Self-writing involves the simultaneous creation of a self and a text. In this seminar, we trace this dual process of creation in a broad selection of self-writing, from diaries and essays to confessions, memoir, autobiographical fiction, documentary prose and film. We inquire about the relationship between certain notions of the self and particular narrative forms, while studying central questions of life writing: narrative techniques that bridge fiction and non-fiction, the rhetoric of person, the quest to capture time, problems of memory and trauma, the situation of the self in space, self-writing as self-training, questions of gender and sexuality. We consider examples of documentary prose in which the observing self is decentered. Authors of primary texts include Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Roland Barthes, Marcel Proust, Walter Benjamin, Lev Tolstoy, Vladimir Nabokov, Lydia Ginzburg, Varlam Shalamov, Primo Levi, Andrei Tarkovsky, Susan Sontag, and others.

This year, our seminar takes part in a new experiment designed to foster collaboration and intellectual exchange among students in world language departments. It will be coordinated with seminars on Italian and French autobiography, allowing its participants to gain a wider perspective on the pervasive practice of self-representation, and to get acquainted with major works of European literature. Students registered in any of the three graduate seminars (in Italian, French, Comparative Literature) will have an opportunity to meet at the beginning of the semester, and to share their final projects in a joint event in December. On three occasions during the semester, students will participate in a joint class taught by Prof. Alessandro Vettori (Italian, Comparative Literature), Carole Allamand, and myself, respectively. All other classes will be with individual instructors in separate meetings.
begins in the sixteenth century to the contemporary world. The course will start out by studying definitions of colonialism, coloniality, postcolonialism, and decoloniality by authors such as Césaire, Said, Spivak, Bhabha, Osterhammel, Young, Loomba, Quijano, Mignolo, Maldonado Torres, Ching, Yokota-Murakami, and Abbas, and then will go on to explore how the debates raised by these definitions in regard to linguistic, gender, and national identity have been articulated in the literatures of six different geographical areas of the postcolonial world: Guatemala, Indonesia, India, Taiwan, Korea, and Hong Kong. The goal of the course is to examine the different conceptions and experiences of colonialism and postcolonialism as well as of decoloniality through the reading of postcolonial narratives in a comparative historical and theoretical framework that includes Central America, Southeast Asia, South Asia, and East Asia.

16:195:516:02 - Introduction to Literary Theory: The Romantic Period
Prof. Martha Helfer
Mondays 3:30-6:50 pm, AB-4050 (CAC)
Cross-listing 16:470:670:01
In light of the 2008 economic crisis, the refugee and humanitarian crisis as well as the Corona pandemic, the EU has seen a troubling resurgence of inequality, racism, and political. This course will trace the genealogy of contemporary literary criticism from Kant through the German romantics to early twentieth-century critical theory and deconstruction. In particular, we will explore the role of aesthetics and art in major philosophical theories of subjectivity, and the structure of critical discourse in these theories. Emphasis will be placed on developing critical reading and writing skills. The language of instruction is English. All readings are available in English, and where applicable, in German. No knowledge of German is required for the course!

16:195:517:01 – Individual Studies in Comparative Literature
Hours by arrangement

16:195:517:02 – Individual Studies in Comparative Literature
Hours by arrangement

16:195:617:01 – The Frankfurt School & It’s Writers
Prof. Nicholas Rennie
Tuesdays 3:50-6:50 pm, AB-4050 (CAC)
Cross-listing 16:470:643:01
Work of the Frankfurt School is among the most important 20th-century German-language contributions to such fields as sociology, political science, gender studies, film, cultural studies and comparative literature. We will read texts by such key figures of the Frankfurt School as Walter Benjamin, Theodor W. Adorno, Max Horkheimer, Herbert Marcuse and Jürgen Habermas for their relevance to a number of disciplines, but give particular consideration to literary and aesthetic questions. To this end, we will also read texts by select authors to whom these figures responded (e.g. Baudelaire, Proust, Kafka, Beckett). Throughout the course, moreover, we will be examining responses to and development of the thought of the first and
second generation of the Frankfurt School in more recent strands of Marxism, deconstruction, feminism, aesthetics and cultural studies. Taught in English.