

Comparative Literature

A STRUCTURED INDIVIDUAL MAJOR

Director: *Nolden (German)*

Advisory Board: *TBA (ex officio: Chair of Language Chairs), Dougherty (Classical Studies), Petterson (French), Respaut (French), Rosenwald (English), Weiner (Russian), Zimmerman (East Asian Languages and Literatures)*

Using literary texts as its base of inquiry, "Comparative Literature" promotes the study of intercultural relations that cross national boundaries, multicultural relations within a particular society, and the interactions between literature and other forms of human activity, including the arts, the sciences, philosophy, and cultural artifacts of all kinds.

Goals for the Major

Acquaint students with the wide range of writing across national and linguistic borders and prepare them to read texts of different cultural traditions in their own languages.

Familiarize students with the ways in which literature can interact with various other forms of human activity and how literary texts can be read in interdisciplinary contexts.

Teach students to write well and to develop and use the skills of close reading.

CPLT 113/ENG 113 Studies in Fiction

Sides (English)

Topic for 2009-10: Fantastic Fictions. When fiction blurs or crosses the line between our "real" world and "other worlds," the reader (as well as the narrator or main character) has entered the realm of "the fantastic," a genre that (broadly interpreted) contains "the uncanny," "the supernatural or ghost story," and "science fiction." We will read "fantastic" novels and short fiction by nineteenth-century, twentieth-century, and twenty-first century masters from Europe, Japan, North and South America. Taught primarily in lecture, this course will not be writing-intensive. *Students may register for either ENG 113 or CPLT 113 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 208/REL 208 Legend, Satire, and Storytelling in the Hebrew Bible

Silver (Religion)

The art of narrative composition in the Hebrew Bible. The literary techniques and conventions of ancient Israelite authors in the Bible's rich corpus of stories. Philosophical and aesthetic treatment of themes such as kingship, power, gender and covenant. Primary focus on the role of narrative in the cultural life of ancient Israel, with attention also to the difficulties of interpreting biblical stories from within our contemporary milieu. *Students may register for either CPLT 208 or REL 208 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Historical Studies or Religion, Ethics, and Moral Philosophy

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 212/CLCV 212 Reading Travel: The Theme of Travel in Classical and Contemporary Fiction

Dougherty (Classical Studies)

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. Every story is a travel story, and this class explores the theme of travel as it appears both literally and figuratively in works of fiction. How is narrative a spatial practice? What is the relationship between travel and fiction, between travel and literary genre? How does travel articulate issues of (personal and cultural) identity? How do gender and family operate together with travel to structure relationships between home and away, men and women? We will begin with Homer's *Odyssey*, which sets the stage for many of the themes and issues to be interrogated in a broad range of texts, classical and contemporary. Additional readings will include Euripides' *Helen*, Heliodorus' *Ethiopian Romance*, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Kincaid's *Lucy*, Robinson's *Housekeeping*, and Ondaatje's *The English Patient*. *Students may register for either CPLT 212 or CLCV 212 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 220/CLCV 220 Introduction to Comparative Literature

Young (Classical Studies)

Topic for 2009-10: Afterlives of Antiquity. Taking up one of the major concerns of Comparative Literature as a field, this course looks at how texts move, tracing several works of Greek and Roman literature as they travel through centuries and across continents. We will begin with the troubled notion of a classic and explore questions of canonicity. Case studies will include texts Sophocles' *Antigone* and the poems of Catullus and Sappho. With the help of readings in reception and translation theory, we will look at these works as they change over time, asking how they have contributed to modern discourses and practices including colonialism, post-colonialism, psychoanalysis, feminism, contemporary pop-culture, and modernist avant-gardes. *Students may register for either CPLT 220 or CLCV 220 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 228 Narratives of the Self

Nolden (German)

Focusing on memoirs which represent the extremes of the human condition, the course will address generic problems and narrative patterns of autobiographical writing and discuss the tension between fact and fiction, the (un-)reliability of memory, the problems of representing history, and the complicated relationship between text and reader. Texts by Augustine, J.-J. Rousseau, W. Benjamin, G. Perec, P. Levi, C. Yang, and others.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Fall

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 284 Magical Realism

Weiner (Russian)

NOT OFFERED IN 2009-10. This course examines fictions whose basic reality would be familiar if not for the introduction of a magical element that undermines commonplace notions about what constitutes reality in the first place. The magical element can be a demon, talisman, physical transformation, miraculous transition in space or time, appearance of a second plane of existence, revelation of the unreality of the primary plane of existence, etc. Students will read Kafka's *Metamorphosis*, Queneau's *The Blue Flowers*, Bulgakov's *The Master and Margarita*, Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Calvino's *If on a Winter Night a Traveler*, Pynchon's *The Crying of Lot 49*, Murakami's *Hard-Boiled Wonderland and the End of the World* and Sokolov's *School for Fools*, and short stories by Borges, Cortazar, and Nabokov.

Prerequisite: None

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: N/O

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 330/MES 330 Seminar. Comparative Literature

Aadnani (Middle Eastern Studies), Nolden (German)

Topic for 2009-10: Cairo, Paris, Weimar: Encounters between Middle Eastern and European Literatures. This seminar explores patterns of influence and modes of (mis)readings that have shaped the encounter between the literatures of the Middle East and Western Europe. From the crusades to Napoleon's campaign in Egypt and colonialism, the interaction between "East" and "West" has left indelible impressions on literature and has heightened the challenges of representation. Topics include: the construction of the East in Enlightenment and Romantic literature and thought; the trajectory of Orientalism; the postcolonial critique of Eurocentrism; contemporary rewritings of the legacy of the nineteenth century in texts and films. Readings include Montesquieu, Goethe, Omar al-Khayyam's quatrains, Richard Burton's translations of the *Thousand and One Nights*, Sally Potter, Jacques Doillon, Naguib Mahfouz, Tayeb Salih, Hélène Cixous, Hanan al-Shaykh, Katia Rubinstein. *Students may register for either CPLT 330 or MES 330 and credit will be granted accordingly.*

Prerequisite: One 200-level course in literature or by permission of the instructor.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 334 Literature and Medicine

Respaut (French)

Drawing on texts from different countries, this course investigates literature's obsession with medicine. Literary representations of doctors and patients, disability, insanity, AIDS, birth, death and grief, the search for healing and the redemptive power of art. Attention will be given to the links between the treatment of medical issues in fiction, in autobiography and in visual representations (film and photography). This course should be of interest to everyone drawn to health-related fields as well as students in social sciences and the humanities.

Prerequisite: One 200-level course in literature or by permission of the instructor. Not open to first-year students.

Distribution: Language and Literature

Semester: Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 350 Research or Individual Study

Prerequisite: By permission of the Director. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 360 Senior Thesis Research

Prerequisite: By permission of the Director. See Academic Distinctions.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

CPLT 370 Senior Thesis

Prerequisite: 360 and permission of department.

Distribution: None

Semester: Fall, Spring

Unit: 1.0

Requirements for the Major

The comparative literature major is a structured individual major for students seeking to study literature across departmental, national, and linguistic boundaries. Students in comparative literature devise their own programs in careful consultation with two advisors, one in each of two departments, and with the director of the program.

Students who major in comparative literature should, in designing their major, be aware of the many and diverse courses that pertain to the study of literature.

These include, but are not limited to:

- 1) courses in literary history;
- 2) courses in particular literary genres;
- 3) courses in the theory of literature;
- 4) courses in linguistics;
- 5)

courses on the theory and practice of translation.

Many courses combine or fall between these categories. Students should also consult the Courses in Literature or Film (from Language Departments) taught in English section at the back of the catalog.

1. Majors in comparative literature shall complete a minimum of 10 units. All courses must count towards the major in the departments in which they are offered.
2. Introduction to Comparative Literature (CPLT 220). This course is strongly recommended and should be taken early on.
2. Comparative Literature Seminar. All majors shall take CPLT 330, the comparative literature seminar.
3. Advanced literature courses. In addition to CPLT 330, majors shall take at least two more literature courses at the 300 level. These two advanced literature courses shall be in at least two languages, of which English may be one, and in at least two departments, and majors shall meet departmental prerequisites for these courses.
4. Premodern literature. Majors shall take at least one course outside of the modern period in at least one of the literatures they are studying; what "the modern period" means for a particular literature will depend on the literature, and will be determined by the major's advisors.
5. Theory of literature. Majors shall take at least one course offering a theoretical perspective helpful to their particular course of study. Sometimes this will be CPLT 220 or ENG 382 (Criticism), but other courses, too, can meet this requirement.
6. Independent research. Majors shall do a substantial piece of independent work in comparative literature. They may supplement CPLT 330 or a course in a pertinent department with extra independent work or enroll in CPLT 350, CPLT 360 and/or CPLT 370. They may also enroll in a 350 in a pertinent department chosen by the student in consultation with her advisors.

In general, programs will be worked out in relation to the major's particular languages and interests. Examples of possible interests would include poetry, the novel, women's writing, and the relations between politics and literature.

Honors

There are two routes to honors in the major: Plan A entails writing a thesis. Plan B entails a dossier of essays written for several courses with a statement of connections among them and critical questions raised by them. Both plan A and plan B require a student to pass an oral exam.

To be admitted to the honors program, a student must have a grade point average of at least 3.5 in all work in the major field above the 100 level; the department may petition on her behalf if her GPA in the major is between 3.0 and 3.5. See Academic Distinctions.