COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

Humanities Quadrangle, 3rd floor, 203.432.2760
http://complit.yale.edu
M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.

Chair
Martin Hägglund

Director of Graduate Studies
Robyn Creswell

Professors Rüdiger Campe, Katerina Clark, Martin Hägglund, Hannan Hever, Pericles Lewis, Shawkat Toorawa, Katie Trumpener, Jing Tsu, Jane Tylus, Jesús Velasco

Associate Professors Robyn Creswell, Marta Figlerowicz, Moira Fradinger, Ayesha Ramachandran

Assistant Professor Samuel Hodgkin

Lecturer Peter Cole

Emeritus Dudley Andrew, Peter Brooks, Peter Demetz, Carol Jacobs, Rainer Nägele, David Quint

Affiliated faculty R. Howard Bloch (French), Francesco Casetti (Film & Media Studies), Michael Denning (American Studies), Alice Kaplan (French), Tina Lu (East Asian Languages & Literatures), John MacKay (Slavic Languages & Literatures), 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 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.

In their fourth term, students must submit a revised seminar paper, selected in consultation with the DGS, no later than April 1. These papers will be circulated to all members of the faculty. The DGS will assign the paper to one faculty member who will write a short evaluation, shared with the student, focused on the questions of whether it shows an ability to: (a) write clearly; (b) conduct independent research at a high level; and (c) develop coherent scholarly arguments.

**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).

Having passed the orals, the student will identify a dissertation committee of three members, at least one of whom must belong to the department’s core or affiliate faculty.

**Prospectus** The dissertation prospectus will be submitted to the DGS by April 1 of the student’s sixth term, after having been reviewed and approved by the student's dissertation committee. A standing faculty committee will hold a conference with the student before the end of the term. Any revisions required by that committee must be submitted before the beginning of the student's fourth year.

**Ph.D. dissertation** After submission of the prospectus, the student’s time is devoted mainly to the dissertation, which completes the degree. It is expected that students will periodically pass their work along to members of their dissertation committee. The first chapter must be submitted to the committee by February 1 of the fourth year of study, followed by a chapter conference before the end of that year.

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 and teaching.

**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 proseminars 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 Early Modern Studies

The Department of Comparative Literature offers, in conjunction with the Early Modern Studies Program, a combined Ph.D. in Comparative Literature and Early Modern Studies. For further details, see Early Modern Studies.

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).

**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 208251, New Haven CT 06520-8251, or stacey.hampton@yale.edu.

**COURSES**

**CPLT 515a / SPAN 524a, Proseminar in Comparative Literature** Jesus Velasco

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 516b, Narrative in Law and Literature  Peter Brooks and Robert Post
“Whoever tells the best story wins,” a recent book addressed to corporate executives tells us. Our culture gives a large importance to what psychologist Jerome Bruner called “the narrative construction of reality.” This seminar studies narrative constructions in both law and literature, asking: how narrative creates human meanings and spurs human actions, how it creates and interprets temporality; how narratives of the past establish legal authority and modes of interpretation, ranging from originalism to textualism to purposivism; how narratives are used to persuade, to win arguments, to produce conviction. The seminar studies cases from such areas as religious rights, affirmative action, Fourth Amendment protections, as well as theories of legal interpretation and literary narratives in an effort to understand the uses of narrative and how they may be analyzed. Open to law students and graduate students in Comparative Literature, English, and other humanities departments. The seminar is for two units (for law students); oral presentations, class participation, and term paper required.

CPLT 554a / ENGL 827a, 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 574a / JDST 677a, Marxist Theory of Literature  Hannan Hever
Marxist thought has played a major role in the understanding of literary institutions, as well as literary texts. Within Marxist thought, literature always had a unique function in the processes of ideology, class struggles, and the constitution of the subject; material Marxism, cultural Marxism, European Marxism, and neo-Marxism all studied the work of literature as an institution and as both reflection and construction of reality, and of its perception. The aim of this seminar is to acquaint ourselves with Marxist theories of literature in the twentieth century. We start with the very basics of Marxism, focusing especially on the theory of ideology. We then study Lukács’s theory of literature as the basis of the development of Marxist literary theory, followed by the literary theories developed by the Frankfurt School, the materialistic school of Louis Althusser, Antonio Gramsci, E.P. Thompson, Raymond Williams, Stuart Hall, Terry Eagleton, Catherine Belsey, Fredric Jameson, and others. Open to undergraduates. All texts are in English, and no previous knowledge is required.

CPLT 601a / NELC 635a, The Education of Princes: Medieval Advice Literature of Rulership and Counsel  Shawkat Toorawa
In this course we read “mirrors for princes,” a type of political writing by courtiers and advisors. The genre flourished in the courts of medieval Europe and the Islamic world. We learn about the ethical and moral considerations that guided (or were meant to guide) rulers in their conduct, in the formulation of their policies, and about theories of rule and rulership. The works we read are from several cultural, religious, and political traditions, and include: Christine de Pizan, A Medieval Woman’s Mirror of Honor; Einhard, Life of Charlemagne; Erasmus, Education of a Christian Prince; Ibn al-Muqaffa’, Kalilah and Dimnah, John of Salisbury, Policraticus: Book of the Statesman; Machiavelli, The Prince; Nizam al-Mulk, The Book of Government. All texts are in English translation. Instructor permission required.
CPLT 605b, Edward Said as Public Intellectual  Robyn Creswell
This seminar focuses on Edward Said’s reflections on the role and responsibilities of the intellectual, paying particular attention to his writings on Palestine, the politics and culture of the Arab world, and the discourse of expertise. We also examine the reception of Said’s ideas and example among Arab thinkers. Texts include Orientalism, The Question of Palestine, After the Last Sky, Representations of the Intellectual, and numerous essays.

CPLT 615a / GMAN 618a, Adapting to the Stage  Sophie Schweiger
In this course, we explore theatre as a site of adaptation, as intermedial constellation. We investigate the relationship between dramatic literature and its performance and performability, between textual outlines and their realization(s): between scripts and stages. Focusing on “adaptations” in their various forms, allows us to explore the history of modern German theatre (1750–present day) from a particular angle. The perspective encourages us to prioritize actors over the writers/directors, it requires us to focus on the margins of a script: paratexts—a stage direction, for example—rather than their “literary” counterparts. With this shift of focus and radical widening of the perspective, the course aims to bring forth minor voices within the canons of German drama literature and to offer a way to engage creatively and in unexpected ways with the canons of our field.

CPLT 616a / GMAN 568a, Thinking Literature in German Modernism  Vivian Liska
Ever since literature left its ancillary position in the service of extraneous creeds, ideologies and educational purposes or, in the eyes of some, became their substitute, it had to rethink itself. Reflections about its own raison d’être and how it relates to the world politically, philosophically, and emotionally became a primary substratum of literary modernism. This is particularly true for modernism in German language contexts where some of the major theories about literature originated and where philosophy, politics and literature had been closely intertwined for centuries. Following general reflections on the term Modernism and its variations in different linguistic and national contexts (Die Moderne, la modernité, modernismo) as well as its relation to Realism, to the Avant Garde and to Postmodernism, this course explores some of the major works of German Modernism. Among the texts to be discussed are works by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Else Lasker-Schüler, Franz Kafka as well as selected poetry and short prose by authors ranging from Expressionists to poets writing in the immediate aftermath of WWII. Special attention is given to intertextual references to the literary tradition and, in this context, to the self-reflexive dimension of the modernist writings.

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. The working group is open
to doctoral students in their second year and beyond. Graduate students interested in
participating should contact michael.denning@yale.edu.

CPLT 654a / NELC 556a, Classics: The Arabic-Islamic World  Shawkat Toorawa
Arabic-Islamic civilization has produced numerous works that would make it onto
almost anyone’s list of wondrous books. In this course, we read a selection of (or from)
those books and study the literary and intellectual cultures that produced them in an
attempt to deepen and nuance our understanding of Islamic civilization. Readings
include the Qur’an, classical Arabic poetry, Jahiz’s epistles, the Maqamat of Hariri,
al-Ghazali, the Shahnameh, Leyli ve Mejnun, the Conference of the Birds, the Hang
Tuah Epic, Aisha al-Bauniyah’s Sufi poetry, and much else besides. All readings in
translation.

CPLT 657a / PORT 652a, Clarice Lispector: The Short Stories  Kenneth David Jackson
This course is a seminar on the complete short stories of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977),
a master of the genre and one of the major authors of twentieth-century Brazil known
for existentialism, mysticism, and feminism.

CPLT 671b / ANTH 514b / ARCG 515b / CLSS 878b / HIST 515b / JDST 657b /
NELC 570b / RLST 672b, Corrupting Seas: Premodern Maritime Ecologies
(Archaia Seminar)  Noel Lenski and Hussein Fancy
Uses the theoretical framework of "corrupting seas" developed by Horden and
Purcell as a hermeneutic to investigate the cultural, economic, political, and religious
environments of the archaic, ancient and medieval Mediterranean, and similar maritime
ecologies. Landscape and natural ecologies play an important but not exclusive role in
mapping how diversity and connectivity combined to constitute complex and dynamic
environments in the Mediterranean, Indian Ocean, Caribbean, and South China Sea.
The course is connected with Archaia’s Ancient Societies Workshop, which runs its own
series of events through the academic year. Students must attend the ASW events in the
spring (fall events are optional).

CPLT 734a / FREN 930a, Fiction and the Archives  Alice Kaplan
What can be learned about 20th-century French literature from literary archives?
This course investigates fiction by Proust, Céline, Guilloux, Sartre, Sarraute, Wittig,
studying finished books in the light of manuscripts, letters, and historical sources. An
exploration in particular of the idea of the "genesis" of a literary work. A number of
classes will take place in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library. Conducted in
English.

CPLT 735a or b / AFST 885a or b / FREN 885a or b, Modern French Poetry in the
Maghreb  Thomas Connolly
A survey of nineteenth-, twentieth-, and twenty-first-century poetry written in French
by authors from North Africa, including works by Si Mohand, Amrouche, Kateb,
Khaïr-Eddine, Sénac, Laâbi, Khatibi, Farès, Djout, Dib, Ben Jelloun, Meddeb, Labbize,
and Acherchour. Includes close readings set in literary, artistic, linguistic, aesthetic,
historical, political, religious, and philosophical contexts. This iteration of the course
coincides with the publication of a new double issue of Yale French Studies entitled

**CPLT 820a and CPLT 821b / ENGL 998a and ENGL 999b, Dissertation Workshop**  
Marta Figlerowicz
This workshop gathers biweekly, throughout the academic year, to workshop chapters, articles, and prospectuses. It is intended to foster conversations among advanced graduate students across diverse historical and geographic fields. Permission of the instructor is required.

**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 889a / AFST 889a / ENGL 889a, Postcolonial Ecologies**  
Cajetan Iheka
This seminar examines the intersections of postcolonialism and ecocriticism as well as the tensions between these conceptual nodes, with readings drawn from across the global South. Topics of discussion include colonialism, development, resource extraction, globalization, ecological degradation, nonhuman agency, and indigenous cosmologies. The course is concerned with the narrative strategies affording the illumination of environmental ideas. We begin by engaging with the questions of postcolonial and world literature and return to these throughout the semester as we read primary texts, drawn from Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. We consider African ecologies in their complexity from colonial through post-colonial times. In the unit on the Caribbean, we take up the transformations of the landscape from slavery, through colonialism, and the contemporary era. Turning to Asian spaces, the seminar explores changes brought about by modernity and globalization as well as the effects on both humans and nonhumans. Readings include the writings of Zakes Mda, Aminatta Forna, Helon Habila, Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, Ishimure Michiko, and Amitav Ghosh. The course prepares students to respond to key issues in postcolonial ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, analyze the work of the major thinkers in the fields, and examine literary texts and other cultural productions from a postcolonial perspective. Course participants have the option of selecting from a variety of final projects. Students can craft an original essay that analyzes primary text from a postcolonial and/or ecocritical perspective. Such work should aim at producing new insight on a theoretical concept and/or the cultural text. They can also produce an undergraduate syllabus for a course at the intersection of postcolonialism and
environmentalism or write a review essay discussing two recent monographs focused on postcolonial ecocriticism.

**CPLT 904a / FILM 617a / FREN 675a / SPAN 901a, Psychoanalysis: Key Conceptual Differences between Freud and Lacan**  Moira Fradinger

Working with primary sources mainly from the Freudian and Lacanian corpuses, this seminar is an introduction to key concepts of continental psychoanalytic theory. Students gain proficiency in what has been called “the language of psychoanalysis,” as well as tools for their critical practice in humanities disciplines such as literary criticism, political theory, film studies, gender studies, theory of ideology, sociology, etc. Concepts studied include the unconscious, identification, the drive, repetition, the imaginary, the symbolic, the real, and *jouissance*. A central goal of the seminar is to disambiguate Freud’s corpus from Lacan’s return to it. We pay special attention to Freud’s "three" (the ego, superego, and id) in comparison to Lacan’s "three" (the imaginary, the symbolic, and the real). Depending on the interests of the group, a special unit can be added (choosing from topics such as sexuation, perversion, fetishism, psychosis, anti-psychiatry, etc.). Commentators and critics of Freud and Lacan are also consulted (Michel Arrivé, Guy Le Gaufey, Jean Laplanche, André Green, Markos Zafiropoulos, and others). Taught in English. Materials can be provided to cover the linguistic range of the group.

**CPLT 958a / AFAM 867a / EMST 667a / SPAN 867a, Black Iberia: Then and Now**  Nicholas Jones

This graduate seminar examines the variety of artistic, cultural, historical, and literary representations of black Africans and their descendants – both enslaved and free – across the vast stretches of the Luso-Hispanic world and the United States. Taking a chronological frame, the course begins its study of Blackness in medieval and early modern Iberia and its colonial kingdoms. From there, we examine the status of Blackness conceptually and ideologically in Asia, the Caribbean, Mexico, and South America. Toward the end of the semester, we concentrate on black Africans by focusing on Equatorial Guinea, sub-Saharan African immigration in present-day Portugal and Spain, and the politics of Afro-Latinx culture and its identity politics in the United States. Throughout the term, we interrogate the following topics in order to guide our class discussions and readings: bondage and enslavement, fugitivity and maroonage, animal imageries and human-animal studies, geography and maps, Black Feminism and Black Queer Studies, material and visual cultures (e.g., beauty ads, clothing, cosmetics, food, Blackface performance, royal portraiture, reality TV, and music videos), the Inquisition and African diasporic religions, and dispossession and immigration. Our challenging task remains the following: to see how Blackness conceptually and experientially is subversively fluid and performative, yet deceptive and paradoxical. This course will be taught in English, with all materials available in the original (English, Portuguese, Spanish) and in English translation.

**CPLT 959a, Dissertation Writing Workshop**  Robyn Creswell

This is a writing seminar for graduate students of Comparative Literature in their fourth, fifth, sixth, or seventh year. Students share their own writing in a workshop setting, receiving intensive feedback from peers and instructors. Each student is expected to produce a conference paper, article, or chapter as their final project.
CPLT 968b, The End of the World  Jesus Velasco
In this course we study different kinds of narratives about the end of times and its consequences in Iberian and Latin American cultures. We include political, theological, social, and environmental narratives across periodizations in Iberian and Latin American cultures.