

Department of Comparative Literature
Course Offerings, Fall 2017

Notes: Because courses in Comparative Literature are general rubrics under which a variety of topics are offered, students may repeat courses provided that the topics are different. Also, this list does not include thesis preparation or independent study courses. Please see Banner for them.

COLT0510F: Fidel Castro and Che Guevara, The Men and the Myths

Che Guevara and Fidel Castro are among the twentieth century's most iconic figures, thanks to their roles in the Cuban Revolution and in anti-imperialist struggles across the globe. They are also among the most divisive, eliciting passionate disapproval among some and strong admiration among others. In this seminar, we will read Guevara and Castro's speeches and writings alongside literary, visual and cinematic representations of them, paying particular attention to the ways in which their lives and deaths have generated distinct interpretations, in Cuba and beyond. Open only to first-year students. Prof. Whitfield. Tues./Thur. 1-2:20p

COLT0610D: Rites of Passage

Examines a seemingly universal theme-coming of age-by focusing on texts from disparate periods and cultures. Proposes that notions of "growing up" are profoundly inflected by issues of class, gender and race, and that the literary representation of these matters changes drastically over time. Texts from the Middle Ages to the present; authors drawn from Chrétien de Troyes, Quevedo, Prévost, Balzac, Brontë, Twain, Faulkner, Vesaas, Rhys, Satrapi and Foer. Enrollment limited to 20 first year students. Prof. Weinstein. Tues./Thur. 1-2:20p

COLT0610E: Crisis and Identity in Mexico, 1519-1968

Examines four moments of crisis/critical moments for the forging of Mexican identity: the "Conquest" as viewed from both sides; the hegemonic 17th century; the Mexican Revolution as represented by diverse stakeholders; the "Mex-hippies" of the 1960s. We especially explore how key literary, historical, and essayistic writings have dealt with Mexico's past and present, with trauma and transformation. Readings include works by Carlos Fuentes, Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Octavio Paz, Juan Rulfo, and the indigenous Nican Mopohua on the Virgin of Guadalupe. All in English. No prerequisites. Prof. Merrim. Tues./Thur. 2:30-3:50p

COLT0610T: Chinese Empire and Literature

This course explores ancient and modern approaches to empire and imperialism, focusing on China from the Qin (221-206 BCE) establishment of unified empire through the Qing (1644-1911 CE) confrontation with the British and other European empires. Emphasis will be placed on the relation between imperial expansion and literary production, and the role of Chinese and non-Chinese literature in representing China's multilingual and multiethnic past. Texts include China's most famous work of historical literature, Sima Qian's *Shiji*; poems, short stories, tomb sculptures, contemporary film; as well as critical essays on empire, colonization, and cross-cultural heritage. Prof. Chin. Thur. 4-6:30p

COLT0610Y: Women's Writing in the Arab World

This course examines Arab women's writing through the lenses of both Arabic and Western feminist theory and criticism. Beginning with a survey of pre-modern female literary personae in Arabic (the elegist, the mystic, the singing slave), we will then examine major figures in the early modern feminist movement, modernist poetry, autobiography, film, and the novel. No Arabic required; supplemental Arabic section may be offered at the discretion of the professor. Texts by Etel Adnan, Salwa Bakr, Hoda Barakat, Assia Djebar, Nazik al-Mala'ika, Alifa Rifaat, Hanan al-Shaykh, Miral al-Tahawy, Fadwa Tuqan, Adania Shibli. Films by Moufida Tlatli, Annemarie Jacir. Prof. Drumsta. MWF 2-2:50p

COLT0610Z: Intersections of Race and Culture in the West

This course will introduce students to ways in which knowledge, power and race have been interrelated in understandings

of culture and in the writing and reception of literature. Beginning in antiquity, we will trace a history of political, ethnic, and social groups' perceptions and categorizations of each other and of shifts in the definitions of "race" and "culture" as concepts. We will then consider changing ideas of alliance, belonging and power, in the context of contemporary American and global politics. The course will draw from readings across various languages, and from the work and lectures of several guest speakers. Prof. Whitfield, Prof. Haynes. Fri. 3-5:30p

COLT0810H: How Not to Be a Hero

One of Shakespeare's greatest plays is about a character who was an irredeemable failure: Coriolanus. What can failure teach us? What kind of strength does a language of failure possess? We will read the ancient sources themselves (Livy, Lucian, Plutarch), and modern adaptations of these stories (Bertolt Brecht, T. S. Eliot, Günter Grass). We will also look at other "exemplary" failures who inspired Shakespeare and later literature, including Lucullus and Timon. Prof. Haynes. Tues./Thur. 9-10:20a

COLT1210: Introduction to the Theory of Literature

An historical introduction to problems of literary theory from the classical to the postmodern. Issues to be examined include mimesis, rhetoric, hermeneutics, history, psychoanalysis, formalisms and ideological criticism (questions of race, gender, sexuality, postcolonialism). Primarily for advanced undergraduates. Lectures, discussions; several short papers. Prof. Bernstein, Prof. Newman. MWF 1-1:50p.

COLT1310E: A Classical Islamic Education: Readings in Arabic Literature

This seminar introduces students to the essential texts of a classical education in the Arabic-Islamic world. What works of poetry, literary criticism, belletristic prose, biography, geography, history, and other disciplines were considered staples of a well-rounded education in medieval Baghdad, Cairo, Damascus, or Fez? Emphasis will be placed on close and patient readings of primary sources. At least three years of Arabic required. Prof. Muhanna. Wed. 3-5:30p.

COLT1422F: Short Forms--Major Works in a Minor Key (HISP 1330Q)

COLT1411C: Shakespearean Comedy (ENGL 1361H)

COLT1420T: Fiction of Relationship

Explores the manifold ways in which narrative literature sheds light on the relationships that we have in life, both knowingly and unknowingly. The novel form, with its possibilities of multiple voices and perspectives, captures the interplay between self and other that marks all lives. Authors include Laclos, Melville, Brontë, Kafka, Woolf, Faulkner, Borges, Burroughs, Vesaas, Morrison, and Coetzee. Prof. Weinstein. Tues./Thur. 10:30-11:50a

COLT1421V: Modernisms North and South: James Joyce and Roberto Bolaño

James Joyce's *Ulysses* (1922) and Roberto Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives* (1998) are weighty, influential, often intimidating works that bookend literary production in the twentieth century. Both are also moving narratives about humans with different sorts of artistic, emotional, and bodily ambitions, grappling with new forms of subjective and collective life in modernity, trying to work out their own place within social, political and artistic systems. Join Stephen Dedalus, Leopold and Molly Bloom, Ulysses Lima and a cast of minor characters as they make their way through the hearts, minds, memories, and nervous systems of a range of modern metropolises. Prof. Clayton. MWF 12-12:50p

COLT1430D: Critical Approaches to Chinese Poetry

Examination of works of Chinese poetry of several forms and periods in the context of Chinese poetic criticism. Knowledge of Chinese not required, but provisions for working with original texts will be made for students of Chinese language. Prof. Levy. Tues./Thur. 1-10:20a

COLT1431C: Poets, Poetry, and Politics

The award of the 2016 Nobel Prize for Literature to Bob Dylan ignited a lively debate about who is, and who is not, a poet. Historically, who were deemed poets, what was their function? What do their poems do and how do they work? Do they foment revolution or “make nothing happen,” as Auden once wrote? How does the poet aspire to a unique, individual voice even as he or she may (be seen to) best represent a constituency? This course relates the poetic act to political action and interrogates the commonly aired contention that politics makes for bad poetry. Prof. Calotychos. MWF 10-10:50a

COLT1440P: Nationalism and Transnationalism in Film and Fiction

Reports of the demise of nationalism always seem greatly exaggerated. How are notions of transnationalism dependent on rewriting the nation? This course revisits films of world cinema acclaimed for their national cachet from a transnational perspective and in dialogue with their literary intertexts. We will study these films’ fictional narration, cinematic articulation, and critical reception and consider how they signify in multinational networks of funding, distribution, production, conception, and critical reception. Students will analyze the political, ethical, and artistic stakes of confronting difference as both a located and universal stance or commodity. Films and texts chosen from across the globe. Prof. Calotychos. Tues. 4-6:30p

COLT1710A: Introduction to Literary Translation

This is a workshop course introducing the history and theory of literary translation, with demonstrations and exercises translating poetry and prose. All languages welcome, but students must be proficient to the level of reading literature in the original language. Foreign language through 0600 or permission of the instructor. Prof. Levy. Tues./Thur. 2:30-3:50p

COLT1813K: The Problem of Vernacular

It has been said that a language is a dialect with an army and a navy. Under what conditions do dialects, vernaculars, creoles, and slangs become mediums for literary and artistic expression? How have writers in different cultures managed the relationship between their “official” national languages and their more intimate mother tongues? This course explores this problem in a variety of literary traditions, including Chinese, Arabic, Greek, Hebrew, Scots, Latin and the Romance vernaculars, and a variety of other languages. Prof. Muhanna. Tues./Thur. 10:30-11:50a

COLT1814D: East-West Encounters: Politics and Fictions of Orientalism

We will explore the myth of the East that develops in Europe during the Enlightenment in the wake of the extremely popular and influential translations of *The Thousand and One Nights* (*Alf Layla wa Layla*) in the early eighteenth century. We will focus on narratives of the encounter between East and West, on the discovery and construction of the Oriental “Other,” and on its representation in the literary and visual culture of the Enlightenment. Particular attention will be paid to the figure of Shahrazad and the theme of the harem. We will study some modern versions of the *Arabian Nights*. Prof. Mostefai. Mon. 3-5:30p

COLT1814L: Apartheid in Post-Apartheid South African Literature

In this course, we explore the political stances that contemporary South African writing articulates towards the apartheid regime. We bring particular attention to the textual emergence of queer subjectivities. During apartheid (1948-1994), South Africa became a global symbol of racial injustice, and several South African writers became famous for their anti-apartheid literary production. Since 1994, critics have looked for new frames in which to analyze a “new” literature. In the search for “newness,” however, we may forget to consider how the “old” – apartheid – reappears in post-apartheid literature. Authors include K. Sello Duiker, Richard Rive, and Zoe Wicomb. Prof. Goldblatt. MWF 11-11:50a

COLT1814T: Maghrebi Fiction and Psychoanalysis

Recent fiction from the Maghreb (Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya) in both French and Arabic has been preoccupied with mothers and fathers, gestation and regeneration, inheritance and transmission, filled with figures for desires and origins blocked or diverted. In this course, we will read Maghrebi literature together with works of psychoanalytic theory, focusing in particular on uncertain origins and aborted futures, geographies of the North African landscape and of the

soul. Texts by Achaari, Berrada, Chraïbi, Djebbar, Kateb, al-Koni, Mustaghanimi, Wattar; Deleuze & Guattari, Fanon, Freud, Jameson, Jung, Lacan. Students of French or Arabic invited to read in the original. Prof. Drumsta. Thur. 4-6:30p

COLT1814U: Politics of Reading

What do we do when we read? And do we even do something, or, as Blanchot suggests, do we rather let be? While being true to Michel de Certeau's plea for a "politics of reading" and an "autonomy of the reader", we will question its binary logic (active vs. passive): 1. by looking closely at the (de)construction of a "sovereign reader" in Hobbes' Leviathan; 2. by analyzing the reading imperative—"Read!"—as it is staged in Plato's and, above all, in Sade's erotics; 3. by taking seriously Walter Benjamin's paradoxical intuition that one should "read what was never written". Prof. Szendy. Tues./Thur. 6:40-8p

COLT1814Z: Alexander to Cleopatra: Greek Literature and Culture (CLAS 1120Y)

COLT2650S: Thinking Tradition: Heidegger, Arendt, Adorno (GRMN 2661K)

COLT2821R: What Was Europe? (HMAN 2400E)

"What Was Europe?" focuses on the "crisis of the European spirit" in 20th-century thought. In this course we will look at the origins of Europe and its aftermath in the literary study, philosophy, and political theory. Profs. McLaughlin & Szendy F 3pm-5:30pm

COLT2821Q: Not With The Master's Tools: Freedom, Enslavement, Emancipation, and Reparations

Focusing on the era of reconstruction - and reading texts of various genres and orientations including dairies, novels, Freedmen's bureau records, enslaved petitions, newspapers, architectonic plans and photographs) and different theoretical accounts by W.E.B.DuBois, Frantz Fanon, C.L.R.James, Audre Lorde, Hannah Arendt, and Olympe de Gouges we will study slavery as a condition that impacted enslaved people, enslaving agents and other members of the communities and continue to impact their descendants. We will also explore categories such as abolition, ownership, rights, reparations, expertise knowledge, master's tools and master pieces and use archives as sources and tools. Prof. Azoulay. M 3-5:30p

COLT2830M: Potential History of Photography: Collaboration (MCM 2100R)

COLT2990: Thesis Preparation

For graduate students who have met the tuition requirement and are paying the Registration Fee to continue active enrollment while preparing a thesis.

Updated September 15, 2017, tm