

Spring 2025 Course Schedule

Program in Comparative Literature & Translation Studies

CODE	COURSE TITLE	Day/Time	Instructor
CPLT BC3002 <i>NEW!!</i>	Photographing the Anthropocene: Nature, Environment & Ecology in Global Photographic Practices This course will start by exploring techniques photographers have used over the past century to respond to the natural world's beauty and complexity. During the second half of the term, we will examine how contemporary photographers are depicting shrinking natural landscapes, environmental destruction, and global warming and why some artists are beginning to question human centrality in the sentient world. Augmented by literary texts by scientists, poets, artists, and ecologists, we will explore how close-looking might inform an artist's practice regarding the living environment - its bounty - and its degradation. Readings include texts by Robin Wall Kimmerer, Masanobu Fukuoka, Robert Macfarlane, Terry Tempest Williams, Rebecca Solnit, Barry Lopez, John McPhee, Akira Hasegawa, and others. Calling on a canon of photographic works from around the globe, students will study book-length photographic essays whose makers have seen art as a form of praise of the natural world and those who investigate the relationship between art and environmental activism. Anna Atkins; Susan Derges; Meghann Riepenhoff; Masahisa Fukase; Pedro David; Stephen Gill; Ron Jude; Dornith Doherty; David Maisel, Zhao Renhui; Mandy Barker; Pablo Lopez Luz are some of the artists whose works we will study. Students will produce a semester-long photographic project that engages with the natural world or explores an ecological theme.	Mon, 4:10-6:00pm Registration Notes: Instructor Approval Required	D. Matar
CPLT BC3107	Translating the Animal Through readings in language philosophy, translation studies, and critical animal studies, <i>Translating the Animal</i> explores how translation, language, and reason have historically worked together to maintain speciesism, preventing human animals from perceiving their commonalities with, and attunement to, sentient nonhuman beings.	Wed, 9:00-10:50am	H. Worthen

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CPLT BC3108	Nazism in Performance Explores the cultivation of national and transnational performances as a significant force of National Socialism, at the same time as challenging the notion of "Nazi Theatre" as monolithic formation. The core of the course inquires into the dialectical analysis of artistic creations in diverse art genres, while working towards an understanding of the social dramaturgy of such events as staging the Führer and the racialized body of the privileged people. Nazism did not harbor ideologies without benefits for the allied nations. Thus, the dynamic performance of transnationalism among the "brothers in arms" will be included as well, to elucidate how works of art crossing into the Third Reich were reimagined, sometimes in ways challenging to the presumed values of the state stage. Permission of instructor given at first class meeting.	Tues, 4:10-6:00pm	H. Worthen
CPLT BC3143	Topics: Literature and Horror The objective of this class is to examine a given topic and relate it to a number of literary texts. Students will examine a variety of literary genres and to an equally wide variety of cultural, linguistic, and historical contexts.	Major Requirement Tues/Thurs, 2:40-3:55pm	M. Cohen
CPLT BC3145	Derrida and Literature Jacques Derrida was one of the most important thinkers of the 20th century and his impact on literary studies was enormously significant. The objective of this course is to take stock of Derrida's contribution to literature, and to do so by assessing the intricate relations he establishes between literature, philosophy, economic and political theory, gender studies, translation studies, postcolonial theory, and theology.	Tues/Thurs, 4:10-5:25pm	B. O'Keeffe
CPLT BC3168 <i>NEW!!</i>	Borders and Bodies This course is a cross-cultural exploration of the construction of gender through significant landmarks in contemporary literature, from feminist and queer theory perspectives. The course will focus on a range of novels, short stories, essays and poetry written in the twentieth- and the twenty-first century from or about the United States, Europe and the MENA region. Through an examination of these works, alongside seminal works of feminist and queer theory (Simone de Beauvoir, Hélène Cixous, bell hooks, etc.) we will ask: is it possible to write about a similar issue as represented across texts from different geographical and cultural zones, and how do you do so ethically without either erasing difference or exaggerating it? How do these texts (critical and creative) dismantle the ways we have been taught to evaluate canonical, male-dominated literary histories? Authors will include Doris Lessing, Toni Morrison, James Baldwin, Hanan al-Shaykh, Nawal El Saadawi and Abdellah Taïa.	Mon/Wed, 11:40-12:55pm	M. Heydari

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CPLT BC3360	Global Kafka Emines the writer's view of foreign cultures and animals, his response to empires and states, reflections on bureaucracy or personal relationships, with an emphasis on Kafka's international legacy and influence. Discussions of his followers in American or world literature. Major novels such as The Trial, The Castle and Amerika as well as short stories are covered and rediscovered in this course.	Tues/Thurs, 10:10-11:25pm	E. Grimm
<i>NEW!!</i>			
CPLT BC3510	Advanced Workshop Translation We will explore translation as a praxis of writing, reading, and revision. Together, we will also interrogate translation's complex and often fraught role in cultural production. What ethical questions does translation raise? Who gets to translate, and what gets translated? What is the place of the translator in the text? What can translation teach us about language, literature, and ourselves? Readings will include selections from translation theory, method texts, and literary translations across genres, from poetry and prose to essay and memoir. Students will workshop original translations into English and complete brief writing and translation exercises throughout.	Wed, 4:10-6:00pm	E. Sun
CPLT BC3552	The Arabic Novel The novel in Arabic literature has often been the place where every attempt to look within ends up involving the need to contend with or measure the self against the European, the dominant culture. This took various forms. From early moments of easy-going and confident cosmopolitan travellers, such as Ahmad Faris al-Shidyaq, to later author, such as Tayeb Salih, mapping the existential fault lines between west and east. For this reason, and as well as being a modern phenomenon, the Arabic novel has also been a tool for translation, for bridging gaps and exposing what al-Shidyaq—the man credited with being the father of the modern Arabic novel, and himself a great translator—called 'disjunction'. We will begin with his satirical, deeply inventive and erudite novel, published in 1855, Leg Over Leg. It is a book with an insatiable appetite for definitions and comparisons, with Words that had been lost or fell out of use (the author had an abiding interest in dictionaries that anticipates Jorge Louis Borges) and with locating and often subverting moments of connection and disconnection. We will then follow along a trajectory to the present, where we will read, in English translation, novels written in Arabic, from Egypt, Syria, Sudan, Morocco and Palestine. We will read them chronologically, starting with Leg Over Leg (1855) and finishing with Minor Detail, a novel that was only published last year. Obviously, this does not claim to be a comprehensive survey; for that we would need several years and even then, we would fall short. Instead, the hope is that it will be a thrilling journey through some of the most fascinating fiction ever written. Obviously, this does not claim to be a comprehensive	Mon, 2:10-4:00pm	H. Matar

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CPLT BC3675	Mad Love The history of irrational love as embodied in literary and non-literary texts throughout the Western tradition. Readings include the Bible, Greek, Roman, Medieval, and modern texts.	Mon/Wed, 2:40-3:55pm	A. Mac Adam
CPLT BC3997	Senior Seminar Designed for students writing a senior thesis and doing advanced research on two central literary fields in the students major. The course of study and reading material will be determined by the instructor(s) in consultation with students(s).	Major Requirement Tues, 9:00-10:50am	E. Sun
CPLT GU4161	Tragic Bodies II This course is conceived as an advanced seminar (i.e., upper-level undergraduate and graduate) that addresses in more depth the themes of my lecture course Tragic Bodies (BC3160). It explores how dramatic enactment represents bodily boundaries and edges and thus skin, coverings, maskings, and dress-up in relation to gender, sexuality, race, and status / class. The course will focus on these edges and surfaces, as well as proximities, touching, and affect in ancient and modern drama (and occasionally film). The course treats the three ancient tragedians (Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides) as unifying threads and centers on politically and aesthetically challenging re-envisionings of their plays.	Wed, 2:10-4:00pm Registration Notes: Prerequisite CPLT BC3160 or permission of instructor.	N. Worman
CROSS-LIST COURSES			
New! HSEA BC3370	Literati Culture in Premodern China Premodern Chinese literati (wenren 文人) have long been regarded as spokesmen of “This Culture of Ours” (siwen 斯文)—a metonym for civilization in the premodern Sinitic context—while they also fed from, partook in, and gave shape to popular and foreign cultures. Besides “literary writings” (wenzhang 文章) like poetry and prose, literati also engaged in calligraphy, painting, and antiquarianism under the umbrella term of “literary or cultural arts” (wenyi 文藝). In turn, creation and appreciation of artwork (“cultural or civil objects,” wenwu 文物) were intrinsic to the leisurely and aesthetic life of literati community and further established their self-identity. Covering the long trajectory of imperial China over 3,000 years, this course reveals the birth and growth of literati culture from the beginning, to	Mon, 2:10-4:00pm	L. Xia

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	<p>its full bloom since the Northern Song dynasty (960–1126), to the shifting patterns across the second millennium. In particular, this course takes an interdisciplinary approach to literati culture, introducing intellectual and poetic discourses, socio-historical contexts, literary criticism, visual and material culture, to envision a “common ground” for their civil world. Textual, visual sources plus material objects are meant to have conversations with each other in this course. Important issues include historical transformations of the elite class, cultural geography in different eras, materiality and visuality of elite calligraphy and painting, literati self-expression through aesthetic practice, the roles of the court and literati in producing and preserving art, as well as other relevant issues such as gender studies, vernacular literature, and commodity society.</p> <p>No background in Chinese language is required in this course, and all reading materials—either translation of primary sources or secondary scholarship—are accessible in English. But students are expected to have a basic familiarity with classical traditions of China. By the end of the semester, students will have grasped a comprehensive insight of literati culture in premodern China, acquired the skills to understand and analyze key textual and visual sources, and kept abreast of up-to-date scholarship in this field. Ideally, this course will help students shed new light on Chinese literary traditions from multi-medial and interdisciplinary perspectives.</p>		
<p>CLSL BC2301</p>	<p>Dreaming Empire: Britain & Russia in 19C Why is the word "empire" thrown around so much? If empires have such negative features, how did it happen that much of the literature produced in them seems memorable and perennially popular? We will look closely at works that may be familiar to some students, like Emily Brontë's <i>Wuthering Heights</i> and Dostoevsky's <i>The Double</i>, as well as less familiar authors like the English "peasant poet" John Clare, whose works consider the internal colonization undergone at home by the poorest citizens of the empire. The course falls neatly into two halves: the British and Russian empires of the 19th century. The purpose of the course is to become familiar with imperial thinking, the imperial or anti-imperial (in contemporary terms) thought implicit in various literary works of the time, and often disregarded during discussions of those works. The readings assigned will be heavily supplemented during course meetings: the instructor will bring in various materials that would be obscure if assigned to students outside of class, but with live explanations in-class, will make a big difference in student engagement and understanding.</p>	<p>Tues/Thurs 11:40-12:55</p>	<p>J. Wright</p>