COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COMPLIT)

COMPLIT 100. CAPITALS: How Cities Shape Cultures, States, and People. 3-5 Units.
This course takes students on a trip to major capital cities, at different moments in time: Renaissance Florence, Golden Age Madrid, Colonial Mexico City, Enlightenment and Romantic Paris, Existential and Revolutionary St. Petersburg, Roaring Berlin, Modernist Vienna, and bustling Buenos Aires. While exploring each place in a particular historical moment, we will also consider the relations between culture, power, and social life. How does the cultural life of a country intersect with the political activity of a capital? How do large cities shape our everyday experience, our aesthetic preferences, and our sense of history? Why do some cities become cultural capitals? Primary materials for this course will consist of literary, visual, sociological, and historical documents (in translation); authors we will read include Boccaccio, Dante, Sor Juana, Montesquieu, Baudelaire, Gogol, Irmgard Keun, Freud, and Borges. Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take the course for a Letter Grade.
Same as: DLCL 100, FRENCH 175, GERMAN 175, HISTORY 206E, ILAC 175, ITALIAN 175, URBANST 153

COMPLIT 101. What Is Comparative Literature?. 5 Units.
What is literature, and how has it been imagined, institutionalized, praised, and criticized over the centuries by authors ranging from Aristotle to Schiller, from Arnold to Auerbach, Woolf, Said, Achebe, Spivak and others, who have understood literature as a powerful tool for individual and social change? What does it mean to “compare” literature or study texts that belong or tap into more than one national literary and cultural tradition or consciously posit themselves as participating in international movements (such as European Decadence or Modernism), or authors who live and produce their work in transcultural contexts and often write in different languages, such as Samuel Beckett or Gloria Anzaldúa? How do markers of identity such as gender, sexuality, and race (and our changing conceptions of them over time) factor into our intellectual theories and practices in comparing texts and authors? Along with several case studies of texts and authors that will help us explore and probe these questions, we will also gain familiarity with major theories and developments in the field of comparative literature. NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 5 units and a letter grade to be eligible for WIM credit.

COMPLIT 103. The Putin Phenomenon: Culture and Politics in Recent Russian History. 3-5 Units.
A man who likes to ride horses shirtless. An autocrat who has shaped contemporary Russia and won’t let go of the reins. A contender who interferes in international democratic processes toward his own nefarious ends. More than a politician or an individual, "Putin" has become a catch-all that stands in for Russia as a whole. In this course, we'll attempt to separate the man from the myth and to understand the historical and cultural context behind Putin’s policies. In the process, we will strive better to grasp contemporary Russian society as a complex and culturally rich environment, not just an oppressed land under the thumb of one man. In the course of our analysis, we will examine literary and cultural artifacts and expressive works that engage with political, social, and universal human problems in a Russian and post-Soviet context, interpreting and critiquing those cultural objects with an eye to aesthetic methods and qualities and also how they reflect historical and cultural elements of Russia over a 25-year period. Cultural products to be addressed include literature and film (and one graphic novel) from the Perestroika period through the present day. We will also read President Putin’s autobiography, First Person, and several of his speeches, using techniques of literary analysis to parse the particular story about Russia that he aims to convey to Russians. By examining and exploring a range of cultural objects from Russia’s recent history, we seek to understand the forces that contributed to social and political change over those years, the effect those changes had on ordinary (and extraordinary) Russians, and how those effects take on meaningful aesthetic form through creative expression.
Same as: SLAVIC 103

COMPLIT 107. Human Rights and World Literature. 5 Units.
Human rights may be universal, but each appeal comes from a specific location with its own historical, social, and cultural context. This summer we will turn to literary narratives and films from a wide range of global locations to help us understand human rights; each story taps into fundamental beliefs about justice and ethics, from an eminently human and personal point of view. What does it mean not to have access to water, education, free speech, for example? This course has two components. The first will be a set of readings on the history and ethos of modern human rights. These readings will come from philosophy, history, political theory. The second, and major component is comprised of novels and films that come from different locations in the world, each telling a compelling story. We will come away from this class with a good introduction to human rights history and philosophy and a set of insights into a variety of imaginative perspectives on human rights issues from different global locations. Readings include: Amnesty International, Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Andrew Clapham, Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction, James Dawes, That the World May Know, Walter Echo-Hawk, In the Light of Justice, Amitav Ghosh, The Hungry Tide, Bessie Head, The Word for World is Forest, Ursula LeGuin.
Same as: COMPLIT 57

COMPLIT 109. Masterpieces: Orhan Pamuk. 3-5 Units.
This course explores the major works of Nobel Prize Winner Orhan Pamuk and the novel tradition. We will start with his more classical narratives such as Silent House and move to modernist, post-colonial, and post-modernist works exemplified by The New Life, The White Castle, The Black Book, My Name is Red. Topics include: East/West, the Ottoman theme, Istanbul, and autobiographical strands in fiction.
Same as: COMPLIT 309
COMPLIT 110. Introduction to Comparative Queer Literary Studies. 3-5 Units.
Introduction to the comparative literary study of important gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, and transgender writers and their changing social, political, and cultural contexts from the 1880s to today. Oscar Wilde, Rachilde, Radclyffe Hall, Djuna Barnes, James Baldwin, Jean Genet, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga, Jeanette Winterson, Alison Bechdel and others, discussed in the context of 20th-century feminist and queer literary and social theories of gender and sexuality. Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take the course 110 or 110X for a Letter Grade.
Same as: COMPLIT 310, FEMGEN 110X, FEMGEN 310X

COMPLIT 110Q. Shakespeare, Playing, Gender. 3 Units.
Preference to sophomores. Focus is on several of the best and lesser known plays of Shakespeare, on theatrical and other kinds of playing, and on ambiguities of both gender and playing gender. Note: This course must be taken for a letter grade to be eligible for WAYS credit.

COMPLIT 121. Poems, Poetry, Worlds. 5 Units.
What is poetry? How does it speak in many voices to questions of philosophy, history, society, and personal experience? Why does it matter? The reading and interpretation of poetry in crosscultural comparison as experience, invention, form, sound, knowledge, and part of the world.
The readings address poetry of several cultures (Brazil, Chile, France, Germany, Greece, Italy, Occitania, Peru) in comparative relation to that of the English-speaking world, and in light of classic and recent theories of poetry.
Same as: DLCL 141

COMPLIT 122. Literature as Performance. 5 Units.
Theater as performance and as literature. Historical tension between text and spectacle, thought and embodiment in western and other traditions since Greek antiquity. Dramas read in tandem with theory, live performances, and audiovisuals.
Same as: DLCL 142

COMPLIT 123. The Novel and the World. 5 Units.
<p>&gt;b&gt;Before the Digital Era: the European Design of the Novel.</p>
Same as: DLCL 143

COMPLIT 127B. The Hebrew and Jewish Short Story. 3-5 Units.
Short stories from Israel, the US and Europe including works by Agnon, Kafka, Keret, Castel-Bloom, Kashua, Singer, Benjamin, Freud, biblical myths and more. The class will engage with questions related to the short story as a literary form and the history of the short story. Reading and discussion in English. Optional: special section with readings and discussions in Hebrew. Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take the course for a Letter Grade.
Same as: JEWISHST 147B

COMPLIT 132. The Grandeur of Epic: Poetry, Narrative, and World from Homer to Evolutionary Biology. 3-5 Units.
Explores the mystery and power of epic. This ancient word, which at its root means “what is spoken,” first classified certain traditions of archaic Greek poetry, especially Homer’s Iliad and Odyssey. It now appears everywhere from slang to contemporary scientific discourse. Though some might dismiss its proliferation as an accident of everyday speech, the course will take the phenomenon of “epic” seriously, asking what it is about this oldest of genres that continues to inspire our collective imagination.

COMPLIT 134. Asian American History through Literature. 5 Units.
History presents us with the historical fact and shows how these facts add up. Literature helps explore the human significance of historical facts. In this course we will focus on a number of works of Asian American literature that each depict specific moments in the development of Asian American history, and discuss how the authors feel the effects of that history and represent those effects through literature. There are no pre-requisites for the course, but students are expected to read and analyze carefully and critically, and to be serious and active participants in the class.
Same as: ASNAMST 134

COMPLIT 142B. Translating Japan, Translating the West. 3-4 Units.
Translation lies at the heart of all intercultural exchange. This course introduces students to the specific ways in which translation has shaped the image of Japan in the West, the image of the West in Japan, and Japan’s self-image in the modern period. What texts and concepts were translated by each side, how, and to what effect? No prior knowledge of Japanese language necessary.
Same as: JAPAN 121, JAPAN 221

COMPLIT 145. Reflection on the Other: The Jew and the Arab in Literature. 3-5 Units.
How literary works outside the realm of Western culture struggle with questions such as identity, minority, and the issue of the Other. How the Arab is viewed in Hebrew literature, film and music and how the Jew is viewed in Palestinian works in Hebrew or Arabic (in translation to English). Historical, political, and sociological forces that have contributed to the shaping of these writers’ views. Guest lectures about the Jew in Palestinian literature and music. Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take course for a Letter Grade.
Same as: AMELANG 126, JEWISHST 106

COMPLIT 149. The Laboring of Diaspora & Border Literary Cultures. 3-5 Units.
Focus is given to emergent theories of culture and on comparative literary and cultural studies. How do we treat culture as a social force? How do we go about reading the presence of social contexts within cultural texts? How do ethno-racial writers re-imagine the nation as a site with many “cognitive maps” in which the nation-state is not congruent with cultural identity? How do diaspora and border narratives/texts strive for comparative theoretical scope while remaining rooted in specific local histories. Note: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for WAYS credit.
Same as: CSRE 149, ILAC 149

COMPLIT 154A. Film & Philosophy. 3 Units.
Issues of authenticity, morality, personal identity, and the value of truth explored through film; philosophical investigation of the filmic medium itself. Screenings to include Blade Runner (Scott), Do The Right Thing (Lee), The Seventh Seal (Bergman), Fight Club (Fincher), La Jetée (Marker), Memento (Nolan), and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Kaufman). Taught in English.
Same as: ENGLISH 154F, FRENCH 154, ITALIAN 154, PHIL 193C, PHIL 293C

COMPLIT 154E. Film & Philosophy CE. 4 Units.
Issues of authenticity, morality, personal identity, and the value of truth explored through film; philosophical investigation of the filmic medium itself. Screenings to include Blade Runner (Scott), Do The Right Thing (Lee), The Seventh Seal (Bergman), Fight Club (Fincher), La Jetée (Marker), Memento (Nolan), and Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind (Kaufman). Taught in English. Satisfies the WAY CE.
Same as: FRENCH 154E, ITALIAN 154E, PHIL 193E, PHIL 293E
COMPLIT 172. Visions of a Golden Age: Nature and Pastoral in Literary History. 3-5 Units.

In the light of ecological collapse and climate catastrophe, eco-critics like Timothy Morton have asserted the need to abandon the very concept of nature. For Morton, it is in literature where the development and limitations of nature are most visible. Taking pastoral, i.e. stories about shepherds in idyllic landscapes, as the genre that has done the most in European contexts to shape how nature is seen and understood, this course proposes a historical appraisal of its literary history from ancient Greece to the twenty-first century. How has pastoral constructed nature? How has this changed over time? What is the relation between the historical contingency of nature as it develops in literary history and theories of human nature? While tracking the development of nature as a concept in plays, poems, and prose will be our main focus, this course will also investigate the ways in which shepherd lives and songs have shaped debates on gender, criticized city-life, depicted a Golden Age and the ideal state of humankind, and confronted political tyranny. Students will analyze poems, prose, and plays as autonomous works of art that shape how we imagine and understand nature. Reading literary texts from different moments in history and from a diversity of cultural contexts will permit students to reflect critically on their own conceptions of nature and those of contemporary political and economic discourses. The course will empower students to construct their own literary histories of nature and bring literature to bear on contemporary debates about the environment and climate change.

COMPLIT 181. Philosophy and Literature. 3-5 Units.

What, if anything, does reading literature do for our lives? What can literature offer that other forms of writing cannot? Can fictions teach us anything? Can they make people more moral? Why do we take pleasure in tragic stories? This course introduces students to major problems at the intersection of philosophy and literature. It addresses key questions about the value of literature, philosophical puzzles about the nature of fiction and literary language, and ways that philosophy and literature interact. Readings span literature, film, and philosophical theories of art. Authors may include Sophocles, Dickinson, Toni Morrison, Proust, Woolf, Walton, Nietzsche, and Sartre. Students master close reading techniques and philosophical analysis, and write papers combining the two. This is the required gateway course for the Philosophy and Literature major tracks. Majors should register in their home department.

Same as: CLASSICS 42, ENGLISH 81, FRENCH 181, GERMAN 181, ITALIAN 181, PHIL 81, SLAVIC 222

COMPLIT 183. Self-Impersonation: Fiction, Autobiography, Memoir. 5 Units.

Course will examine the intersecting genres of fiction, autobiography, and memoir. Topics will include the literary construction of selfhood and its constituent categories (gender, race, ethnicity, religion, etc.); the role of language in the development of the self; the relational nature of the self (vis-à-vis the family, “society,” God); the cultural status of “individuality”; the concept of childhood; and the role of individual testimony in our understanding of family, religious and national history. In addition to short theoretical works, authors will include Knausgaard, Nabokov, Hoffman, Winterson, Said, Levi, Barthes, and Duras.

Same as: ENGLISH 183E

COMPLIT 194. Independent Research. 1-5 Unit. (Staff)

COMPLIT 199. Senior Seminar. 5 Units.

What is criticism? When we interpret literature today, are we fulfilling the critical vocation? What are the alternatives? We consider the origins of the idea of the critic in nineteenth-century culture, its development in the twentieth century, and its current exponents, revisionists, and dissenters. Senior seminar for Comparative Literature Senior majors only.

COMPLIT 208. The Cosmopolitan Introvert: Modern Greek Poetry and its Itinerants. 3 Units.

Overview of the last century of Greek poetry with emphasis on modernism. Approximately 20 modern Greek poets (starting with Cavafy and Nobel laureates Seféris and Elytis and moving to more modern writers) are read and compared to other major European and American writers. The themes of the cosmopolitan itinerant and of the introvert, often co-existing in the same poet, connect these idiosyncratic voices. The course uses translations and requires no knowledge of Greek but original texts can also be shared with interested students. Note: The course is open to both undergraduate and graduate students.

COMPLIT 219. Dostoevsky: Narrative Performance and Literary Theory. 3-5 Units.

In-depth engagement with a range of Dostoevsky’s genres: early works (epistolary novella Poor Folk and experimental Double), major novels (Crime and Punishment, The Idiot), less-read shorter works (“A Faint Heart,” “Bobok,” and “The Meek One”), and genre-bending House of the Dead and Diary of a Writer. Course applies recent theory of autobiography, performance, repetition and narrative gaps, to Dostoevsky’s transformations of genre, philosophical and dramatic discourse, and narrative performance. Slavic students read primary texts in Russian, other participants in translation. Course conducted in English. For graduate students; undergraduates with advanced linguistic and critical competence may enroll with consent of instructor. Same as: SLAVIC 251

COMPLIT 222A. Myth and Modernity. 1-5 Unit.

Masters of German 20th- and 21st-Century literature and philosophy as they present aesthetic innovation and confront the challenges of modern technology, social alienation, manmade catastrophes, and imagine the future. Readings include Nietzsche, Freud, Rilke, Musil, Brecht, Kafka, Doeblin, Benjamin, Juenger, Arendt, Musil, Mann, Adorno, Celan, Grass, Bachmann, Bernhardt, Wolf, and Kluge. Taught in English. WAYS Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take GERMAN 222 or COMPLIT 222A for a minimum of 3 Units and a letter grade. Note for German Studies grad students: GERMAN 322 will fulfill the grad core requirement since GERMAN 332 is not being offered this year.

Same as: GERMAN 222, GERMAN 322, JEWISHST 242G, JEWISHST 342

COMPLIT 234. Classics of Persian Literature. 3-5 Units.

The course offers a survey of and introduction to the central works of Persian literature, from the 10th century to our time, across the genres: epic, romance, lyric, and novel. Special attention will be given to the various ways in which the texts continue to resonate in Persian culture. Readings include: the <em>-Shahnameh>-em/> by Ferdowsi (940-1020); <em>-Khosrow and Shirin>-em/> by Nezami (1114-1199); <em>-The Conference of the Birds- by Attar-<em>-/ (1145/46-1221); selections from the masnavi and divan of Rumi (d. 1273); selections from the <em>-divan>-em/> of Hafez (1325/26-1389/90); <em>-The Blind Owl- by Sadeh Hedayat (1903-1951); selected poems by Nima (1895-1960), Shamlu (1925-2000), Akhavan Sales (1928-1990), and Forough Farrokhzad (1935-1967); and <em>-My Uncle Napoleon- by Iraj Pezeshkzad (1928-). Taught in English.</p>

COMPLIT 246. Advanced Readings in Persian. 3-5 Units.

Through studies of representative works of Persian literature (prose and poetry) and culture (art, history, music, cinema, journalism) the course familiarizes students with a wide range of styles. The aim is to enhance both reading and writing skills in connection with an active understanding of cultural and linguistic codes.
COMPLIT 248A. Reading Turkish I. 2-4 Units.
Reading Turkish I is an introduction to the structures of the Turkish language necessary for reading. It is designed to develop reading competence in Turkish for graduate students. Undergraduates should consult the instructor before enrolling for the course. Essential grammar, syntax points, vocabulary, and reading skills will be emphasized. This is not a traditional language course that takes an integrated four-skill approach; since the goal is advanced reading level, the focus is mainly on grammar, reading comprehension, and translation. With full concentration on reading, we will be able to cover advanced material in a short amount of time. The course is conducted in English, but students will be exposed to the sounds of Turkish, and will have the opportunity to practice pronunciation in class. NOTE: COMPLIT 248A Reading Turkish I is followed by COMPLIT 248B Reading Turkish II in the Winter and COMPLIT 248C Advanced Turkish for Research in the Spring.

COMPLIT 248B. Reading Turkish II. 2-4 Units.
This course is the continuation of COMPLIT 248A Reading Turkish I, which served as an introduction to the structures of the Turkish language necessary for reading. It is designed to develop reading competence in Turkish for graduate students. Undergraduates should consult the instructor before enrolling for the course. Essential grammar, syntax points, vocabulary, and reading skills will be emphasized. This is not a traditional language course that takes an integrated four-skill approach; it focuses only on reading, and as a result we will be able to cover advanced material in a short amount of time. This course is conducted in English, but students will be exposed to the sounds of Turkish, and will have the opportunity to practice pronunciation in class. COMPLIT 248B is followed by COMPLIT 248C Advanced Turkish for Research in the Spring.

COMPLIT 248C. Advanced Turkish-English Translation. 2-4 Units.
This course is the continuation of COMPLIT 248A Reading Turkish I and COMPLIT 248B Reading Turkish II. Refining advanced grammar, reading, and translation skills in modern Turkish through intensive reading and translation from a variety of source texts. Emphasis on Turkish cultural, historical, literary, and political texts depending on students’ academic interests. Prerequisites COMPLIT 248A & B or prior knowledge of Turkish and consultation with the instructor is necessary.

COMPLIT 249A. The Iranian Cinema: Image and Meaning. 1-3 Unit.
This course will focus on the analysis of ten Iranian films with the view of placing them in discourse on the semiotics of Iranian art and culture. The course will also look at the influence of a wide array of cinematic traditions from European, American, and Asian masters on Iranian cinema. Note: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: GLOBAL 249A

COMPLIT 249B. Iranian Cinema in Diaspora. 1-3 Unit.
Despite enormous obstacles, immigrant Iranian filmmakers, within a few decades (after the Iranian Revolution), have created a slow but steady stream of films outside Iran. They were originally started by individual spontaneous attempts from different corners of the world and by now we can identify common lines of interest amongst them. There are also major differences between them. These films have never been allowed to be screened inside Iran, and without any support from the global system of production and distribution, as independent and individual attempts, they have enjoyed little attention. Despite all this, Iranian cinema in exile is in no sense any less important than Iranian cinema inside Iran. In this course we will view one such film, made outside Iran, in each class meeting and expect to reach a common consensus in identifying the general patterns within these works and this movement. Questions such as the ones listed below will be addressed in our meetings each week: What changes in aesthetics and point of view of the filmmaker are caused by the change in his or her work environment? Though unwantedly these films are made outside Iran, how related are they to the known (recognized) cinema within Iran? And in fact, to what extent do these films express things that are left unsaid by the cinema within Iran? NOTE: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: GLOBAL 249B

COMPLIT 249C. Contemporary Iranian Theater. 1-3 Unit.
Today, Iranian plays both in traditional and contemporary styles are staged in theater festivals throughout the world and play their role in forming a universal language of theater which combine the heritages from countries in all five continents. Despite many obstacles, some Iranian plays have been translated into English and some prominent Iranian figures are successful stage directors outside Iran. Forty-six years ago when "Theater in Iran" (a monograph on the history of Iranian plays) by Bahram Beyzaie was first published, it put the then contemporary Iranian theater movement "which was altogether westernizing itself blindly" face to face with a new kind of self-awareness. Hence, today’s generation of playwrights and stage directors in Iran, all know something of their theatrical heritage. In this course we will spend some class sessions on the history of theater in Iran and some class meetings will be concentrating on contemporary movements and present day playwrights. Given the dearth of visual documents, an attempt will be made to present a picture of Iranian theater to the student. Students are expected to read the recommended available translated plays of the contemporary Iranian playwrights and participate in classroom discussions. Note: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for Ways credit.
Same as: GLOBAL 249C

COMPLIT 251. Deeper than the Day Could Read: A History of the Night Across Literary Traditions. 3-5 Units.
Drawing on ancient and modern texts from different traditions, this course traces the history of the night as metaphor and imaginal space in literature. Questions to be touched upon include the night and its relation to God; the place of the human being within the night; representations of the night as a space of transgression that is opposed to reason (enlightenment); the place of modern science in our understanding of the night; and the effects of artificial lightning, ontologically separating the night from darkness in the industrial age. Departing from Greek and Mesopotamian cosmogonies, the initial aim is to understand the night both in its scientific definition as a constellation in time and as a transient reality that exposes the human being to the different, impersonal order of the stars. The mythological night is followed by an analysis of the night in Judaic, Christian, and Islamic mystical thought (the Zohar, Angela da Foligno, Juan de la Cruz, Jakob Böhme, Suhraward). Then, the centrality of the night to Romanticism is investigated (Novalis, E.T.A. Hoffmann). The course concludes with a discussion of philosophical discourses on the night (the Pre-Socratics, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Bataille, Blanchot). Taught in English.
COMPLIT 252A. Great Arabic Poetry. 3-5 Units.
Introduction to the canon of Arabic poetry from the sixth to the twenty-first century. Imru` al-Qays, al-Mutanabbi, Mahmud Darwish, and more. Readings in Arabic. Two years of Arabic at Stanford or equivalent required. Counts for the Arabic Track in the MELLAC Minor.

COMPLIT 252B. Great Arabic Prose. 3-5 Units.
Introduction to the best Arabic Literature from the 790s to 2016. Al-Jahiz, Naguib Mahfouz, and much more. Readings in Arabic. Two years of Arabic at Stanford or equivalent required. Counts for the Arabic Track in the MELLAC Minor. Note: This course must be taken for a minimum of 3 units and a letter grade to be eligible for WAYS credit.

COMPLIT 253. Hannah Arendt: Facing Totalitarianism. 3-5 Units.
Like hardly any other thinker of the modern age, Hannah Arendtss thought offers us timeless insights into the fabric of the modern age, especially regarding the perennial danger of totalitarianism. This course offers an in-depth introduction to Arendt's most important works in their various contexts, as well as a consideration of their reverberations in contemporary philosophy and literature. Readings include Arendt's <em>The Origin of Totalitarianism</em>, <em>The Human Condition</em>, Between Past and Future</em>, <em>Men in Dark Times</em>, <em>On Revolution</em>, <em>Eichmann in Jerusalem</em>, and <em>The Life of the Mind</em>. Special attention will be given to Arendt's writings on literature with emphasis on Kafka, Brecht, Auden, Sartre, and Camus. Same as: GERMAN 253

COMPLIT 259A. Levinas and Literature. 3-5 Units.
Focus is on major works by French phenomenologist Emmanuel Levinas (1906-1995) and their import for literary studies. Aim is to discuss and evaluate Levinas's (often latent) aesthetics through a close reading of his work in phenomenology, ethics, and Jewish philosophy. If poetry has come to seem barbaric (or at least useless) in a world so deeply shaped by genocide, forced migration, and climate change, Levinas offers a clear and deeply engaged path forward. If you love literature but still haven’t figured out what on earth it might be good for, this course is for you. Readings and discussion in English. Same as: JEWISHST 249A

COMPLIT 260B. Love and Negativity in Medieval Persian Mysticism. 3-5 Units.
An analysis of apophatic discourses of love in medieval Persian mystical texts, 800-1300 AD. The philosophical underpinnings and implications of Sufi thought are discussed in this course. The principal aim, however, is to shed light on the radical poetic force of the Persian texts. Topics to be addressed include the fundamentally oral, temporal nature of mystical speech; the relation of the speaking I to the unknown and unknowable Other; the discourse of love in which God and the beloved are one; the speech; the relation of the speaking I to the unknown and unknowable Other; the linguistic fragmentation of mystical discourse, straining against the edges of meaning; the possibility of salvaging mystical experience in the place of history, and the methods of science? This course will examine the ways in which fictions figure in the workings of the human mind and human institutions, as well as in literature. Readings will include work by philosophers and critics stretching from Locke, Hume, and Adam Smith, to twentieth-century figures such as Vaihinger (the philosophy of “as if”), to “possible worlds” theory. Bruno Latour, Marie-Louise Ryan, and Ann Bandyfield will be joined by Catherine Gallagher and narratologists. In reaching back to the eighteenth century, we also can have in mind important essays or prefaces by such writers as Horace Walpole, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, and Anne Radcliffe. Novels, of course, raise large questions about fictionality. Works for study include: The Female Quixote, The Castle of Otranto, Tristram Shandy, and A Simple Story. Same as: ENGLISH 303D

COMPLIT 270. Poetess (Obsolete): Women Poets Take Back Time. 1-5 Unit.
Is there a tradition of women poets creating forms against the grain of their time? Close reading of women poets in conjunction with short readings in philosophy of time (Kant, Kierkegaard, Bergson, Heidegger). Syllabus includes Sappho, Dickinson, G. Morrison, J. Moore, E. Bishop, Akhmatova, Tsvetaeva, Plath, N Sachs, G Brooks, Harjo, Cisneros, Szymborska. Students will introduce their favorites. Last weeks: living poet-performers, including our own Stanford talent. Poetry party/ Symposium at end.

COMPLIT 303D. Thinking in Fiction. 5 Units.
Is there a boundary between fact and fiction? Is fiction a stable category at all? Should we be thinking instead about description, factual reference, the place of history, and the methods of science? This course will examine the ways in which fictions figure in the workings of the human mind and human institutions, as well as in literature. Readings will include work by philosophers and critics stretching from Locke, Hume, and Adam Smith, to twentieth-century figures such as Vaihinger (the philosophy of “as if”), to “possible worlds” theory. Bruno Latour, Marie-Louise Ryan, and Ann Bandyfield will be joined by Catherine Gallagher and narratologists. In reaching back to the eighteenth century, we also can have in mind important essays or prefaces by such writers as Horace Walpole, Anna Laetitia Barbauld, and Anne Radcliffe. Novels, of course, raise large questions about fictionality. Works for study include: The Female Quixote, The Castle of Otranto, Tristram Shandy, and A Simple Story. Same as: ENGLISH 303D

COMPLIT 304. Voice, Dissent, Resistance: Antiracist and Antifascist Discourse and Action. 5 Units.
The rise of right-wing movements in the United States and in Europe signal a resurgence of nativist and ethno-nationalist politics that rely heavily on racism to advance fascist politics. This course will explore these phenomena both in terms of their historical development and their present-day appearances. The goal will be to understand how those involved in anti-racist and anti-fascist struggles have invented, created, and practiced discourses and actions that attempt to resist racism and fascism, and to evaluate their merits and weaknesses. Historical, philosophic, journalistic, and creative writings will be the basis of study. This is an experimental course driven by the urgency of recent political events. Students should have open minds and be willing to help shape the course.

COMPLIT 305. Prospects for a Comparative Poetics. 3-5 Units.
What are the prospects for comparative work with poetry and poetics beyond genre? Is there a role for formalism without historicism? Is it possible or desirable to dispense with ethical and political dynamics? We will read a series of theoretical interventions and histories of literary criticism, we will talk about developing our own tools, and we will experiment with them on poetry from all kinds of contexts.

COMPLIT 309. Masterpieces: Orhan Pamuk. 3-5 Units.
This course explores the major works of Nobel Prize Winner Orhan Pamuk and the novel tradition. We will start with his more classical narratives such as <em>Silent House</em> and move to modernist, post-colonial, and post-modernist works exemplified by <em>The New Life</em>, <em>The White Castle</em>, <em>The Black Book</em>, and <em>My Name is Red</em>. Topics include: East/West, the Ottoman theme, Istanbul, and autobiographical strands in fiction. Same as: COMPLIT 109
COMPLIT 310. Introduction to Comparative Queer Literary Studies. 3-5 Units.
Introduction to the comparative literary study of important gay, lesbian, queer, bisexual, and transgender writers and their changing social, political, and cultural contexts from the 1880s to today. Oscar Wilde, Rahlid, Radclyffe Hall, Djuna Barnes, James Baldwin, Jean Genet, Audre Lorde, Cherrie Moraga, Jeannette Winterson, Alison Bechdel and others, discussed in the context of 20th-century feminist and queer literary and social theories of gender and sexuality. Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take the course 110 or 110X for a Letter Grade.
Same as: COMPLIT 110, FEMGEN 110X, FEMGEN 310X

COMPLIT 314. Halit Ziya and the 19th Century Ottoman Novel. 2-4 Units.
This course explores the major works of the late 19th century Ottoman writer Halit Ziya Uak'gil and the emergence of modern prose genres in late Ottoman Empire. Through an analysis of his earlier "Izmir" and later "Servet-i Funun" novels, short stories, memoirs, and literary criticism, we will a thorough understanding of literary movements of the late 19th century Ottoman literary circles.

COMPLIT 31Q. Humanities Core: Middle East I -- Ancient. 3 Units.
This course tells the story of the cradle of civilization. We will start from the earliest human stories, and follow the path from Gligamesh to the Quran via Babylon, the Hebrew Bible, and ancient philosophy. We will read letters, myths, and religious texts in order to pose questions about how how different we are we now in Silicon Valley. What are our traditions? Our faiths? Our foundational stories, or myths? Should we connect ourselves in deep ways to the most ancient past of civilization, or seek to distance ourselves from those origins? N.B. This is the first of three courses in the Middle Eastern track. These courses offer an unparalleled opportunity to study Middle Eastern history and culture, past and present. Take all three to experience a year-long intellectual community dedicated to exploring how ideas have shaped our world and future.
Same as: DLCL 31Q, HUMCORE 31Q

COMPLIT 320A. Epic and Empire. 5 Units.
Focus is on Virgil's Aeneid and its influence, tracing the European epic tradition (Ariosto, Tasso, Camoes, Spenser, and Milton) to New World discovery and mercantile expansion in the early modern period.
Same as: ENGLISH 314

COMPLIT 327. Genres of the Novel. 5 Units.
Provides students with an overview of some major genres in the history of the modern novel, along with major theorists in the critical understanding of the form. Novels might include works by Cervantes, Defoe, Lafayette, Radcliffe, Goethe, Scott, Balzac, Melville, and Woolf. Theorists might include Lukacs, Bakhtin, Jameson, Gallagher, Barthes, Kristeva, and Bourdieu. *PLEASE NOTE: Course for graduate students only.*
Same as: ENGLISH 327, FRENCH 327

COMPLIT 32Q. Humanities Core: Middle East II -- Classic. 3 Units.
How should we live? This course explores two ethical pathways: mysticism and rationality. They seem to be opposites, but as we'll see, some important historical figures managed to follow both at once. We will read works by successful judges, bureaucrats, academics, and lovers written between 700 and 1900 C.E. We will ask ourselves whether we agree with their choices and judgments about professional success and politics. What would we do differently today? We certainly organize knowledge differently, but do we think about ethics the same way? N.B. This is the second of three courses in the Middle Eastern track. These courses offer an unparalleled opportunity to study Middle Eastern history and culture, past and present. Take all three to experience a year-long intellectual community dedicated to exploring how ideas have shaped our world and future.
Same as: DLCL 32Q, HISTORY 85Q, HUMCORE 32Q

COMPLIT 334A. Concepts of Modernity I: Philosophical Foundations. 5 Units.
In the late eighteenth century Immanuel Kant proclaimed his age to be "the genuine age of criticism." He went on to develop the critique of reason, which set the stage for many of the themes and problems that have preoccupied Western thinkers for the last two centuries. This fall quarter course is intended as an introduction to these themes and problems. We begin this course with an examination of Kant's philosophy before approaching a number of texts that extend and further interrogate the critique of reason. In addition to Kant, we will read texts by Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Freud, Lukács, and Heidegger. This course is the first of a two-course sequence. Priority to graduate students in MTL and English. The course will be capped at 12 students.
Same as: ILAC 334A, MTL 334A

COMPLIT 334B. Concepts of Modernity II: Culture, Aesthetics, and Society in the Age of Globalization. 5 Units.
Emphasis on world-system theory, theories of coloniality and power, and aesthetic modernity/postmodernity in their relation to culture broadly understood.
Same as: ENGLISH 334B, MTL 334B

COMPLIT 33Q. Humanities Core: Middle East III -- Future. 3 Units.
How do we face the future? What resources do we have? Which power structures hold us back and which empower us? What are our identities here at college on the far Western edge of the Western world? In 1850s Lebanon, Abu Faris Shidyaq faced all these same questions except for the last of course though he did face a version of even that question, one proper to a mid-19th c. Christian magazine editor. In HumCore Middle East III - Future, we engage with global claims about identity culture and politics. Gänzner’s graphic novel speaks to California as much as to Egypt; Atatürk’s speeches are about power and identity just like Donald Trump’s. Whether in Turkish novels or Arabic poetry, the people we engage in this course are looking to their pasts and futures, just like us. N.B. This is the third of three courses in the Middle Eastern track. These courses offer an unparalleled opportunity to study Middle Eastern history and culture, past and present. Take all three to experience a year-long intellectual community dedicated to exploring how ideas have shaped our world and future.
Same as: DLCL 33Q, HUMCORE 33Q

COMPLIT 343. World War Two: Place, Loss, History. 5 Units.
Same as: ARTHIST 401
COMPLIT 348. US-Mexico Border Fictions: Writing La Frontera, Tearing Down the Wall. 3-5 Units.

A border is a force of containment that inspires dreams of being overcome, crossed, and cursed; motivates bodies to climb over walls, and threatens physical harm. This graduate seminar places into comparative dialogue a variety of perspectives from Chicana/o and Mexican/Latin American literary studies. Our seminar will examine fiction and cultural productions that range widely, from celebrated Mexican and Chicana/o authors such as Carlos Fuentes (<em>La fronda de cristal</em>), Yurí Herrera (<em>Señales que precederan al fin del mundo</em>), Willivaldo Delgado (<em>La Virgen del Barrio Arábe</em>), Américo Paredes (<em>George Washington Gómez: A Mexico-Texan Novel</em>), Gloria Anzaldúa (<em>Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza</em>), and Sandra Cisneros (<em>Carmelo: Puro Cuento</em>); among others, to musicians whose contributions to border thinking and culture have not yet been fully appreciated such as Herb Albert, Ely Guerra, Los Tigres del Norte, and Café Tacvba. Last but not least, we will screen and analyze Orson Welles’ iconic border films <em>Touch of Evil</em> and <em>Touch of Evil</em> and Rodrigo Dorfman’s <em>Los Sueños de Angélica</em>. Proposing a diverse and geographically expansive view of the US-Mexico border through literary and cultural studies, this seminar links the work of these authors and musicians to struggles for land and border-crossing rights, anti-imperialist forms of trans-nationalism, and to the decolonial turn in border thinking or pensamínete fronterizo. It forces us to take into account the ways in which shifts in the nature of global relations affect literary production and negative aesthetics especially in our age of (late) post-industrial capitalism. 

Same as: ILAC 348

COMPLIT 359A. Philosophical Reading Group. 1 Unit.

Discussion of one contemporary or historical text from the Western philosophical tradition per quarter in a group of faculty and graduate students. For admission of new participants, a conversation with H. U. Gumbrecht is required. May be repeated for credit. Taught in English.

Same as: FRENCH 395, ITALIAN 395

COMPLIT 369. Introduction to the Profession of Literary Studies. 1-2 Unit.

A survey of how literary theory and other methods have been made institutional since the nineteenth century. The readings and conversation are designed for entering Ph.D. students in the national literature departments and comparative literature.

Same as: DLCL 369, FRENCH 369, GERMAN 369, ITALIAN 369

COMPLIT 36A. Dangerous Ideas. 1 Unit.

Ideas matter. Concepts such as race, progress, and evil have inspired social movements, shaped political systems, and dramatically influenced the lives of individuals. Others, like religious tolerance, voting rights, and wilderness preservation play an important role in contemporary debates in the United States. All of these ideas are contested, and they have a real power to change lives, for better and for worse. In this one-unit class we will examine these dangerous ideas. Each week, a faculty member from a different department in the humanities and arts will explore a concept that has shaped human experience across time and space. Some weeks will have short reading assignments, but you are not required to purchase any materials.

Same as: ARTHIST 36, EALC 36, ENGLISH 71, ETHICSOC 36X, FRENCH 36, HISTORY 3D, MUSIC 36H, PHIL 36, POLISCI 70, RELIGIST 21X, SLAVIC 36


This seminar will study aesthetic theories and their political implications. Its goal is to apply aesthetic theories to the exploration of the image of nature. We will study Terry Eagleton’s classic ideology of the Aesthetic, which reviews the Western aesthetic tradition. We will read writings by Walter Benjamin, Adorno, and the French thinker Jacques Ranciere. We will study aesthetic theories by classical Chinese philosophers and modern thinkers such as Li Zehou. Equipped with the dual perspective of aesthetics and politics, we will explore issues of nature, the environment, social ecology, and deep ecology. We will critique the anthropocentric stance toward natural environments, landscape, and wilderness. Delving into the issues of natural beauty, environmental ethic, politics, and literature, we will discuss the human body as an organism among other living organisms, the aesthetic of landscape, alienated labor, environment degradation, and dire consequences of technological civilization. Primary texts include Shen Congwen’s fiction, Chinese SF works, and films. Chinese is not required. PhD students are required to write a term paper of 20-25 pages. MA and undergraduate students will write two short essays of 10 pages in response to the questions from readings and discussion.

Same as: CHINA 371

COMPLIT 37Q. Zionism and the Novel. 3 Units.

At the end of the nineteenth century, Zionism emerged as a political movement to establish a national homeland for the Jews, eventually leading to the establishment of the State of Israel in 1948. This seminar uses novels to explore the changes in Zionism, the roots of the conflict in the Middle East, and the potentials for the future. We will take a close look at novels by Israelis, both Jewish and Arab, in order to understand multiple perspectives, and we will also consider works by authors from the North America and from Europe. Note: This course must be taken for a letter grade to be eligible for WAYS credit.

Same as: JEWISHST 37Q

COMPLIT 399. Individual Work. 1-15 Unit.

COMPLIT 51Q. Comparative Fictions of Ethnicity. 4 Units.

We may "know" "who" we "are," but we are, after all, social creatures. How does our sense of self interact with those around us? How does literature provide a particular medium for not only self expression, but also for meditations on what goes into the construction of "the Self"? After all, don't we tell stories in response to the question, "who are you"? Besides a list of nouns and names and attributes, we give our lives flesh and blood in telling how we process the world. Our course focuses in particular on this question—Does this universal issue ("who am I") become skewed differently when we add a qualifier before it, like "ethnic"? Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take course for a Letter Grade.

Same as: AMSTUD 51Q, CSRE 51Q

COMPLIT 55N. Batman, Hamilton, Diaz, and Other Wondrous Lives. 3-5 Units.

This seminar concerns the design and analysis of imaginary (or constructed) worlds for narratives and media such as films, comics, and literary texts. The seminar’s primary goal is to help participants understand the creation of better imaginary worlds - ultimately all our efforts should serve that higher purpose. Some of the things we will consider when taking on the analysis of a new world include: What are its primary features - spatial, cultural, biological, fantastic, cosmological? What is the world’s ethos (the guiding beliefs or ideals that characterize the world)? What are the precise strategies that are used by the artist to convey the world to us and us to the world? How are our characters connected to the world? And how are we - the viewer or reader or player - connected to the world? Note: This course must be taken for a letter grade to be eligible for WAYS credit.

Same as: CSRE 55N
COMPLIT 57. Human Rights and World Literature. 5 Units.
Human rights may be universal, but each appeal comes from a specific location with its own historical, social, and cultural context. This summer we will turn to literary narratives and films from a wide number of global locations to help us understand human rights; each story taps into fundamental beliefs about justice and ethics, from an eminently human and personal point of view. What does it mean not to have access to water, education, free speech, for example? This course has two components. The first will be a set of readings on the history and ethos of modern human rights. These readings will come from philosophy, history, political theory. The second, and major component is comprised of novels and films that come from different locations in the world, each telling a compelling story. We will come away from this class with a good introduction to human rights history and philosophy and a set of insights into a variety of imaginative perspectives on human rights issues from different global locations. Readings include: Amnesty International, Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, Andrew Clapham, Human Rights: A Very Short Introduction, James Dawes, That the World May Know, Walter Echo-Hawk, In the Light of Justice, Amitav Ghosh, The Hungry Tide, Bessie Head, The Word for World is Forest, Ursula LeGuin.
Same as: COMPLIT 107

COMPLIT 61Q. The Literature of Lost Identity. 3-4 Units.
This course will explore tales of lost identity from the Middle Ages through the Renaissance. Our stories feature orphans abandoned at birth, young heroes who must hide who they are, even cross-dressed knights on gender-bent adventures. The trials and tribulations of these displaced youths invite us to question what identity means and where it comes from. Are we made in our parents’ image? What happens when we are separated from our family, or forced to take up a disguise? Are we defined by our birth and bloodline, or by education and experience? Our readings will include texts by Marie de France, Chrétien de Troyes, William Shakespeare, Philip Sidney, and Miguel de Cervantes.

COMPLIT 680. Curricular Practical Training. 1-3 Unit.
CPT course required for international students completing degree. 
Prerequisite: Comparative Literature Ph.D. candidate.

COMPLIT 70N. Animal Planet and the Romance of the Species. 3-4 Units.
Preference to freshmen. This course considers a variety of animal characters in Chinese and Western literatures as potent symbols of cultural values and dynamic sites of ethical reasoning. What does pervasive animal imagery tell us about how we relate to the world and our neighbors? How do animals define the frontiers of humanity and mediate notions of civilization and culture? How do culture, institutions, and political economy shape concepts of human rights and animal welfare? And, above all, what does it mean to be human in the pluralistic and planetary 21st century? Note: To be eligible for WAYS credit, you must take course for a Letter Grade.
Same as: CHINA 70N

COMPLIT 802. TGR Dissertation. 0 Units.