COURSE SYNOPSES – Fall 2018

195:101 01, 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.

195:110:01

**Heritage Speakers**: More than half of the world’s population speaks or understands a minority language in addition to the majority language. This course looks at the way they use and process each of those languages, the effects bilingualism has on their mind, their culture and their place in society. This is a hybrid course that requires completion of a substantial portion of the work online.

195:135: 01, 03, 90 & 91

**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.

195:135: 02

**Short Fiction**: This course examines a handful of beautiful short stories, in English translation, by some of the most important French writers of the 18th, 19th and 20th centuries. Its objective is to give students with no particular knowledge of French an overall view of an important French literary genre and to develop critical thinking.

195:150:01, 90 & 91

**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. Does not count towards major or minor.

195:170:01

**Introduction to Ladino Language and Culture**: Ladino is the language of the Sephardic Jews. Sepharad is the Hebrew name for the Iberian Peninsula, which is why Ladino is also known as JudeoSpanish, Spanyolit, Judezmo, and Haketia. Sephardic Jews who spoke this variation of Spanish were dispersed across the Mediterranean after their expulsion from Spain in 1492. They preserved their “Spanish” as part of their Iberian heritage. Ladino reflects their centuries long journey, from Spain to North Africa and the Ottoman Empire, the Balkans and the Levant. This course is an introduction to the language and the literary culture produced in Ladino.

195:395:01

**Italian Food Culture**: Lexicon, images and metaphors of food have an essential role in the Italian literary tradition, and gastronomy is interwoven into all aspects of Italian culture. Through the reading of short stories, poems, and texts of different genres, the course will highlight the diverse roles and functions of food: as nourishment of body and spirit, as social divider or unifier, as means of seduction or communication, as catalyst for an atmosphere or as a statement of power, as stimulus of memories or projection to the future.
Masterworks of Western Literature – Masterworks of Western Literature presents a chronological series of major works of European literature in a variety of genres. In following the historical evolution of the European tradition, we will pay particular attention to a linked series of fundamental questions: What sort of story does literature tell? What sort of character can be the hero of such a story? What sort of language is needed to tell that story properly?

Tales of Horror – Franklinstein and Dracula, vampires and zombies, Doppelgängers, ghosts, and artificial humans continue to haunt the cultural imagination throughout the centuries. This course explores tales of horror through some of their most spellbinding creatures and fantasies in a period ranging from the Brothers Grimm to surrealist cinema.

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

Introduction to Mythology – This course presents a psychological approach to the study of myth. Starting with C.G. Jung’s definition of myth and a description of its powers (and with further reference to my book *Jung and the Jungians on Myth), discussion will then turn to a series of myths as represented in literary and cinematic texts.

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Modern Literature of South Asia – Postcolonial Identity and Indian Literature: This class on South Asian literature seeks to explore texts that grapple with diverse forces of colonialism, tradition and modernity over the course of various historical and social movements of the last one hundred years in India. The readings are a combination of Anglophone texts and texts in English translation from regional languages and all the texts highlight different ways in which the society and literature of India has grappled with the question of national identity.

Topics in French Literature: Surrealism – Few aesthetic movements have had the far-reaching impact of surrealism, dating from the early 20’s in France, but exerting an international influence that continues even today in cyberculture and music videos, the visual arts, and literature. In this course, we shall study the origin and artistic/social preoccupations of the surrealist school, including surrealist experiments in film, poetry, theater, novel, and painting.

Major French Plagiarists- Literature, between Originality and Word Robbery: Can words be owned? Since the invention of copyright, modern written cultures have treated acts of plagiarism as distasteful, immoral, and illegal. Studying cases of word robbery in their historical contexts will help us make sense of our contemporary debates about originality, author’s rights and the public domain in all matters of artistic creation.

Russia Between Empire and Nation– The Russian tsars called Moscow the New Jerusalem. The Russian emperors preferred Third Rome or Great European Power. Soviet leaders called it the Friendship of the
Peoples. Reagan denounced it as the Evil Empire. Either way, over the course of several centuries some idea of imperial dominance has been used to define how Russia has related to its many borderlands and its external neighbors. Our course will examine how Russian and Russophone literature and art has engaged with Russia’s complicated territorial identity, focusing especially on the last two hundred years.

Latino and Caribbean Studies- 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 the key debates on cultural studies in the Humanities. Examination of key debates in the study of culture Latino and Caribbean studies, such as the links between historical experience, ethnicity, race and culture, the quest for and critique of national and ethnic identities, populism and studies on popular culture, the cultural contacts paradigm and hybridity, the multicultural debate, the Culture Wars of the 1980s, gender and queer studies, the study of cultures in displacement, the ethnic turn in cultural studies, the analysis of visual cultures, and the emergence of pop, media and electronic cultures.

Introduction to Literary Theory– Designed especially for students of Comparative Literature, the course has two related aims: 1) to examine critically seminal texts which have helped to shape contemporary views of literature, culture and art; 2) to engage in a sustained, interdisciplinary exploration of the question: what is theory? Topics include: formalism, poetics and narrative theory, psychoanalysis, structuralism, post-structuralism, speech act theory, Marxism, sexuality and gender, race, postcolonial studies.

Caribbean Pluralities and Indo-Caribbean Literature– This is an introduction to the Anglophone Caribbean (the national/international split in identities and its troubled histories of indenture and slavery that separate into ethnic and racial differences) primarily through the literature and partly, through the musical form of the calypso, which has had an integral influence on the literary form of the region.

Serial Storytelling: From Dostoevsky to the Wire– This course investigates serial narrative as a modern mode of storytelling, from the emergence of the serialized novel in 19th-century Europe and Russia up through contemporary American serial television and podcasts. Through discussions of serial narratives from multiple times and in multiple media, we will explore the enduring power of this versatile narrative form — in particular, its capacity to interweave fiction with the course of current events and the rhythms of everyday life.

Stories of Russian Life: Memory, Invention, Experience— In this course we read stories that reflect experiences of Russian life, ranging from a happy childhood on an aristocratic estate to the suffering of a Soviet labor camp. When writing about their lives in autobiographies, memoirs, essays, or diaries, how do writers construct a self in the process of producing a text? How do they fashion a text that reflects the self? How do they select which experiences to represent or to omit? Where are the boundaries between fact and fiction?

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. Using an intercultural approach, it focuses on the imaginative works of African women, exploring the socio-cultural and political landscapes that have shaped their works, and how their works, in turn, are a reflection of the (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial) conditions of their production. Special attention is given to the intersection of power, class and gender in the analysis of the texts covered in class, demonstrating how the writings of women often constitute a different voice about Africanity

Topics in World Cinema- Latin American Film: Emotion and Engagement: – Study of a particular region, time period, movement, or theme in world cinema. Specific topic announced at preregistration time

Issues in Comparative Literature: From Nietzsche to Superman: Literature & Popular Culture– What is popular culture? How do “high” and “low” cultures inform each other? In what way can contemporary popular culture alter and challenge the established canon and provide new means of reflections of established philosophical paradigms? This seminar explores canonical works of (mostly
German) literature and philosophy in regards to works from popular culture (mostly American film and pop music).

**Issues in Comparative Literature: Love & Sex Italian Style**—An investigation of love in Italian literary texts from the Middle Ages to the present, through a combination of novels, poems, short stories, treatises, essays, and films. Themes of the course will be: What is love in the Italian literary tradition? What constitutes Italian sexual conduct? What is the role of women in love relationships after Romanticism? How is gay and lesbian love perceived and represented in literature? What is the role of psychoanalysis in the development of the idea of love in the twentieth century? Does religion (and particularly the Catholic Church) still have an impact in amorous interactions and in the discourse on love?

**Issues in Comparative Literature: Modern Arabic Literature**—This course provides an introduction to modern Arabic literature of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will examine the interaction between social, political and cultural change in the Middle East and the development of a modern Arabic literary tradition. The texts that form the basis of the syllabus deal with major political, social, religious, cultural, and linguistic aspects of modern Arabic society. The course aims to reflect the different spaces of literary development in diverse parts of the Arab world, including North Africa.

**Twentieth-Century Arabic Literature**—Survey of representative works of Arabic literature in translation, including poetry, the novel, the short story, and plays. Emphasis on how new literary trends reflect sociocultural change in the Arab world, including debates over tradition, gender relations, and cultural pluralism.

**Capstone Workshop**—This course is a workshop required of all senior Comparative Literature majors, including those writing honors theses in the program. Its purpose is two-fold: 1) to help Comparative Literature majors reflect on and consolidate their knowledge of the field; and 2) to afford advanced students the opportunity to research, write, and present a 15-page paper that will be the culmination of the work they have completed in the major.