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, David Quint, 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

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.

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

**COURSES**

**CPLT 504b, Proseminar in Translation Studies** Marijeta Bozovic
This graduate proseminar combines a historically minded introduction to Translation Studies as a field with a survey of its interdisciplinary possibilities. The proseminar is composed of several units (Histories of Translation; Geographies of Translation; Scandals of Translation), each with a different approach or set of concerns, affording the students multiple points of entry to the field. The Translation Studies coordinator provides the intellectual through-line from week to week, while incorporating a number of guest lectures by Yale faculty and other invited speakers to expose students to current research and practice in different disciplines. The capstone project is a conference paper-length contribution of original academic research. Additional assignments throughout the term include active participation in and contributions to intellectual programming in the Translation Initiative.

**CPLT 509a, Advanced Literary Translation** Robyn Creswell
Students apply to this workshop with a project in mind that they have been developing, either on their own or for a senior thesis, and they present this work during the class on a regular basis. Practical translation is supplemented by readings in the history of translation practice and theory, and by the reflections of practitioners on their art. These readings are selected jointly by the instructor and members of the class. Topics include the history of literary translation—Western and Eastern; comparative approaches to translating a single work; the political dimension of translation; and translation in the context of religion and theology. Class time is divided into student presentations of short passages of their own work, including related key readings; background readings in the history of the field; and close examination of relevant translations by accomplished translators. Students receive intensive scrutiny by the group and instructor. Permission of the instructor required.

**CPLT 510a / GMAN 604a, The Mortality of the Soul: From Aristotle to Heidegger** Martin Hagglund
This course explores fundamental philosophical questions of the relation between matter and form, life and spirit, necessity and freedom, by proceeding from Aristotle's analysis of the soul in *De Anima* and his notion of practical agency in the *Nicomachean Ethics*. We study Aristotle in conjunction with seminal works by contemporary neo-Aristotelian philosophers (Korsgaard, Nussbaum, Brague, and McDowell). We in turn pursue the implications of Aristotle's notion of life by engaging with contemporary philosophical discussions of death that take their point of departure in Epicurus (Nagel, Williams, Scheffler). We conclude by analyzing Heidegger's notion of constitutive mortality, in order to make explicit what is implicit in the form of the soul in Aristotle.

**CPLT 522b / GMAN 687b, Heimito von Doderer's The Strudlhof Steps** Kirk Wetters
Spanning the fin-de-siècle to the postwar, high modernism and popular fiction, Heimito von Doderer’s classic 1951 novel of the city of Vienna was published in English only recently, in 2021. Unclassifiable in its combination of romanticism, realism, and modernism, *The Strudlhof Steps* has won over many generations of readers, critics, scholars, and other novelists (including recently Daniel Kehlmann, for whom Doderer’s novel is “the best German language novel of the 20th century”). This course undertakes a slow reading of Doderer’s 900-page bestseller, with attention to many relevant contexts, including: the theory and history of the novel, modernism in art and architecture, the complex genesis of *The Strudlhof Steps*, selections of Doderer’s other writings, the historical context (especially the interwar period, the rise of fascism, and the question of Habsburg nostalgia). Strongly recommended to avid readers of fiction. Knowledge of German is helpful.

**CPLT 524a / GMAN 650a, Critique and Crisis** Kirk Wetters
In our time, when everyone is suspected of being hypercritical, it is not surprising that the limits of critique, its function, and institutional location are called to question. The idea of “post-critique” has been much discussed in recent years. This course develops critical models, primarily from the German tradition, in order to show the great variety of options available beyond the “hermeneutics of suspicion.”
Topics include post-critique, the history of critique/criticism, the Romantic concept of critique, traditional vs. critical theory, historicism, philology vs. hermeneutics, science (Wissenschaft) vs. the critique of positivism. Main protagonists include Kant, Schiller, Schlegel, Nietzsche, Dilthey, Max Weber, Lukács, Husserl, Benjamin, Adorno, Koselleck, Szondi, Gadamer, Gumbrecht, Latour, Felski.

**CPLT 582a / ENGL 455a / FREN 802a / MDVL 502a, Chaucer and Translation** Ardis Butterfield

An exploration of the works of Geoffrey Chaucer (ca. 1340–1400), brilliant writer and translator. Using modern postcolonial as well as medieval theories of translation, memory, and bilingualism, we investigate how texts in French, Latin, and Italian are transformed, cited, and reinvented in his writings. Some key questions include: What happens to language under the pressure of crosslingual reading practices? What happens to the notion of translation in a multilingual culture? How are ideas of literary history affected by understanding Chaucer’s English in relation to the other more prestigious language worlds in which his poetry was enmeshed? Texts include material in French, Middle English, Latin, and Italian. Proficiency in any one or more of these languages is welcome, but every effort is made to use texts available in modern English translation, so as to include as wide a participation as possible in the course.

**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 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 624b / GMAN 689b, Alienation, Reconciliation: From Hegel to the Ecological Rift** Rudiger Campe

Alienation has been explored in social, economic, or environmental respects, and thinkers differ widely according to how, where, and when to identify the other of alienation, a non-alienated way of life or reconciliation. This course discusses alienation and reconciliation along these lines in Rousseau, Hegel, Marx; Simmel, Lukács, Sartre; Lefebvre, J.B. Foster, J.W. Moore; and others.

**CPLT 638b / ENGL 605b, Shakespeare’s Tempest, Cultural Translation, and the Genealogies of Race** Lawrence Manley and Ayesha Ramachandran

This course explores current debates over questions of premodern race, racialization, and race-thinking through the lens of *The Tempest* and its literary and critical afterlives. Almost since its first performance, Shakespeare’s play has served as an index of England’s (and Europe’s) engagement with its “others”: it is (arguably) a play both about and against empire, a meditation on indigenous and settler relations, a study in language and social stratification, a wry dramatization of gender dynamics, and an exemplary case in the making and deconstruction of race. Its classical and contemporary early modern sources are already concerned with these problems, which are in turn reimagined by Shakespeare for his time and then repurposed by the diverse range of writers who adapt from his work. The process of adapting *The Tempest* to different media and cultural situations over the past century (and more) has further elaborated these complex intersections: from Browning and Renan to Auden, from Césaire and Lamming to Virahsavmy, from Darío and Rodó to Fanon and Retamar, from Brathwaite to Clyff and Wynter, Shakespeare’s play is an occasion for exploring processes of cultural translation and the critical problems of race, gender, and (post)colonialism. While examining the transhistorical travels of *The Tempest*, this seminar introduces and examines the current state of criticism and theory with regard to adaptation, race, and empire.

**CPLT 645b / AMST 734b, 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 669a / GMAN 643a, Georg Büchner’s Revolutions** Dietrich Thomae and Rudiger Campe

Georg Büchner’s (1813–1837) work is a work across times and places. In *Danton’s Death* he reenacts the French Revolution, in the pamphlet *Hessian Messenger* he calls for revolution in German lands. Büchner’s other, simultaneous, revolution is one of language and
literature. In the narrative *Lenz* and the theater play *Woyzeck*, Büchner turns the Romanticism of his own time upside down, and the two works resurface only ca. 1900 as trailblazers of social naturalism and modernist (postdramatic) theater. Celan, in *The Meridian*, gives an idiosyncratic account of Büchner's travel across times and places. This course contextualizes the close reading of Büchner's work with materials from the French Revolution, early socialists, and Marx; French, German, and British Romanticism; prose and theater ca. 1900 when Büchner is rediscovered; and Celan.

**CPLT 684a / ENGL 574a / ITAL 720a / RNST 684a, Renaissance Epic** 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*, Lucret's *Bellum civile*, Tasso's *Gerusalemme liberata*, Camões's *Os Lusíadas*, and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*.

**CPLT 705b / ITAL 781b, The Decameron** Millicent 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 716a / FILM 729a / GMAN 730a, German New Waves in Cold War Europe** Katie Trumpener

Before 1961, Berlin was the best place in Europe to follow both Eastern and Western Europe's emerging cinematic New Waves. And first in East, then in West Germany, young filmmakers developed distinctive approaches to political and documentary filmmaking, to the Nazi past and the Cold War, to class, gender, and social transformation. This course juxtaposes the two German New Waves, focusing on aesthetic ferment, institutional barriers, and transformation. Features, documentaries, and experimental films by Gerhard Klein, Konrad Wolf, Alexander Kluge, Herbert Vesely, Edgar Reitz, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Jürgen Böttcher, Heiner Carow, Frank Beyer, Wim Wenders, Rainer Werner Fassbinder, Helke Sander, Helke Misselwitz, read against other Eastern and Western New Wave films (i.e., by Lindsay Anderson, Karel Reisz, Andrzej Munk, Alain Resnais, Mikhail Kalatozov, Milos Forman).

**CPLT 724b / ENGL 729b, Literature and Philosophy from Locke to Kant** Jonathan Kramnick

This is a class on epistemology, aesthetics, and literary form. We read major works in empiricism and moral philosophy alongside poetry and fiction in several genres. We ask, for example, how do poetry, fiction, and the visual arts recruit and account for perceptual experience or consider material and natural objects? What happens when the empirical psychology of consciousness or the categories of the sublime, beautiful, and picturesque take narrative or poetic form? What sort of ethical models follow from formal or generic decisions? We focus throughout on how these topics have been discussed across the history of literary studies, and we pay close attention to current debates in the field, including those prompted by new formalisms and materialisms, critical race studies, cognitive literary studies, and the digital humanities. Authors include Locke, Behn, Defoe, Pope, Addison, Hume, Burke, Sterne, Smith, Kant, and Wordsworth.

**CPLT 725b / AFST 965b / FREN 965b, On Violence: Politics and Aesthetics across the Maghreb** Jill Jarvis

A study of twenty-century Maghrebi texts and films that document, theorize, and critique forms of political violence. How might aesthetic works—novels, plays, poems, torture and prison testimonies, political cartoons, films—run counter to state-sanctioned memory projects or compel rethinking practices of testimony and justice for a postcolonial time? Works by Kateb, Behn, Defoe, Pope, Addison, Hume, Burke, Sterne, Smith, Kant, and Wordsworth.

**CPLT 754a / ENGL 915a, Western and Postcolonial Marxist Cultural Theory** Joe Cleary

An introduction to classic twentieth-century Western and postcolonial Marxist theorists and texts focusing on historical and intellectual exchange between these critical formations. Reading theoretical works in conjunction with some selected literary texts, the course tracks how key Marxist concepts such as capital and class consciousness, modes of production, praxis and class struggles, reification, commodification, totality, and alienation have been developed across these traditions and considers how these concepts have been used to rethink literary and other cultural forms and their ongoing transformation in a changing world system. Writers discussed may include G.W.F. Hegel, Karl Marx, Friedrich Engels, Georg Lukács, Mikhail Bakhtin, Theodor Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Walter Benjamin, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Toril Moi, C.L.R. James, W.E.B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Paul Gilroy, Antonio Gramsci, Raymond Williams, Fredric Jameson, Perry Anderson, Giovanni Arrighi, Cornel West, and others. The object of the seminar is to provide students with a solid intellectual foundation in these still-developing hermeneutic traditions.

**CPLT 777b / ENGL 777b / GMAN 777b, Poems and Their Theories** Paul North

A task lies before us: to go back and understand the importance that critical theory, in its inception and throughout its life, gave to poems. Poems and theories shared ideals from the turn of the nineteenth century to at least the end of the twentieth, at a minimum in German, French, and English. They dreamed of taking a vacation from language, of returning to the sensible, of imagining communities, of revising the model of *Bildung* and culture, of rethinking history, of critiquing the nation-state and capitalism, among other dreams. Why this shared project between poetry and theory? What did theory find in the resources of literature, the genius idea, the past, and other foreignnesses that seemed so vital to critiquing the perceived present? Readings include Hölderlin, Schlegel, Novalis, Wordsworth, Shelley, Baudelaire, Celan, Benjamin, Heidegger, Arendt, de Man, Lacoue-Labarthe, Sedgwick, Kristeva, Jacobs.
CPLT 709b / GMAN 627b, Writing Scenes: Toward a Theory of the Literary Act  Rudiger Campe
For a long time, thinking about producing literature has been dominated by the legalization of authorship. The notion of the “writing scene” allows us to rethink the production of literature in broader ways: technologies of writing, the writing body, systems of writing, etc. This course looks at investigations into the act of writing by Benjamin, Blanchot, Foucault, Barthes, Flusser, Latour; theories of cultural production by Cassirer, Jameson, Goody, Kittler, Bolter, Rheinberger; and vignettes of writing scenes in Quintilian, Christine de Pisan, Dante, Descartes, Goethe, Blake, Hegel, Flaubert, F. Douglass, V. Woolf, Kafka, Proust, Cixous.

CPLT 809a / ENGL 668a / ITAL 668a / RNST 668a, 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 816a / FREN 874a, Marketing and Literature  Christophe Schuwey
Books are not only the medium of great literary works. They are also competing commercial products that, in order to be bought and/or read, must attract and retain attention, spark interest, and excite or meet a specific need. This course examines how markets, production techniques, habits, fashions, or advertising practices shape literary production. Drawing from the Beinecke collections, we study a wide range of diverse early modern French books to rethink the way we approach literature in general, from titles to typography, from structure to the very content of a work.

CPLT 820a, Comparative Theory Dissertation Workshop  Marta Figlerowicz
This workshop gathers biweekly, throughout the academic year, to workshop chapters, articles, and prospectuses around the general topic of comparative literary and critical theory. It is intended to foster conversations among advanced graduate students working within this broad methodological framework across diverse historical and geographic fields. Permission of the instructor is required.

CPLT 822b / AMST 632b, 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 823a / SPAN 823a, New Latin American Cinemas: 1950–1990  Moira Fradinger
This seminar is a study of cinema produced in Latin America between 1950 and 1990, when filmmakers throughout the region articulated anew the relationship between cinema and politics. In Latin America, scholars identify the films of this era as “New Latin American Cinema,” on account of their rejection of the national cinema traditions of the thirties and forties, which were dependent on the control of studios and Hollywood conventions. We study a vast array of films from the period that are usually hard to access, but deserving of scholarly attention. We watch, for example, many “firsts”: the first Honduran film (1962), the first Haitian feature-length film (1975), the first film by a woman in Peru (Nora de Izcue), the first film in Quechua (1961), the first fully Paraguayan film (1978). Our corpus includes films from Peru, Argentina, Chile, Brazil, Colombia, Venezuela, Cuba, Mexico, Honduras, Paraguay, Bolivia, Ecuador, and Haiti. We read film manifestos that launched concepts such as “cine imperfecto,” “cine urgente,” “cinema novo,” “estética da fome,” and so forth. Readings are in Spanish and Portuguese. The seminar requires approximately four hours of film viewing per week. Prerequisite: a high level of proficiency in Spanish. Many films have no subtitles in English, and the seminar is conducted in Spanish.

CPLT 837b / FREN 890b, Modernity  Maurice Samuels
The seminar studies literature and art from nineteenth-century France alongside theoretical and historical reflections to explore the significance of modernity. How did historical forces shape cultural trends? How did literature and art define what it means to be modern? Writers to be studied include Balzac, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Maupassant, and Zola. Theorists include Benjamin, Durkheim, Foucault, Marx, Simmel, and Weber. We also examine the painting of Manet and his followers. Reading knowledge of French required.

CPLT 900a, Directed Reading  Staff
Designed to help fill gaps in students’ programs when there are corresponding gaps in the department’s offerings. By arrangement with faculty and with the approval of the DGS.

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 / ENGL 920b, FILM 601b, Foundations of Film and Media  
Dudley Andrew and John Peters
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 924a / JDST 857a, Modernism and Avant-Garde in Hebrew Poetry: Poetics and Theory  
Hannan Hever
Modernism in Hebrew poetry: close readings of the poetry of Nathan Alterman, Lea Goldberg, Nathan Zach, Yona Volakh, Avot Yeshurun. Prerequisites: a high level of reading Hebrew texts in poetry and criticism, and permission of the instructor.

CPLT 960b / SPAN 914b, Microliteratures: The Margins of the Law  
Jesus Velasco
Examining marginal writing in manuscripts and printed books from the Middle Ages and the early modern period, we interrogate the productive relations between law and culture. We focus on a wide array of sources from the Iberian Peninsula and the Mediterranean. Likewise, we consider different legal systems.

CPLT 973a / RNST 870a / SPAN 870a, Imagining the New World  
Lisa Voigt
This course focuses on the use of images of and in the “New World” during the first century of European exploration, conquest, and colonization in the Americas. We explore printed illustrations that shaped European perceptions of New World “exoticism” and “barbarism,” as well as indigenous pictorial manuscripts that continued and adapted native visual practices and offered alternative views of the conquest. Besides reading texts by European and indigenous authors in which images played an important role (Columbus, Las Casas, Oviedo, Staden, Léry, Raleigh, Sahagún, Guaman Poma), we study nonalphabetic visual sources such as Nahua codices and maps, and portraits and festive performances of Afro-descendants. We also examine how images of the Americas were disseminated in Europe through copied illustrations, generating clichés and stereotypes—terms originally associated with printing techniques—that contributed to the racism and colonialism that have shaped the modern world. We conclude with a discussion of examples of contemporary films that reimagine the colonial Americas.

CPLT 974b / PORT 905b, The Short Story: Major Authors  
Kenneth David Jackson
Close reading of modern short stories by major authors writing in Portuguese, with an emphasis on Brazilian literature. Dominant critical and thematic currents; analysis of social forces. In Portuguese.

CPLT 976b / SPAN 866b, Roberto Bolaño in the Twenty-First Century  
Aníbal González-Pérez
Readings of the poetry, short stories, novellas, novels, and essays of the Chilean-Mexican author Roberto Bolaño (1953–2003), regarded as a founding figure of early twenty-first-century Spanish American narrative. Topics explored include issues of truth and reality; ethics; materiality; self-fictionalization; post-nationalism; gender; Bolaño’s politics; humor; fractals; and narrative.