HUMANITIES (HUMS)

* HUMS 005a / NELC 005a, The Ancient Egyptian Empire of the New Kingdom
For most of the duration of the New Kingdom (1550-1069 BCE), the ancient Egyptians were able to establish a vast empire and became one of the key powers within the Near East. This course is an introduction to the history, archaeology and literary sources of one of the most dynamic periods of ancient Egyptian history. We investigate the development of Egyptian foreign policies and military expansion, which affected parts of the Near East and Nubia to the south. We also examine and discuss topics such as ideology, imperial identity, political struggle and motivation for conquest and control of wider regions surrounding the Egyptian state as well as the relationship to other powers and their perspective on Egyptian rulers, as, for example, described in the famous Amarna letters, the world's earliest diplomatic correspondence. Throughout the semester, we consider the different sources that have survived in the archaeological and textual record for understanding Egypt's first empire within its ancient geopolitical context. All primary texts are read in translation. HU

* HUMS 027a / LITR 027a, Six Pretty Good Selves
Through the prism of thinking about the self, this course provides first-year students with an intensive introduction to studying the humanities at Yale. The course is anchored around six trans-historical models of thinking about selfhood: the ideal self, the lover, the revolutionary, the convert, the solipsist, and the social climber. We range widely across genres, media, periods, and geographies: from Plato's Symposium to Machado de Assis's Epitaph for a Small Winner, from the ghazals of Hafez to the Kamasutra. We also make extensive use of Yale's rich manuscript archives, historical object collections, and art galleries and devote sustained attention to improving students' academic writing skills. This is a 1.5 credit intensive writing course that fulfills one WR requirement. Friday sessions will alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. WR, HU 1.5 Course cr

* HUMS 065a / EDST 065a, Education and the Life Worth Living
Consideration of education and what it has to do with real life—not just any life, but a life worth living. Engagement with three visions of different traditions of imagining the good life and of imagining education: Confucianism, Christianity, and Modernism. Students will be asked to challenge the fundamental question of the good life and to put that question at the heart of their college education. Enrollment limited to freshmen. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

* HUMS 075a, Mastering the Art of Watercolor
An introductory course on the art of watercolor as a humanistic discipline within the liberal arts tradition. Readings, discussions, and studio work emphasize critical, creative thinking through a tactile, “learning by doing” study of the watercolor medium. Students analyze and imitate the classic techniques of J. M. W. Turner, John Singer Sargent, Georgia O’Keeffe, and Edward Hopper, among others. Studio components include painting en plein air to understand color, form, perspective, composition, and shade and shadow. Basic drawing skills recommended. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under Freshman Seminar Program. HU

* HUMS 091b / HIST 078b, Truth and Post-Truth
This European intellectual history seminar explores the epistemological question in philosophy: does the world really exist? How do I know it’s really there and not just a projection of my consciousness? is there such a thing as truth? We begin with European philosophy, moving through Descartes, Kant and Husserl and through the role of ideology and lies in 20th century totalitarianism, then to dissident thought in Eastern Europe in the 1970s and 1980s, and finally to the emergence of "post-truth" in the 20th century and its implications in both philosophy and life. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU RP

* HUMS 095a, Certain Uncertainties: Literature, Physics, Philosophy
Why does the universe exist? What is the nature of reality? Who are we? Where are we? How do we know? This course attempts to address such uncertainties by looking at three seemingly disparate disciplines: literature, physics, and philosophy. Throughout the twentieth century, significant advances were made in each of these fields. In literature, the modernists and postmodernists changed the way we read and write. In physics, modern cosmology and quantum mechanics profoundly affected our understanding of the universe's origins and the nature of reality. In philosophy, new schools of thought such as structuralism and poststructuralism challenged our perception of language and meaning. By placing such seemingly separate fields of study and some of their signature advances in conversation, this course not only aims to explore certain uncertainties but also to underscore the value of a liberal arts education. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. HU

* HUMS 096b, Collecting History: "Treasures" of Yale
This course considers the concept of “treasure” by visiting nearly all of Yale's galleries, museums, and library special collections. We explore questions around how these objects and materials were created, how they came to be at Yale, and the considerations and compromises that make up collections of cultural heritage materials. We learn what these objects say about themselves, their creators, their users, and their collectors. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program. WR, HU

HUMS 115a / LITR 101, Purposes of College Education
College is a crucial institution in which our society works through its expectations for young people. This course of 12 lectures in the fall semester explores some of the purposes that have been ascribed to college, including development of personal character, participation in a community, conversation with others on intellectual matters, and preparation for citizenship. We also touch on other purposes, including career preparation and pursuit of knowledge for its own sake. Readings from Plato, Aristotle, Confucius, Bhagavad-Gita, Virginia Woolf, Martin Luther King, Max Weber, and others. One hour of lecture plus two hours of discussion weekly. Hybrid course
with in-person lectures, which will also be recorded and available for remote enrollment. Intended for first-year students beginning college. ½ Course cr

* HUMS 120a / AFAM 264a / RLST 104a, Memory, Culture, and Religion  Stephen Davis
This course investigates the constructive role that cultural memory plays in the shaping of religious identity and practice. In addition to the study of cognitive, sociological, and political theories and their application, students explore topics from the ancient Greco-Roman world and the New Testament to contemporary history, politics, and media culture. By the end of the semester, students are equipped to think in multilateral ways about how transpersonal forms of memory and memory practices have shaped cultural and religious identity from antiquity to the present day.  HU

* HUMS 128a / NELC 128a, From Gilgamesh to Persepolis: Introduction to Near Eastern Literatures  Kathryn Slanski
This lecture course is an introduction to Near Eastern civilization through its rich and diverse literary cultures. We read and discuss ancient works, such as the Epic of Gilgamesh, Genesis, and “The Song of Songs,” medieval works, such as A Thousand and One Nights, selections from the Qur'an, and Shah-nama: The Book of Kings, and modern works of Israeli, Turkish, and Iranian novelists and Palestinian poets. Students complement classroom studies with visits to the Yale Babylonian Collection and the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, as well as with film screenings and guest speakers. Students also learn fundamentals of Near Eastern writing systems, and consider questions of tradition, transmission, and translation. All readings are in translation.  WR, HU

* HUMS 130b / LITR 130b, How to Read  Martin Hagglund
Introduction to techniques, strategies, and practices of reading through study of lyric poems, narrative texts, plays and performances, films, new and old, from a range of times and places. Emphasis on practical strategies of discerning and making meaning, as well as theories of literature, and contextualizing particular readings. Topics include form and genre, literary voice and the book as a material object, evaluating translations, and how literary strategies can be extended to read film, mass media, and popular culture. Junior seminar; preference given to juniors and majors.  HU

HUMS 133a / JDST 110a / RLST 145a, The Bible  Christine Hayes
The writings common to both Jewish and Christian scripture examined as diverse and often conflicting expressions of the religious life and thought of ancient Israel. The works’ cultural and historical setting in the ancient Near East; the interpretive history of selected passages influential in Western culture. Introduction to a wide range of critical and literary approaches to biblical studies. Students view course lectures, which survey the entire Bible, on line; class time focuses on specific biblical passages and their subsequent interpretation in Jewish and Christian culture.  HU

HUMS 134a / ENGL 154a / FREN 216a / LITR 194a, The Multicultural Middle Ages  Ardis Butterfield
Introduction to medieval English literature and culture in its European and Mediterranean context, before it became monolingual, canonical, or author-bound. Genres include travel writing, epic, dream visions, mysticism, the lyric, and autobiography, from the Crusades to the Hundred Years War, from the troubadours to Dante, from the Chanson de Roland to Chaucer. Formerly ENGL 189.  HU

* HUMS 140b / NELC 121b, The Hero in the Ancient Near East  Kathryn Slanski
Exploration of the interaction of religion, history, and literature in the ancient Near East through study of its heroes, including comparison with heroes, heroic narratives, and hero cults in the Bible and from classical Greece.  WR, HU

* HUMS 175b / RUSS 175b, Reading the Russian Revolution  Constantine Muravnik
The course explores the complex political and social landscape of the Russian Revolution of 1917 through the multiple and shifting perspectives of its main participants from Nicholas II to Lenin. All of the participants of the Revolution understood the immense significance of the changes taking place in front of them in 1917; many took detailed notes of conversations, actions, and events in which they participated or which they witnessed. Later, many reworked these notes into meticulous memoirs and histories. The expected subjectivity of these documents, as well as the contradictory nature of the opinions expressed in them—but generally, not the facts—highlight the complexity of the situation they describe. The readings chosen for the course represent the entire political spectrum of the Russian Revolution from the extreme right to extreme left. They chronologically document the precipitous progression of the events starting with the murder of Rasputin, carried out by the Monarchists and one member of the royal family on the eve of 1917, and ending with the Bolshevik coup d’état in October 1917. They trace the gradual shift of the epicenter of the Revolution from right to left until the Revolution ends or succeeds (it depends on the point of view) in Lenin’s gaining full control over the country on the brink of the Civil War. Prerequisites: Six semesters of Russian or permission of the instructor. 1.5, HU  RP

* HUMS 179a / ENGL 217a, Shakespeare’s Political Plays  David Bromwich
Reading and interpretation of selected histories and tragedies from Richard II to Coriolanus with emphasis on the tension between individual freedom and political obligation.  WR, HU

HUMS 180a / ITAL 310a / LITR 182a, Dante in Translation  Simona Lorenzini
A critical reading of Dante’s Divine Comedy and selections from the minor works, with an attempt to place Dante’s work in the intellectual and social context of the late Middle Ages by relating literature to philosophical, theological, and political concerns. No knowledge of Italian required. Course conducted in English.  HU

* HUMS 185a / ENGL 419a / HSAR 460a, Writing about Contemporary Figurative Art  Margaret Spillane
A workshop on journalistic strategies for looking at and writing about contemporary paintings of the human figure. Practitioners and theorists of figurative painting; controversies, partisans, and opponents. Includes field trips to museums and galleries in New York City. Formerly ENGL 247.  WR, HU
from a skeptical approach to the subject. Particular emphasis is placed on the origins and development of the research university.

This course is an iconoclastic introduction to the study of education. Besides examining the purposes and practice of education and what we take for granted as true and universal, the course will engage us in a more sophisticated understanding of the construction of knowledge in terms of the different historical and cultural contexts in which it was produced. This course will consider the purposes and practice of education and the concept of “wisdom,” and ask such questions as: What is the nature and purpose of education? What is knowledge? What is the role of the philosopher in the intellectual life of society? What is the nature of the university? What is the relationship between philosophy and politics? What is the role of education in society? What is the role of higher education in society? What is the role of the university in society? What is the role of the university in the global economy? What is the role of the university in the global economy?

* HUMS 189a / MUSI 189a, Music & Jane Austen  Jessica Peritz
This course takes Jane Austen as a guide to the world of early nineteenth-century music culture in Britain, exploring through her novels and letters the relationships between music, gender, and class in the decades around 1800. We approach this period of music history by delving into how “regular people”—especially women—consumed, curated, and created music in their everyday lives. Austen, an accomplished musician herself, wove music into her novels in ways that reveal much about contemporary practices of (and prejudices against) music. We focus on three of Austen’s novels (Pride & Prejudice, Sense & Sensibility, Emma) and excerpts from her music manuscript collections, alongside recent scholarship and modern film adaptations, which taken together raise a series of interdisciplinary questions. By learning about Austen’s musical milieu, we open up the musical lives of Regency-era women and the “middling sort,” while becoming more attuned to the social critiques embedded in Austen’s representations of music, ultimately enriching our engagement with the novels themselves. The ability to read musical notation is not required, but will be helpful.  HU

* HUMS 192a / HIST 299Ja, Intellectuals and Power in Europe  Terence Renaud
The role of intellectuals in politics, with a focus on social, cultural, and political upheavals in Europe during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Whether intellectuals betray a higher spiritual calling when they enter politics or merely strive to put their own theories into practice. Modern answers to the question of why ideas and intellectuals matter. HU

HUMS 201b / FREN 240b / LITR 214b, The Modern French Novel  Alice Kaplan and Maurice Samuels
A survey of major French novels, considering style and story, literary and intellectual movements, and historical contexts. Writers include Balzac, Flaubert, Proust, Camus, and Sartre. Readings in translation. One section conducted in French. HU TR

HUMS 206b / ENGL 191b / LITR 318b / MMES 315b / NELC 201b, The Arabian Nights, Then and Now  Robyn Creswell
Exploration of Arabian Nights, a classic of world literature. Topics include antecedents, themes and later prose, and graphic and film adaptations. HU TR

* HUMS 210b / ITAL 317b / LITR 180b / WGSS 317b, Women in the Middle Ages  Christiana Purdy Moudarres
Medieval understandings of womanhood examined through analyses of writings by and/or about women, from antiquity through the Middle Ages. Introduction to the premodern Western canon and assessment of the role that women played in its construction. HU TR

HUMS 213b / ENGL 159b / LITR 339b / THST 262b, Global Shakespeares: Race, Gender, and the Idea of the Human  Ayesha Ramachandran
Shakespeare today is a global phenomenon: over five hundred years after his death, the playwright’s legacy continues to flourish with new performances, new buildings, new appropriations, and adaptations continuously produced across the world in a range of languages and across various media. Once exported along with the ideologies and practices of empire, Shakespeare’s works have now become an index for the complex histories of colonialism and postcolonialism as well as a crucial site for studying processes of racialization and the universalizing idea of “the human.” How did Shakespeare become global? Was the cultural imagination of his plays always already global, written at a time with the very notion of the modern world as we know it was shaped? This course explores the political afterlives of “Shakespeare” as a cultural icon and aesthetic touchstone for the Western tradition through a close reading of four plays alongside their adaptations: Hamlet, Othello, King Lear, and Antony and Cleopatra. We look at films, novels, manga comics, memoirs, stand-up comic routines, along with classic stagings of the plays to elucidate the themes that have made Shakespeare global—in particular, questions of race, gender, sexuality, generational conflict, and political intrigue. Authors and directors include Akiro Kurosawa, Vishal Bharadwaj, Janet Suzman, Iqbal Khan, James Baldwin, Sulayman Al-Bassam, Tayeb Salih, Preti Taneja, and Derek Walcott. This is the non-intensive writing version of LITR 340 and is worth 1 credit. It meets with LITR 340. Students may earn credit for LITR 339 (1 credit) or for LITR 340 (1.5 credits) but not for both. WR, HU

* HUMS 217a, Classical Storytelling in the Modern World  Brian Price
In his seminal work Poetics, Aristotle first identified the observable patterns and recurring elements that existed in the successful tragedies and epic poems of his time, as he posed the existential query: Why do we tell stories? And his illuminating analysis and conclusions are still just as meaningful and relevant today in our contemporary dramatic narratives, our movies, plays, and Netflix binges-of-the-week. In this seminar, we examine Aristotle’s observations and conclusions and relate them to the contemporary stories we consume and enjoy today. By doing so, we identify the universal principles that all good stories share, investigate how these principles connect us all despite cultural, ethnic, and geographical differences, learn how to incorporate Aristotle’s precepts into our own creative expression and communications—and most importantly, explore the vital function of storytelling, why we tell them, what makes a good one, and how to best tell one effectively. Preference given to first years and sophomores. This course is not open to students previously enrolled in Classical Storytelling and Modern Screenwriting. HU

* HUMS 220a / HIST 289a / HSAR 399a / HSHM 407a, Collecting Nature  Paola Bertucci
A history of museums before the emergence of the modern museum. Focus on: cabinets of curiosities and Wunderkammern, anatomical theaters and apothecaries’ shops, alchemical workshops and theaters of machines, collections of monsters, rarities, and exotic specimens. WR, HU TR

* HUMS 221a / EDST 312a / HIST 423Ja / PLSC 310a, Idolizing Education  Mordechai Levy-Eichel
This course is an iconoclastic introduction to the study of education. Besides examining the purposes and practice of education and learning across a wide variety of times and places, the course examines the study of education today in order to see what can be gained from a skeptical approach to the subject. Particular emphasis is placed on the origins and development of the research university. SO
Artifacts of Greek art and architecture made in honor of Dionysos, the god of wine and theater, whose worship involved ecstatic experiences. The Great Dionysia, a festival where theatrical productions were performed, as the source of inspiration for artifacts and architectural monuments. Objects and structures such as painted vases and theaters as means of keeping the realm of Dionysos present in daily experience. **HU**

What can the Humanities tell us about climate change? The Humanities help us to better understand the relationship between everyday individual experience, and our rapidly changing natural world. To that end, students read literary, political, historical, and religious texts to better understand how individuals both depend on, and struggle against, the natural environment in order to survive. **HU**

Consideration of the role animals play in our aesthetic, ethical, political, and scientific worlds through reading of fiction, poetry, philosophy, and critical theory. Topics include: animal sentience and experience; vegetarianism; animal fables; pet keeping; animals alongside disability, race, and gender; and the representation of animal life in the visual arts. **WR, HU**

In-depth examination of James Baldwin’s canon, tracking his work as an American artist, citizen, and witness to United States society, politics, and culture during the Cold War, the Civil Rights era, and the Black Arts Movement. **HU**

This course examines representations of the Orient in the French literature from 17th to the 20th centuries in fiction, poetry, travel literature, and art. The topics range from problems of Orientalism and encounters with peoples, monuments, and cultures of the Muslim Middle East, to Oriental influences on French prose, poetry and arts, use of Oriental “Other” in social and political critique, the popular lure of Oriental exoticism, fantasy and fantastic, the Orient as a romantic space and literature of escapism and also the impact of the “Imagined Orient” on figurative art. The seminar makes use of the extensive collections at the Beinecke Rare Books and Manuscripts Library like Denon, *Voyage dans la Basse et la Haute Égypte*, the Reserve of Sterling, Botta and Flandin, *Monuments de Ninive*, and the Yale University Art Gallery for drawings and photographs. Readings cover the Middle East (Levant and Egypt), Iran (Persia) and include works by preeminent French writers such as Molère, Montesquieu, Voltaire, Chateaubriand, Nerval, Gautier, Flaubert, travelers like Tavernier, Denon, Jane Dieulafoy or Bouvier and essayists such as Said. Artists like Delacroix, Decamps, Ingres, Horace Vernet, Chassériau, Fromentin and Gérôme are also considered. Prerequisite: Knowledge of French at L5 level. **LS, HU**

Issues of faith examined through poetry, with a focus on modern Christian poems from 1850 to the present. Some attention to poems from other faith traditions, as well as to secular and antireligious poetry. **HU**

This is a course on the interrelations between philosophical and literary writing beginning with the English Revolution and ending with the beginnings of Romanticism. We read major works in empiricism, political philosophy, and ethics alongside poetry and fiction in several genres. Topics include the mind/body problem, political ideology, subjectivity and gender, and aesthetic experience as they take philosophical and literary form during a long moment of historical change. **WR, HU**

Du Fu has for the last millennium been considered China's greatest poet. Close study of nearly one-sixth of his complete works, contextualized by selections from the tradition that defined the art in his age. Exploration of the roles literature plays in interpreting human lives and the ways different traditional forms shape different ethical orientation. Poetry as a vehicle for moral reflection. All readings are in English. **WR, HU**

An introduction to the literature, culture, and thought of premodern China, from the beginnings of the written record to the turn of the twentieth century. Close study of textual and visual primary sources, with attention to their historical and cultural backdrops. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 join a weekly Mandarin-language discussion section. No knowledge of Chinese required for students enrolled in EALL 200. Students enrolled in CHNS 200 must have L5 proficiency in Mandarin or permission of the course instructor. **HU TR**

Recent headlines about China in the world, deciphered in both modern and historical contexts. Interpretation of new events and diverse texts through transnational connections. Topics include China and Africa, Mandarinization, labor and migration, Chinese America, nationalism and humiliation, and art and counterfeits. Readings and discussion in English. **HU**

A survey of eighteenth-century European intellectual life, considered in its social and cultural contexts and with attention to its historical legacies, focusing on responses to emerging global networks of trade, finance, and empire. **HU TR**

The French Revolution of 1789 and its legacies, as viewed through the late-eighteenth-century debates about democracy, equality, representative government, and historical change that shaped an enduring agenda for historical and political thought in Europe and around the world. **WR, HU**
* HUMS 285a / EALL 233a / EAST 243a / HSAR 417a, History of Chinese Imperial Parks and Private Gardens  Pauline Lin
Study of notable parks and private gardens of China, spanning from the 2nd century BCE to contemporary China. Themes include the history, politics, and economics surrounding construction of parks; garden designs and planning; cultural representations of the garden; and modern reinterpretations of landscapes. Some sessions meet in the Yale University Art Gallery. No previous knowledge of Chinese language is necessary. Students previously enrolled in EALL 050 may not take this course for credit.  HU

* HUMS 287b / GMAN 373b / HIST 455Jb / WGS 347b, Resistance in Theory and Practice  Terence Renaud
Exploration of the histories and theories of resistance in the modern world. How liberation movements, guerrillas, and oppressed groups appeal to resistance as an organizational strategy and as moral justification. Readings include Kant, Thoreau, Nietzsche, Luxemburg, Lenin, Gandhi, Fanon, Arendt, Marcuse, Foucault, A. Lorde, Said, and J. Butler. Themes include antifascism to terrorism; violence to nonviolence, the New Left to Black Lives Matter.  HU TR

* HUMS 291a, The Real and the Virtual in Literature and Film  Anna Alber
In the age of reality TV, social media, and fake news, our relation to the world and to others is increasingly mediated by virtual images and spaces, a condition that postmodern theorists have called hyperreality. Our course asks: Is it possible to maintain a confident sense of what’s real when we are constantly inundated by powerful, highly produced versions of reality? How do various media shape our ideas about what counts as real, true, or authentic? Our course explores the changing relationship between the real and the virtual as it is reflected in twentieth century literature and film. We consider what consequences our being surrounded by images and media has not only for art, but also for modern subjectivity and for politics. Our travels in hyperreality take us from postmodern theories of simulation to the labyrinthine fictions of Borges and Calvino to cyberpunk films such as The Matrix and, finally, to contemporary speculative fiction and TV. Sophomore Seminar: Registration preference to sophomores. Not normally open to first-year students.  WR, HU

* HUMS 292b / EALL 213b / PHIL 209b / RLST 211b, Philosophy, Religion, and Literature in Medieval China  Lucas Bender
Exploration of the rich intellectual landscape of the Chinese middle ages, introducing students to seminal works of Chinese civilization and to the history of their debates and interpretation in the first millennium. No previous knowledge of China is assumed. Instead, the course serves as a focused introduction to Chinese philosophy, religion, and literature.  HU TR

* HUMS 302a / PLSC 303a, Demagoguery and Democracy  Bryan Garsten
This course offers historical and theoretical perspective on contemporary debates about democratic leadership and political discourse. How can demagoguery be distinguished from healthy forms of popular leadership? Under what conditions do demagogues tend to emerge? What institutional arrangements and political strategies help to manage demagogues? The course traces these themes through a set of conversations that begin in ancient Greek and Roman texts on the art of persuasion and continue through the Renaissance and early modern period and into revolutionary and post-revolutionary thinking about leaders’ claims to speak for the people. Contemporary issues including populism and the impact of social media are addressed.  HU, SO

* HUMS 303b, Women in Greek Political Thought  Staff
In the classical polis, women were silent and absent, confined to the household and excluded from political life. Yet women remain loud and present in Greek political thought. What are we to make of Euripides’ Medea, for example, who screams that she would stand in the first line of battle three times rather than give birth once? The incorporation of women into Greek political thought raises enduring questions — about hierarchy, rule, and justice; courage, war, and mourning; citizenship, friendship, marriage, and motherhood; the definition of the demos and the threat of a “barbarian other”; and the emotions, the virtues, and the well-ordered soul. To address these questions, we read texts (or selections from texts) by Thucydides, Aristophanes, Sophocles, Euripides, Plato, Wole Soyinka, and Arlene Saxenhouse.  WR, HU

* HUMS 313b / HIST 212Jb, Philosophy of Dissent in Central and Eastern Europe  Marci Shore
This is a seminar in the field of European intellectual history, based on primary sources. It focuses on how philosophers, novelists, sociologists, and other thinkers developed and articulated a philosophy of dissent under communism. More specific topics include the relationships between temporality and subjectivity and between truth and lies, and the role that existentialism played in formulating philosophical critiques of repression. Readings consist of a mixture of philosophical and literary works from the Soviet Union, East Germany and the lands in-between. Potential authors include Merab Mamardashvili, Danilo Kiš, Józef Tischner, Adam Michnik, Jacek Kuro#, Ladislav Hejdánek, Václav Havel, Jan Patočka, Leszek Kołakowski, Gajo Petrovi#, Norman Manea, Lev Kopelev, Igor Pomerantsev, Tomas Vendlova.  HU

* HUMS 319a / AMST 390a / ENGL 280a, Poetry, Film, Music and Art: John Ashbery’s Work  Karin Roffman
A study of the poetry of John Ashbery (1927–2017) through examining the films, music, and art that provoked his imagination and structured and inhabited his poems. In the course, we study his original paintings and collages, read from his published art criticism, film and music reviews, and explore his off-the-cuff reactions to contemporary work in correspondence with friends. In short, we consider how he practiced and extended the art of American poetry through a vivid, lively, and continuous conversation with other arts. We also discuss critiques of the interdisciplinarity of Ashbery’s poetics in work by second generation New York School poets.  WR, HU

* HUMS 320b / LITR 324b / THST 330b, Representations of the Underworld  Toni Dorfman
What is the underworld? What questions have different ideas about the underworld posed about mortality, freedom, and goodness? Topics include dreams, hell, ghosts, the unconscious, and string theory. Sophomore standing required.  HU

* HUMS 322b / GMAN 365b / LITR 460b, German Novels After 1945  Rudiger Campme
The course discusses exemplary novels in German language after 1945 from West and East Germany and Germany after Reunification, as well as from Austria and Switzerland. Part I, "Zero Hour - or Not," on the political critique of Nazi Germany and the attempt at an
The truth can set you free, but of course it can also get you into trouble. How do the constraints on the pursuit and expression of “truth” change with the nature of the censoring regime, from the family to the church to the modern nation-state? What causes regimes to protect perceived vulnerabilities in the systems of knowledge they privilege? What happens when conflict between regimes implicates modes of knowing? Are there types of truth that any regime would—or should—find dangerous? What are the possible motives and pathways for self-censorship? We begin with the revolt of the Hebrews against polytheistic Egypt and the Socratic questioning of democracy, and end with various contemporary cases of censorship within and between regimes. We consider these events and texts, and their reverberations and reversals in history, in relation to select analyses of the relations between truth and power, including Hobbes, Locke, Kant, Brecht, Leo Strauss, Foucault, Chomsky, Waldron, Zizek, and Xu Zhongrun.

Permission of the instructor required.

William Klein

Sometimes the line is so thin between the genres of comedy and tragedy that it disappears altogether. Scripts by Gogol and Chekhov through Beckett and Spike Lee exemplify radical uncertainty. (Says Nell in Endgame, “There’s nothing funnier than unhappiness.”) Another approach to anxiety and uncertainty is magic realism, a genre describing some 20th-century fiction but which could also characterize most live theater, from Aeschylus and Aristophanes to Kushner. Such questions as, What are the aesthetic and ethical functions of irony? What constitutes a good life? What are we thinking about as we wait for the Covid-19 vaccine? Permission of the instructor required.

Paul Grimstad

The course looks closely at detective stories, novels and films, with attention to the basic narrative structure of criminal enigma, logical investigation and denouement (whodunnit), and considers the meaning of “genre” more broadly. Starting with the proto-detective story Oedipus Rex – in which tragic drama takes the form of a murder mystery – we move on to Edgar Allan Poe’s invention of the genre proper in “The Murders in the Rue Morgue” and “The Purloined Letter.” From there we go to Poe’s “golden age” inheritors Arthur Conan Doyle, G.K. Chesterton, Agatha Christie, and Dorothy Sayers, as well as the adaptation of Doyle’s tales for the BBC series Sherlock. We also spend time on American “hard boiled” writers (Dashiell Hammett, The Maltese Falcon and John Huston’s 1941 film adaptation of the novel); fiction which draws upon the conventions of detective stories without being genre fiction (Nabokov, Borges), non-fiction works which have the structure of a detective story (Freud’s “Wolf Man” case study); neo-noir film (Chinatown); works that fuse detective fiction and science-fiction (Minority Report) and recent film homage to “golden age” whodunnits (Knives Out). Students write essays making interpretive claims and using evidence from works on the syllabus, with emphasis on writing clear prose in support of an original argument.

Fatima Naqvi

We will look at a variety of German-language feature films from 1945 to the present in order to focus on issues of trauma, guilt, remembrance (and its counterpart: amnesia), gender, Heimat or “homeland,” national and transnational self-fashioning, terrorism, and ethics. How do the Second World War and its legacy inflect these films? What socio-political and economic factors influence the individual and collective identities that these films articulate? How do the predominant concerns shift with the passage of time and with changing media? How is the category of nation constructed and contested within the narratives themselves? Close attention will be paid to the aesthetic issues and the concept of authorship. Films by Staudte, Wolf, Kluge, Radax, Wenders, Fassbinder, Schroeter, Farocki, Haneke, Petzold, Schanelec, Seidl, Hausner, Geyrhalter, among others.

Kirk Wettters

The literary forms of novel, the novella, the short story and the fairy tale were fundamentally reconfigured in Germany around 1800. In the decades 1790-1820, narrative forms begin to take on the importance and enduring shape that will extend through the 19th century and beyond. Techniques such as frame narration (stories in stories), unreliable narrators, gothic and supernatural elements, the Bildungsroman, the novel of the artist, take shape in the context of a highly experimental literary culture. Works covered include Goethe, Conversations of German Refugees and Wilhelm Meister’s Journeyman Years; Schiller, The Ghost-Seer; Tieck, Blond Eckbert; Novalis, Heinrich of Ofterdingen; E.T.A. Hoffmann, The Sandmann and Kreisleriana. Readings are available in German and English.

Kirk Wettters

This course considers together several phenomena often considered separately: the conversion of arable land to pasture; the central place of property in seventeenth-century English formulations of political liberty; and the increasing racialization of forced labor in the period. We read seminal works of political theory produced in England's tumultuous seventeenth century, namely those of Hobbes and Locke. We also explore how transformations of labor and property necessarily exert influence in literature, focusing on Andrew Marvell, Aphra Behn, John Dryden, and Daniel Defoe.
* HUMS 348a / FILM 431 / FILM 432a / LITR 432a, World War II: Homefront Literature and Film  Katie Trumpener
Examination of quotidian, civilian World War II experiences in many parts of Europe. Modes of literary and filmic reflection occasioned by the war; civilian perspectives on the relationship between history and everyday life, during and after the war; children’s experience of war; and ways homefront and occupation memories shaped postwar avant-gardes.  HU

* HUMS 349b / LITR 470b, Identity in Modern Thought  Benjamin Barasch
Identity is at the heart of our present social conflicts, from campus debates about power and privilege, to movements like Black Lives Matter and Me Too, to the resurgence of ethnic nationalism. But what is identity, after all? How does it come into being? What role do “nature” and “culture” play in this process, and are they separable? To what extent are we defined by our belonging to identity categories such as race, class, gender, and sexuality? How free are we to create our own identities? What makes me “me”? Is there a true self? This class explores the complexities of identity through readings in modern literature, philosophy, and social theory, from psychoanalysis to critical race theory, romanticism to postmodernism, autobiography to autofiction. Authors include J.-J. Rousseau, William Wordsworth, R. W. Emerson, Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, G. H. Mead, Erik Erikson, Judith Butler, Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Djuna Barnes, Nella Larsen, W. E. B. Du Bois, Frantz Fanon, Ralph Ellison, James Baldwin, Ta-Nehisi Coates, Thomas Chatterton Williams, Saidiya Hartman, Claudia Rankine, Ben Lerner, Maggie Nelson, Camille Paglia.  HU

* HUMS 380a / ENGL 395a / LITR 154a, The Bible as a Literature  Leslie Brisman
Study of the Bible as a literature—a collection of works exhibiting a variety of attitudes toward the conflicting claims of tradition and originality, historicity and literariness.  WR, HU RP

* HUMS 411b, Life Worth Living  Staff
Comparative examination of the shape of the life advocated by several of the world’s normative traditions, both religious and nonreligious. Concrete instantiations of these traditions explored through contemporary exemplars drawn from outside the professional religious or philosophical spheres. Readings from the founding texts of Buddhism, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Marxism, and utilitarianism.  HU

* HUMS 427b / ENGL 456b / JDST 316b / LITR 348b, The Practice of Literary Translation  Peter Cole
This course combines a seminar on the history and theory of translation (Tuesdays) with a hands-on workshop (Thursdays). The readings lead us through a series of case studies comparing, on the one hand, multiple translations of given literary works and, on the other, classic statements about translation—by translators themselves and prominent theorists. We consider both poetry and prose from the Bible, selections from Chinese, Greek, and Latin verse, classical Arabic and Persian literature, prose by Cervantes, Borges, and others, and modern European poetry (including Pushkin, Baudelaire, and Rilke). Students are expected to prepare short class presentations, participate in a weekly workshop, try their hand at a series of translation exercises, and undertake an intensive, semester-long translation project. Proficiency in a foreign language is required.  HU

* HUMS 428b / ENGL 483b / JDST 343b / LITR 305b, Advanced Literary Translation  Robyn Creswell
A sequel to LITR 348, The Practice of Literary Translation. 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. Prerequisite: LITR 348.  HU

* HUMS 435b / HIST 232Jb / JDST 27b / MMES 342b / RLST 201b, Medieval Jews, Christians, and Muslims In Conversation  Ivan Marcus
How members of Jewish, Christian, and Muslim communities thought of and interacted with members of the other two cultures during the Middle Ages. Cultural grids and expectations each imposed on the other; the rhetoric of otherness—humans or devils, purity or impurity, and animal imagery; and models of religious community and power in dealing with the other when confronted with cultural differences. Counts toward either European or Middle Eastern distributional credit within the History major, upon application to the director of undergraduate studies.  WR, HU

* HUMS 444a, The City of Rome  Virginia Jewiss
An interdisciplinary study of Rome from its legendary origins through its evolving presence at the crossroads of Europe and the world. Significant moments of Roman and world history will be considered through the literature, intellectual history, political science, theology, and arts inspired by Rome.  HU

* HUMS 451a / GMAN 377a / LITR 306a / PHIL 418a, Karl Marx’s Capital  Paul North
A careful reading of Karl Marx’s classic, Capital volume 1, a work of philosophy, economy, and critical social theory that has had a significant global readership for over 150 years. During our work with the book, we also make reference to Capital volume 2, as well as interpretations by influential readers. This is a Franke Seminar in the Humanities at the Whitney Humanities Center. Students who enroll in the seminar will also attend special weekly colloquia with visiting scholars.  HU

* HUMS 452a / ITAL 321a, Translating Dante  Virginia Jewiss
Dante Alighieri is celebrated for The Divine Comedy, his epic journey through Inferno, Purgatory, and Paradise, in which he moves from despair to bliss, watched over by his beloved Beatrice. Yet the story of Beatrice begins well before the Divine Comedy, in a powerful and problematic text called the Vita nuova (New Life). Here Dante recounts how his life was changed by his youthful encounter
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with her. Simultaneously a profound exploration of the power of love and an elaborate experimentation with poetic form, this early work is essential to our amorous and literary traditions. It is also a meditation on translation: of life to text; of prose to verse; of the divine to human, and vice versa. A moving reflection on beginning, and beginning again in the face of tragedy, this medieval work is freshly relevant in our current historical moment. We analyze the text through a comparative analysis of several translations before turning to relevant moments in the Divine Comedy and a selection of modern and contemporary works that the Vita nuova has inspired. This course offers a rare opportunity to read deeply Dante's most enigmatic, restless work, to study its influence, and to participate in the making of a new translation of the New Life.

* HUMS 470a and HUMS 471b, Special Studies in the Humanities  
  Paul Grimstad

For students who wish to pursue a topic in Humanities not otherwise covered. May be used for research or for directed reading under the guidance of one or more faculty advisers. In either case a term paper or its equivalent is required, as are regular meetings with the adviser or advisers. To apply, a student should present a prospectus and a bibliography signed by the adviser or advisers to the director of undergraduate studies. Enrollment limited to juniors and seniors majoring in Humanities.

* HUMS 491a or b, The Senior Essay  
  Paul Grimstad

Independent library-based research under faculty supervision. To register, students must consult the director of undergraduate studies no later than the end of registration period in the previous term. A written plan of study approved by a faculty adviser must be submitted to the director of undergraduate studies by November 16, 2018, if the essay is to be submitted during the spring term, by May 1, 2019, for yearlong or fall-term essays. A rough draft of the essay is due at noon on March 25, 2019 for spring-term essays or on October 29, 2018 for fall-term essays. The final essay is due at noon on April 8, 2019 for spring-term essays or on December 3, 2018 for fall-term essays; late essays will be penalized by a lower grade.  

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