

## **COURSE SYNOPSES– SPRING 2018**

- 195:101  
90 & 91      **Introduction to World Literature** – Study of outstanding works of fiction, plays, and poems from European, North and South American, African, Chinese, Japanese, Indian, and Middle-Eastern parts of the world through a different theme every semester. Focus on questions of culture, class, gender, colonialism, and on the role of translation.
- 195:135: 01      **Short Fiction: Human, Machine, and In-Between: The Robot in Literary Imagination** – This course will begin by asking us to consider what, exactly, a robot is—is it a slave? A household object? A pet? A lover? A redefinition of or replacement for the human?—and will use these questions to investigate how personhood as a category is applied, denied, and constructed.
- 195:135: 90      **Short Fiction** – This introductory comparative literature course looks at the form, function and history of short fiction in modern Western literature. We'll consider how the novella, the short story, and flash fiction work with an eye to identifying the literary devices and narrative structures that make for good storytelling in a short amount of space.
- 195:135:91  
Online      **Short Fiction** – Study of various genres of short fiction, in English translation, by some of the most important writers in world literature. Course themes focus on the city, the nation, migration and exile, colonialism, science fiction, the fantastic, magical realism, horror, mystery, among others.
- 195:150:01      **World Mythology** – This course, by critically exploring the mythic knowledges of Africa in the world (that is within and beyond the continental perspectives), seeks to ask these very fundamental questions: What does Africa mean to me/you? How do I/you understand Africa in the world? And what can the knowledge of myths in the African world tell me/you about my/your self and world? We will attempt to engage these fundamental questions within the frame of *mythmaking*, the lexicon that stands between *myth* and *Africa in the World* in the title of our course.
- 195:150:90      **World Mythology** – Story, structure, and meaning in myths of many cultures. Myth as a primary literary phenomenon, with some attention to anthropological and psychological perspectives.
- 195:201  
01, 02, 03      **Literature Across Borders: Music and Literature** – This course is an introduction to the field of Comparative Literature, and is required of all majors and minors. For the Spring 2018 semester we will engage with the topic of “Music and Literature” by looking at musical motifs in literary works, and literary motifs in musical works.
- 195:220  
01,02,H1      **The Global Ecological Imagination** –We will focus on feature films, documentaries, fictions, and testimonies produced by indigenous or aboriginal intellectuals, or by authors in close collaboration with such communities. Their stories take place in Bolivia, Brazil, Ecuador, Haiti, India, New Zealand, Nigeria, Peru, and South Africa. We will learn about the conflict but also the confluence between traditional aboriginal and indigenous beliefs of the human and the nonhuman, on the one hand, and modern economic development, scientific knowledge, and Western environmentalism, on the other.
- 195:243:01      **Introduction to the Literatures of South Asia** - This course introduces students to the literature of the Indian subcontinent, which is situated within the broader region of South Asia (Bangladesh, India, the Maldives, Nepal, Pakistan, and Sri Lanka). It surveys a selection of translated texts in various Indian languages from the classical to the postcolonial periods and explores a range of genres such as the epic, drama, poetry, essay writing, the short story, the novel, and film.

195:244:01

**Introduction to Mythology** –This course presents a Jungian approach to myth. Starting with Jung's definition of myth and a description of its powers, discussion will then turn to a series of myths as articulated in literary and filmic texts:

195:244:02

**Introduction to Mythology** – Myths are stories that, for millennia, human communities have used to explain central aspects of life in relation to broader ideas and questions—whether historical, political, or religious. This course draws together myth and literature, and focuses primarily on how texts relate to, help building, or question different mythologies. We will read and discuss several short stories and novels, so as to understand how myths have been used in the past, why they are still relevant today, and in what ways they affect everyday life, culture, and society.

195:244:90

**Introduction to Mythology** – Myths of various cultures; their structures and functions in social and especially literary contexts.

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195:246:01

**Fairy Tales Then and Now** – This course analyzes the structure, meaning, and function of fairy tales and their enduring influence on literature and popular culture. While we will concentrate on the German context, and in particular on the works of the Brothers Grimm, we also will consider fairy tales drawn from a number of different national traditions and historical periods, including the American present.

195:256:01

**Introducing Italy City by City:** –Taught in English, this course explores the culture of Venice, from its origins to modern days, starting with its geographical configuration, the demographic composition, the foreign communities, the government, the economy, the spice trade, diplomacy and more. We will use literary texts, images of art, and musical pieces

195:267:01

**Latino Literature: Puerto Rican Literature** – Study of the development of Puerto Rican literature from the Spanish colonial period to the present. Emphasis on major writers: Pales Matos, Corretjer, Marquez, Gonzalez, Soto, Diaz, Valcarcel, Sanchez, and Blanco.

195:260:01

**Introduction to Caribbean Literature** –A study of the Caribbean as a distinctive and complex world area, with a focus on major authors, themes, and literary movements that have emerged in the context of a region shaped by the experiences of colonialism, slavery, and indentured servitude.

195:270: 01,  
02,03,04,05,06

**Past Today** –The great American novelist William Faulkner famously said, "The past is not dead. It's not even past." Focusing on three current conflicts from disparate cultures, the course looks to literature, film, and other visual arts, as well as architecture and music to ask why some conflicts endure despite the enormous political, technological, cultural and economic changes of the past several decades.

195:276:01

**Realism and Revolution** – This course looks at the ways in which 19<sup>th</sup>-century German fiction reflects, wards off, and incorporates revolution, social upheaval, and historical trauma, responding to the German *Sonderweg* (special path) that eventually led an aggressively modernizing society to imperialism and totalitarianism.

195:295:01

**Latino and Caribbean Culture Studies-** A comparative study of Latino and Caribbean cultures by reviewing key definitions of culture, paying attention to the historical and disciplinary development of the term, as well as key debates on cultural studies in the Humanities.

195:307:01

**Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures and Theories** – In this course we will discuss, through the lens of theories of postcolonialism and decoloniality, major texts from four nations: Indonesia, India, Senegal, and Guatemala, paying particular attention to the role of nation and national culture, language, education, and law in constructing the identities of both colonized peoples and contemporary people in postcolonial nations struggling to decolonize their identities.

195:315:01

**Journey to Hell and Beyond: Dante and Medieval Culture** – A narration of an afterlife experience, Dante's *Divine Comedy* incorporates philosophy, theology, history, art, mythology, spirituality, mysticism, and theatrics to create a diverse, rich story whose moral issues students are required to "translate" into contemporary issues.

195:318:01

**Post Modern Approaches to Sacred Literature** – An examination of major postmodern literary and filmic texts from the western and non-western world that, through a reference to a canonical sacred text, create statements of religious orientation regarding such themes as the antinomy of Good and Evil, apocalypse as a myth of both world and individual transformation, and the feminine side of God.

195:363:01

**Women Writers of Africa** – This course is a survey of writings by women from a variety of cultural, linguistic, and regional areas of Africa and the Diaspora, focusing on the intersection of power, class and gender in texts that re-imagine/reshape the world we share.

195:374:01

**Marx, Nietzsche, Freud** – Exploration of key writings by Karl Marx, Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud --three German writers who revolutionized modern philosophy, theology, psychology, aesthetics, social and political science, gender studies, historiography, literature and the arts.

195:384:01

**Russian Poetry:** – This course will introduce students to Russian lyric poetry by showing its historical development from the late 18th to the 20th century, sampling works by Russia's leading poets. Readings will be in Russian; discussions are in English.

195:395:01

**Issues in Comparative Literature: Masculinities and Literature** - An analysis of literary, visual, and critical texts that reflect on the question of masculinity, and its representation, focusing on masculinity as spectacle, authorial voice, heteronormativity, race, male bodies, cyberidentity, and pleasure.

195:396:02

**Issues in Comparative Literature: – Modern Urdu Literature and Culture** – An introduction to modern Urdu literature and popular culture in various genres and cultural contexts. Conducted entirely in Urdu.

195:397:01

**Issues in Comparative Literature: – Films After Benjamin-** Taught in a seminar format and based on readings, discussion, and active participation, the course studies the most important essays on film, photography, and the philosophy of history of Walter Benjamin (1892-1940), as well as addresses the question of how Benjamin's theory, or reflections, can be identified in actual movies.

195:480:01

**Gender and Sexuality in Russian Literature:** - In this course we will study questions of gender and sexuality in modern Russian literature and culture through close readings of novellas, short stories, poems, films, essays, and memoirs from the 19<sup>th</sup> century through the turbulent decades of the Bolshevik Revolution and on to contemporary literature.