

Comparative Literary Studies Program
Graduate Course Descriptions 2014-2015

Fall 2014

CLS 410/FRENCH 493: Intro to Graduate Study: Critical Theory: African Postcolonial Theory

Class Meetings: W 3:30-5:50pm

Instructor: Nasrin Qader

Expected Enrollment: 20

Course Description The aim of this introductory course is to read with beginning graduate students in French and Comparative Literary Studies some of the major theoretical texts in colonial and postcolonial studies. While the field is expansive, both temporally and geographically, this course's focus will be primarily on twentieth century theories with special emphasis on the Francophone world. The aim is therefore neither to be exhaustive nor representative of all the positions and directions that this vast field has come to cover in recent years. At the heart of the course is the issue of language and of discursive practices that constitute coloniality and postcoloniality and that may demarcate these conditions geographically. Clearly, the goal is not to reach definitive conclusions, nor to discover final answers to any of the questions we will pose. Rather, the course seeks to trace some of the vicissitudes of ideas about the colonial and the postcolonial, the necessities and consequences of these ideas as well as their modes of presentation.

Evaluation Method

This is a seminar course. Therefore, students will be required to participate fully in each session. All students will be required to present the materials assigned to them from the reading list, providing further context to the readings. They will also be asked to write several response papers to the readings (3-5 pages) and a final short synthesis/reflection essay (8-10 pages). Presentations, participations and the papers will be the basis of the final grade for the course.

Reading List

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*
Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other*
Abdelkebir Khatibi, *Love in Two Languages*
Edouard Glissant, *Caribbean Discourse*
Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*
V.Y Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa*
Gayatri Spivak, *Critique of Postcolonial Reason*

CLS 413/ENG 465: Comparative Studies in Theme: Indian Ocean Modernisms

Class Meetings: TH 2-5pm

Instructor: Evan Mwangi

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description The course reads Indian-Ocean texts in terms of their repurposing of modernism to express local and transnational sensibilities. Reviewing critical and theoretical work on modernism and its global spread, the course will propose various ways of conceiving projects on alternative global modernism studies and neglected conceptions of modernity. While reading and critiquing the now well-known theoretical positions on non-western modernisms, such as Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic*, we will experiment with different other locales and nodal points, such as the Indian-Ocean societies, in which modernism has played an important part in the production of local and transnational literatures. Readings will include fiction by

Abdulrazak Gurnah, Moyez Vassanji, V.S. Naipaul, Anita Desai, and Amitav Ghosh. Attitudes toward modernism and universalism among Indian-Ocean writers and theorists will be discussed in the context of global modernisms in Africa, Asia, the Pacific, Latin America, and the Caribbean.

Evaluation Method

One 7000-word peer-critiqued essay.

Reading List

(May change slightly):

Desai, Anita. *The Village by the Sea*. London : Puffin, 2001.

Desai, Gaurav Gajanan. *Commerce with the Universe: Africa, India, and the Afrasian Imagination*. New York : Columbia University Press, [2013]

Devi, Ananda. *Indian Tango*. Trans. Jean Anderson. Austin, TX : Host Publications, 2011.

Ghosh, Amitav. *In an Antique Land*. New York : Vintage Books, 1994.

Ghosh, Amitav. *The Hungry Tide*. Boston : Houghton Mifflin, 2005.

Gurnah, Abdulrazak. *By the Sea*. New York : New Press, 2001.

Gurnah, Abdulrazak. *Paradise*. New York : New Press, 1994.

CLS 481: Studies in Literary Theory: Agamben

Class Meetings: TH 4-7pm

Instructor: Alessia Ricciardi

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description This course offers a critical introduction to the philosophy of Giorgio Agamben and, in particular, to the cycle of theoretical texts that Agamben has organized under the *Homo Sacer* rubric. We will discuss the genealogy and wide-ranging influence of his treatment of concepts such as *homo sacer*, bare life, the state of exception, potentiality, spectacle, the inoperative, and forms of life. In his handling of them, these notions have generated both vital interest and vehement controversies that seem likely to endure for quite some time. Above all, our inquiry seeks to assess the advantages and limits of Agamben's thought for current debates on biopolitics, ethics, aesthetics, Jewish studies, and cultural studies. The itinerary of the class attempts, on the one hand, to provide students who are less steeped in Agamben's work with a careful analysis of the basic tenets of his philosophy while trying, on the other hand, to evaluate his accomplishments in depth for students who possess greater familiarity with his thought. Over the span of the term, we will read texts by Agamben, Butler, Benjamin, Debord, Foucault (most crucially), Levi, and Schmitt.

Evaluation Method

- Participation in class discussion is a crucial component (30%)
- Two short written assignments of 2-3 pages each in response to a specific text (20%)
- Final paper of 15-18 pages (50 %)

Teaching Method

Seminar style

Reading List

- *Homo Sacer: Sovereign Power and Bare Life*
 - *Remnants of Auschwitz: The Witness and The Archive*
 - *State of Exception*
 - Additional selections from Agamben's *The Kingdom and the Glory*, *Opus Dei*, and *The Highest Poverty* will be part of the expected reading assignments
 - Secondary readings will include Butler's *Precarious Life* (excerpts), selections from Foucault on biopolitics and forms of life, Benjamin's "Critique of Violence," Levi's *If This Is a Man*, Debord's *The Society of Spectacle*, and Schmitt's *Political Theology* (excerpts)
-

CLS 487-0-20/SLAV 411: Studies in Literature and the Arts: Proseminar: Aesthetics of Anarchy

Class Meetings: M 3-5:50pm

Instructor: Nina Gourianova

Expected Enrollment: 15

Course Description For most of the last century Paris was widely considered the epicenter of the various waves of avant-garde –isms that attempted to revolutionize literature and art. More recently, scholars have reconsidered the global character of these movements, largely rejecting the model according to which Paris invents and the rest of the world imitates, more or less belatedly. This seminar offers a three-fold engagement with these debates about the geography of the historical avant-gardes: 1) an introduction to canonical works of the Parisian avant-garde, with an emphasis on their geopolitical and racial imaginaries; 2) consideration of non-French manifestations of these movements; and 3) critical readings on how a more transnational perspective might change the ways we historicize and theorize the avant-garde. We will focus on Futurism (in relation to Italy, France, Mexico, and Brazil); Dada (in France and Germany) and Surrealism (in France, the Caribbean, and Japan), through writings by Oswald de Andrade, André Breton, Blaise Cendrars, Aimé Césaire, Richard Huelsenbeck, Kitasono Katue, Manuel Maples Arce, F.T. Marinetti, Valentine de Saint-Point, and Tristan Tzara, among others. Our focus will be on manifestos and literary works, but we will also consider photography and the visual arts, with a planned group trip to the Art Institute of Chicago.

Reading List

The majority of readings will be provided as pdfs via Blackboard, but the following books are required (in English or French):

Louis Aragon. *Paris Peasant*. Exact Change [1878972103]

Louis Aragon. *Le Paysan de Paris*. Gallimard [2070367827]

André Breton. *Manifestoes of Surrealism*. University of Michigan [0472061828]

André Breton. *Manifestes du surrealism*. Gallimard/folio [0801858305]

Blaise Cendrars. *Moravagine*. *New York Review of Books* [1590170636]

Blaise Cendrars. *Moravagine*. Grasset and Fasquelle [2246108853]

Michael Richardson and Krzysztof Fijalkowski, eds. *Refusal of the Shadow: Surrealism and the Caribbean*. Verso [1859840183]

Winter 2015

CLS 411 - Critical Practices: Rhetoric, Philology, Linguistics

Class Meetings: T 3:00-6:00

Instructor: Samuel Weber

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description

This class will present a selection of texts that have influenced literary studies over the past decades and that continue to be important for its future. It will focus on the “linguistic turn” beginning with Saussure’s *Course in General Linguistics*, which gives rise both to conventional structuralism and to its more significant “post-structuralist” elaboration. Derrida’s discussion of Saussure in *De la grammatologie*, together with Lacan’s interpretation of it in *L’instance de la lettre* can be seen as both a critique of the systematic closure of previous “structuralist” interpretations, as well as an opening to a more “Nietzschean” conception of the relation of language, literature and “reality”. Other national traditions that anticipate this tendency include V. N. Volosinov’s study, *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* and Walter Benjamin’s theory of allegory in *Origins of the German Mourning Play*. In more recent American criticism, Paul de Man’s work occupies a

special place in emphasizing and reinterpreting the irreducible rhetoricity of literary language and his theorization of allegory (in "The Rhetoric of Temporality") can be productively contrasted with that of Benjamin. At the same time, the rhetorical dimension of literary criticism will also be a constant focus, with a view toward helping students think about the significance of rhetoric, argumentation and presentation in their own writing and speaking.

Evaluation Method

Attendance, class participation, final paper, presentations

Required Texts

Saussure, Course in General Linguistics (new edition edited by Haun Saussy)

Derrida, "Linguistics and Grammatology," from: Of Grammatology

Lacan, "The Instance of the Letter," from: Ecrits (Writings)

Nietzsche, "Truth and Deceit in an extra-moral Sense"

W. Benjamin, chapter on "Allegory" from Origins of the German Mourning Play

V. N. Volosinov, Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (especially chapter on Free Indirect Style)

William Empson, Selections from Seven Types of Ambiguity

Paul de Man, "The Rhetoric of Temporality," from: Blindness and Insight

All texts will be available in English, although reading in the original language is preferred wherever possible.

CLS 413/SPORT 480 - Comparative Studies in Theme: Friendship, Masculinity, Vulnerability

Class Meetings: TH 2:00-5:00

Instructor: César Braga-Pinto

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description

This seminar will discuss how literature engaged with shifting notions of friendship and masculinity at the turn of the 20th century (broadly speaking, that is, from the late 1880's to the 1930's). We will first study how new European forms of hegemonic and therefore, also, subordinated and marginalized masculinities, were reproduced in Latin America during the late 19th-century. We will pay particular attention to how emerging forms of male sociability were represented in literature and displayed in the public sphere; and how the democratization of the press and new concerns with public opinion contributed to the emergence of new notions of authorship and originality. We will also look at how the new bourgeois subject recast aristocratic codes of honor as well as rituals of male rivalry (such as the duel, newspaper polemics, slander and public shaming) as a way of affirming their autonomy and, at the same time, as a form of prevalence and differentiation from the masses.

We will examine male friendship in relation to a number of related concepts, such as charity, philanthropy, sympathy/ hostility, patronage, clientelism, fraternity, camaraderie, companionship, generation, cordiality, etc. One of the goals is to understand how these notions have evolved during the first decades of the 20th century and, at the same time, to demonstrate how they informed socio-political imaginings of nationhood and political strategies to attain (or arguably to defer) democracy and racial equality. We will further interrogate how the notion of an autonomous and independent, masculine subject, as well as the ideal of material and biological reproduction, became associated with the modern nation. Finally, as we change our focus to notions of interdependence and inequality, of vulnerability and precariousness, of hospitality and cosmopolitanism -- we shall reconsider our received ideas of personhood, citizenship, consciousness, originality, authorship, nationhood and ethics.

Students will be encouraged to think comparatively about their own fields and to consider the various "nineteenth centuries" in world literature

For the first class, please read:

- Plato: Lysis
- Montaigne: "Of friendship".

- Machado de Assis: "Pylades and Orestes"

Evaluation:

The final project (15-20pp) may focus on student's own area of specialization as long as it relates to theme of friendship/ masculinity/ vulnerability and, preferably, but not necessarily, the period studied in the course. Students will make one 10-15 minute questions-presentations (designed to spur discussion of the day's readings)

Required Texts:

Primary readings (all available in English and/or Spanish translation): Raul Pompeia, *The Atheneum* (1888); Adolfo Caminha, *Bom Crioulo* (1895); Machado de Assis, *Esau e Jacó* (1904); Lima Barreto, *Recordações do Escrivente Isaías Caminha* (1909). José Lins do Rego, *Plantation Boy* [*Menino de Engenho* (1933) and *Doidinho* (1934)]; Gilberto Freyre *The Mansions and the Shanties (Sobrados e Mucambos)*; Sérgio Buarque de Hollanda, *Roots of Brazil*.

In addition to classics by Plato, Montaigne, Marcel Mauss and Carl Schmidt, we will read contemporary criticism by David Halperin, Judith Butler, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Heather Love, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Silvano Santiago, Alan Bray, Clifford Geertz, Carole Pateman, R.W. Connell, Robert Nye, Leela Ghandi, and others.

CLS 414 - Comparative Study in Genre: Versions of the Self

Class Meetings: TH 3:00-6:00

Instructor: Marcus Moseley

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description:

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 481/PHIL 415/GS490 - Studies in Literary Theory: Deconstruction & Feminism

Class Meetings: TH 6:00-8:50

Instructor: Penelope Deutscher

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description

The course offers an introductory overview, restricted to graduate students, of Derrida's work, providing a foundation for more advanced seminars on Derrida. We focus on texts that will allow a discussion of reception and discussion of deconstruction from a gender studies and sexuality studies perspective. The course includes excerpts from Derrida's early and late work, with a concentration on the reading of Rousseau in Derrida's major work *Of Grammatology*, and on his most recently published seminar "The Death Penalty Seminar", with discussions of the role of sex and gender in later works such as *Rogues*, *Politics of Friendship*, and

Monolingualism of the Other. The course requires experience in working in the area of gender and sexuality studies (including at least one advanced course in this area).

Teaching Method

Largely discussion based with some lectured content, group presentations.

Evaluation Method

Papers, class participation, class presentation.

Required Texts

Course packet

CLS 486/ENGLISH 461 - Studies in Literature and the Disciplines: International Law and Literature

Class Meetings: M 2:00-5:00

Instructor: Andrew Leong

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description

This course examines recent scholarship that draws on “law and literature” approaches, but turns from domestic or national legal regimes towards the broader, transnational frameworks of international law and diplomacy. Departing from Ed Morgan’s proposal that modernist aesthetics are crucial to the parsing of international legal texts, we will examine key pairings of international law and literature from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Our readings will cluster around three areas of emphasis: immigration and asylum agreements and immigrant/exile literature; copyright and intellectual property treaties and their effects on the transnational circulation of texts; and international criminal tribunals and literature of witness.

Evaluation Method

Oral presentations, Blackboard postings, and a final paper (10-12 pages).

Required Texts

Will include works by Benedict Anderson, Hannah Arendt, Pheng Cheah, Costas Constantinou, James Der Derian, Jacques Derrida, Timothy Hampton, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, David Palumbo-Liu, Paul K. Saint-Amour, etc. English

CLS 486-0-21/GERMAN 401/ENGLISH 481 - Studies in Literature and the Disciplines: German Literature and Critical Thought 1750-1832: Hegel and Shakespeare

Class Meetings: M 3:00-6:00

Instructor: Anselm Haverkamp

Expected Enrollment: 12

Course Description:

The combination Hegel and Shakespeare works well in both directions: it is profitable to know Shakespeare, if one wants to understand Hegel's Phenomenology of the Mind (or Spirit), as it is profitable to read Hegel in order to understand Shakespeare. Thus, the rediscovery of Shakespeare in the 18th century comes along with a philosophical interest in this author whose modern dimension has been most thoroughly investigated by Hegel and, in his wake, by an implicitly Hegelian New Historicism or Cultural Materialism.

The seminar shall discuss both perspectives, but shall first of all read closely the more or less explicit Shakespearian passages in Hegel's philosophy and, consequently, read all the more closely the Shakespearian texts, motifs and cruxes, identified and problematized by Hegel and dealt with in recent philosophical criticism, notably by Stanley Cavell, Jacques Derrida and Christoph Menke.

Required Course Materials:

Shakespeare: Hamlet, Macbeth, Lear, Julius Caesar, The Winter's Tale in Arden editions. Hamlet in Harold Jenkins' second Arden edition.

Aristotle, *On Poetics*, trans. Seth Benardete and Michael Davis, St. Augustine's Press (no other editions, please!)

Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. Miller, Oxford UP

Lectures on the Philosophy of World History, trans. Nisbet, Cambridge UP

combination Hegel and Shakespeare works well in both directions: it is profitable to know Shakespeare, if one wants to understand Hegel's *Phenomenology of the Mind* (or *Spirit*), as it is profitable to read Hegel in order to understand Shakespeare. Thus, the rediscovery of Shakespeare in the 18th century comes along with a philosophical interest in this author whose modern dimension has been most thoroughly investigated by Hegel and, in his wake, by an implicitly Hegelian New Historicism or Cultural Materialism.

The seminar shall discuss both perspectives, but shall first of all read closely the more or less explicit Shakespearian passages in Hegel's philosophy and, consequently, read all the more closely the Shakespearian texts, motifs and cruxes, identified and problematized by Hegel and dealt with in recent philosophical criticism, notably by Stanley Cavell, Jacques Derrida and Christoph Menke.

Spring 2015

CLS 412/FRENCH 421: Visual Culture and Media

Class Meetings: M 5:30-7:50

Instructor: Domietta Torlasco

Course Description: The aim of this course is to introduce new graduate students to twentieth-century theories of visual culture and media, with special emphasis on the French and German contexts. Rather than attempting to cover all the positions and directions that this field has produced, we will work around specific questions and trace the ways in which they have been pursued by theorists and practitioners alike. How can we conceptualize the relation between art and technology? Can we speak of perception and memory independently of specific technical apparatuses? What is at stake in the shift from analog to digital media at the level of both inscription and reception? We will also ask questions of media archeology, and consider a range of pre-twentieth century devices for hearing and seeing. As we focus on different kinds of audiovisual media, we will read texts by T.W. Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida, Friedrich Kittler, Bernard Stiegler, and Samuel Weber. We will also analyze films and art installations by Harun Farocki, Martin Arnold, and Pierre Huyghe.

Evaluation Method: Class attendance and participation, including an individual presentation

Two short response papers, Final paper (15-20 pages)

Reading List: All texts and audiovisual materials will be posted on Blackboard.

CLS 414/SLAV 437: Poetry & Cold War: Milosz and Brodsky

Class Meetings: T 3:00-5:00

Instructor: Clare Cavanagh

Expected Enrollment:

Course Description: Recent decades have seen the emergence of "Cold War Studies" as a field of literary and cultural criticism in Anglophone literature particularly. The Cold War likewise played a fundamental role in shaping the creation, translation, and reception of Eastern European writing in the West. But this phenomenon has yet to receive the same kind of scholarly attention--though the consequences for writers and writing on both sides of the Iron Curtain were incalculable. This seminar will address postwar literature East and West by way of the poetry and prose of friends and fellow Nobel Laureates Joseph Brodsky (1940-1996) and Czesław Miłosz (1911-2004). Other figures who may be discussed include: Boris Pasternak, Anna Akhmatova, Vladimir Nabokov, Zbigniew Herbert, and Wisława Szymborska.

CLS 488/GER 441: Affective Passages

Class Meetings: W 3:00-5:50

Instructor: Anna Parkinson

Course Description: What is “affect theory”? What is “the history of emotions”? This course charts seminal critical theoretical approaches to literary and cultural analysis through the lens of emotion and affect theory. Beginning with post-Freudian psychoanalysis, the class considers how subjectivity and attachment are constructed and disassembled in theory, literature, and film. Is affect merely an expression of contained, individual inner states? How do emotions form and mediate the subject’s relationship to the world? In response to questions such as these, the class will consider connections between emotion and politics and the ways in which this relationship is staged in different media from emotions-on-the-couch to post cinematic affect.

Evaluation Method: Attendance, class participation, final paper, writing assignments, readings, presentations

Reading List:

BOOKS MAY INCLUDE:

- Elisabeth R. Anker, *Orgies of Feeling: Melodrama and the Politics of Freedom*.
- Lauren Berlant, *The Female Complaint: The Unfinished Business of Sentimentality in American Culture*.
- Judith Butler, *Precarious Life: The Powers of Mourning and Violence*.
- Henry James, *The Turn of the Screw and The Aspern Papers*.
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Touching Feeling: Affect, Pedagogy, Performativity*.
- Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Basic Writings of Nietzsche*.
- Steven Shaviro, *Post Cinematic Affect*.
- Niza Yanay, *The Ideology of Hatred*.