

DEPARTMENT OF COMPARATIVE LITERATURE
SENIOR HONORS THESES – MAY 2010

Julie Dufresne

“The King Who Will Be Man: A Study of the Absolute Monarch in Shakespeare and Calderón”

📖 Explores the representation of the absolutist ruler in Shakespeare’s *Measure for Measure* and *Richard II*, and Calderón’s *La vida es sueño* and *El médico de su honra*. These playwrights do not present the idealized *deus ex machina* figure so common to Early Modern drama. Instead, we see developed characters that portray a discrepancy between ideal and actual kingship, a discrepancy which ultimately leads to questions about the representation of early modern selfhood.

☑ Prof. Peter Saval, Prof. Dore Levy

Annie Farber

“Constraint and the Creative Labyrinth: Potential Literature in Theory and Practice”

📖 A two-part exploration of the work of the Oulipo (Ouvroir de Littérature Potentielle), a group dedicated to research and experimentation in literary form. The first part, a critical discussion of the group’s theories, centers on constraint, potentiality, and the subversion of the notion of a master and his oeuvre. The second part, a creative story written according to Oulipian techniques, puts these theories into practice.

☑ Prof. Réda Bensmaïa, Prof. Keith Waldrop

Alex Feldman

“The Undercutting of the Question in Heidegger: Thematization, Negativity, Performance, and Eros”

📖 Traces the question of the question in Heidegger’s thinking, following a footnote in Jacques Derrida’s *De l’esprit*, in which he notices Heidegger’s seeming rejection of the priority of the question in his late work on language. Examines the implications of this move for thinking and reading, or for having an experience with language.

☑ Prof. Susan Bernstein, Prof. Michael Gottsegen

Sujata Gidumal

“Narrating Playful Deceptions: Modes of Seduction in Kathak and Tango”

📖 A comparative study of narrative representations of seduction within the performance and in the literature of Tango and Kathak, two dance styles originating from South America and South Asia respectively. Both were deemed dangerously seductive by their respective societies and repressed as such, only to become integral in defining the national identities of Argentina and India. This thesis analyzes the characteristics of seduction illustrated by dance performances and their accompanying lyrics.

☑ Prof. Meera Viswanathan, Prof. Aldo Mazzucchelli, Prof. Shayoni Mitra

Isabel Gottlieb

“The City Speaks: Reading and Writing the Urban Heteroglossia of James Joyce’s *Ulysses*, Carlos Fuentes’ *La Region Mass Transparente* and Guillermo Cabrera Infante’s *Tress Trysts Tigres*”

📖 Mikhail Bakhtin’s theory of heteroglossia defines the novel by its multiplicity of languages. The modern urban novel displays the city’s breadth of dialogues, but Bakhtin’s model must be expanded to read all the ways in which the modern city speaks, including written and non-human language. The experimental urban novels *Ulysses*, *La Region Mas Transparente*, and *Tres Tristes Tigres* read their respective cities heteroglossically, re-constructing them out of the dialogues they speak to form new languages.

☑ Prof. Julio Ortega, Prof. Esther Whitfield

Kathryn Lamb

“Personal Poems of Alcuin”

📖 Free verse translations of a small collection of twenty-three poems originally written by Alcuin in Medieval Latin during the time of Charlemagne. The introduction focuses on the translation process and historical/social background of Alcuin’s work.

☑ Prof. Joseph Pucci, Prof. Michel-André Bossy

Rachel Levenson

“Other Islands: Reading and Re-Writing Robinson Crusoe”

📖 The purpose of this project is to root the Robinson Crusoe myth in Defoe’s novel and to offer a reading that complicates the myth’s narrative of Western man’s triumph over human and environmental “others.” In J.M. Coetzee’s *Foe*, and Tournier’s *Vendredi* I study stories and viewpoints silenced or sidelined in Defoe’s original text. My aim is to identify the way counter-readings and counter-narratives can unearth new dimensions of a canonical text.

☑ Prof. Arnold Weinstein, Prof. Olakunle George

Ezra Miller

“Cruel Meringues: Poems by Melisa Machado.”

📖 A translation of Melisa Machado's complete poetry. Attentive to Machado's position in her Uruguayan literary context and in the Latin American tradition of women poets, the translation also seeks to render Machado's writing relevant for North American readers.

☑ Prof. Aldo Mazzucchelli, Prof. Stephanie Merrim

Jade Starr Noik

“Attachment and Exile: Three Portraits of an African Landscape.”

📖 A study of three memoirs of land attachment, spanning a continent and century: Isak Dinesen’s *Out of Africa*, Alexandra Fuller’s *Don’t Let’s Go to the Dogs Tonight*, and Andrée Chédeville’s *Territoires de Souffle*. The authors favor the arts of storytelling and lyric poetry over novelistic representation in order to express integration with their experience in Africa. Techniques of expression include the pathetic fallacy, lyrical imagination, and the notion of “visage” as landscape.

☑ Prof. Dore Levy, Prof. Pierre Saint-Amand

Sofía Pellón

“Dark Doubles: Two Rewritings of *Jane Eyre*.”

📖 Explores techniques and purposes of rewriting in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Beatriz Guido’s *La mano en la trampa*, mid-twentieth-century postcolonial reworkings of Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. I draw conclusions about how Rhys and Guido

change Brontë’s story by writing it anew and differently as well as by altering the reader’s perception of the original novel.

☑ Prof. Esther Whitfield, Prof. Sanda Golopenția

Caroline Straty

“The Gothic and the Country-City Narratives in Literature from 19th Century Paris and the 20th Century American South.”

📖 Explores the gothic and country-city narratives in the works of 19th century French authors and 20th century American authors from the South. Looks specifically at works from Honoré de Balzac, Gustave Flaubert, Émile Zola, and William Faulkner, Flannery O’Connor, and Tennessee Williams to investigate how these two narrative strains reflected Paris and the Deep South, and how these regions were affected by changes of modernity.

☑ Prof. Arnold Weinstein, Prof. Edward Ahearn

Jordi Torres

“Manuel de Pedrolo’s *Act of Violence* Translated from Catalan”

📖 For my senior honors thesis I have translated Manuel de Pedrolo's previously untranslated novel *Acte de Violencia* from Catalan to English. The introduction aims to situate the novel within its particular cultural, historical and socio-political framework. It was also my intention to reflect on the translation process in general and the specific challenges and peculiarities associated with translating from Catalan.

☑ Prof. Marinos Pourgouris, Ms. Carlota Benet Cros

Nathaniel Wolfson

“The Error of Transgressive Thought: Prison and the Outside”

📖 In Gilles Deleuze's description of the Panopticon, the prison's inside is formed in relation to an 'outside.' By relating Foucault's interest in 'the thought from outside' to his work on confinement, I question the prisoner's ability to resist incarceration, Thinking about prison as both a physical and literary space, especially in Maurice Blanchot's *Aminadab* and Silviano Santiago's *Em Liberdade*, I argue that the prisoner's inability to transgress limits of power can be read as analogous to the author's inability to write.

☑ Prof. Esther Whitfield, Prof. Rey Chow