

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COURSE OFFERINGS 2009 – 2010

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 0510 LITERARY CREATION AND LITERARY DISCOURSE

COLT 0510C - The World of Lyric Poetry

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 20. Reserved for: First Year Students. [D.J. Levy]

Fall

H hour

COLT 0510G - "The Grand Tour, or A Room With a View": Italy in the Imagination of Others

Italy has for many decades been the place to which people traveled in order to both encounter something quite alien to their own identities and yet a place where they were supposed to find themselves, indeed to construct their proper selves. This course introduces students to some of the most important texts that describe this "grand tour." We will read texts (both literary and travelogues by Goethe, De Stael, Henry James, Hawthorne, Freud, among others, as well as view films (such as "A Room With a View") - all in order to determine the ways in which Italy "means" for the cultural imagination of Western civilization. Enrollment Limited to 20. Reserved for: First Year Students.

[S. Stewart-Steinberg]

Spring

N hour

COLT 0510H - Introduction to 20th-Century Arabic Prose Literature

Provides an introductory overview of the emergence and development of fiction written in Arabic through translated works from Egypt, Palestine, Sudan, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, and Lebanon. [C. Kia]

Fall

D hour

COLT 0610 THE FUNCTIONS OF LITERATURE

COLT 0610A - The Far Side of the Old World: Perspectives on Chinese Culture

A survey of traditional Chinese culture focusing on the major literary and artistic achievements of six major periods in Chinese history, including philosophical texts, poetry, various forms of the fine arts, and vernacular fiction and drama. A broad range of primary materials will give the student greater insight and appreciation of Chinese culture in general and also provide a foundation for further study of East Asia in other disciplines. [D. J. Levy]

Levy]

Spring

G hour

COLT 0610C - Banned Books

An examination of literary censorship in which we read various texts forbidden for putatively violating social, religious, and political norms in particular historical and cultural contexts. We also analyze the secondary literature surrounding the banning of these

ostensibly "dangerous" texts in order to theorize questions and assumptions about the power of art and the ironies generated by these debates. [M. Viswanathan]
 Fall B hour

COLT 0610D – 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, Vesnaas, Rhys, Satrapi and Foer. Enrollment Limited to 20. Reserved for: First Year Students. [A. Weinstein]
 Fall J hour

COLT 0610E - Crisis and Identity in Mexico, 1519-1968

The course examines four moments of crisis or critical moments for the forging of Mexican identity: the Conquest, the hegemonic 17th century, the Mexican Revolution, the "Mex-hippies" of the 1960s. We especially explore how key historical, essayistic, and literary writings have dealt with Mexico's past and present, with trauma and transformation. Excellent preparation for study in Mexico. In English. No prerequisites. [S. Merrim]
 Fall K hour

COLT 0810 IDEAS, MYTHS AND THEMES

COLT 0810E - Confession, Autobiography, Testimony

Does writing a life give it coherence and veracity, or create a fiction? What is the relationship between first-person narrative and truth, and between authorship and authority? How does the form of a first-person text – a religious confession, a personal journal, a political denunciation, a collective memoir – affect the telling? Must the reader of such an account be "you" to the teller's "I", and how does the intimacy of this relationship shape the experience of reading? In this course, we test the limits of self-narration against ethical and physical limits, reading first-person narratives that purport to be non-fictional. We will read accounts of different experiences – social and sexual transgression, suffering and perpetrating violence, slavery – and explore both the possibilities and duplicities of writing as "I". [E. Whitfield]
 Spring N hour

COLT 0810G - Equity: Law, Literature, and Philosophy

Justice, rigorously applied, yields injustice. This paradox has haunted Western aspirations toward legal and political justice from antiquity to the Renaissance. It necessitated the formulation of a complementary principle, equity, whose job it was to correct or supplement the law in cases where the strict application of it would lead to unfairness. We will read Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dickens, Kafka, and others. [K. Haynes]
 Fall L hour

COLT 0810O - Civilization and its Discontents

This course investigates the age-old tension between order and chaos as a central dynamic in the making and interpretation of literature. Texts will be drawn from drama, fiction and poetry from Antiquity to the present. Authors include Sophocles, Shakespeare, Racine, Beckett, Prevost, Bronte, Faulkner, Morrison, Blake, Whitman, Dickinson, and Rich. [A. Weinstein]
 Spring J hour

COLT 0810S - Literature and National Identity

This course explores the notion of the nation as expressed in literature, poetry, film and popular culture. It primarily centers on two case studies (Greece and Israel) and it considers multiple definitions of the nation as well as the concept of national/historical memory. It also examines the display of cultural memory (in national museums, commemorations, memorials etc.). Other areas of interest include the national appropriation of literature and literature's function in the national institution. Though the course primarily examines critical and theoretical texts, poems, films, and literary texts will be considered in the context of a theoretical approach to the nation. [M. Pourgouris]

Fall

E hour

COLT 0810Z – Myth and Literature

Great authors throughout the ages have been fascinated by ancient mythology and have incorporated elements of it into their texts. Similarly, the ways in which these myths are modified and varied throughout time can serve as a lens into values, traditions and the passage of time. This course will investigate different kinds of cultural myths, and the disparities and similarities—diachronological, geographical and thematic—that we can observe in different versions. We will investigate the values and limitations of interpreting, representing and translating myth in literature. Our focus will be myth in the literature of different Western nations from the medieval period to the twentieth century. Primary texts will include major works by Marie de France, Milton, Goethe, Kleist, Racine, Shakespeare and Kafka. Students will learn to question and engage critically with the historical, cultural, literary and scientific frontiers that separate myth and reality. Assignments will include three short papers and a final paper. [N. Peterson]

Summer

TBA

COLT 0811A - Introduction to Modernism: Past, Future, Exile, Home (ENGL 0610F)

Interested students MUST register for ENGL 0610F

COLT 0811B - Believers, Agnostics, and Atheists in Contemporary Fiction (JUDS 0050A)

Interested students MUST register for JUDS 0050A

COLT 0811C - Belonging and Displacement: Cross-Cultural Identities (POBS 0810)

Interested students MUST register for POBS 0810

COLT 0811D - The Bible as Literature (JUDS 0260)

Interested students MUST register for JUDS 0260

For Undergraduates and Graduates**COLT 1210 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. [S. Bernstein & P. Saval]

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

C hour

COLT 1410L - Philosophy and Tragedy

Explores the intersection of philosophy and tragedy in western literature. Readings include Aeschylus, Sophocles, Seneca, Plato, Aristotle, Racine, Calderón, Descartes, Pascal, Kant, Schelling, Hölderlin, Hegel, Nietzsche, and Heidegger. [P. Saval]

Spring

I hour

COLT 1420 STUDIES IN NARRATIVE**COLT 1420A - *The Tale of Genji* and its Legacy**

The Tale of Genji (circa 1000 CE), authored by Murasaki Shikibu, a woman of the Heian court, has been canonized over the centuries as the greatest work of Japanese literature. No work in the Japanese tradition has exerted as much literary influence as this mammoth work of prose fiction detailing the private lives of Genji, the brilliant son of the emperor, those with whom he consorts, and his descendents. We will read *Genji* in its entirety, along with antecedent works, other texts of the period, works influenced by Murasaki's opus, other historical materials, and secondary commentary. There are no prerequisites for this course and it is open to all undergraduates. [M. Viswanathan]

Fall

D hour

COLT 1420F - Fantastic and Existentialist Literatures of Argentina, Uruguay and Brazil

Jorge Luis Borges proclaimed that South American writers can "wield all themes," without superstition, with irreverence. This course examines the ways in which mostly mid-20th-century writers from Argentina, Uruguay, and Brazil appropriated European fantastic and existentialist fictions, taking them in new directions. Readings, in English or original languages, include Borges, Cortázar, Onetti, Lispector. Prerequisite: previous college literature course(s). [S. Merrim]

Spring

K hour

COLT 1420O – Proust, Joyce and Faulkner

A reading of three major Modernist authors, with a focus on the following issues: role of the artist, representation of consciousness, weight of the past. Texts include substantial portions of Proust's *Recherche*, Joyce's *Portrait* and *Ulysses*, Faulkner's *Sound and the Fury*, *Light in August* and *Absalom, Absalom!* Prior background in these authors desirable, especially *Ulysses*. Senior seminar. Reserved for: Seniors. Preference given to concentrators in Comparative Literature, English, Modern Culture and Media. Permission of the instructor. [A. Weinstein]

Spring

W 12-2:20

COLT 1420T - The 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. [A. Weinstein]
 Fall I hour

COLT 1421F - Esthers of the Diaspora: Female Jewish Voices from Latin America (POBS 1500H)

Interested students MUST register for POBS 1500H

COLT 1421G - Dickens and Others (ENGL 1511G)

Interested students MUST register for ENGL 1511G

COLT 1430 STUDIES IN POETRY

COLT 1430C - Classical Japanese Poetry

A historical study of various poetic forms of *waka* or Japanese poetry from the 8th-century anthology, the *Man'yōshū*, to the advent of modern verse, including *jiyūshi* or free verse, in the latter part of the 19th century. Focuses on the relationship of poetry to religion, the political implications of *waka*, and the dominant aesthetic governing poetic conventions in different periods. [M. Viswanathan]

Spring

H hour

COLT 1430F - Medieval Poets

Heroic, lyrical, visionary, and satirical poetry, 1100-1500: Troubadour songs of love and politics, lyrics of the minnesingers and early Italian poets, Dante's *Divine Comedy*, selections from Villon's *Testament*. We will observe the games of art and persuasion played by the poets, while also discussing the moral outlooks and social ideals displayed in their works. [M. A. Bossy]

Fall

M hour

COLT 1430H - Poetry, Art, and Beauty

What does it mean to be beautiful in classical and European literature and the arts? How do poems and works of visual art embody beauty? How is the idea of beauty defined by thinkers from Plato to Benjamin and Dante? What is aesthetics in relation to artistic practice? This course is a workshop in the reading of lyric poetry and the interpretation of works of visual art from pre-historic cave painting to moments of modernism from Manet through the present. Each class will involve images as well as texts, focusing on the objective properties of both media and the way philosophy and theories of literature and the arts have understood these practices. The three written exercises call for the interpretation of texts and images in the light of aesthetics, and also allow for creative practice in literary translation and imitation. No final examination. Texts include Sappho, Plato, Aristotle, Catullus, Petrarch, Plato, Goethe, Kant, Wordsworth, Baudelaire, Rilke, Benjamin, Stevens, Heidegger, Derrida, and Danto. LL [S. Foley]

Spring

D hour

COLT 1610 STUDIES IN CRITICISM

COLT 1610B – Irony

A study of the trope of irony and its evaluation, especially in the Romantic tradition. Focuses on the epistemological implications of irony and the role it plays in contemporary criticism. Readings from Plato, Hegel, Schlegel, Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Lukács, Booth, White, De Man. [S. Bernstein]

Spring

F hour

COLT 1710 INTRODUCTION TO LITERARY TRANSLATION**COLT 1710A – Introduction to Literary Translation: Translation as Art**

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

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

M hour

COLT 1810O - Latin American Literature in Dialogue with France

This course complicates the question of influence in Latin American literary and intellectual self-fashioning, specifically with regard to France. It explores the productivity and perplexity of this relationship through romanticism and articulations of the real (as realism, surrealism and magical realism). Approaching the twenty-first century, considers Latin American perspectives on French theories of feminism, postmodernism and globalization. [E. Whitfield]

Spring

H hour

COLT 1811Q – Poisonous or Prophetic?

Wright's *Native Son*, Burrough's *Naked Lunch*, Derrida's *Specters of Marx*, and Rimbaud. [E. Ahearn]

Spring

Q hour

COLT 1810V - Marx and Modern Literature

A contrastive and integrative study of the range of Marx's writings and works by writers such as Shakespeare, Dickens, Baudelaire, Flaubert, Woolf, and Stevens. Examines Marx's leading concepts in philosophy, history, economics, ideology, and aesthetics in relation to the particularities of literary forms. One or two short papers and a longer final study of a literary work chosen from the student's major field. [E. Ahearn]

Fall

Q hour

COLT 1810W – Marx, Freud, Nietzsche and the Philosophy of Nikos Kazantzakis

Examines the life and works of Nikos Kazantzakis. Apart from his more famous novels, *The Last Temptation of Christ* and *Zorba the Greek*, students will also read the novels *Christ Recrucified*, *Freedom or Death*, *Saint Francis (The Pauper of God)*, *The Fratricides*, *The Odyssey: A Modern Sequel* as well as the author's autobiography *Report to Greco*. The course also examines Kazantzakis's philosophical writings (*Saviors of God*), his travel memoirs (Spain, Italy, Sinai, Japan, England, Russia, Jerusalem and Cyprus), and his plays *Prometheus*, *Christopher Columbus*, and *Buddha*. Special emphasis will be placed on the influence of Nietzsche, Bergson, Marx, Freud as well as Buddhism and Christianity on Kazantzakis. [M. Pourgouris]

Spring

O hour

COLT 1810X - Mirror for the Romantic: *The Tale of the Genji* and *The Story of the Stone*

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. Prerequisites: COLT 0710, RELS 0040 (0088) or 0100 (0006), or permission of the instructor. [D.J. Levy]

Spring

E hour

COLT 1811L - Travel and Tourism through the Ages

The travel diary, whether prompted by pleasure, pilgrimage, official duty, scientific exploration, or profit, emerges as a prominent genre in virtually all times and cultures. Readings include literary accounts of actual travels, such as the autobiographical "slave narratives" recounting involuntary displacement - typified by *The Life of Olaudah Equiniao* - and purely fictive work, such as the medieval *Mandeville's Travels*, and metaphoric narratives of spiritual quests. [M. Viswanathan]

Spring

J hour

COLT 1811P - Literature and Resistance: Revolt in the Time of Oppression

Examines texts, (poems, novels, films, short stories, music) written during times of political oppression. Much of the material will focus on the period 1967-1974 and the rule of the Greek Junta; texts from other literatures written under similar oppressive regimes will be considered. The course aims to explore the relationship between literature and censorship, exile, trauma, and revolt. [M. Pourgouris]

Fall

N hour

COLT 1811T - Levantine Cities: Alexandria, Istanbul, Athens

This course explores the literary and filmic imagination of three Eastern Mediterranean cities, Alexandria, Istanbul, and Athens. It examines the history, culture and politics of these cities and the ways in which they emerge in literature, film, poetry and travelogues. How is the city defined in these works? How are social tensions addressed, such as those between Greeks and Turks and Arabs or between Christians, Muslims and Jews? How are thematic and historical issues resolved, such as those involving antiquity and modernity, tradition and modernization, colonialism and nationalism, religion and secularism? How are these cities defined in the works of western writers? [M. Pourgouris]

Spring

B hour

COLT 1812B - Aesthetics and Politics (ENGL 1900E)

Interested students MUST register for ENGL 1900E

COLT 1812C - The Ethics of Romanticism (ENGL 1560Y)

Interested students MUST register for ENGL 1560Y

COLT 1812D - Prehistories of the Global: Literature and Modernity Across East and West

Pairs a series of literary works from the last two centuries juxtaposed around themes of empire, decolonization, modernism, and gender. [C. Kia]

Fall

G hour

COLT 1812E - Imagining the Eastern Mediterranean in Literature and Film

Explores cultures and eclectic identities of the Eastern Mediterranean and its cities (Athens, Alexandria, Beirut, Haifa, Istanbul, Jerusalem) through the works of literature and film. We

will focus on two central themes: first, the relationship between fiction and the history/memory of Eastern Mediterranean cities and peoples; second, the origins and sustenance of certain discourses that describe the Eastern Mediterranean with nostalgia for vanished cosmopolitanism. Writers and poets may include Abasiyanik, Adnan, Cavafy, Darwish, Durrell, Kanafani, al-Kharrat, Melville, Matalon, Oz, Pamuk, Shamma, and Uzun; filmmakers may include Akin, Bitton, Boulmetis, Chahine, Egoyan, Jacir, Suleiman, and Zaim. [I. Celik]

Fall

I hour

COLT 1812F – Violence and Representation

Traces diverse genealogies from which to theorize violence and its relation to aesthetics. We will identify a disciplinary philology for “violence” as a signifier within visual culture, art practice and literature; historicize key transitions in varied invocations of violence in representation; study texts (photography, film, novel, installation) that create a space where violence can be discussed as both everyday and extraordinary. Some issues to be considered: representability in moments of historical crisis (war, colonialism, genocide); the efficacy of genres and artistic movements in representing violence (tragedy, surrealism, theater of cruelty); and the violence of representation (surveillance, spectatorship, voyeurism). [I. Celik]

Spring

C hour

COLT 1812G – Thematizing Sex and Gender in Writings from the Middle East

Investigates historical and social constructions of sexuality and sexual difference in a range of texts from the Modern Middle East. The fundamentally literary framework of the course encompasses memoirs, fiction, poetry and film by and/or about women from the late nineteenth century to the present. Significant authors include Huda Shaarawi, Forugh Farrokhzad, Nawal El-Saadawi, Hanan al-Shaykh. The course will treat various themes and theoretical issues related to gender, sexuality, desire, patriarchy, jurisprudence and reproduction with reference to supplementary readings by such authors as Leila Ahmed, Jacques Lacan, Ali Shari`ati, Afsaneh Najmabadi, Fatema Mernissi. [C. Kia]

Spring

I hour

Primarily for Graduate Students

COLT 2520 SEMINAR IN FORMS AND GENRES

COLT 2520E – Dialectics of Word and Image

Explores how proximities and interactions of text and image construct and complicate meaning. It brings together a constellation of theoretical and historical readings that have bearing on particular problems generated at the nexus of word and image. Readings by Horace, Abd al-Qahir Jurjani, Lévi-Strauss, Ricoeur, Derrida, Mitchell and others will anchor a cross-disciplinary investigation of European and non-European paradigms of the relationship between text and image in various literary and visual cultures since late antiquity. We will examine specific examples of the interaction between word and image in several Islamic manuscripts. [C. Kia]

Spring

P hour

COLT 2650 THEORY OF LITERATURE

COLT 2650D - Theory of Comparative Literature

This seminar is designed to introduce students to some of the central theoretical issues that define the discipline of Comparative Literature through the study of twelve central texts in the field. We will begin with Erich Auerbach's foundational text *Mimesis*, and end with Gayatri Spivak's *Death of a Discipline*. In between the authors to be read and analyzed will

be Bakhtin, Lukacs, Barthes, Derrida, DeMan, Jameson, Greenblatt and others. Open to graduate students, and to undergraduates by permission of the instructor. [S. Stewart-Steinberg]

Fall

N hour

COLT 2720 THEORY AND PRACTICE OF LITERARY TRANSLATION

COLT 2720B - Theory and Practice of Literary Translation

Readings in the history and theory of translation from the Renaissance to the present, along with selected major examples of literature in English translation. Students will write two papers: (1) an analysis of a theoretical issue in translation, with ample attention to the historical context of that issue; and (2) either a discussion of an important translation as a criticism of the original work; or a critical comparison of several translations of an original work; or an annotated translation into English of a literary text from a language familiar to the student. [K. Haynes]

Fall

M hour

COLT 2820 SPECIAL TOPICS IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

COLT 2820D - The "Tenth Muse" Phenomenon

The texts and contexts of women writing in English, Spanish and French, during the sixteenth and especially seventeenth centuries. Often dubbed "Tenth Muses," these first early modern women writers to gain public prominence wrote iconoclastic texts and/or epitomized socially sanctioned scripts for women. Authors include: Anne Bradstreet, Margaret Lucas Cavendish, Sor Juana, Mme de Lafayette, Maria de Zayas. [S. Merrim]

Fall

O hour

COLT 2820S - Poetry after Kant

Begins with the intensive study of a selection of writings by Immanuel Kant focused especially on force and conflict in politics and aesthetics. This study, along with relevant readings from more recent work, will provide the basis for an approach to this topic in nineteenth-century poetry. Readings of Kant (Critique of Judgment, "Toward Eternal Peace," The Conflict of the Faculties), Walter Benjamin, Jacques Derrida, and Giorgio Agamben and will lead to several "case studies" of nineteenth-century poetry, including works by Friedrich Hölderlin, Charles Baudelaire, and Matthew Arnold. [K. McLaughlin]

Spring

M hour

COLT 2820T - Universals

Explores the status of universals in classical, Hellenistic, Scholastic, and Renaissance metaphysics. Also explores the literary implications of this philosophical problem. Readings include Plato, Aristotle, Chrysippus, Augustine, Cicero, Seneca, Abelard, Avicenna, Aquinas, Scotus, Ficino, Cusanus, Pico, and Suárez. [P. Saval]

Spring

Q hour