

Comparative Literary Studies Program
Graduate Course Descriptions 2012-2013

Fall 2012

CLS 410 / SPO 401 Theories of Literature: The Coordinates of Theory: South by North by South

Class Meetings: T 2:00-5:00, Kresge 2-301 Instructor: Jorge Coronado Expected Enrollment: 15

Course Description: The course has the following goals: 1. To introduce students to a coherent body of literary and cultural theory in Latin American and Iberian writing. 2. To familiarize students with the ways in which literary and cultural theorists construct their objects of study. 3. To train students in the application of these theoretical and critical models to literary and cultural texts. 4. To examine the geopolitical and historical formation of all theory and criticism. In order to achieve these goals, and in the full conscience of our limited time and knowledge, we will take a selective view of theoretical and critical discourse over the modern period and particularly in the 20th century. After introducing and discussing the notion of theory, we will group texts so that our discussions may illuminate both a common conceptual inheritance as well as their at times acute divergences. We will read articles or essays and chapters taken from the works listed in the sample syllabus. We will ask questions such as: What sort of suppositions does theory take for granted? How does theory construct the cultural and social objects from which it supposedly arises? What factors give a specific theoretical discourse its shape? Finally, what is theory good for? We will consider these questions primarily in light of both literary and cultural production, in Latin America and elsewhere.

CLS 413/SLAVIC 411: Comparative Studies in Theme: Romanticism and the Nation-State

Class Meetings: Th 11:00-11:50, Crowe 4-134 Instructor: Clare Cavanagh Expected Enrollment: 15

This course is an introduction to methodological and critical issues in graduate literary studies by way of three figures who changed the shape of modern European literature, George Lord Byron (1788-1824), Adam Mickiewicz (1798-1855), and Aleksandr Pushkin (1799-1837). Byron's impact on European Romanticism generally was tremendous, and, as Peter Cochran notes, his "influence got more powerful the more endangered freedom of action and expression became": "In countries with assured national identities and complacent convictions about their past and future . . . his power over poets waned rapidly" (Cambridge Companion to Byron, p. 255). Both Pushkin and Mickiewicz were profoundly influenced by Byron, whom they read, at least initially, in French prose translations; and their shared admiration for the English writer helped to shape their own friendship, forged during the years of Mickiewicz's imposed exile in Russia. In the seminar we will read key texts from the vast secondary literature on Byron to examine recent Anglo-American approaches to literary studies; to test their applicability to the very different literary traditions of Poland and Russia; and to challenge the critical and theoretical vocabulary in Slavic and Anglo-American Romantic scholarship alike. We will also address key topoi in the Romantic movement generally (the Romantic hero, Romantic nature, Orientalism, nation, politics, prophecy) by way of works in multiple genres: lyric, drama, narrative poem, novel. All works will be available in translation; Slavic students will be expected to read Russian texts in the original. Polish texts will be available in both Russian and English translation. Questions of literary and cultural translation will form part of our discussion. Requirements:(NB: all assignments subject to change. Instructor will notify you in advance of any changes to the requirements or syllabus) 20% --regular attendance and participation. Each meeting constitutes one-tenth of the course, and missed classes will be reflected in your final grade accordingly. 15% --3-4 page close reading of a Romantic ballad to be read in Russian or Polish (Slavic), or English. 10%--bibliography on one assigned literary text for the course. 15%--3-4 page review of an article or book-length secondary work exploring a key issue or approaches to Romanticism

in modern literary studies, e.g. New Historicism, Socialist Realism, etc. This review will form the basis of a 15-20 minute presentation to the class. 5%--one page abstract of final paper topic, due at final class meeting. 40%--12-15 page final paper, with appropriate scholarly apparatus, on topic of your choice. Your topic must, however, derive from close analysis of a single text in the original language, and must be cleared with instructor in advance. Required Texts (all available at Norris Bookstore): 1. Adam Mickiewicz, *Pan Tadeusz*, tr. Kenneth R. MacKenzie (bilingual edition: Hippocrene Books, ISBN 078170331) 2. Joseph Gibaldi, *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers* 3. M. H. Abrams, *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (Harcourt) 4. Michael Wachtel, *The Cambridge Introduction to Russian Poetry* (Cambridge UP, ISBN 052104934) 5. Lord Byron, *The Major Works*, ed. Jerome McGann (Oxford UP, ISBN 0192840401) 6. *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, ed. Drummond Bone (Cambridge UP, ISBN 0521786762) 7. *The Cambridge Companion to Pushkin*, ed. Andrew Kahn. Recommended Secondary Texts (a highly selective sampling of key works in English): Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism* (New York, 1991) M. H. Abrams, *Natural Supernaturalism: Tradition and Revolution in Romantic Literature* (New York, 1973) Jerome McGann, *The Romantic Ideology: A Critical Investigation* (Chicago, 1985)

CLS 414/FRENCH 410: Studies in Medieval Literature: Fictions of the Grail

Class Meetings: W 3:30-5:50, Kresge 2-420 Instructor: Scott Hiley Expected Enrollment: 20

The object known variously as “a grail,” “the grail,” “the Holy Grail,” and “the Most Holy Vessel” is one of medieval French literature’s most enduring and perplexing legacies. Beginning with the first use of the term “grail” in Chrétien de Troyes’ *Perceval* and ending with the violent aftershocks of the Grail quest in the post-apocalyptic *Mort du roi Arthur*, we will read key texts of the Old French Grail tradition as extended reflections on the possibility of a sacred romance, a courtly fiction that would train readers to the purported truth of Christian doctrine. This line of inquiry will lead us through areas as diverse as the mechanics of allegory, the generic interplay of romance, hagiography and historiography, and the politics of sacramental life, but our central questions will remain constant: at what price and by what dislocations might fiction be redeemed? Taught in English. Readings in Old French, modern French, and English. The course will include significant work on reading and translating the medieval French vernacular, as well as the opportunity to examine digital reproductions of medieval manuscripts.

CLS 488: Romanticism and its Discontents

Class Meetings: M 2-5, Library 3-370 Instructor: Jorg Kreienbrock Expected Enrollment: 15

Course Description: The challenge of early German Romanticism to traditional ideas of literature, language, and representation has not diminished throughout the last two centuries and made its spectral reappearance in such diverse disciplines as deconstruction, psychoanalysis, or political theory. This course offers a historical-intellectual survey of German Romanticism and its reception in the 19th and 20th century. To this purpose we will read some of the most influential poetical and theoretical texts of early to late Romanticism. Authors such as Friedrich Schlegel, Novalis, Ludwig Tieck, Achim von Arnim, Clemens Brentano, Adelbert von Chamisso, and E.T.A. Hoffmann will be juxtaposed with the reception, translation, and transformation of their thought in literature, philosophy, and critical theory. Our readings will trace the persistence of Romantic ideas and tropes like irony, reflection, criticism, and the fantastic in authors such as Heine, Poe, Kierkegaard, Baudelaire, Benjamin, de Man, and Nancy/Lacoue-Labarthe.

Winter 2013

CLS 412: Literary Studies Colloquium

Class Meetings: F 3:00-5:00, Crowe 1-125

Instructor: Genevieve Amaral

In this seminar, we will be focusing our attention on works of theorists and poets central to the field of comparative literary studies and critical theory. In our discussions, we will approach the texts closely and indicate striking points in their structure. Although the students are invited to work on their individual interests in respect to the readings, the seminar will be structured around two key terms: ambiguity and awakening.

CLS 413 / ENG 431: Grammars of PreModernity

Class Meetings: W 2:00-5:00, Univ. Hall 018

Instructor: Will West

Course Description: This course will explore the ramifications, vicissitudes, and consequences of the long history and varied practices of understanding the world as legible or even digital, with particular emphasis on early modern writings, but also some classical and medieval texts. Among other things, this way of looking at things shifts the science of understanding them from a *logic* to a *grammar*, from holism to discrete elements, from completeness to fragmentariness, from overview to upsurge. In theoretical terms, we will revisit the Derridean critique of logocentrism and its call for a grammatology through the frame of premodern writings that may present alternative models. Texts will be drawn from works by Euripides/ ps.-Nazianzen, Lucretius, Dante, Petrarch, Poliziano, Spenser, Shakespeare, Herbert, and Cavendish; we will consider, among other things, premodern practices and theories of the fragment, the cento, and the commonplace, critical assumptions about what to do with texts, and contemporary theories of the assemblage.

CLS 414 / ENG 461: Studies in Contemporary Literature: Proust, Joyce, Woolf

Class Meetings: W 2:00-5:00, Harris Hall L05

Instructor: Christine Froula

Course Description: This seminar will focus on three European writers who opened the realist novel to new ideas and experiences of temporality during the early decades of the twentieth century: the Parisian Marcel Proust (1871-1922), the Irish expatriate James Joyce (1882-1941), the English writer and publisher Virginia Woolf (1882-1941). Writing during a period of accelerating scientific, technological, economic, political and social change—the early decades of that “lethal century,” bloodier than any previous era—these novelists register modern time and modern times in ways that provoke reflection on a wide array of fronts. We’ll study selections from Proust’s *Swann’s Way*, Joyce’s *Ulysses* (omitting an episode or two), and two or three of Woolf’s novels to be chosen by the class from *Jacob’s Room*, *Mrs. Dalloway*, *To the Lighthouse*, *The Waves*, and *Between the Acts*, to analyze narrative time and represented temporalities in relation to conceptions of time as historical, metahistorical, scientific, philosophical, cosmological, phenomenological, psychological, lyric or aesthetic, natural, evolutionary, revolutionary, everyday, eternal, ritual, sacralized, cyclical, apocalyptic, cultural, archival; durational; as simultaneity, as past, passing, and to come, as time lost, missed, remembered, misremembered, conjured, constructed, reconstructed, or regained. We’ll also reflect on temporal categories such as the modern, modernism, modernity; colonial, semicolonial, postcolonial; wartime, peacetime. With our vast topic inviting affording many different approaches, we’ll keep the literary works at center stage and draw on ideas, passages, and short pieces by such thinkers as Einstein, Bergson, Genette, Auerbach, Ricoeur, Worringer, Frank, White, Hawking, Barrow, and others, as well as materials on the works’ historical conditions (e. g., imperialism, colonialism, the Dreyfus affair, the two world wars).

In the final three weeks of the term, each student will design and pursue a seminar project that furthers his or her intellectual purposes and deepens our thinking in common. These may engage other genres (poetry, drama), media (film, performance), and authors or directors.

Requirements: Active, informed participation, weekly analytic and interpretive Blackboard posts, oral presentation, proposal and seminar project.

CLS 481 / GERMAN 441: Studies in Communication and Culture: Hölderlin's theory of the "Tragic" as the result of "Counter-Rhythmic interruption" or "Caesura"

Class Meetings: M 2:00-5:00, Kresge 2-500

Instructor: Sam Weber

Course Description: This seminar will be devoted to reading the unique theory of "the tragic" elaborated by Friedrich Hölderlin in his "Remarks on Oedipus and Antigone". Hölderlin introduces a theory of "counter-rhythmic interruption" that he also designates as the "caesura", which in certain ways develops the Aristotelian notion of the "peripeteia" as an essential component of "complex" tragic "plots". The notion of the Caesura has had an enormous influence on 20th century critics, such as Walter Benjamin, and more recently, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe. The seminar will try to unpack the notion of "counter-rhythmic interruption" through a close reading both of Hölderlin's "Remarks" and of the tragedies "themselves" -- i.e. either in Hölderlin's own translation or in English translation.

Reading List:

Friedrich Hölderlin, "Anmerkungen zum Oedipus" and "Antigone" (Friedrich Hölderlin, *Sämtliche Werke und Briefe*, vol. 2, edited by Michael Knapp, isbn: 3-446-17259-9; English in: Friedrich Hölderlin: *Essays and Letters on Theory*, edited and translated by Thomas Pfau, SUNY Press, ISBN: 978-0887065590. Sophocles, *Theban Plays*, Jebb translation available as Kindle Book (or in paperback)

CLS 486 / ENG 481: The Transnational Turn

Class Meetings: TH 10-1, Kresge 2-435

Instructor: Rebecca Johnson

Course Description: While a transnational turn in literary studies has been announced relatively recently in journal articles, presidential addresses, and reports on the states of various disciplines, the scholarship to which it refers emerges from a longer history of transnational approaches that both predate it and coexist with it. This course will survey these approaches, which include post-colonial theory, diaspora and migration studies, translation theory, and globalization, as well as the larger-than-nation units and in-between-nation spaces that scholars have evoked in order to conceptualize this turn (continents, hemispheres, the globe, borderlands and frontiers, translation zones, and oceanways, to name a few). In doing so, we'll aim to understand how these problematize or reframe the nation as an organizing category for literary studies, and how they elucidate new assumptions or anxieties. Texts will include works by Edward Said, Mary Louise Pratt, Paul Gilroy, Brent Hayes Edwards, Ian Baucom, Emily Apter, Arjun Appadurai, Franco Moretti, Pascale Casanova, Rey Chow, Shu-mei Shih, Françoise Lionnet, Pheng Cheah, Gayatri Spivak. This course also includes a collaborative element: primary texts will be decided by consensus. Please bring suggested titles to the first class.

CLS 488: Essential Readings in Modern Jewish Culture

Class Meetings: W 3:00-6:00, Kresge 3-420

Instructor: Marcus Moseley

Course Description: The twentieth century has been referred to as “The Jewish Century”. Jews in Western Europe, in particular Germany, played an extraordinarily disproportionate role in the forging of European modernity in all fields of culture, finance and politics. The mass entrance of Jews to the secular cultural sphere following upon civil emancipation was accompanied by the rise of modern anti-Semitism that shook the foundations of Western civilization in the last century. At the same time Jewish culture was convulsed from within by the emergence of what Isaac Deutscher famously termed “the non-Jewish Jew.” In Eastern Europe, in particular, this cultural ferment led to the efflorescence of modern secular literatures in Hebrew and Yiddish. This led in turn, in the early decades of the last century, to an intense and fruitful dialogue between Eastern and Western European Jewish modernist cultural trends. Thus, “East and West” served as the title of a leading Jewish periodical both in German and Hebrew. Among prominent Jewish figures who stand as testimony to this encounter we may number the S.Y. Agnon, Marc Chagall, Walter Benjamin, Gershom Scholem, Franz Kafka, Martin Buber—the scroll is long indeed. Jews, to employ a Yiddish proverb “were sitting in the corner in the middle of the room”.

Thus it is not surprising that a significant number of graduate students in the Humanities, literature and history in particular, place particular emphasis upon the Jewish aspects of their scholarly enterprises. However, many of these students, housed in departments of English, French, German, Slavic literatures etc., have had no background in Jewish Studies. The aim of the present course is to provide such graduates with an apprenticeship in modern Jewish cultural history by means of close reading of and meditation upon, key documents that illuminate the transformations of Jewish culture in Europe and the impact of these transformations in the shaping of European modernity.

Topics of discussion include: Germany as the laboratory of Jewish modernity; anti-Semitism and Jewish self-hatred; the cultural encounter of Eastern and Western European Jewry; the emergence of Modern Hebrew and Yiddish literatures; Jewish heretics and the shaping of twentieth-century sensibilities.

Figures to be studied include Solomon Maimon, Franz Kafka, Karl Marx, Gershom Scholem, Sigmund Freud, Haim Nahman Bialik, Sholem Aleichem, Marc Chagall.

It is appropriate that this course be offered by the Department of German since as Paul R. Mendes-Flohr and Jehudah Reinharz point out “the transformations in traditional Jewish life occurred in a comprehensive way among the Jews of the Germanic lands first and in a particular intense manner.” Geographically Jewish modernity traces a trajectory from Berlin to Vienna to Eastern Europe whence back again to Germany.

Evaluation Method: Students will meet once per week for a seminar and will be asked to make oral presentations. A paper of at least twenty pages is required at the end of the quarter. In this paper, students will be asked to integrate the insights they have acquired in the course of the semester to their own scholarly enquiry.

Spring 2013

CLS 412: Versions of the Self: Theories of Autobiography

Class Meetings: M 2:00-5:00, Crowe 1-125 **Instructor:** Marcus Moseley

Ours is an era of autobiography par excellence.

This course traces the discourse surrounding writings of the self. Autobiography is self-reflexive mode of writing and thus autobiographical theory is an essential component of autobiographical texts. We thus take account in this course what autobiographers write of their own writing within autobiography, from Augustine’s meditations on memory to Roland Barthes’ autobiographical account of the disappearance of his own self and beyond. In addition, we survey some of the most influential essays written on autobiography by

critics and theorists including Derrida, Foucault, De Man, focusing especially upon Augustine, Montaigne, Rousseau and Michel Leiris.

Questions to be Addressed:

Is the very notion of an autonomous self one peculiar to Western culture from the 18th Century onwards? Why given the late 20th. Century's assault upon this notion of autonomous selfhood has autobiography not only continued but flourished?

Is autobiography the book that everyone can write?

What constitutes autobiographical "truth"?

CLS 488: Special Topics in Comparative Literature: Circulation

Class Meetings: W 2:00-5:00 Instructor: Brian Edwards

Circulation is a concept at the center of thinking about the relationship between globalization, diaspora, and literature. The concept has a rich history in economics and cultural anthropology and is at the heart of the "linguistic turn" initiated in the latter field by Lévi-Strauss. Most recently, a number of theorists at the intersection of literary studies and transnational cultural studies have reimagined the ways in which attention to circulation might help us to understand the relationship of individual subjectivity (or imagined worlds, or new social imaginaries) to global cultural and capital flows. There is of course much more work to be done, and the topic is generative of many sorts of intellectual projects and helps to rethink or redirect others. The goal of the seminar is both to develop students' understanding of processes of globalization and literary and cultural production that are especially sensitive to questions of circulation and to open up thinking about students' ongoing or future research projects via a reconsideration of their relationship to various circulatory matrices. We will address questions of global culture and diasporic movement through an examination of circulation of peoples and cultural forms, as well as financial instruments and global technoscapes and mediascapes. There will be a concerted effort to account for literature, and to develop modes and methods of reading literary and film texts within the "age of circulation" (or episteme of globalization). We will read several works of literature (from the U.S., Europe, and North Africa and the Middle East), attending to the thinking about circulation within them and in order to further open up the topic itself. There are no prerequisites to the course, which is designed for graduate students in a variety of fields and disciplines.

Readings by theorists and critics such as: Karl Marx, Marcel Mauss, Claude Lévi-Strauss, Jacques Derrida, Fredric Jameson, Benjamin Lee and Edward LiPuma, Arjun Appadurai, Giovanni Arrighi, Michael Warner, Paul Gilroy, Gayatri Spivak, Miriam Hansen, Dilip Gaonkar, Franco Moretti. Literary texts and films to be announced, but will include works by authors from 20/21st century U.S., France, North Africa, and the Middle East.