COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (LITR)

* LITR 025b / AFST 028b / ENGL 028b, African Literature in the World  Cajetan Iheka
This seminar introduces students to a subset of African literature that has entered the canon of world literature. Bookended by the writings of Chinua Achebe and Chimamanda Adichie, we explore the marks of regional specificity in these works and how they transcend local geographical markers to become worldly artifacts. Our considerations include why certain texts cross the boundaries of nation and region while others remain confined within territorial bounds. We also examine advantages of the global circulation of African literary works and the pitfalls of a global readership. The class moves from an introductory unit that orients students to African and world literature to focus on close reading of primary texts informed by historical and theoretical nuances. From analyzing works responding to the colonial condition and the articulation of anticolonial sensibilities, to those narrating the African nation at independence and the postcolonial disillusionment that followed, the seminar attends to the formal and thematic implications of globalization for African literary writing. Authors include Chinua Achebe, Mariama Ba, Ngugi wa Thiong’o, Mbolo Mbuye, NoViolet Bulawayo, Taiye Selasi, and Chimamanda Adichie. Enrollment limited to first-year students. Preregistration required; see under First-Year Seminar Program.  WR, HU

* LITR 027a / HUMS 027a / WGSS 027a, Six Pretty Good Selves  Marta Figlerowicz and Ayesha Ramachandran
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 / HUMS 029a, Medicine and the Humanities: Certainty and Unknowing  Matthew Morrison
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 101a / HUMS 115a, Purposes of College Education  Staff
College is a crucial institution in which our society works through its expectations for young people. The first half of this course explores some of the purposes that have been ascribed to college, including development of personal character, participation in a community, preparation for citizenship, and conversation with others on intellectual matters. The second half touches on the social and economic contexts of college education, including the history of the curriculum, the role of social class, the cost of higher education, and career preparation. We read Plato’s Republic, a key text for the philosophy of education, in its entirety. Other readings from Aristotle, Confucius, Bhagavad-Gita, Virginia Woolf, Martin Luther King, Max Weber. Lectures are designed for interactive conversation. Preference for first-year and sophomore students, but all students are welcome.  HU 0 Course cr

* LITR 125a / GMAN 391a / HUMS 391a / JDST 380a / RLST 374a, The Bible in German-Jewish Modernist Literature  Staff
Biblical references in modernist literary works illustrate literature’s potential to transform ancient forms and conceptions into driving forces of renewal. This renewal concerns both literature and the Bible. Their encounter in modernist texts rarely occurs in a straightforward fashion. While the modernist literary reception of Biblical material occasionally does appear as pious affirmation or outright rejection, more characteristically, it alters, displaces, or distorts the original Scriptures. Not only do these transformations enact modernism’s basic injunction to “make it new,” but they also illuminate its complex relationship to tradition as such. The course explores this dynamic in the work of major German-Jewish modernists such as Franz Kafka, Else Lasker-Schüler and Paul Celan. None.  HU

* LITR 129a / GMAN 278a / HUMS 195a, Thinking Literature in German Modernism  Staff
Ever since literature left its ancillary position in the service of extraneous creeds, ideologies and educational purposes or, in the eyes of some, became their substitute, it had to rethink itself. Reflections about its own raison d’être and how it relates to the world politically, philosophically, and emotionally became a primary substratum of literary modernism. This is particularly true for modernism in German language contexts where some of the major theories about literature originated and where philosophy, politics and literature had been closely intertwined for centuries. Following general reflections on the term Modernism and its variations in different linguistic and national contexts (Die Moderne, la modernité, modernismo) as well as its relation to Realism, to the Avant Garde and to Postmodernism, this course explores some of the major works of German Modernism. Among the texts to be discussed are works by Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Rainer Maria Rilke, Hermann Hesse, Thomas Mann, Else Lasker-Schüler, Franz Kafka as well as selected poetry and short prose by authors ranging from Expressionists to poets writing in the immediate aftermath of WWII. Special attention is given to intertextual references to the literary tradition and, in this context, to the self-reflexive dimension of the modernist writings.  HU

* LITR 130a / HUMS 130b, How to Read  Rüdiger Campe and Hannah Hever
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.  

* LITR 140a, How To Compare  Samuel Hodgkin
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 Tахmasebian 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 143b / ENGL 192b / FILM 240b, World Cinema  Marta Figlerowicz
Development of ways to engage films from around the globe productively. Close analysis of a dozen complex films, with historical contextualization of their production and cultural functions. Attention to the development of critical skills. Includes weekly screenings, each followed immediately by discussion.  

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

* 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 McCraney, 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 178a / HUMS 233a / MMES 201a / NELC 156a, Classics of the Arabic-Islamic World  Shawkat Toorawa
Arabic-Islamic civilization has produced numerous works that would make it onto almost anyone’s list of wondrous books. In this course, we will read a selection of (or from) those books and study the literary and intellectual cultures that produced them in an attempt to deepen and nuance our understanding of Islamic civilization. Readings will include the Qur’an, classical Arabic poetry, Jahiz’s epistles, the Maqamat of Hariri, al-Ghazali, the Shahnameh, Leyli ve Mejnun, the Conference of the Birds, the Hang Tuah Epic, Aisha al-Bauniyyah’s Sufi poetry, and much else besides. All readings in translation.  

HU, TR

LITR 183a / HUMS 180a / ITAL 310a, Dante in Translation  Staff
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 0 Course cr

* LITR 195b / ENGL 205b / HUMS 206b, Medieval Songlines  Ardis Butterfield
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 196b / JDST 312b / MMES 312b / NELC 323b, Hebrew Poetry in Muslim Spain  Peter Cole
Introduction to the Golden Age of Hebrew poetry in Muslim Andalusia from the tenth century through the twelfth. Major figures of the period and the cultural and philosophical questions they confronted. The Judeo-Arabic social context in which the poetry emerged; critical issues pertaining to the study and transmission of this literature. Readings from the works of several poets. Readings in translation. Additional readings in Hebrew available.  

HU, TR

LITR 198a / EALL 202a / HUMS 284a, The Tale of Genji  Staff
A reading of the central work of prose fiction in the Japanese classical tradition in its entirety (in English translation) along with some examples of predecessors, parodies, and adaptations (the latter include Noh plays and twentieth-century short stories). Topics of discussion include narrative form, poetics, gendered authorship and readership, and the processes and premises that have given The Tale of Genji its place in “world literature.” Attention will also be given to the text’s special relationship to visual culture. No knowledge of Japanese required. A previous college-level course in the study of literary texts is recommended but not required.  

WR, HU
LITR 239b / CLCV 216b / MGRK 216b / WGSS 209b, 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 245b / RSEE 254b, Tolstoy and Dostojevsky  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 250b / AFAM 287b / AFST 412b / AMST 465b / FREN 412b, Postcolonial Theory and Literature  Fadila Habchi
A survey of the principal modes of thought that have animated decolonization and life after colonialism, as seen in both theoretical and literary texts. Concentration on the British and French imperial and postcolonial contexts. Readings in negritude, orientalism, psychoanalysis, poststructuralism, and novels. Lectures in English; readings available both in French and in English translation.  HU  RP

LITR 253a / HIST 260a / HUMS 255a / RSEE 312a / RUSS 312a, Tolstoy’s War and Peace  Staff
The course is a semester-long study of the quintessential big Russian novel, Leo Tolstoy’s War and Peace, about Napoleon’s failed 1812 war against Russia. War and Peace (1869) is a sweeping panorama of nineteenth-century Russian society, a novel of profound philosophical questions, and an unforgettable gallery of artfully drawn characters. Reading the novel closely, we pose the following questions. In what ways is this patriotic war epic also an imperial novel? What myths does it destroy and construct? How does it combine fiction and history? What forces drive history, as it unfolds in the present? What are the limits of individual agency, and how much do emperors and generals control the fates of nations and armies? Finally, a question that is never too broad for Tolstoy: what is a meaningful, well-lived life? We explore these questions while refining our tools of literary analysis and situating the novel in its historical context and in our contemporary world. Secondary materials include Tolstoy’s letters, contemporary reviews, maps, and historical sources, as well as readings in political theory, philosophy, international relations, and literary criticism. All readings and class discussions in English.  No prerequisites required. Both WR and non-WR sections are offered.  WR, HU  o Course cr

LITR 256a / CPLT 657a / PORT 352a / PORT 652a, Clarice Lispector: The Short Stories  Kenneth David Jackson
This course is a seminar on the complete short stories of Clarice Lispector (1920–1977), a master of the genre and one of the major authors of twentieth-century Brazil known for existentialism, mysticism and feminism.  WR, HU  TR

LITR 259a / LAST 252a / PORT 356a, Concrete Poetry in Brazil & Portugal: Verbivocovisual Poetics in Theory and Practice  Kenneth David Jackson
Brazilian concrete poetry in international perspective; production and theory of concrete poetry, translation, and criticism during the second half of the twentieth century. Brazilian concrete poets in the context of visual and concrete poetics. Representative works include ‘Pilot Plan’ and Theory of Concrete Poetry, graphic and spatial poems, and public expositions of works. Brazilian concrete poets were among the leaders of an international neo-vanguard movement in mid-twentieth century related to geometrical abstraction in painting. In the journals Neogândres and Invenção, and the Theory of Concrete Poetry the Brazilians link their poetics to Pound, Mallarmé, cummings and other inventive figures in world poetry, while relating poetry to graphic arts through reference to painting and to semiotics, including Fenollosa’s essay on use of the Chinese character. The exhibit in S. Paulo’s Museum of Modern Art in December 1956 was the beginning of the public exhibition of concrete poetry, now the topic of anthologies, websites, criticism, and museum retrospectives. Concrete poetics dominated the production of poetry in Brazil for half a century with a major effect on cultural and intellectual life. Prerequisite: PORT 140 or equivalent.  HU

LITR 265b / EALL 256b / EAST 358b / GLBL 251b / HUMS 272b, 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’s international relations and global footprint, Mandarinization, Chinese America, science and technology, science fiction, and entrepreneurship culture. Readings and discussion in English.  HU

LITR 270b / ER&M 209b / VIET 220b, Introduction to Vietnamese Culture, Values, and Literature  Quang Van
Introduction to Vietnamese culture and values. Topics include cultural and national identity, aesthetics, the meaning of life, war, and death. Selected readings from Zen poems, folklore, autobiographies, and religious and philosophical writings. Course is taught in English and is an alternative to Western perspectives. Readings in translation. No previous knowledge of Vietnamese required.  HU

LITR 284a / FREN 270a / GMAN 214a, Mad Poets  Staff
A lecture course introducing undergraduates to the rich tradition of poetry written in French (and German) during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each week is devoted to exploring the life and work of a poet whose ways of behaving, creating, and perceiving the world might be described as insane. There is, perhaps, no shortage of mad poets, but those whose life and work provide topics for discussion here include Hölderlin, Nerval, Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Verlaine, Mallarmé, Lautréamont, Apollinaire, Breton, Artaud, and Celan. Students become familiar with the tools required to read, interpret, understand, and enjoy poetry, and develop an understanding of the poems’ broader literary historical, philosophical, and political significance. Regular references are made to other modes of expression, including painting, photography, film, music, dance, philosophy, theater, and architecture. Lectures in English. Sections in English or French. Readings available both in original language and in English translation.  WR, HU  o Course cr
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**

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**

A sequel to LITR 348 or its equivalent, this course brings together advanced and seriously committed students of literary translation, especially (but not only) those who are doing translation-related senior theses. Students must apply to the class with a specific project in mind, that they have been developing or considering, and that they will present on a regular basis throughout the semester. Discussion of translations-in-progress are supplemented by short readings that include model works from the world of literary translation, among them introductions and pieces of criticism, as well as reflections by practitioners treating all phases of their art. The class is open to undergraduates and graduate students who have taken at least one translation workshop. By permission of the instructor. Prerequisite: LITR 348.

Readings and films from post-1948 Palestine and Israel, with special attention given to historical and political contexts. Consideration of the limit, in the geographical sense of borders and checkpoints, as well as in the existential sense of extremity and trauma. **HU**

The role of Marxist thought in understanding literary institutions and texts in the twentieth century. Marx's theory of ideology; Lukacs's theory of literature as the basis for development of Marxist literary theory; the Frankfurt and materialistic schools. Readings include works by Raymond Williams, Catherine Belsey, Walter Benjamin, Pierre Macherey, and Frederic Jameson. **HU**

History of the folk tale 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. **WR, HU TR**

Systematic, chapter by chapter study of Heidegger's *Being and Time*, arguably the most important work of philosophy in the twentieth-century. All major themes addressed in detail, with particular emphasis on care, time, death, and the meaning of being. **HU**

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**

Close reading of dramas of reconciliation from the Western canon that have traditionally been categorized as tragedies. Ways in which the recategorization of such plays lends additional complexity and meaning to their endings and allows for new interpretations of the texts, their authors, and the history of drama. **HU**

What do ancient fifth-century Athens and turn-of-the-(twentieth-)century Vienna have in common? In fact, psychoanalysis' development was intertwined with Freud's interpretations of classical Greek tragedy, and Greek tragedies in turn can shed light on psychoanalytic concepts in excess of Freud's readings. The juxtaposition of these two worlds allows us to understand each with a fresh perspective. And this is what we study in this class: we read and interpret the best-known tragic plays by ancient playwrights Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides in dialogue with key concepts of psychoanalytic criticism. Well-established questions that Greek tragedy raises about gender politics, the evolution of democracy, the progressive disintegration of the Athenian polis, the construction of citizenship and foreignness, the influence of rhetoric and sophistry is reframed in dialogue with Freud's (and his followers') redefinitions of language, the unconscious, the self, trauma, violence, and gender. The goal of this course is to provide students with a clear understanding of the historical evolutions of these two forms of cultural production while also engaging in more theoretical and comparative work of literary interpretation and critical theorization. Considering the pivotal role that both psychoanalysis and Greek tragedy held in the development of later currents of thought (including postcolonial studies, Black Studies, feminist theory, queer theory, and Black studies), particular attention is paid the afterlives of the Freudian method and classical tragedy. **WR, HU**
* LITR 374a / FILM 325a / GMAN 379a, German Cinema 1918–1933  
Jan Hagens

The years between 1918 and 1933 are the Golden Age of German film. In its development from Expressionism to Social Realism, this German cinema produced works of great variety, many of them in the international avantgarde. This introductory seminar gives an overview of the silent movies and sound films made during the Weimar Republic and situates them in their artistic, cultural, social, and political context between WWI and WWII, between the Kaiser’s German Empire and the Nazis’ Third Reich. Further objectives include: familiarizing students with basic categories of film studies and film analysis; showing how these films have shaped the history and the language of film; discussing topic-oriented and methodological issues such as: film genres (horror film, film noir, science fiction, street film, documentary film); set design, camera work, acting styles; narration in film; avantgarde cinema; the advent and use of sound in film; Realism versus Expressionism; film and popular mythology; melodrama; representation of women; modern urban life as spectacle; film and politics. Directors studied include: Grune, Lang, Lubitsch, Murnau, Pabst, Richter, Ruttmann, Sagan, von Sternberg, Wiene, et al.

WR, HU

LITR 383a / FREN 244a / THST 225a, The French Stage: History and Performance of French Theater from Molière to Césaire  
Staff

From Molière to Marie Ndiaye, via Augustin de Beaumarchais, Olympe de Gouges, George Sand and Wouafo Mouhouawad, theater is at the center of French artistic and political culture. This course covers four centuries of theater history, from the age of Versailles to the beginning of the twenty-first century. We discover the plays, their relationship to current events, their political and aesthetic dimensions, the history of their staging, and the material aspects of their productions.

HU o Course cr

LITR 384b / EALL 252b / EAST 251b / FILM 446b, Japanese Cinema before 1960  
Aaron Gerow

The history of Japanese cinema to 1960, including the social, cultural, and industrial backgrounds to its development. Periods covered include the silent era, the coming of sound and the wartime period, the occupation era, the golden age of the 1950s, and the new modernism of the late 1950s. No knowledge of Japanese required. Formerly JAPN 270.  
HU TR

LITR 386a / HUMS 211a / RLST 266a, Fate and Chance in Art and Experience  
Noreen Khawaja

This seminar is co-taught with Sheila Heti. It discusses shifts in how the unchosen is conceived and how it is valued, across a range of contemporary fields and historical models—from Greek tragedy to contemporary performance art, from Protestant aesthetics of fate and grace to the I Jing and its interpreters, from mathematical and physical approaches to chance to the rise of astrology. Students consider when and where we ourselves operate with a belief in something like fate. The goal to explore whether and how a contemporary concept of fate may come into focus.

HU

LITR 388a / HUMS 274a / NECL 352a, The Education of Princes: Medieval Advice Literature of Rulership and Counsel  
Shawkat Toorawa

In this course we read “mirrors for princes,” a type of political writing by courtiers and advisors. The genre flourished in the courts of medieval Europe and the Islamic world. We learn about the ethical and moral considerations that guided (or were meant to guide) rulers in their conduct, in the formulation of their policies, and about theories of rule and rulership. The works we read are from several cultural, religious, and political traditions, and include: Christine de Pizan, A Medieval Woman’s Mirror of Honor; Einhard, Life of Charlemagne; Erasmus, Education of a Christian Prince; Ibn al-Muqaffa, Kalilah and Dimnah, John of Salisbury, Politicatus: Book of the Statesman; Machiavelli, The Prince; Nizam al-Mulk, The Book of Government. All texts are in English translation. Instructor permission is required.

HU

LITR 389b / ENGL 289b / HUMS 388b / PHIL 385b / RLST 386b, Philosophies of Life  
Nancy Levene

Study of works that challenge and provoke philosophies of life—how to live, what to live for, what life is. The point of departure is a selection of writings from the Hebrew Bible and moves from there to modern philosophical and literary re-imaginings and alternate realities. What are questions to which a philosophy of life is the reply? Insofar as a philosophy of life is itself a question, what is the repertoire of replies offered in our texts? What is your reply? Readings from the Bible (Genesis, Job), Shakespeare, Spinoza, Diderot, Kierkegaard, Woolf, Camus, Baldwin, Marilynne Robinson, and Achille Mbembe.

WR, HU

LITR 414a / GMAN 300a / HUMS 276a / SOCY 301a, Non-Cynical Social Thought  
Paul North

Living together is difficult. How do some people do it? How can we do it less badly, or much better, or in the very best way? In this seminar we read sources from several disciplines that describe positive modes of conviviance. Much social thought is cynical, starting from where we are and mapping why we haven’t gotten there. Some social thought is revolutionary, looking for an exit, casting hopes toward the future. What both of these lack is contents. Without ignoring the massive difficulties involved, we try to fill this in with images of viable and livable groups, collectives, festivals, syndicates, congregations, planets.

HU TR

LITR 418a / JDST 339a / MMES 418a / RLST 203a, The Classics of Modern Hebrew Literature  
Hanan Hever

Overview of the Poetics, Culture, History, and Political dynamics of Modern Hebrew Literature as national literature over the last 300 years. The course traces the literary development of its diasporic condition in Europe through the Hebrew Literature that is created in the Israeli Jewish sovereignty. The course is taught in Hebrew and the readings of literary texts are also in Hebrew. No background in Jewish literature, Hebrew literature, or Jewish culture is required.

HU

LITR 431a / HUMS 229a / LAST 431a / SPAN 431a, Latin American Languages of Liberation: The Long Sixties  
Staff

This is a multi-media seminar that studies the Latin American cultural and political discourses of liberation throughout the sixties, with an eye at assessing their legacy today. While the language that characterized the foundation of the nation-states in the 19th century was emancipation, in the second part of the twentieth century, and particularly around 1968, Latin America embraced the world discourse of liberation. This seminar examines languages of liberation in an array of disciplines and artistic practices from South and Central America.
as well as the Caribbean. We explore regional debates that were also inserted in the larger discourse of the anti-colonial struggles of the global South. Topics include Philosophy of liberation (Dussel), Theology of liberation (the 1968 Council of Bishops in Medellin, Colombia), Theater of the oppressed (Boal), Pedagogy of the oppressed (Freire), Cinema of liberation (manifestos of Third Cinema), the New Song protest movements across the region (both Spanish and Portuguese American music), anti-colonialism in the Caribbean (Césaire, Fanon), anti-neocolonialism (dependency theory, internal colonialism), Indigenous liberation (from the Barbados declarations to the Lacandon jungle declarations), experimental “boom” literature (Cortázar) etc. HU o Course cr

* LITR 446b / FREN 247b, Experimental Literature, Theory, and Manifestoes Morgane Cadieu
A survey of the French experimental prose of the 20th and 21st centuries. Corpus includes novels and plays, literary and political manifestoes, and landmark articles on literary theory, structuralism, and poststructuralism. Topics include: inspiration and creativity; the aesthetics of manifestoes and the politics of literature; automatic writing and constrained prose; feminist and queer writings; urban spaces in avant-garde literary movements. Works by: Bataille, Beauvoir, Beckett, Breton, Perec, Sarraute, Wittig. Theoretical excerpts by: Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida, Foucault, Glissant, Malabou. L5, HU TR

Dialogue constitutes an integral part of human experience and culture ever since antiquity. Whether as a rhetorical or a dramatic device, written or oral, fictional or not – dialogue substantiates the core of any intersubjective communication, building bridges between the self and the Other while maintaining them as two separate entities. This seminar explores the form and function of dialogue through a wide range of theoretical and literary texts, focusing on a set of social, hermeneutical, poetic, and political questions. Specific attention is given to literary cases of failed dialogues and miscomprehension, aiming at the unique ability of the literary text to draw our attention beyond the limits of human communication and language. Readings include texts by Plato, Schlegel, Novalis, Bachtin, Levinas, Buber, Gadamer, Parsons, Kleist, Beckett, Melville, Schnitzler, Celan, Bachmann, and others. HU

* LITR 473b / MMES 164b, Politics and Literature in the Middle East Samuel Hodgkin
This course considers the relationship between literature and politics in Turkey, Iran, and the Arab world since the late 19th century. We read novels, short stories, poetry, essays, play scripts, and comics, and watch movies, while situating them in their artistic and political contexts. This course considers the ways that an artwork can intervene in the political debates of its time, while taking seriously the distinctive modes of political thought that are possible only through art. Topics include gender relations, the legacies of European colonialism, modernization and modernism, revolutionary movements, the role of religion in society, experiences of violence and trauma, and the drastic changes to Middle Eastern societies wrought by the oil boom. All readings are in English translation, but if sufficient students with relevant language skills enroll, an additional biweekly session may be arranged for selected course readings in the original languages. 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 484b / AFST 443b / FREN 442b / MMES 402b, 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 anticolonial, 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 Djebbar, Rahmani, Ouologuem, Sebbar, Diop, Head, Krog. Films by Djebbar, Leuvrey, Sembène, and Sissako. Theoretical readings may include works by Arendt, Azoulay, Césaire, Derrida, Fanon, Mbembe, Ngåg#, Spivak, and Trouillot. WR, HU o Course cr