

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE OFFERINGS 2008 – 2009

Note: 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.

Primarily for Undergraduates

COLT 0610 THE FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE

COLT 0610G – Literature and the American Presidency

We shall read widely in writings by, and about, selected American presidents, but also focus on the ways in which presidents have used literature as a dictional source in their own writing and thinking. We will attend also to the relationship of culture to power as evidenced in other textual media, such as film. FYS [J. Pucci]

Spring

B hour

COLT 0610H – Renaissance Epic

Explores Renaissance attempts to renew, parody, and question the classical epic tradition. The study of poetics, narrative, and imagination will be wedded to investigations of beauty, wonder, and nationhood. Authors will include Ariosto, Tasso, Ercilla, Spenser, Camões, du Bartas, and Milton. [P. Saval]

Spring

D hour

COLT 0710 LITERATURE AND ITS HISTORY

COLT 0710C - Introduction to Scandinavian Literature

An introduction to major works of Scandinavian writers, painters and filmmakers over the past 150 years. Figures include Kierkegaard, Ibsen, Strindberg, Munch, Hamsun, Josephson, Södergran, Lagerkvist, Vesaas, Cronqvist, August and Vinterberg, as well as children's books by Astrid Lindgren and Tove Jansson. LL [A. Weinstein]

Fall

I hour

COLT 0710I - New Worlds

An interdisciplinary journey-combining history, literature, art, film, architecture, cartography-through representations of the many worlds that comprised the colonial Hispanic New World. We traverse the paradisiacal Antilles, the U.S. Southwest, Tenochtitlan/Mexico City, Lima, Potosí. We read European, indigenous, and Creole writers, including: Columbus, Las Casas, Bernal Díaz, Aztec poets, Guaman Poma, Sor Juana. In English. Excellent preparation for study abroad in Latin America. FYS/CAP [S. Merrim]

Fall

O hour

COLT 0710Q - Odysseus in Literature

Examines the reincarnations of the Homeric figure of Odysseus in contemporary literatures. It approaches the texts historically, culturally and literary. How is the Odysseus myth altered from culture to culture (Greece, Rome, Ireland, the Caribbean), how is it re-adapted in different historical periods, how does Odysseus change as the genre changes (epic, poetry, the novel, film, drama)? [M. Pourgouris]

Fall

H hour

COLT 0810 IDEAS, MYTHS AND THEMES**COLT 0810H - How Not to Be a Hero**

Shakespeare wrote two great, intense plays about ancient characters who were irredeemable failures: Coriolanus and Timon of Athens. What can failure teach us? What kind of strength does a language of failure possess? We will also read the ancient sources themselves (Livy, Lucian, Plutarch), and modern adaptations of these stories (Bertolt Brecht, T.S. Eliot, Günter Grass, Wyndham Lewis). [K. Haynes]

Fall

L hour

COLT 0810I - Tales and Talemakers of the Non-Western World

Examines many forms of storytelling in Asia, from the *Epic of Gilgamesh* and the *Arabian Nights Entertainments* to works of history and fiction in China and Japan. The material is intended to follow the evolution of non-western narratives from mythological, historical and fictional sources in a variety of cultural contexts. Topics will include myth and ritual, the problem of epic, tales of love and the fantastic, etc. [D. Levy]

Spring

C hour

COLT 0810J - The Colonial and Postcolonial Marvelous

A celebration and critique of the marvelous in South American and related literatures (U.S., Caribbean). We follow the marvelous from European exoticizing of the New World during the colonial period to its postcolonial incarnations in 'magical realism' and beyond. We attend particularly to the politics and marketing of the marvelous, in writers including Borges, Chamoiseau, Columbus, García Márquez, Fuguet. Reading in English or Spanish. [S. Merrim & E. Whitfield]

Spring

K hour

COLT 0810K - Dropping Out in Morocco

Long before American beat poets began to take up residence there, Morocco had figured for many as a point from which one could exit western civilization. This course explores Morocco as a literary site for "dropping out", from the early modern period to the present. Readings will include works by Burroughs, Goytisolo and Choukri. FYS [E. Colla]

Fall

Q hour

COLT 0810X - European Renaissances

Just what is the European renaissance and when and how did it happen and who decided? Let's look at the renaissances of Petrarch, Boccaccio, and Giotto, of Erasmus, and Thomas More and Holbein, of Machiavelli and Castiglione and Raphael. Are these renaissances intellectual, aesthetic, visual, rhetorical? Did they happen in the fourteenth century, the fifteenth, the sixteenth? Or in the nineteenth when they were first clearly described? [S. Foley]

Spring

I hour

COLT 0810Y – Greece in the Imagination of Western Authors

Considers contemporary western thinkers (British, American, French and German) whose works are situated in or comment on Greece (both Classical and Modern). It examines novels, short stories, travelogues, and poems that exemplify the relationship of these authors to Greek culture. Authors include: Byron,

Shelley, Durrell, Miller, de Bernieres, Freud, Camus, Le Corbusier, Woolf,
Twain, Wharton, Forster and others. [M. Pourgouris]
Spring H hour

For Undergraduates and Graduates

COLT 1210 INTRO 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. [S. Bernstein]

Fall F hour

COLT 1410 STUDIES IN DRAMA

COLT 1410K – European Early Modern Drama

An introduction to early modern drama in the French, Italian, Spanish, and English traditions. The goal is to explore a wide range of imaginative impulses in the Renaissance and Baroque periods. Readings will include plays by Corneille, Racine, Calderón, Lope de Vega, Shakespeare, Machiavelli, and Molière.

[P. Saval]

Fall D hour

COLT 1420 STUDIES IN NARRATIVE

COLT 1420R - The 1001 Nights

So many nights, so many versions of those nights. Can we read *The 1001 Nights* as a discrete text, separate from the stories that gave birth to it or from the myriad of narratives it has spawned in the modern period? Explores the philological issues raised by the different Arabic versions as well as rewritings by Allende, Djebbar, and Pamuk. [E. Colla]

Spring G hour

COLT 1420U - The South: Literature of the U.S. South and South America

For Jorge Luis Borges, in his story of the same title, the South is a spectral region, hovering between imagination and reality. The literatures of the U.S. South and South America enact his notion of the South. We examine the remarkable similarities between the two literatures--similarities that result from literary influence and from social, cultural, and historical circumstances. Enrollment limited to 20. Criteria: previous upper-level literature courses, relevance to your studies at Brown. Permission given after second class. [S. Merrim]

Fall K hour

COLT 1421A - European Fiction, 1100-1400

Medieval narratives of high heroism, fantastic adventure, forbidden love, humor and comedy. Introduction to the literary conventions and cultural outlooks of these fictions. What was their appeal in their own times? How may modern readers decipher their cultural oddities and enigmas? Readings from Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, Boccaccio, Chaucer, and several anonymous authors. [M. Bossy]

Spring J hour

COLT 1421C – Subaltern Studies: History, Literature, Theory

Charts the literary as an analog space of the subaltern in the influential postcolonial project of subaltern studies, taking as its point of departure the premise that "the small voice of history" and that of literature and its theory complement each other to disturb the figurations of the dominant. Readings: major figures of the Subaltern Studies Collective. [N. Naqvi]

Fall

P hour

COLT 1421D – Mediterranean Islands

Considers the modern literature and culture of Mediterranean islands with particular emphasis on Sicily, Sardinia, the Aegean islands, Cyprus, and Malta. It explores the significance of the island both as a contained space and as part of the diverse Mediterranean region. Assignments will include novels, short stories, poems, travelogues, films as well as ethnographic and theoretical texts. [M. Pourgouris]

Spring

O hour

COLT 1430 STUDIES IN POETRY**COLT 1430D - 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. [D. Levy]

Fall

J hour

COLT 1430K - The Classical Tradition in English Poetry

We will read a number of famous short poems in Greek and Latin in conjunction with the major English writers who later translated, imitated, and reworked them. The class will be arranged by genre, and we will focus on the georgic, epistle, idyll, and epigram, in both ancient and modern guises. We will read Horace, Theocritus, Virgil, Dryden, Pope, Tennyson, and others. [K. Haynes]

Fall

K hour

COLT 1430N – The Albatross and the Nightingale: Nineteenth-Century Poetry

Readings in French, German, British and American poetry of the nineteenth century. Texts selected from: Hölderlin, Mörike, Heine, Hugo, Nerval, Baudelaire, Keats, Hardy, Dickinson, Poe and others. Focus on close reading, and rhetorical and formal elements of poetry. Frequent writing assignments. [S. Bernstein & K. Waldrop]

Spring

Q hour

COLT 1710 INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TRANSLATION**COLT 1710A - Translation as Art**

Includes some discussion of the history and theory of translation, but mainly involves practice in translating poetry or imaginative prose. Conducted as a workshop. S/NC [Staff]

Spring

M hour

COLT 1810 STUDIES IN THE LITERATURE OF IDEAS**COLT 1810C – City (B)Lights**

Interdisciplinary explorations of the modern urban experience featuring social sciences, literature and film. Convergences and differences in the presentation of urban life in literature, film, the visual arts, urban planning, and social sciences. City populations, bureaucracy, power groups, alienation, urban crowds, the city as site of the surreal, are central themes. Against the background of classic European urban images, American cities and literary works are foregrounded. [E. Ahearn]

Spring

Q hour

COLT 1810G - Fiction and History

How the historical fiction that has flourished over the past four decades challenges the notions of objectivity and totalization, while providing alternative viewpoints for the reconstruction and reinterpretation of the past. Novels by Grass, Doctorow, Delillo, García-Márquez, Allende, Cristina García and Lída Jorge. Theoretical texts by White, LaCapra, Benjamin, Ricoeur, and Chartier. Films to be discussed include *The Official Story* and *Europa, Europa*. Prerequisite: two previous literature courses. Instructor's permission required. [L. Valente]

Spring

N hour

COLT 1810I - Gates of Asia

An exploration of the growth of European knowledge of Asia from the rise of the Mongol empire through the Great Game and its aftermath. Primary sources include three kinds of accounts provided by travelers who set their hearts on Asian exploration: personal narratives, official reports and dispatches, and scholarly studies of the exotic cultures. [D. Levy]

Fall

Q hour

COLT 1810N - Freud: Writer and Reader

A broad survey of Freud's writings, with particular emphasis on psychoanalysis' relevance to literary theory and cultural analysis. Readings include Freud's major works, as well as secondary sources focused on applications to literary studies. Instructor's permission required. [S. Stewart-Steinberg]

Fall

Tu 9:30-11:50

COLT 1810P - Literature and Medicine

The purpose of this course is to examine a number of central issues in medicine-- disease, pain, trauma, madness, the image of the physician-- from the distinct perspectives of the sciences and the arts. Literary texts will be drawn from authors such as Sophocles, Hawthorne, Buchner, Strinberg, Gilman, Tolstoy, Kafka, Anderson, Hemingway, Ionesco, and K. Harrison; theorists will include Foucault, Sontag, Scarry and others. [A. Weinstein]

Fall

J hour

COLT 1811J - The Paternalistic Thriller and other Studies in Colonial Fiction

The impact of colonialism on European fiction from the rise of empire to its decline and fall, focusing on authors who wrote from direct contact with the peoples of Africa and Asia, such as Rudyard Kipling, Joseph Conrad, T.E. Lawrence, E.M. Forster, and Isak Dinesen. Topics will include romantic images of conquest, imperial ideology in literature, differing attitudes towards acculturation, and the changing symbolism of exotic settings. [D. Levy]

Spring

N hour

COLT1811X – Marx and his Critics

This course will focus on a close study of the work of Karl Marx and its legacy for critical theory. The first part of the course will be dedicated to a reading of Marx's most important texts, with special emphasis given to his theories of economy, of ideology, alienation and fetishism. The second part will be dedicated to a reading of some of Marx's most important readers: Lukacs, Gramsci, Althusser, Zizek and Derrida. Instructor's permission required. [S. Stewart-Steinberg]

Spring

Tu 9:30-11:50

COLT1811Y – Genius and Melancholia in the Renaissance

Explores Renaissance accounts of genius, genial inspiration, and melancholia, and their accompanying ideas of intellection and immortality. Primary materials include Dürer, Montaigne, Rabelais, Ficino, Ariosto, Erasmus, Saint Teresa, and Luther. Secondary or contemporary texts include Warburg, Panofsky, Saxl, Klibansky, Wind, Benjamin, Kierkegaard, and Sebald. [P. Saval]

Spring

O hour

Primarily for Graduate Students**COLT 2540 SEMINAR IN SCHOOLS AND MOVEMENTS****COLT 2540A - The Troubadours and their Followers**

Introduction to Old Occitan language and troubadour poetry. From the 12th to the 14th century, the troubadours of southern France, northern Italy, and Catalonia spurred many new developments in European literatures. During the second half of the semester the seminar will branch out toward poets who adapted troubadour modes and styles in other languages. [M. Bossy]

Fall

O hour

COLT 2540B – Modernism and its Others

Examines European modernism in a wider geographical and cultural context. Apart from considering major literary and theoretical texts of modernism it aims to reassess the concept with the inclusion of neglected but highly active territories of modernism. Major themes include: movements and manifestoes, modernism and national identity, modernist form, tradition and the mythical subtext, Marxism and psychoanalysis. [M. Pourgouris]

Fall

N hour

COLT 2820 SPECIAL TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COLT 2820P - Aesthetics and the Eighteenth Century Subject

The debates about taste, judgment, beauty, sentiment, and sensation in the eighteenth century gave rise to the discourse of aesthetics as we know it today, but they also exerted a powerful influence on how knowledge, virtue, and subjectivity were imagined in the post-enlightenment period. In this course, we will examine some of the founding texts of aesthetic theory from the era (including Locke, Smith, Burke, Lessing, and Kant), and then turn to consider how aesthetic questions informed and were taken up by Goethe's narrative of subject-formation in his Bildungsroman, *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship*. In English. [Z. Sng]

Fall

M hour

COLT 2820Q – Culture and Politics in Cuba and the Caribbean

Complicating standard narratives about intellectuals and the Cuban Revolution, explores writings whose relationship to the state is neither affirmative nor oppositional. Focusing on journals and on recent work in cultural theory, history, anthropology, and political science, addresses the evolution and potential of civil society; articulations of marginality; revisions of socialism and the Soviet legacy; and the mobility of theory. Spanish required. [E. Whitfield & A. L. Denis]

Spring

N hour

COLT 2820R Postcolonial Melancholia

Figures of loss and defeat proliferate widely in the accounts of colonization, national liberation, and decolonization in South Asia, Africa, the Arab world, and the Americas. We will attend to the particularity of loss by juxtaposing readings in literature and postcolonial theory with readings on mourning and melancholia, drawn from a range of disciplines. [E. Colla & N. Naqvi]

Spring

M hour

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