

**COMPARATIVE LITERATURE**  
**Courses for Fall 2008**

**Undergraduate Courses**

**121 -- International Short Story**

(AL) Staff

Lec. 1 – MWF 9:05-9:55

Lec. 2 – MWF 11:15-12:05

Lec. 3 – MWF 12:20-1:10

Lecture, discussion. Reading and analysis of a variety of short stories from the Russian, Czech, German, French, Italian, Spanish, English, American, and Latin American traditions from the early 19th century to the present. We will analyze fantastic tales, character sketches, surprise endings; main types of the short story as a special genre marked by compassion and intensity of effect. All works read in translation. Course requirements to be announced.

**121H -- International Short Story: Fiction & Film**

(AL) Staff

TuTh 1:00-2:15

Commonwealth college students only

A course for students who really love to read, discuss and write about fiction. An interest in film and in writing stories is also a plus! We'll think about, talk about, and write about how stories are told. We'll look at the language, the voice, the "texture" of a story, the choices the writer has made, the way the writer draws the reader in, subverts our expectations. We'll look at the particular way this happens in short fiction where economy and brevity are essential. We'll look at the particular way(s) this happens in cinematic stories. Stories by a wide variety of writers from around the world: Oates, Chekhov, Carver, Yamamoto, Butler, Silko, Conrad, Cisneros, O'Brien, Achebe, Kafka, and Kundera. Films by: Coppola, Stone, Kaufman and others. As we read stories and screen films, we will be partners in exploring what these many texts have to say and the ways they go about doing it. I will give presentations and background. However, the substance of the course is what you, the students, make of class discussion. We offer a variety of approaches so that you are all active, involved participants in the course, for example: get together to discuss outside class in pairs or in groups of 3 or 4; be responsible, in pairs, for prompting class discussion; prepare short creative exercises relative to the day's readings. Assignments and grading: 5 very short summaries of readings, two 3-4 page papers, 1 creative writing assignment; occasional in-class writing and written preparation for class, essay exam on the last segment of the course; substantive, daily participation in class discussion. Weighing of grades: 50% for class participation and preparation, short summaries, in-class writing; 50% for papers, final essay exam.

**122 -- Spiritual Autobiography**

(ALG) Elizabeth Petroff, 413 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – MW 2:30-3:20

Dis. 1 – F 11:15-12:05 – Elizabeth Petroff

Dis. 2 – F 9:05-9:55

Dis. 3 – F 10:10-11:00

Dis. 4 – F 11:15-12:05

Dis. 5 – F 12:20-1:10

Lecture, discussion. Spiritual Autobiography is writing about the self or selves in confrontation with the unknown, during times of personal or social crisis, loss, and rebirth. (Spiritual in this sense does not necessarily refer to institutionalized religion - in fact, a spiritual crisis may happen through the failure of religion). We will read autobiographies from several traditions and many time periods – medieval Christianity, 11th century Japan, 20th century Black America, the slums of Modern Brazil, China just before WW II, etc. Some possible readings: The Letters of Abelard and Heloise, The Book of Margery Kempe, The Education of Henry Adams, Black Elk Speaks, Carlo Levi's Christ Stopped at Eboli, Maya Angelou's I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Daughter of Han, Chogyon Trungpa's Born in Tibet, Sei Shonagon's Pillow Book, and others. Requirements: 4 short autobiographical papers, 2 pages each. Midterm in class, take-home final. No prerequisites. Heavy Readings.

### **131 -- Brave New World**

(ALG) Lenson, 427 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – TuTh 1:00-1:50 – David Lenson

Dis. 1 – F 11:15-12:05

Dis. 2 – F 10:10-11:00

Dis. 3 – F 11:15-12:05

Dis. 4 – F 10:10-11:00

Dis. 5 – F 11:15-12:05

Lecture, Discussion. Aim: This course studies texts in the Utopian and Dystopian traditions, prophetic projections of Modernist totalitarian worlds, and postmodern worlds of fragmentation, diversity and abandonment. It will address issues of interest in the current cultural crisis, for example: What is the role of war in maintaining social cohesion? Is individualism still tenable in a world of seven billion people? Is freedom an absolute condition? And what role do art and culture play in the era of global Consumerism? Tentative Readings: Huxley, Brave New World and Island; Dick, Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep; Atwood, The Handmaid's Tale; Butler, Parable of the Sower; Requirements: Attendance in lecture and section; a weekly quiz; two seven-page papers. Prerequisites: None.

### **133 -- Introduction to Science Fiction**

(AL) Couch, 325 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – MW 2:30-3:20

Dis. 1 – F 9:05-9:55

Dis. 2 – F 10:10-11:00

Dis. 3 – F 11:15-12:05

Dis. 4 – F 12:20-1:10

This course provides an introduction to science fiction in the twentieth century. Through reading novels and short stories from the 1920s to the present, the course will examine science fiction in social, critical and literary contexts in the United States, Europe and Japan. We will also consider SF in terms of its sites of production and consumption, the affinity and interest groups that have helped to shape it, and international influences and interconnections. The course will also include discussion of editing, writing, and publishing science fiction, and science fiction in other media.

### **141 -- Good & Evil: East-West**

(ALG) Staff

Lec. 1 – MWF 10:10-11:00

Lec. 2 – MWF 9:05-9:55

Lec. 3 – MWF 12:20-1:10

Lec. 4 – MWF 11:15-12:05

Lec. 5 – TuTh 1:00-2:15

An introduction to the imaginative presentation of good and evil in Western and Eastern classics, folktales, children's stories, and 20th century literature. Cross-cultural comparison of ethical approaches to moral problems such as the suffering of the innocent, the existence of evil, the development of a moral consciousness and social responsibility, and the role of faith in a broken world.

### **256H -- Poets & Poetry of New England**

(AL) Moebius, 428 Herter Hall

Commonwealth College students only

Lec. 1 – Th 1:00-4:00

A study of poets and poetry of New England, with attention to the role and function of the natural, social and cultural landscape in nurturing, attracting or sustaining poets, immigrant or native. While poets writing in English, from Ann Bradstreet to Elizabeth Bishop and Sylvia Plath, will figure prominently, immigrant poets writing in languages other than English will also be introduced, recognized and discussed. Resources for this course will include specially produced videotapes, a website and the opportunity for dialogue with teachers and researchers from the state higher education system via a teleconferencing system.

### **291F -- Introduction to Folklore**

Rothstein, Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – MWF 1:25-2:15

Lecture, discussion. An introduction to the study of the folklore of various cultures and peoples--from the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe--in English. Examination of a variety of genres including proverbs, riddles, jokes, folk songs, and folk tales, and of different theories and approaches to folklore. No prerequisites, but students with proficiency in languages other than English will be offered the opportunity to work with material from those languages.

### **381 -- Self-reflexive Avant-Garde Film**

(AT) Levine, 328 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – M 3:35-7:00 – Levine

Dis. 1 – Tu 2:30-3:45

Dis. 2 – Tu 2:30-3:45

Dis. 3 – Tu 4:00-5:15

Dis. 4 – Tu 7:00-8:15

Lecture, discussion. Explores modern origin of film experimentation in avant-garde modes such as Expressionism, Surrealism and contemporary results of this heritage. Trying to determine if film is the most resolutely modern of the media, we'll look at cinema as the result of two obsessive concerns: 1) the poetic, dreamlike and fantastic, 2) the factual, realistic and socially critical or anarchistic. Thus, we'll attempt to discover how modern culture deals with avant-garde imperatives to always "make it new." Films and filmmakers such as *Breathless* (Godard), *My Own Private Idaho* (Lang), *The American Soldier* (Fassbinder), others. Requirements: one 5-page paper for midterm, ten-page final paper or project; attendance.

### **381H -- Self-reflexive Avant-Garde Film**

(AT) Levine, 328 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – M 3:35-7:00

Dis. 1 – tu 2:30-5:30

Levine Commonwealth College Honors section

We will apply ourselves to the problem of vision itself as an acquired skill, learning to distinguish the various ways in which Hollywood normative cinema has constructed a code both visual and narrative which we accept, uncritically, as the standard by which reality gets transposed to the screen. This code is examined – how it differs from what we actually see with the “naked” eye and how it, in turn, influences what we see (what we can see, what we look for) in the world. Various forms of avant-garde film are examined so that we come to imagine how it might be otherwise (films by directors such as Dreyer, Lang, Man Ray, Bunuel, Vertov, Godard, Fassbinder, Egoyan, and Van Sent). Students will attend a large lecture and film screening: (once a week) and the next day, an intensive seminar-style section of 2-3 hours. Here we present and discuss new material, some from readings, and, occasionally, screenings of additional films and film clips. The course is incremental and there is thus, an absolute attendance requirement. There will be a take-home mid-term essay (5 pages) and final essay (10 pages), two 2-page analyses of specific shots or scenes. This course differs from ComLit 381 in the length of the section (2-3 hours per week instead of 75 minutes), extra work-load and additional readings. Recommended only for students (at all levels) who have a keen interest in film.

### **385 -- Russian Themes In World Cinema**

Dienes, 405 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – M 7:00-10:00

Dis. 1 Tu 2:30-3:45

Lecture/screening/discussion. A general introduction to the art of cinema through Russian themes in Western films (mostly American, French, and Italian) inspired by Russian culture, particularly by Russian literary works from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Some emphasis also on selected contemporary themes (violence, youth culture, race and gender issues), and on comparisons of Russian and Western approaches

to film art. Requirements include electronic quizzes, short papers, and presentations. Prerequisites: none other than an OIT computer account; no prior knowledge of things Russian (language, history, literature) is expected. A significant portion of the course will use resources on the Web; students will be expected to do some of the coursework electronically.

### **387H -- Myths of the Feminine**

Petroff, 413 Herter

MW 10:10-11:25

A survey of the ancient and medieval stories of women and men and their goddesses. We'll begin in the ancient Near East, with the stories of Inanna and Ishtar and their devotees, and then turn to the classical world of Greece and Rome, with the Homeric Hymns and the tale of Cupid and Psyche. We'll then survey the images of women in the three 'religions of the book'--Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, as well as Taoism and Buddhism. The medieval world inherited all these traditions, and we'll read stories from *The Arabian Nights*, *The Canterbury Tales*, and *The Decameron* that illustrate these themes. We'll learn about the complexity of images of the feminine, including women as goddesses and priestesses, as leaders of their people, as the embodiment of sexuality and fertility, as pious housewives and cunning deceivers. This is a 4 credit Honors course. Readings: Baring and Cashford, *The Myth of the Goddess*; Young, *An Anthology of Sacred Texts by and about Women*; Kinsley, *The Goddesses Mirror*; Wolkstein and Kramer, *Inanna*; Rayor, *Sappho's Lyre*; selections from *The Arabian Nights*, *Canterbury Tales*, and *Decameron*. Requirements: Journal every two weeks, three five-page papers, class participation.

### **393 -- Comic Art in North America**

Couch, 325 Herter Hall

Lec. 1 – MW 10:10-11:00

Dis. 1 – W 3:35-4:25 - Couch

Dis. 2 – F 12:20-1:10

Dis. 3 – F 1:25-2:15

An introduction to comic art, from the beginnings of the newspaper comic strip through the development of comic books, the growth of graphic novels, and current developments in electronic media. We focus on the history and aesthetics of the medium, comparison between developments in the United States, Mexico, and French Canada, and the social and cultural contexts in which comic art is created and consumed.

The first half of the semester concentrates on early comic strips and the development of the comic book form through the 1940s; the second on the social changes affecting comic art in the 1950s and 1960s, and the development of a comic book subculture in the 1970s and 1980s, and contemporary electronic media developments. Requirements: Midterm for first half of the course, final on the second half. and one ten-page paper. Reading knowledge of at least one language other than English, preferably Spanish or French.

### **397B -- Junior Year Writing**

Staff

TuTh 1:00-2:15

Junior Year Writing is an advanced composition class, designed specifically to improve the research and writing skills of students majoring in Comparative Literature. Through library sessions and hands-on experience, students will learn how to do library research for an academic paper. In addition, they will learn how to do close readings of texts spanning over a variety of literary genres and media (e.g. poems, short stories, novels, films, comic books, etc.). Finally, the class will provide a brief overview of the most significant literary theories and their application in text analysis. In order to complete this class successfully, students are expected to choose a topic, research it carefully, and organize their findings into a conference-length paper. The finished papers are to be presented in a formal setting at the end of the semester. Although not specifically intended to teach other types of writing, the class will include sessions that will help the students develop certain skills necessary for job and graduate school applications (e.g. how to write a resume, a statement of purpose, etc.). The structure of the class is flexible, and it will change every year in order to accommodate best the interests of the students currently enrolled in it. Please note, however, that this is a class in advanced, not basic composition, and as such it will not teach skills covered in English 111 or 112. Students are expected to have developed basic writing skills, including paragraph and essay structure, as well as correct grammar and mechanics, before enrolling in Junior Year Writing.

#### **499D -- Capstone Course**

Levine, 428 Herter Hall

Eligibility; Junior And Senior Honors Students Only

Lec. 1 – M 3:35-7:00

Dis. 1 Tu 2:30-5:30

This 6-credit Capstone Course fulfills the Commonwealth college culminating-experience requirement. We apply ourselves to the problem of cinematic vision as both process and acquired skill. We learn to distinguish the ways in which Hollywood normative cinema has constructed a visual language which we accept, uncritically, as the look reality has when screened. In turn, this "look" is examined to see how it differs from what we may see with the "naked" eye, and how it informs what we, see (what we can see, what we look for) in the world. Recommended for students who have a keen interest in film. Students attend a large lecture and film screening (once a week), an intensive seminar-style section of 2-3 hours the next day, on Thursday a film-making component for 3 hours. There will be a take-home mid-term essay (six pages) and final essay (ten pages), a two page scene analysis, and an intensive final film project (20 minutes). Students investigate aspects of film-making (such as shot formation, camera movement, editing approaches) by collaboratively exploring a range of expressive -possibilities on video. Working in groups of three or four, students start off the semester alternating roles of writer/director, camera -person, editor, etc., in constructing brief scenes. No prior film experience necessary. This 6 credit course may qualify students for high Latin Honors, if they have fulfilled other specific requirements. See a Commonwealth College advisor for more information. Preference in registration given to seniors using this course toward their culminating experience requirement, others as space permits. Contact Commonwealth College 504 Goodell to register.

## Graduate courses

### **691 -- Literature and Music**

Moebius, 428 Herter Hall

M 4:00-6:30

Lecture. Examination of three major aspects of the relation of literature to music: Music as a phenomenon (social, political, psychological) to be made comprehensible through literary or cinematic discourse; music as a pattern of feeling or of understanding to be imitated in literary or cinematic discourse; music as a mode of interpretation of translation of poetry or drama. Our inquiry will take into account questions of complementary patterns in music, drama and poetry, and of the political and social effects of music portrayed in the novel or in film. Readings: selected writings of Plato, Aristotle, Schopenhauer, Wagner, Diderot, Mann, Mallarmé, and Valéry. Various essays on prosody, expression and imitation, compositions of Josquin des Pres, Purcell, Wagner, Schubert, and Sting, among others. Prerequisites: some knowledge of one or more European romance languages will be extremely helpful. Persons without any of the above should consult instructor before enrolling.

### **695A -- International Film Noir**

Levine, 328 Herter Hall

W 3:35-7:35

Lecture. Often referred to as the only indigenous American film style, "film noir" in its very appellation reveals that its major effects (for certain modern conceptions of cinema) lay elsewhere. We will examine film noir in its American heyday (1945-1957) and how it came to be a major propelling force in the new European cinema of the 1960's (Godard, and the Cahiers du cinema). How film noir displaces American social mores and their constitution of "reality" within the imaginary and symbolic fields, and within the symptomatic concretization of those fields that is normative (dominant) cinema. How film noir both makes film different and allows already latent difference to be manifested. How film noir takes shape in the U.S. as expression of the inexpressible (and the 'unheimlich') or, at least, of the allusion to it; which in the lens and on the screen of directors such as Godard and Fassbinder becomes pseudomorphic, presenting a critique of American imperialism both public (political) and private (psychic) – the American way of death and love (or, as the title of one work would have it, Love & Napalm: Export USA). Films by: American directors such as Aldritch, Ray, Fuller, Kubrick, Welles; Foreign agents such as Lang, Ophuls, Siodmak, Sirk, Von Sternberg; European directors such as Godard, Fassbinder, Wenders. Prerequisite: 2 prior film courses or permission of Instructor.

### **703 -- Contemporary Literary Theory**

Hicks, 303 Herter Hall

Th 4:00-6:30

The purpose of this seminar is two-fold: to provide something of a broad-based foundation for reading literary theory and to sample and engage recent work in the field. More precisely, the course will give participants a chance to (re)read and discuss texts which have been fundamental in the development of four basic approaches: (psychoanalytic, formalist/structuralist, Marxist/historicist and poststructuralist/deconstructive) to the study of literary and other cultural texts; it will also ask them to survey ways in which a variety of more recent theorists have both taken up and challenged assumptions inherent in one or more of these four analytical fields. (In the latter section, particular emphasis will be given to feminist and postcolonial studies.) Throughout the semester, we will focus on the move from theory to method: participants will be urged, in a variety of ways, to contribute examples for discussion as well as to examine, and defend, their own methods and conclusions. There will be two 10-12 page essays and a final exam.

### **751 -- Theory and Practice of Translation**

Tymoczko, 411 Herter Hall

Th 1:00-3:30

A many-sided consideration of the practical problems and theoretical issues raised by translation. Consideration will be given to recent research on the role of translation and translated literature in the history of literary development; special attention will be paid to the politics of translation also. Practical aspects to be discussed include translation of genre and form (including poetry, dramatic literature), language register and tone, metaphor and imagery, word play. Lecture/discussion with workshop elements. Readings: translation theorists; philosophers, linguists. Requirements: one historical analysis, one translation project, class participation. Prerequisites: proficiency in a language other than one's native tongue.

### **753 -- Advanced Translation and Technology**

Gentzler, 19 Herter Hall

Tu 4:00-6:30

Once considered primarily a linguistic activity, translation has evolved into a complex language engineering practice involving information technology, computer memory tools, and sophisticated graphics editing and desktop publishing skills. This course covers a range of advanced translation techniques and technologies, including project management, html, Internet authoring and file-sharing, software localization, and computer memory tools. The class will follow a workshop format, with students presenting work in progress and sharing their knowledge of the computer tools used. Knowledge of one language other than English required. Successful completion of Translation and Technologies highly recommended. Grades based on discussion, workshop presentations, learning new technologies, and a final project.

### **895A -- Dissertation Research Seminar**

Portugues, 320 Herter Hall

W 4:00-6:30

Seminar format. Designed primarily as a writing seminar/workshop for advanced graduate students in the humanities and arts as a forum for individual and collaborative

writing and research, including drafting of the dissertation prospectus and chapters; preparation of abstracts and proposals for publication of journal articles; academic conference presentations; job letters and resumes; and submission of proposals for fellowships, grants, and doctoral research funding. Students are encouraged to share information on funding sources and professional academic opportunities, present their own work, and critique others' presentations.