Department of Comparative Literature
Course Offerings, Fall 2016

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.

NEW COURSES, Fall 2016 (added since spring 2016 registration):

COLT0710Q: 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)? Prof. Calotychos. MWF 2-2:50.

COLT0812I: Anxieties of Origins in the Fictions of the Maghreb
To what extent do we depend on origin stories to tell us who we are? Are our origins determined by nationality, language, religion, ethnicity, or some combination of these? Is it possible to claim harmonious hybrid origins? Or is it in the nature of origins to constantly vie for dominance within us? In this class, we will read twentieth-century North African literature of both French and Arabic expression together with works of postcolonial theory and criticism to ask what it means to locate one’s origins within a multilayered history of conquest and violence. Prof. Drumsta. MWF 10-10:50.

COLT 0811Z: Paradise, Periphery, Prison?: The Island in the Western Imaginary
Paradise, periphery, or prison? The representation of the island has been described as imaginary and not actual, mythological and not geographical. Examines the fascination with islands in the western cultural imaginary. Selective readings from literature, film and historical texts focus on the ways in which island spaces have been represented in diverse social, national, imperial contexts as well as the effect of such projections on the native islanders, their visitors and often subjugators. Authors may include Homer, Plato, Marco Polo, Mandeville, Darwin, Defoe, Tournier, Kincaid, Kafka, Durrell, Seferis; theoretical works drawn from critical geography, postcolonialism, and the field of island studies. Prof. Calotychos. Tues./Thurs. 2:30-3:50.

COLT1422E: The 19th-Century Novel: Transatlantic Perspectives
What happened when the novel crossed the Atlantic? After its rise in Europe in the mid 18th century, the novel quickly spread and became a dominant literary genre both in the U.S. and in Latin America. In this course we will read key 19th-century novels in the European tradition; we will then discuss how this (by no means homogenous) European genre was assimilated and modified across the Atlantic. What did writers in Brazil and in the U.S. do with the genre, and how did they transform it according to national specificities? We will focus on English, French, American, and Brazilian novels. LILE. Mr. Moreto. MWF 1-1:50.

COLT1610U: Womens’ Writing in Arab World
In this course, we will examine 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 (the
pre-Islamic elegist, the soothsayer, the mystic), we will move on to examine women writers’ contributions to the early modern women’s movement (‘A’isha Taymur, Mayy Ziyada), modernist poetry (Nazik al-Mala’ikah, Fadwa Tuqan), the novel (Hoda Barakat, Miraal al-Tahawy, Adania Shibli), and the short story (Salwa Bakr, Hanan al-Shaykh, Radwa ‘Ashur). Critical approaches will focus on grammatical gender, women’s association with the oral, and structures of narrative and poetic voice. Prof. Drumsta. MWF 12-12:50.

**CANCELLED (since spring 2016 registration):**

**COLT 0610E: Crisis and Identity in Mexico, 1519-1968.** Prof. Merrim.
**COLT 1410S: Classical Tragedy.** Prof. Ierulli.
**COLT 1430L: Voices of Romanticism.** Prof. Bernstein (who will now be teaching COLT 1210 with Prof. Sng).

**Primarily for Undergraduate Students:**

**COLT 0510K: The 1001 Nights**
Explores the origins, performance, reception, adaptation, and translation of the *1001 Nights*, one of the most beloved and influential story collections in world literature. We will spend the semester in the company of genies, princes, liars, slaves, mass murderers, orientalists, and Walt Disney, and will consider the *Nights* in the context of its various literary, artistic, and cinematic afterlives. Prof. Muhanna. MWF 1-1:50.

**COLT 0510O: Twentieth-Century Experiments**
In this course, we will read some of the most experimental and adventurous literature of the 20th century. Instead of understanding texts as mirrors of social reality, we will consider them as laboratories—spaces for testing out, working through, or mixing up new ideas, categories, and ways of seeing and feeling. We will pay special attention to 20th-century international avant-garde movements, including Futurism, Dadaism, and Surrealism, and we will explore the relation of the literary avant-garde to the avant-garde in painting, cinema, and music. Prof. Freed-Thall. MWF 2-2:50.

**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, Vesaas, Rhys, Satrapi and Foer. Enrollment limited to 20 first year students. FYS. Prof. Weinstein. Tues./Thurs. 1-1:20.

**COLT 0610E: 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, 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 on the Virgin of Guadalupe. All in English. No prerequisites. WRIT. Prof. Merrim. Tues./Thurs. 2:30-3:50.
COLT 0610T: 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 Shi Ji; poems, short stories, tomb sculptures, contemporary film; as well as critical essays on empire, colonization, and cross-cultural heritage. Prof. Chin. 10:30-11:50.

COLT 0710N: A Comparative Introduction to the Literatures of the Americas
Considers the common links between the diverse literatures of North and South America, approached in relation to one another rather than to Eurocentric paradigms. Focuses on the treatment of such topics as the representation of the past and the self, the role of memory and the imagination, the nature of literary language, and the questions of alienation, colonialism and post-colonialism, communication versus silence, and fiction versus history in the works of selected writers from North and Latin America, including García-Márquez, Faulkner, Cortázar, Allende, Lispector, Morrison, Doctorow, Rosa, and DeLillo. Enrollment limited to 15 first year students. FYS WRIT. Prof. Valente. Tues./Thurs. 2:30-3:50.

COLT 0711E: Reading and Writing African Gender
In this course, we will examine ways that gender and literary genre figure in postcolonial African writing, and in its reception. We will closely read novels by four significant women authors: Mariama Bâ (Senegal), Zoe Wicomb (South Africa), Tsitsi Dangarembga (Zimbabwe), and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (Nigeria). We will also read short, lesser-known texts, such as Richard Rive's “Riva” and Binyavanga Wainaina's “The Missing Chapter,” that question boundaries of gender, genre, and sexuality. Prof. Goldblatt. Tues./Thurs. 9-10:20.

COLT 0812H: Literary Bestsellers of the Islamic World
Who read what during the golden age of Islamic civilization? What were the page-turners, must-read classics, and viral texts of the Islamic world? In this course, we explore works of poetry, epic, satire, fantasy, and allegory by such figures as Jahiz, Mutanabbi, Hafez, Nizami, Abu Nuwas, and others. Prof. Muhanna. MWF 9-9:50.

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. Profs. Redfield and Sng. MWF 11-11:50.

COLT 1310G: Silk Road Fictions
This course introduces students to East-West comparative work. We will explore the history and politics of different methods of literary comparison, and diverse definitions of East and West. In particular we will ask how assumptions of cultural contact or isolation shape the way we bring
together, say, a Chinese and a Greek poem, or interpret a documentary film about modern Indonesia. Themes will include: the “Silk Road,” as a historical framework of cultural exchange across Afro-Eurasia; the “Axial Age” of independent civilizations; Orientalism; Hellenism; Pan-Asianism. The filmmaker of The Act of Killing will visit. Prof. Chin. Tues./Thurs. 1-2:20.

**COLT 1410S: Classical Tragedy**
This course will read the great Greek tragedies of Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, and some Senecan tragedy. We will then read Renaissance and later tragedies that use the classical world as a setting, such as *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar*, and tragedies that rewrite classical themes, including O’Neill’s *Mourning Becomes Electra*. Prof. Ierulli. MWF 12-12:50.

**COLT 1410Y: Shakespeare and Embodiment.** Interested students should register for ENGL 1360Z.
Consideration of a number of Shakespearean texts including the erotic narrative poem “Venus and Adonis,” the early revenge drama *Titus Andronicus*, the history *Henry IV, pt. 1*, the tragedy of *Othello*, among others, and their various representations of the body: as subject to violence, gender and desire, sovereignty and history. Attention to Shakespeare’s rewriting of Ovid, novelle, and chronicle history. Enrollment limited to 20. Not open to first year students. Prof. Newman. Tues. 1-3:30.

**COLT 1430L: Voices of Romanticism**
Readings of lyric poetry in the European Romantic tradition. Focus on problems of lyric subjectivity and representation, and the rhetoric of "voice." Emphasis on formal features of poetry. The course will be based on close reading and frequent writing assignments. Readings from Wordsworth, Shelley, Keats, Goethe, Novalis, Hugo, Nerval, Lamartine, Baudelaire and others. Knowledge of French or German required, or by permission. Prof. Bernstein. MWF 10-10:50.

**COLT 1610K: Literature and Multilingualism (Register for GRMN 1340R)**
Has literature ever really been monolingual? Has it not spoken, from the outset, with a split tongue? We will examine a range of authors from the twentieth century in this seminar for whom speaking is always speaking otherwise: speaking about the other, speaking as other, something other than merely speaking. Literary examples might include Franz Kafka, Samuel Beckett, Paul Celan, W. G. Sebald, Yoko Tawada. We will also look at a selection of theoretical writings from Derrida, Deleuze and Guattari, Freud, Benjamin, and others. In English. Reading knowledge of German helpful but not required. DPLL. Prof. Sng. MWF 1-1:50.

**COLT 1610N: Ecological Thought**
This course will serve as an introduction to the new interdisciplinary field of the environmental humanities. Discussing an exciting range of texts and films—from Mary Shelley, Virginia Woolf, and Arundati Roy to Ridley Scott and Werner Herzog—we will investigate how literary and cinematic works make ecological crisis perceptible. The following topics will be central to our discussions: garbology (especially hoarding, collecting, and the relation between trash and modern poetry); “slow violence” and postcolonial environmentalism; queer ecology; biopolitics; the representation of non-human animals; the effects of 24/7 consumerism; and the political uses of ecological nostalgia, disgust, grief, and wonder. Prof. Freed-Thall. M 3-5:30.
COLT 1710C: Literary Translation
Exercises and investigations in the history, theory, and practice of literary translation. Prerequisite: at least one foreign-language course in literature at 1000-level (or equivalent). Prof. Haynes. Tues./Thurs. 9-10:20.

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. Texts will be drawn from authors such as Sophocles, Hawthorne, Gilman, Tolstoy, Kafka, Anderson, O'Neill, Hemingway, Ionesco, Verghese, Barker, Sacks, Foucault, Sontag, Scarry, Gawande and others. Open enrollment course: lecture + section. Prof. Weinstein. Tues./Thurs. 10:30-11:50.

COLT 1814P: Fascinating Fascism
This seminar examines the enduring First World fascination with fascism and above all with Nazism, not just as a historical political phenomenon, but as a cultural, literary, and cinematic topic, trope and image. The question of the commercial and ideological appeal of Nazi villains, imagery and iconography will be pursued through several contexts: the historical, psychological and ideological appeal of fascism; the trauma of the Shoah; the narrative and ideological imperatives of late-capitalist entertainment systems. Readings will engage a variety of theoretical texts (Freud, Bataille, Adorno, Sontag), films (Riefehstahl, Tarantino), novels (Dick, DeLillo, Littell). Prof. Redfield. Thurs. 4-6:30.

Primarily for Graduate Students:

COLT 2650P: Frankfurt School Critical Theory (Register for GRMN 2661G)
Careful readings of key texts by members of the Frankfurt School, including Theodor W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Max Horkheimer, Siegfried Kracauer, and others. Examination of the ways in which these writers transformed their conceptual roots (provided by such thinkers as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud) into a new set of concepts, premises, and strategies that came to be known as “Critical Theory” (a term invented by Horkheimer in 1937). Taught in English; students from a variety of disciplines welcome. (Seminar takes place also in conjunction with an international conference on the Frankfurt School at Brown during Fall 2016.) Prof. Richter. M 3:5-30.

COLT 2821P: Walter Benjamin: Literary Criticism
The seminar will trace the emergence of an idea and a practice of literary criticism in Benjamin's writings from his early essay on Friedrich Hölderlin through his essays on Goethe, Proust, the Baroque Trauerspiel, Kafka and Baudelaire. We will pair selections from the literary works with Benjamin's critical writing on them. Prof. McLaughlin. F 3-5:30.

COLT 2830I: Histories of the Early Modern Body
This seminar considers the production of knowledge about the body in the early modern period. The institution of science and how the emerging "science" of the body was visualized; discourses of the erotic, the scientific and the religious; the body in varied cultural performances including the blason, devotional texts, erotica, drama etc. Texts include theoretical work on gender and sexuality. Open to graduate students only. Prof. Newman. M 3-5:30.