

**Brown University Department of Comparative Literature**  
**Fall 2020 Course offerings**

**UNDERGRADUATE COURSES**

**COLT0510C: The World of Lyric Poetry**

Tuesdays/Thursdays 2:30-3:50 – Online

Professor Dore J. Levy

**Course Description**

Lyric poetry is the prime mode for conveying emotion in many cultures, from ancient times to the present day. This course will survey the variety of forms and themes from the earliest texts from Greece, Rome, China and Japan, then the glories of the Renaissance and the Tang Dynasty, then move to the challenges for lyric expression in the modern world. Enrollment limited to 19 first year students.

**COLT 0610D: Rites of Passage**

Tuesdays/Thursdays 1:00-2:20 – Online

Professor Arnold Weinstein

**Course Description**

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 19 first year students.

**COLT0710Q: The Odyssey in Literature and Film**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 1:00-1:50 - Sayles Hall, Room 200

Professor Vangelis Calotychos

**Course Description**

Examines reincarnations of the Homeric figure of Odysseus in contemporary literatures and film as modernist figure, postcolonial subject, and existentialist hero. How is the Odysseus myth altered from culture to culture (Greece, Rome, Ireland, the Caribbean)? How is it re-visioned in different historical periods and from different perspectives (feminist, marxist, postcolonial) and genres (epic, poetry, the novel, film, drama)? Major authors include Homer, Virgil, Tennyson, Joyce, Kazantzakis, Cavafy, Seferis, Atwood, Walcott; criticism by Bakhtin, Edith Hall, Adorno, Derrida. Films include works by Angelopoulos, the Coen brothers; Singer's Usual Suspects, Mendes' James Bond offering Skyfall, and Kubrick's 2001: Space Odyssey.

**COLT1210: Introduction to the Theory of Literature**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 2:00-2:50 – Online

Professor Susan Bernstein and Professor Marc Redfield

**Course Description**

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.

**COLT 1420B: Genji: Mirror for the Romantic**

Wednesdays 3:00-5:30 Prospect House, Room 102

Professor Dore J. Levy

Course Description

In East Asian Buddhist culture, the mirror is a symbol of the mind in both its intellectual and emotional aspects. These masterworks detail the lives and loves of Prince Genji, cynosure of the medieval Japanese court, and Jia Baoyu, the last hope of an influential Chinese clan during the reign of Manchus. We examine both works as well as the sources of *Genji* and literary aesthetics of the Tang dynasty.

**COLT 1420T: The Fiction of Relationship**

Tuesdays/Thursdays 10:30-11:50 – Online

Professor Arnold Weinstein

Course Description

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.

**COLT 1610W: Whites, White Jews and Us: Radical Black, Arab & Jewish Thinkers**

Mondays 3:00-5:30 – Online

Professor Ariella Azoulay

Course Description

Inspired by Houria Bouteldja's book *White, Jews and Us*, which we will read in class, we will read authors who are engaged with generations of (forced) displacement and concomitant fraught cartographies. The class will proceed along lines drawn by two questions: (a) what makes these texts radical and how does their radicalness opens paths of refusal, care and repair of and in shared worlds; (b) how do these authors engage with identities made and remade by displacement and catastrophe, and how imagination, fabulation, remembrance and reclamation of never-completely-lost worlds are mobilized to question these identities, borders and injustices they produce. We will read texts by Ella Shohat, Houria Bouteldja, Saidiya Hartman, Susan Slymovics, Anarkata, Aliyyah Abdur-Rahman, Lital Levy and others.

**COLT 1710C: Literary Translation Workshop**

Thursdays 4:00-6:30 –Online

Professor Emily Drumsta

Course Description

The primary focus of this course is the practice of literary translation as an art. Using the workshop format, each student will complete a project by the end of the semester. Examples and theoretical texts will illuminate the historical, ethical, cultural, political, and aesthetic values that underlie every translation, keeping an eye towards opening up the field beyond inherited practices to consider the contemporary implications of our choices, intentions, and purposes in translation. Open to all levels. Heritage speakers are welcome, collaboration is permitted, and an open-spirited approach to this developing and fascinating practice is strongly recommended.

**COLT 18130: Adventures of the Avant-Garde**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 12:00-12:50 – Online

Professor Michelle Clayton

**Course Description**

In the early years of the twentieth century, a series of artistic movements rippled across the Western hemisphere, exploding conceptions of art and culture while reconfiguring international relations. Explores those movements, from their predecessors (Baudelaire, Rimbaud, Mallarmé), through overlapping –isms (Cubism, Futurism, Constructivism, Vorticism, Expressionism, Dada, Surrealism), to avatars in the Americas. In keeping with the avant-garde's cross-pollinating spirit, we study texts from a variety of traditions, forms, and genres: from poetry through prose to manifestoes, from painting and photography to film, music, and dance, touching on questions of translation and translatability between languages, cultures, and art-forms. Enrollment limited to 25.

**COLT1814S: The Balkans, Europe's Other?: Literature, Film, History –**

Tuesdays 4:00-6:30; 67 George Street, Room 104

Professor Vangelis Calotychos

**Course Description**

Introduces the modern Balkans through a critical examination of literary and visual, historiographic and political, narratives. The course considers the contestation over a shared historical past and interreligious geographic space through common and divergent master narratives, motifs, myths, and recurring discourses. It also examines the region's aesthetic, religious, and political relation to Europe. Do the Balkans constitute a traumatized, “balkanized,” self-colonized, abject modernity at Europe's edges, its inner alterity? Given the acclaim achieved by Balkan filmmakers since 1989, the course also asks how Balkan artists, caught in-between nationalism, Orientalism, Eurocentrism and globalization, assert agency and subjectivity and captivate our imaginations.

**COLT 1815R: Germans and Jews (Register for GRMN 1340Y)**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 11:00-11:50 – Online

Professor Susan Bernstein

**Course Description**

This introductory course will examine the fraught relationship between Germans (and Austrians) and Jews in Germanophone writing across genres from the Enlightenment to the mid- 20th century. We will consider writing by Jewish authors, images of Jews, and the themes of Jewishness and Germanness, emancipation, assimilation, anti-semitism and Zionism. Students will learn analytic reading, writing and research skills. Texts by Lessing, Mendelsohn, Veit, von Arnim, Heine, Marx, Droste-Hülshoff, Laske-Schüler, Kafka, Benjamin, Scholem and Arendt, among others. Readings and discussion in English.

**COLT 1815S The Cultures of Roman Imperialism (Register for HMAN 1974U)**

Th 4pm-6:30pm —Online

Professor Joseph Reed

**Course Description**

“The Cultures of Roman Imperialism” explores the cultural feedback loops between capital and provinces in the ancient Roman world, studying the literature (and some material culture) not only of expansionist Rome, but of the populations subject to Rome (including Greek, Egyptian, and Judaic). How did Rome appropriate local cultural forms to legitimize its own power? How did local cultures push back with their own appropriations? We will find new ways to study an ancient

empire that has subsequently been a model not only for governance, whether enlightened or oppressive, but also for dialogue and interchange, however fraught.

## GRADUATE COURSES

### **COLT2210: Introduction to the Theory of Literature**

Mondays/Wednesdays/Fridays 2:00-2:50 – Online

Professor Susan Bernstein and Professor Marc Redfield

#### Course Description

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).

Enrollment is limited to Graduate level students.

### **COLT 2540M Latin American Existential Literature (Register for HISP 2520L)**

F 3pm-5:30pm – Online

Prof. Stephanie Merrim

#### Course Description

European existentialism had a strong impact on Latin American literature, though that impact remains under-explored. The course begins with European existentialism and Latin American identity politics. It then explores the particular constructions of European existentialism effected by Argentine, Uruguayan, Mexican, and Brazilian writers of prose fiction in the mid-twentieth century. Readings in Spanish and English. Instructor override needed for registration.

Enrollment is limited to Graduate level students.

### **COLT 2820L: Moderns and Primitives**

Wednesdays 12:00-2:30 – Prospect House, Room 102

Professor Kenneth Haynes

#### Course Description

Major writers, artists, and theorists of European modernism put a new emphasis on the status of primitive society and archaic pre-history. We will consider the works of Durkheim, Eliot, Joyce, Picasso, and others with reference to the anthropology and ethnography of their period, and to subsequent post-colonial critique and controversy.

### **COLT 2822E Mourning, in Theory (Register for GRMN 2261U)**

M 3pm-5:30pm – Online

Prof. Gerhard Richter

#### Course Description

Our graduate seminar will trace the fundamental affinity between critical theory and modes of mourning. Through careful reading of key reflections on the bonds among thinking, language, and mourning, we will work to deepen our understanding of how our relation to finitude, loss, and absence relates to the potentialities of conceptual inquiry. Texts to include Heidegger on Dasein's finitude; Freud on mourning and melancholia; Benjamin on the "mourning play"; Barthes' *Mourning Diary*; Derrida's *The Work of Mourning* and his newly published seminar *Life Death*; and Butler on the politics of grievable and allegedly ungrievable lives. Students from diverse fields welcome.

Enrollment is limited to Graduate level students.