COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (LITR)

* LITR 022a, Music and Literature  Candace Skorupa
This seminar explores the rivalry between music and literature, the attraction and repulsion between these two art forms, and the dialogue between writers and composers. In select fiction and poetry spanning a variety of cultures and times, we look at the aesthetic challenges of conveying music in words; in select music from the same periods, we study the use of literary themes and narrative. How does music inhabit literature, and literature influence music? We read fiction describing music and borrowing musical forms; we study symphonies and opera inspired by literature; we look at films that bring together these two arts. Students examine theoretical approaches and learn comparative methods useful for literature and culture courses. Though not required, musical experience and/or interest is welcomed for the seminar, which may be taken simultaneously with gateway courses in the humanities. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* LITR 026a, The Literature of Sports  Robyn Creswell
Writers on sport examine ideas of beauty and human divinity; virtuosic performance; group identity; questions of race, class, and gender; global realities of migration; and the ubiquity of spectacle. Topics include origins and essence of play; and case studies in the literature of sports, including the Olympic games of classical Greece, bull fighting, Muhammad Ali, cricket and colonialism, and the globalization of soccer. Readings by Pindar, Hemingway, Huizinga, CLR James, Mailer, Delillo, Foster-Wallace, and Ben Fountain. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* LITR 027a / HUMS 027a, Six Pretty Good Selves  Ayesha Ramachandran and Marta Figlerowicz
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. Friday sessions will alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU 1½ Course cr

* LITR 028a or b / HUMS 029a or b, Medicine and the Humanities: Certainty and Unknowing  Sherwin Nuland
Sherwin Nuland often referred to medicine as “the Uncertain Art.” In this course, we address the role of uncertainty in medicine, and the role that narrative plays in capturing that uncertainty. We focus our efforts on major authors and texts that define the modern medical humanities, with primary readings by Mikhail Bulgakov, Henry Marsh, Atul Gawande, and Lisa Sanders. Other topics include the philosophy of science (with a focus on Karl Popper), rationalism and romanticism (William James), and epistemology and scientism (Wittgenstein). Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* LITR 031a / EALL 020a / HUMS 024a, Six Pretty Good Poems  Lucas Bender
This seminar that serves as an introduction to the Humanities. The course considers the way that poetry, across cultures and historical eras, allows authors to navigate the challenging relationship between the universal and the particular. We read six poems that are considered among the best in their respective, and very different, traditions. We also make extensive use of Yale’s rich manuscript archives, historical object collections, and art galleries, and we devote sustained attention to improving academic writing skills. Friday sessions alternate between writing workshops and field trips to Yale collections. Part of the "Six Pretty Good Ideas" program. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  HU

* LITR 130a or b / HUMS 130a or b, How to Read  Staff
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

* LITR 140b, How To Compare  Jane Tylus
This course is an exploration of literary comparison from methodological as well as historical perspectives. We compare texts within genres, across genres and media, across periods, and between cultures and languages. We consider questions such as whether all comparisons must assume a common ground, and whether there is always an implicit politics to any comparison. Topics range from theories of translation and ekphrasis to exoticism and untranslatability. Readings include classics by critics such as Aristotle, Ibn Sina, and Kristeva, and writers such as Marie de France, Nezami, and Calvino. It also engages with the literature of our own moment: we will read a newly-translated novel by the Chilean writer Nona Fernández, and the Iranian poet Kayvan Tahmasebian will visit the class for a conversation. We will also discuss films (Parajanov and Barta) and a new Russian computer game. This course fulfills an introductory requirement for students considering one of the majors in the Comparative Literature department, but all are welcome, and the methodologies and questions discussed in the class are useful for any kind of humanistic inquiry.  HU

* LITR 154b / ENGL 395b / HUMS 380b, 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
* LITR 168a or b / ENGL 129a or b / HUMS 127a or b / THST 129a or b, Tragedy in the European Literary Tradition Staff
The genre of tragedy from its origins in ancient Greece and Rome through the European Renaissance to the present day. Themes of justice, religion, free will, family, gender, race, and dramaturgy. Works might include Aristotle’s Poetics or Homer’s Iliad and plays by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Hrotsvitha, Shakespeare, Lope de Vega, Calderon, Racine, Büchner, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekhov, Wedekind, Synge, Lorca, Brecht, Beckett, Soyinka, Tarell Alvin McCrane, and Lynn Nottage. Focus on textual analysis and on developing the craft of persuasive argument through writing. WR, HU

* LITR 169a or b / ENGL 130a or b, Epic in the European Literary Tradition Staff
The epic tradition traced from its foundations in ancient Greece and Rome to the modern novel. The creation of cultural values and identities; exile and homecoming; the heroic in times of war and of peace; the role of the individual within society; memory and history; politics of gender, race, and religion. Works include Homer’s Odyssey, Vergil’s Aeneid, Dante’s Inferno, Cervantes’s Don Quixote, and Joyce’s Ulysses. Focus on textual analysis and on developing the craft of persuasive argument through writing. WR, HU

* LITR 180b / HUMS 210b / ITAL 317b / WGSS 317b, Women in the Middle Ages Christiana Purdy Moudarres
Medieval understandings of womanhood examined through analysis 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

* LITR 181a / EALL 236a, Japanese Poetry and Poetics Edward Kamens
Core concepts and traditions of classical Japanese poetry explored through the medium of translation. Readings from anthologies and treatises of the ninth through early twentieth centuries. Attention to recent critical studies in transcultural poetic theory. Inspection and discussion of related artifacts in the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library and the Yale University Art Gallery. Readings and discussion in English. No knowledge of Japanese required. Previous study of literary texts is recommended but not required. WR, HU

LITR 183a / HUMS 180a / ITAL 310a, Dante in Translation Christiana Purdy Moudarres
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 TR

LITR 194a / ENGL 154a / FREN 216a / HUMS 134a, The Multicultural Middle Ages Ardis Buttefield and Marcel Elias
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. WR, HU

LITR 195b / ENGL 205b / HUMS 200b / MUSI 462b, Medieval Songlines Ardis Buttefield
Introduction to medieval song in England via modern poetic theory, material culture, affect theory, and sound studies. Song is studied through foregrounding music as well as words, words as well as music. WR, HU

LITR 202a / RUSS 260b, Nabokov and World Literature Marijeta Bozovic
Vladimir Nabokov’s writings explored in the context of his life story and of the structures and institutions of literary life in Russian émigré circles. Themes of exile, memory, and nostalgia; hybrid cultural identities and cosmopolitan elites; language and bilingualism; the aims and aesthetics of émigré and diasporic modernism in novels and other media. Additional readings from works of world literature inspired and influenced by Nabokov. Readings and discusson in English. WR, HU

LITR 214b / FREN 240b / HUMS 210b, 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

* LITR 220b / CZEC 301b / RSEE 300b, Milan Kundera: The Czech Novelist and French Thinker Karen von Kunés
Close reading of Kundera’s novels, with analysis of his aesthetics and artistic development. Relationships to French, German, and Spanish literatures and to history, philosophy, music, and art. Topics include paradoxes of public and private life, the irrational in erotic behavior, the duality of body and soul, the interplay of imagination and reality, the function of literary metaphor, and the art of composition. Readings and discussion in English. HU TR

* LITR 224a / FREN 403a / HUMS 409a, Proust Interpretations: Reading Remembrance of Things Past R Howard Bloch and Pierre Saint-Amand
A close reading (in English) of Marcel Proust’s masterpiece, Remembrance of Things Past, with emphasis upon major themes: time and memory, desire and jealousy, social life and artistic experience, sexual identity and personal authenticity, class and nation. Portions from Swann’s Way, Within a Budding Grove, Cities of the Plain, Time Regained considered from biographical, psychological/psychoanalytic, gender, sociological, historical, and philosophical perspectives. WR, HU TR

* LITR 235b / JDST 320b, Modern Jewish Poets Peter Cole
This course introduces students to a diverse group of modern Jewish poets—from Gertrude Stein, Moyshe Leyb-Halpern, and Adrienne Rich to Muriel Rukeyser, Yehuda Amichai, Paul Celan, Edmond Jabès, Leonard Cohen, and others. Writing in English, Yiddish, German, Hebrew, and French, these poets gave seminal expression to Jewish life in a variety of modes and permutations, and in the process produced poems of lasting and universal value. The class explores work as art and considers pressing questions of cultural, historical, and political context. All readings are in English. HU TR
* LITR 239a / CLCV 216a / MGRK 216a / WGSS 209a, Dionysus in Modernity  George Syrimis
Modernity’s fascination with the myth of Dionysus. Questions of agency, identity and community, and psychological integrity and the modern constitution of the self. Manifestations of Dionysus in literature, anthropology, and music; the Apollonian-Dionysiac dichotomy; twentieth-century variations of these themes in psychoanalysis, surrealism, and magical realism.  HU TR

* LITR 240a / GMAN 248a / HUMS 236a / THST 248a, Goethe's Faust  Kirk Watters and Jan Hagens
Goethe’s Faust, with special attention to Faust II and to the genesis of Faust in its various versions throughout Goethe’s lifetime. Emphasis on the work in context of Goethe’s time and in the later reception and criticism. Reading knowledge of German beneficial but not required.  HU

LITR 245a / RSEE 254a / RUSS 254a, Tolstoy and Dostoevsky  Molly Brunson
Close reading of major novels by two of Russia’s greatest authors. Focus on the interrelations of theme, form, and literary-cultural context. Readings and discussion in English.  HU

* LITR 251b / EALL 265b / EAST 253b, Japanese Literature after 1970  Timothy Goddard
This course provides a survey of Japanese literature from 1970 to the present. Readings include novels and essays from a diverse range of authors, addressing themes such as identity, language, memory, domesticity, postmodernism, and racial discrimination. Students develop extensive knowledge of contemporary Japanese literature, while also cultivating skills in close reading and research methods. All readings are in English translation; no knowledge of Japanese is required.  HU TR

* LITR 262a / GMAN 414a / HUMS 414a, Georg Büchner's Revolutions  Dietrich Thomae and Rudiger Campe
Georg Büchner’s (1813-1837) 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 trail blazers of social naturalism and modernist (postdramatic) theater. Celan, in the Meridian, gives an idiosyncratic account of Büchner’s travel across times and places. The course contextualizes the close reading of Büchner’s work with materials from the French Revolution, early socialists, Marx; French, German, British Romanticism; prose and theater ca. 1900 when Büchner is rediscovered; Celan.  HU

* LITR 265b / EALL 265b / EAST 253b, China in the World  Jing Tsu
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 counterfeiting. Readings and discussion in English.  HU

* LITR 267b / ARBC 171b / ARBC 527b / MMES 271b, Hunger in Eden: Mohamed Choukri's Narratives  Jonas Elbouzy
A survey of the work of Mohamed Choukri, one of the most prominent Moroccan, if not Arab, writers to have shaped the modern Arabic literary canon. His influence has been instrumental in forming a generation of writers and enthusiastic readers, who fervently cherish his narratives. Students dive deeply into Choukri’s narratives, analyzing them with an eye toward their cultural and political importance. The class looks to Choukri’s amazing life story to reveal the roots of his passion for writing and explores the culture of the time and places about which he writes. Through his narratives, students better understand the political environment within which they were composed and the importance of Choukri’s work to today’s reader regarding current debates over Arab identity. This class surveys the entirety of his work, contextualizing within the sphere of Arabic novelistic tradition. Prerequisite: ARBC 151, L4 or equivalent, or permission from the instructor.  15

* LITR 269b / AFST 414b / FREN 414b / MMES 261b, Aftelives of Algeria's Revolution  Jill Jarvis
The Algerian War for Independence from France was the longest and most violent decolonizing war of the 20th century. This war and its aftermath transformed political, social, intellectual, and artistic life on both sides of the Mediterranean—and it became a model for other decolonizing and civil rights movements across the world. Memory of this war continues to shape current debates in Europe and its aftermath transformed political, social, intellectual, and artistic life on both sides of the Mediterranean—and it became a model for other decolonizing and civil rights movements across the world. Memory of this war continues to shape current debates in Europe and North Africa about state violence, terrorism, racism, censorship, immigration, feminism, human rights, and justice. Through study of film, testimonies, graphic novels, and theater, this seminar charts the war’s surprising and enduring legacies. Films may include Pontecorvo's The Battle of Algiers, Haneke's Caché, and Pani'tel's Octobre à Paris. Literary works by Djebar, Camus, Sebbar, Etcherelli, Dib, Cixous, Kateb, Fanon, De Beauvoir, Mechakra. The course is conducted in French. If you have any questions about your French ability, contact the instructor.  15, HU

* LITR 273a / HUMS 215a, The Poetry of Vision: East and West  Riley Soles
Samuel Johnson's Dictionary of 1755 provides four definitions of the word vision: (1) sight; the faculty of seeing, (2) the act of seeing, (3) a supernatural appearance; a spectre; a phantom, (4) a dream; something in a dream. A dream happens to a sleeping man, a vision may happen to a waking man. A dream is supposed natural, a vision miraculous; but they are confounded. This course explores poetry that deals with any or all of these definitions, across a wide range of cultural and historical contexts, from the visionary, astral journeys of ancient Chinese verse to the visionary, redemptive apocalypse of William Blake, from the fleeting beauty in Japanese haiku to the high Sublime of American shore odes, from the psychedelic sermons of Buddhist scripture to the dream images of Geoffrey Chaucer, from the divine, cosmic manifestation in the Bhagavad Gita to the non-linear, multilayered poetics of Stéphane Mallarmé, from the spiritual and erotic yearnings of Rumi to the romantic and poetic longings of Hart Crane.  HU
* LITR 294a / LAST 394a / PORT 394a, World Cities and Narratives  Kenneth David Jackson
Study of world cities and selected narratives that describe, belong to, or represent them. Topics range from the rise of the urban novel in European capitals to the postcolonial fictional worlds of major Portuguese, Brazilian, and Lusophone cities. Conducted in English.  WR, HU TR

* LITR 295a / AFAM 352a / AMST 438a / ER&M 291a / WGSS 343a, Caribbean Diasporic Literature  Fadila Halbchi
An examination of contemporary literature written by Caribbean writers who have migrated to, or who journey between, different countries around the Atlantic rim. Focus on literature written in English in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries, both fiction and nonfiction. Writers include Caryl Phillips, Nalo Hopkinson, and Jamaica Kincaid.  HU

* LITR 296b / LAST 392b / PORT 392b, Brazil's Cannibal Modernism: From Modern Art Week to Antropofagia  Kenneth David Jackson
A study of Brazilian modernism in literature and the arts, centered on São Paulo's "Modern Art Week" of 1922 and the "Cannibal Manifesto" from the perspective of major figures and works, and transatlantic exchanges with figures from the European avant-gardes. Includes analysis of antropofagia as a post-colonial strategy. Reading knowledge of French and Portuguese helpful but not required.  WR, HU TR

* LITR 301a / FILM 360a / RSEE 380a / RUSS 380a, Putin’s Russia and Protest Culture  Marijeta Bozovic
Survey of Russian literature and culture since the fall of communism. The chaos of the 1990s; the solidification of power in Putin’s Russia; the recent rise of protest culture. Sources include literature, film, and performances by art collectives. Readings and discussion in English; texts available in Russian.  WR, HU

* LITR 302b / FREN 307b, France by Rail: Trains in French Literature, Film, and History  Morgane Cadieu
Exploration of the aesthetics of trains in French and Francophone literature and culture, from the end of the nineteenth-century and the first locomotives, to the automatically driven subway in twenty-first century Paris. Focus on the role of trains in industrialization, colonization, deportation, decolonization, and immigration. Corpus includes novels, poems, plays, films, paintings, graphic novels, as well as theoretical excerpts on urban spaces and public transportation. Activities include: building a train at the CEID and visiting the Beinecke collections and the Art Gallery. May not be taken after FREN 306.  WR, HU

LITR 318b / ENGL 191b / HUMS 206b / MMES 215b / 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

* LITR 328b / MGRK 212b, Folktales and Fairy Tales  Maria Kaliambou
History of the folktale from the late seventeenth through the late twentieth centuries. Basic concepts, terminology, and interpretations of folktales, with some attention to twentieth-century theoretical approaches. Performance and audience, storytellers, and gender-related distinctions. Interconnections between oral and written traditions in narratives from western Europe and Greece.  HU TR

* LITR 335a / AFST 341 / ER&M 441a / PORT 341a, Crossing Cultures in the Portuguese Diaspora  Kenneth David Jackson
Inquiry into the first encounters of the Portuguese with the people and cultures of Africa, Asia, and Brazil after the voyage of Vasco da Gama (1497-99). Topics include acculturation, contact peoples and languages, creolistics and hybrid cultures, music, plants and cuisines, and the theory of space in between cultures. Readings include the epic, histories, memoirs, and travel literature, and the “Cannibal Manifesto.” Reading knowledge of Portuguese suggested.  WR, HU TR

LITR 339b / ENGL 159b / HUMS 213b / 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, reworkings, 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 was being 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 Akira 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

* LITR 345a / EVST 228a / HIST 450a / HUMS 228a, Climate Change and the Humanities  Katja Lindskog
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
said to be detrimental to social cooperation, as it fuels the “frenzy to achieve distinction” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau). When it comes to money, it represents power and desire. It is regarded as an enabler of freedom by some, and as a source of alienation by others. Money is a social fabric at large.

Money matters, whether we like it or not. Besides being an economic means, it plays a pervasive role in the lives of individuals and the social fabric at large. 

* LITR 348b / ENGL 436b / HUMS 427b / JDST 316b, 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

* LITR 359b / FILM 457b / ITAL 303b, Italian Film from Postwar to Postmodern  Millicent Marcus
A study of important Italian films from World War II to the present. Consideration of works that typify major directors and trends. Topics include neorealism, self-reflexivity and metacinema, fascism and war, and postmodernism. Films by Fellini, Antonioni, Rossellini, De Sica, Visconti, Pasolini, Bertolucci, Wertmuller, Tornatore, and Moretti. Films in Italian with English subtitles. WR, HU

* LITR 360a / FILM 363a / LAST 360a, Radical Cinemas of Latin America  Moira Fradinger
Introduction to 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. HU

LITR 361a / FILM 305a, Animation: Disney and Beyond  Aaron Gerow
Survey of the history of animation, considering both its aesthetics and its social potentials. The focus is on Disney and its many alternatives, with examples from around the world, from various traditions, and from different periods. HU

* LITR 368a / FILM 319a / GMAN 273a, The Third Reich in Postwar German Film, 1945 to Present  Jan Hagens
Close study of the intersection of aesthetics and ethics with regard to how German films, since 1945, have dealt with Nazi history. Through the study of German-language films (with subtitles), produced in postwar East, West, and unified Germany, students consider and challenge perspectives on the Third Reich and postwar Germany, while learning basic categories of film studies. HU

* LITR 369b / FILM 340b / HMRT 369 / LAST 369b, Gender Politics in Latin American Cinema  Moira Fradinger
Introduction to the contemporary politics of gender in Latin American cinema, with review of films from Argentina, Brazil, Colombia, Chile, Peru, Paraguay, Guatemala, Cuba, Venezuela and Mexico, and emphasis on how gender has been represented in a region with massive gender debates developing from the 1980s onwards. Topics include: discourses of human rights; representations of gay, transgender and intersex questions; social and economic status of women and feminized bodies; migration and indigenous peoples. Seminar is conducted in Spanish. Prerequisite: Level of L4. 15, HU

* LITR 382a / FILM 419a / GMAN 368a, German New Waves in Cold War Europe  Katie Trumpener
Comparative study of New Wave cinema in East and West Germany, with a focus on aesthetic ferment, institutional barriers, and transformation. Berlin as the best place to follow Europe’s emerging cinematic New Waves before 1961. Distinctive approaches developed by young filmmakers in East and West Germany to political and documentary filmmaking, to the Nazi past and the Cold War, and to class, gender, and social transformation. Knowledge of German helpful but not necessary. WR, HU

* LITR 402b / ENGL 329b / FILM 380 / HSAR 441b / HUMS 371b, The Picturebook: Euro-American and Japanese Traditions  Katie Trumpener
Examines the form, history, and preoccupations of the picturebook form from the eighteenth century to the present, juxtaposing Euro-American with Japanese picturebook traditions. HU

* LITR 436b / PORT 300b, 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. Prerequisite: PORT 140 or equivalent. 15, HU

* LITR 461a / AFST 295a / ENGL 295a, 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 the 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 Zakès Mda, Aminatta Forna, Helon Habila, Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, Ishimeure Michiko, and Amitav Ghosh. WR, HU

* LITR 464a / GMAN 307a / HUMS 374a, Greed and Its Discontents: From Aristotle to the Present  Dietrich Thomae and Paul North
Money matters, whether we like it or not. Besides being an economic means, it plays a pervasive role in the lives of individuals and the social fabric at large—a role scrutinized by writers, philosophers, and cultural theorists. By opening up a vast horizon of possibilities, money represents power and desire. It is regarded as an enabler of freedom by some, and as a source of alienation by others. Money is said to be detrimental to social cooperation, as it fuels the “frenzy to achieve distinction” (Jean-Jacques Rousseau). When it comes to
greed and its discontents, issues of status, recognition, and contempt come into play. Money, which has been called an “abstract” form of happiness (Arthur Schopenhauer), permeates the debates on the intricate relation between well-being, welfare, and wealth. On a macro level, the standings of different social spheres, including the economy, politics, and the realm of intimate relationships, depend on the question of whether “everything is for sale” or not (Debra Satz). In this course, we explore the meaning of money by tracing the arc from Aristotle to the present. HU

* LITR 466a / FILM 429a / RUSS 465a, War in Literature and Film Katerina Clark
Representations of war in literature and film; reasons for changes over time in portrayals of war. Texts by Stendahl, Tolstoy, Juenger, Remarque, Malraux, and Vonnegut; films by Eisenstein, Tarkovsky, Joris Ivens, Coppola, Spielberg, and Altman. HU

* LITR 467b / ANTH 467b, Blood: Science, Culture, and Society Claudia Valeggia and Moira Fradinger
How does biology define blood? What can the history of the science of blood tell us about blood’s mythical connotations? Why is blood so often used in cultural narratives of national belonging, fear and desire, purity and impurity? This cross-disciplinary seminar explores the complexity of blood from the disciplinary angles of medical anthropology and the humanities. We study how cultural narratives have informed scientific research about blood and how scientific research has influenced cultural beliefs surrounding blood. Blood is a biological substance bearing a host of social meanings. It can keep communities together and tear them apart. The course establishes a transdisciplinary dialogue in order to study the complexity of blood in different cultures. We treat topics such as, among others, the role of blood in religious sacrifice; the history of blood therapies; the mythologies of vampires; the relationship of blood to ideologies of gender, class, race and ethnicity; and the roles played by blood in works of art. HU, SO

* LITR 477b / AMST 379b / ENGL 371b / FREN 371b, Fictions of Canada: Colonialism, Nationalism, Postcolonialism Katie Trumpener
This seminar explores the literature(s) of Canada in its long history, its considerable linguistic and cultural range, and its complex relationship to political history. Like Canada itself, its literature represents a “contact zone” between First Nations peoples, French and British settlers, and immigrants from Eastern Europe, East and South Asia, and the Caribbean. Particular focus on Canada’s diverse early literatures (from Jesuit hymn to epistolary novel); on the prominent role of women writers across Canadian literature history; on the emergence of an experimental Québécois literature (utilizing Montreal patois as a new literary language) in an era also marked by secularization, modernization and political separatism; of English Canadian attempts to rethink colonial history, and the critiques of Canada’s ongoing decolonization process by new generations of indigenous, immigrant and ethnic writers. This course explores both literary history and literary form; the work of internationally famous novelists and poets (Leonard Cohen, Marie-Claire Blais, Margaret Atwood, Alice Munro, Michael Ondaatje) and their innovative local counterparts. Throughout the semester, moreover, our discussion of written literary texts (poems, novels, plays) is supplemented by primarily oral texts, Canadian anthems, ballads, folk, rock and punk songs in a range of Canadian languages. We will thus listen to even as we read Canada. WR, HU

* LITR 479b / GMAN 343b / HUMS 364b, Writing Scenes: Theory of the Literary Act Rudiger Campe
For a long time, thinking about producing literary questions has been dominated by the legalism of authorship. The notion of the Writing Scene allows to rethink the production of literature in broader ways: technologies of writing, the writing body, systems of writing etc. The 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; vignettes of writing scenes in Quintilian, Christine de Pisan, Dante, Descartes, Goethe, Blake, Hegel, Flaubert, Fr. Douglas, V. Wolfe, Kafka, Proust, Cixous. HU

* LITR 481b / GMAN 390b / HUMS 368b, 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. HU

* LITR 482a / GMAN 288a / HUMS 480a / PHIL 469a, 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. HU

* LITR 483a / ENGL 248a / HSHM 476a / HUMS 430a / PHIL 361a, Thought Experiments: Connecting Literature, Philosophy and the Natural Sciences Paul Grimstad
The course looks closely at the intersection of literature, philosophy and natural science through the lens of the thought experiment. Do thought experiments yield new knowledge about the world? What role does narrative or scene setting play in thought experiments? Can works of literary fiction or films function as thought experiments? Readings take up topics such as personal identity, artificial intelligence, meaning and intentionality, free will, time travel, the riddle of induction, “trolley problems” in ethics and the hard problem of consciousness. Authors may include Mary Shelley, Plato, Albert Einstein, Franz Kafka, H.G. Wells, Rene Descartes, Kazuo Ishiguro, Rivka Galchen, Alan Turing, Hilary Putnam, as well as films (The Imitation Game) and television shows (Black Mirror). Students should have taken at least one course involving close analysis of works of literature or philosophy. WR, HU
* LITR 484a / AEST 443a / FREN 442a / MMES 402a, Decolonizing Memory: Africa & the Politics of Testimony  Jill Jarvis

This seminar explores the politics and poetics of memory in a time of unfinished decolonization. It also provides students with a working introduction to antimperial, postcolonial, and decolonial critique. Together we bring key works on the topics of state violence, trauma, and testimony into contact with literary works and films by artists of the former French and British empires in Africa. Reading literary and theoretical works together permits us to investigate archival silences and begin to chart a future for the critical study of colonial violence and its enduring effects. Literary readings may include works by Djebar, Rahmani, Oluooguem, Sebar, Diop, Head, Krog. Films by Djebar, Leuvrey, Sembène, and Sissako. Theoretical readings may include works by Arendt, Azoulay, Césaire, Derrida, Fanon, Mbembe, Ngåg, Spivak, and Trouillot.  WR, HU

* LITR 485a / ENGL 257a / GMAN 312a / HUMS 208a, Poe and Kafka  Paul North and Caleb Smith

Some mysteries seem unsolvable by science or religion. For instance, there is the mystery of how people remain hidden from themselves of repressed impulses and buried truths that find expression in fantasies, dreams, and other strange visions. A word for this mystery is the unconscious. Some terms for its literature include the gothic and the grotesque. Our experimental course pursues this mystery by studying two writers working in different languages, in different centuries, in a variety of minor, unpretentious genres: Edgar Allan Poe and Franz Kafka. We use tales and other short texts by each writer to illuminate the other’s techniques for examining the psychological and political unconscious.  WR, HU

* LITR 486b / GMAN 304b / HUMS 367b, 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.  HU

* LITR 487b / ENGL 213b / HUMS 209b, The Poetry of Wordsworth and Shelley  David Bromwich

An exploration of the major poems of William Wordsworth and Percy Shelley, with emphasis on the diverse imaginings required for lyrics and longer works such as The Prelude and Prometheus Unbound.  WR, HU

* LITR 488a or b, Directed Reading and/or Individual Research  Staff

Special projects in an area of the student’s particular interest set up with the help of a faculty adviser and the director of undergraduate studies. Projects must cover material not otherwise offered by the department, must terminate in at least a term paper or its equivalent, and must have the approval of the director of undergraduate studies. Enrollment limited to Literature majors.

* LITR 489a / GMAN 362a / HUMS 372a, Critique and Crisis  Kirk Wetters

In our time, when everyone is suspected of being hyper-critical, 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 year. In order to gain orientation with respect to such concerns, 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 (Wissenscha#) 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.  HU

* LITR 491a or b, The Senior Essay  Staff

An independent writing and research project. The senior essay is due in the office of the director of undergraduate studies according to the following schedule: (1) by September 3 (for LITR 491a) or January 14 (for LITR 491b), a three-page prospectus signed by the student’s adviser; (2) by October 8 (for LITR 491a) or March 4 (for LITR 491b), a full rough draft (not notes); (3) by November 19 (for LITR 491a) or April 8 (for LITR 491b), the completed essay. The minimum length for an essay is twenty-five pages. Students are urged to arrange a topic and adviser early in the term before the term in which the essay is to be written.

* LITR 492a or b and LITR 493a or b, The Yearlong Senior Essay  Staff

An extended research project. Students must petition the curriculum committee for permission to enroll by the last day of classes in the term preceding enrollment in LITR 492. For students expecting to graduate in May, the senior essay is due in the office of the director of undergraduate studies according to the following schedule: (1) by September 3, a three-page prospectus signed by the student’s adviser; (2) by February 11, a full rough draft (not notes); (3) by April 8, the completed essay. December graduates should consult the director of undergraduate studies for required deadlines. The minimum length for a yearlong senior essay is forty pages.