has for them. Among the authors we read are Schlegel, Benjamin, Barthes, Derrida, Felman, Kittler, Butler, Latour.

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

CPLT 965a / SPAN 904a, Latin American Thought  Moira Fradinger
This seminar introduces students to two centuries of Latin American political thought in the form of social and literary essays produced since the times of independence. It studies how Latin American writers have thought of their identity and how they have theorized the political/cultural heritage of the colony. The seminar starts with the Haitian constitution and contemporary Haitian authors who assess the legacy of the Haitian revolution. It ends with writings on current indigenous movements across the region. The first unit
engages nineteenth-century debates over “American identity” that were foundational to the newly constituted nation-states (authors include Bolívar, Lastarria, Alamán, Martí, Sarmiento, Echeverría, Montalvo). The second explores twentieth-century debates over cultural independence, the movement of “indigenismo,” mestizaje, transculturation and heterogeneity, the Caribbean movement of “negritude,” the metaphor of “cannibalism” to account for the cultural politics of the region, concepts such as “internal colonialism” and “motley society,” and the polemics over the region’s capitalist modernity and postmodernity (authors include Rodó, da Cunha, Ortiz, Moreno Fraginals, Lezama Lima, Vasconcelos, Reyes, de Andrade, González Prada, Mariátegui, Antenor Orrego, Zapata, J.L. Borges, J.M. Arguedas, Sérgio Buarque de Holanda, Caio Prado Júnior, Jean Price-Mars, Jacques Roumain, Aimé Césaire, George Lamming, C.L.R. James, Fanon, Léon Damas, Paulo Freire, Angel Rama, Retamar, Edmundo O’Gorman, Antonio Candido, Darcy Ribeiro). The third explores recent debates over indigenous cosmologies, coloniality, and other ways of knowing (authors include Pablo González Casanova, León-Portilla, R. Kusch, René Zavaleta Mercado, A. Quijano, Bolívar Echeverría, Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, Viveiros de Castro). There is an extra session on the tradition of Latin American feminist thought depending on the interests of the group. Weekly sessions are conducted in Spanish, and most of the readings are Spanish, French, and Portuguese materials (with a few Anglo-Caribbean sources). Students will be provided with English translations if they prefer and will be allowed to write their papers in English.

CPLT 985a / AFST 969a / FREN 969a, Islands, Oceans, Deserts  Jill Jarvis
This seminar brings together literary and theoretical works that chart planetary relations and connections beyond the paradigm of francophone. Comparative focus on the poetics and politics of spaces shaped by intersecting routes of colonization and forced migrations: islands (Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Martinique), oceans (Indian, Mediterranean, Atlantic), and deserts (Sahara, Sonoran). Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French; knowledge of Arabic and Spanish invited. Conducted in English.