COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COML)

COML 003 Introduction to Sexuality Studies and Queer Theory
This course will introduce students to the historical and intellectual forces that led to the emergence of queer theory as a distinct field, as well as to recent and ongoing debates about gender, sexuality, embodiment, race, privacy, global power, and social norms. We will begin by tracing queer theory's conceptual heritage and prehistory in psychoanalysis, deconstruction and poststructuralism, the history of sexuality, gay and lesbian studies, woman-of-color feminism, the feminist sex wars, and the AIDS crisis. We will then study the key terms and concepts of the foundational queer work of the 1990s and early 2000s. Finally, we will turn to the new questions and issues that queer theory has addressed in roughly the past decade. Students will write several short papers.
Taught by: Sanchez
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: ENGL 003, GSWS 003
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 006 Hindu Mythology
Premodern India produced some of the world’s greatest myths and stories: tales of gods, goddesses, heroes, princesses, kings and lovers that continue to capture the imaginations of millions of readers and hearers. In this course, we will look closely at some of these stories especially as found in Purana-s, great compendia composed in Sanskrit, including the chief stories of the central gods of Hinduism: Visnu, Siva, and the Goddess. We will also consider the relationship between these texts and the earlier myths of the Vedas and the Indian Epics, the diversity of the narrative and mythic materials within and across different texts, and the re-imagining of these stories in the modern world.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Patel
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: RELS 066, SAST 006
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 009 Introduction to Digital Humanities
This course provides an introduction to foundational skills common in digital humanities (DH). It covers a range of new technologies and methods and will empower scholars in literary studies and across humanities disciplines to take advantage of established and emerging digital research tools. Students will learn basic coding techniques that will enable them to work with a range data including literary texts and utilize techniques such as text mining, network analysis, and other computational approaches.
Taught by: Trettien
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 009, ENGL 009, HIST 009
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 010 Central and Eastern Europe: Cultures, Histories, Societies
The reappearance of the concept of Central and Eastern Europe is one of the most fascinating results of the collapse of the Soviet empire. The course will provide an introduction into the study of this region - its cultures, histories, and societies from the foundation of the Holy Roman Empire to the enlargement of the European Union. Students are encouraged to delve deeper into particular countries, disciplines, and sub-regions, such as Central Europe, Eastern Europe, and the Balkans, through an individual research paper and class presentations. Prerequisite: This course is one of two required core courses for the Russian and East European Studies (REES) major.
Taught by: Ghodse
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: REES 010
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 012 India's Literature: Love, War, Wisdom and Humor
This course introduces students to the extraordinary quality of literary production during the past four millennia of South Asian civilization. We will read texts in translation from all parts of South Asia up to the sixteenth century. We will read selections from hymns, lyric poems, epics, wisdom literature, plays, political works, and religious texts.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Patel
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 004
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 013 Introduction to Modern South Asian Literatures
This course will provide a wide-ranging introduction to the literatures of South Asia from roughly 1500 to the present, as well as an exploration of their histories and impact on South Asian society today. How are literary movements and individual works - along with the attitudes towards religion, society, and culture associated with them - still influential in literature, film, and popular culture? How have writers across time and language engaged with questions of caste, gender, and identity? We will read from the rich archive of South Asian writing in translation - from languages that include Braj, Urdu, Bangla, and Tamil - to consider how these literatures depict their own society while continuing to resonate across time and space. Topics of discussion will include the Bhakti poetries of personal devotion, the literature of Dalits - formerly referred to as the Untouchables - and the ways in which literature addresses contemporary political and social problems. Students will leave this course with a sense of the contours of the literatures of South Asia as well as ways of exploring the role of these literatures in the larger world. No prior knowledge of South Asia is required; this course fulfills the cross-cultural analysis requirement.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Goulding
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: SAST 007
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 014 Critical Speaking Seminar
American political discourse, especially since September 11th, has often depicted Islam as an oppressive force from which both Muslims and non-Muslims, particularly women and gender/sexual minorities, must be saved. In this CWIC critical speaking seminar, we will investigate how oral and written narratives—such as political rhetoric, apologetics and historical sources—claim to establish unassailable "facts" about Islam, Muslims and the Middle East. We will also investigate how the notion of empire—both in its traditionally understood form in Islamic and European history, as well as in its iterations as US Military and soft power privileges—certain voices over others, and how we can reclaim the voices of the marginalized in both contemporary discourse as well as historical oral traditions.
Taught by: Raffi
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: GSWS 008, NELC 008
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 015 Writing the Self: Life-Writing, Fiction, Representation
This course investigates how people try to understand who they are by writing about their lives. It will cover a broad range of forms, including memoirs, novels, essay films, and even celebrity autobiographies. The course will be international and in focus and will ask how the notion of self may shift, not only according to the demands of different genres, but in different literary, linguistic, and social contexts. Questions probed will include the following:
What does a writer's language—or languages—shape how they think of themselves? To what extent is a sense of self and identity shaped by exclusion and othering? Is self-writing a form of translation and performance, especially in multilingual contexts? What can memoir teach us about the ways writers navigate global literary institutions that shape our knowledge of World Literature? How do various forms of life-writing enable people on the margins, whether sexual, gendered, or racial, to craft narratives that encapsulate their experience? Can telling one’s own story bring joy, affirmation, and greater transcultural or even global understanding? In sum, this course proposes to illuminate the many ways in which writing becomes meaningful for those who take it up. The format of the seminar will require students to offer oral presentations on the readings and invite them to craft their own experiences and memories in inventive narrative forms.
Taught by: Barnard
Course offered spring; odd-numbered years
Also Offered As: ENGL 011, GSWS 005
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 016 Topics in Literature
This course will explore various topics within the diverse landscape of literature with an emphasis on a particular theme or genre.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 017, ENGL 016
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Freshman seminar.

COML 017 In Praise of the Small
We can memorize aphorisms and jokes, carry miniature portraits with us, and feel the power of playing small objects. This seminar will ask us to pay attention to smaller texts, art works, and objects that may easily be overlooked. In addition to reading brief texts and looking at images and objects, we will also read texts on the history and theory of short genres and the small.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 023
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Freshman seminar. All readings and lectures in English. No knowledge of German is required.

COML 025 Chaucer: Poetry, Voice, and Interpretation
Watching Chaucer at work, modern poet Lavinia Greenlaw says, is like meeting English "before the paint has dried." Before rules (even of spelling) have hardened. Before live oral performance is subordinated to written record. Chaucer was fluent in French, the most prestigious lingua franca of Europe. His wife Philippa was French, so his pillow talk was French. He learned Latin, the language of law and the Church, as a boy. He first learned Italian from merchants working along the Thames, where he grew up; he later travelled to Italy (and Spain) on royal missions. Out of all his he fashioned his mash up Middle English. This wonderfully flexible language captures the nuances of medieval London life while projecting itself imaginatively into ancient Athens, Tartary, and realms of romance. Chaucer's poetry comes fully alive when read aloud. Each of you will gradually come to read and perform Middle English fluently and well. And this will give you a good idea of where modern English comes from: Middle English is the floor upon which, word by word, modern English walks; a frequent challenge is "etymologize that!" Our flower the daisy, for example, comes from the Old English dayes eye, "the eye of day"; the dandelion is from the French dent de lion ("the lion's tooth": such is the shape of its petals). Why do so many poets, especially women poets, and minority women poets, find Chaucer so imaginatively liberating? What is so special about Alisoun, the Wife of Bath? How does a return to English origins open the way to new English expressive futures? Sylvia Plath, Lavinia Greenlaw, Marilyn Nelson, Patience Agbabi, Jean Binta Breeze, Pattie McCarthy, Zadie Smith all have things to say here. Caroline Bergvall, author of wonderful Chaucerian poems in her Meddele English, has recently published a chapbook called "Alisoun Sings"; we'll invite her to (virtual) class. You might be similarly inspired into creative response; your final assignment can take the form of a poem, video, screenplay, or you can write a traditional critical essay. Our course will concentrate upon The Canterbury Tales, an amazingly varied framed collection of stories, juxtaposing knightly deeds of chivalry with low deeds of sexual opportunism; philosophical musing and tales of talking chickens; tales of liberty and tyranny; oriental exoticism and gritty, close-to-home realism; enlightened views of Islam and tales of wicked mothers-in-law; alchemy and magic; ecology and astronomy; saint's life and undergraduate escapade; freelance exoticism and married love. "Genre" never stabilizes in Chaucer, and there is no stable Chaucerian template: every new tale is a fresh adventure. We will develop a "slow cooking" habit of reading the text: better to go slowly and appreciate what is going on.
Taught by: Wallace
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 025
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 031 Introduction to Renaissance Literature and Culture
This course will survey the cultural history of sixteenth and seventeenth century England. Interdisciplinary in nature and drawing on the latest methodologies and insights of English studies, we will explore how aesthetics, politics, social traditions, impacted literature at this vital and turbulent time of English history. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Taught by: Loomba
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 031
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 053 Music of Africa
African Contemporary Music: North, South, East, and West. Come to know contemporary Africa through the sounds of its music: from South African kwela, jazz, marabi, and kwaito to Zimbabwean chimurenga; Central African soukous and pygmy pop; West African juj, and North African rai and hop-hop. Through reading and listening to live performance, audio and video recordings, we will examine the music of Africa and its intersections with politics, history, gender, and religion in the colonial and post-colonial era.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Muller
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 053, MUSC 051
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 054 Sounding Poetry: Music and Literature
Never before has poetry been so inescapable. Hip hop, the soundtrack of our times, has made rhyme, meter, and word-play part of our daily lives. How did this happen? This course begins not on the page, but in the bardic traditions of Homer’s Iliad, which encoded many of the values of its time in oral formulas. Poetry was, however, no mere encyclopedia, but also a source of risk, as we will read in Plato’s warning against its hypnotic powers, and in the excesses of the Bacchae. We continue through 19th and 20th century attempts to recover these classic traditions (Wordsworth, Longfellow, Pound). Yet Europe was not the only center of poetic production. How does the Homeric tradition relate to living traditions of West African singing poets (griots) and Southern African praise songs? And what traces of these traditions can we hear in the blues? We will listen to early blues recordings and discuss the politics of collecting folklore, and the genius of African American modernists (Langston Hughes, Claude McKay, Georgia Douglas Johnson) who bought vernacular speech onto the page. We will read and listen to a number of 20th century poets inspired when page meets stage in jazz poetry, dub poetry, spoken word, and hip hop. Assignments will include 2 papers, 2 small-group performances, memorization exercises, and a creative adaptation of one poem. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of current offerings.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: TBD
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: AFRC 054, ENGL 054
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 056 Seeing/Hearing Globally: Knowing People, Culture, and Places through Travel
Students are provided a general introduction to a country’s history, politics, environment, and performance through a range of resources: scholarly literature, film, music, and online resources; with particular focus on sites, communities, and events included in the 12 day intensive travel to that country (either Fall semester Intro with winter break travel; or spring semester Intro with late spring intensive travel). Students are given guidelines for writing about and representing live performances and experiences of exhibits and heritage sites for journaling and are expected to produce a written/creative project at the end of the travel. The itinerary and specific course content will vary according to the travel site and focus of each class.
Taught by: Muller
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 056, ANTH 056, MUSC 056
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Application required through Penn Global: <a href="https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs">https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs</a>

COML 059 Modernisms and Modernities
This class explores the international emergence of modernism, typically from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. We will examine the links between modernity, the avant-garde, and various national modernisms that emerged alongside them. Resolutely transatlantic and open to French, Spanish, Italian, German, or Russian influences, this course assumes the very concept of Modernism to necessitate an international perspective focusing on the new in literature and the arts -- including film, the theatre, music, and the visual arts. The philosophies of modernism will also be surveyed and concise introductions provided to important thinkers like Marx, Nietzsche, Sorel, Bergson, Freud, and Benjamin.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 059, FREN 258
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 061 20th-Century British Literature
This course introduces major works in twentieth-century British literature. We will read across a range of fiction, poetry, plays, and essays, and will consider aesthetic movements such as modernism as well as historical contexts including the two World Wars, the decline of empire, and racial and sexual conflict. Authors treated might include: Conrad, Yeats, Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Forster, Shaw, Woolf, Auden, Orwell, Beckett, Achebe, Rhys, Syng, Naipaul, Rushdie, Heaney, and Walcott.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 061
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 062 20th-Century Poetry
From abstraction to beat, from socialism to negritude, from expressionism to ecopoetry, from surrealism to visual poetry, from collage to digital poetry, the poetry of the twentieth century has been characterized by both the varieties of its forms and the range of its practitioners. This course will offer a broad overview of many of the major trends and a few minor eddies in the immensely rich, wonderfully varied, ideologically and aesthetically charged field. The course will cover many of the radical poetry movements and individual innovations, along with the more conventional and idiosyncratic work, and will provide examples of political, social, ethnic, and national poetics, both in the Americas and Europe, and beyond to the rest of the world. While most of the poetry covered will be in English, works in translation, and indeed the art of translation, will be an essential component the course.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 062
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 065 20th-Century British Novel
This course traces the development of the novel across the twentieth-century. The course will consider the formal innovations of the modern novel (challenges to realism, stream of consciousness, fragmentation, etc.) in relation to major historical shifts in the period. Authors treated might include: Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce, Forster, Woolf, Cather, Faulkner, Hemingway, Achebe, Greene, Rhys, Baldwin, Naipaul, Pynchon, Rushdie, and Morrison.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 065
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 067 Latina/o Literature and Culture
This course offers a broad introduction to the study of Latina/o/x culture. We will examine literature, theater, visual art, and popular cultural forms, including murals, poster art, graffiti, guerrilla urban interventions, novels, poetry, short stories, and film. In each instance, we will study this work within its historical context and with close attention to the ways it illuminates class formation, racialization, and ideologies of gender and sexuality as they shape Latino/a/x’s experience in the U.S.
Topics addressed in the course will include immigration and border policy, revolutionary nationalism and its critique, anti-imperialist thought, Latinx feminisms, queer latinxidades, ideology, identity formation, and social movements. While we will address key texts, historical events, and intellectual currents from the late 19th century and early 20th century, the course will focus primarily on literature and art from the 1960s to the present. All texts will be in English.
Taught by: Sternad Ponce de Leon
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 070, ENGL 070, GSWS 060, LALS 060
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 062 Caribbean Literature
Caribbean Literature
Taught by: Nunes
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 082, ENGL 082
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 090 Women and Literature
This course will focus on questions of gender difference and of sexual desire in a range of literary works, paying special attention to works by women and treatments of same-sex desire. More fundamentally, the course will introduce students to questions about the relation between identity and representation. We will attend in particular to intersections between gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation, and will choose from a rich vein of authors: Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, the Brontes, Christina Rossetti, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, Zora Neale Hurston, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Nella Larsen, Radclyffe Hall, Willa Cather, Elizabeth Bishop, Jean Rhys, James Baldwin, Sylvia Plath, Bessie Head, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Cherri Moraga, Toni Morrison, Michael Cunningham, Dorothy Allison, Jeanette Winterson, and Leslie Feinberg.
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 090, GSWS 090
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. If the topic is “Gender, Sexuality, and Literature,” the following description applies.

COML 093 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature
English is a global language with a distinctly imperial history, and this courseserves as an essential introduction to literary works produced in or about the former European colonies. The focus will be poetry, film, fiction and non fiction and at least two geographic areas spanning the Americas, South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa as they reflect the impact of colonial rule on the cultural representations of identity, nationalism, race, class and gender.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 093, ENGL 093
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 094 Introduction to Literary Theory
This course introduces students to major issues in the history of literary theory. Treating the work of Plato and Aristotle as well as contemporary criticism, we will consider the fundamental issues that arise from representation, making meaning, appropriation and adaptation, categorization and genre, historicity and genealogy, and historicity and temporality. We will consider major movements in the history of theory including the “New” Criticism of the 1920’s and 30’s, structuralism and post-structuralism, Marxism and psychoanalysis, feminism, cultural studies, critical race theory, and queer theory. See the Comparative Literature website at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/complit/ for a description of the current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 094, GRMN 279
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 095 Universal Language: From the Tower of Babel to Artificial Intelligence

"Universal Language" is a course in intellectual history. It explores the historical trajectory, from antiquity to the present day, of the idea that there once was, and again could be, a universal and perfect language among the human race. If recovered, this language can explain the origins and meaning of human experience, and can enable universal understanding and world peace.

Taught by: Verkholantsev
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 219, HIST 056, REES 095
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 096 Theories of Gender and Sexuality

What makes men and women different? What is the nature of desire? This course introduces students to a long history of speculation about the meaning and nature of gender and sexuality -- a history fundamental to literary representation and the business of making meaning. We will consider theories from Aristophanes speech in Platos Symposium to recent feminist and queer theory. Authors treated might include: Plato, Shakespeare, J. S. Mill, Mary Wollstonecraft, Sigmund Freud, Virginia Woolf, Simone de Beauvoir, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Michel Foucault, Gayle Rubin, Catherine MacKinnon, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Judith Butler, bell hooks, Leo Bersani, Gloria Anzaldua, David Halperin, Cherrie Moraga, Donna Haraway, Gayatri Spivak, Diana Fuss, Rosemary Hennessy, Chandra Tadpole Mohanty, and Susan Stryker. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.

For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 096, GSWS 096
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 099 Television and New Media

How and when do media become digital? What does digitization afford and what is lost as television and cinema become digitized? As lots of things around us turn digital, have we started telling stories, sharing experiences, and replaying memories differently? What has happened to television and life after New Media? How have television audiences been transformed by algorithmic cultures of Netflix and Hulu? How have (social) media transformed socialities as ephemeral snaps and swiped intimacies become part of the "new" digital/phone cultures? This is an introductory survey course and we discuss a wide variety of media technologies and phenomena that include: cloud computing, Internet of Things, trolls, distribution platforms, optical fiber cables, surveillance tactics, social media, and race in cyberspace. We also examine emerging mobile phone cultures in the Global South and the environmental impact of digitization. Course activities include Tumblr blog posts and Instagram curation. The final project could take the form of either a critical essay (of 2000 words) or a media project.

Taught by: Mukherjee
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: ARTH 107, CIMS 103, ENGL 078
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 100 Introduction to Literary Study

This course has three broad aims: first, it will introduce students to a selection of compelling contemporary narratives; second, it will provide prospective students of literature and film, as well as interested students headed for other majors, with fundamental skills in literary, visual, and cultural analysis; and, third, it will encourage a meditation on the function of literature and culture in our world, where commodities, people, and ideas have been constantly in motion. Questions for discussion will therefore include: the meaning of terms like "globalization," "translation," and "world literature"; the transnational reach and circulation of texts; migration and engagement with "others"; violence, trauma, and memory; terrorism and the state; and the ethic of cosmopolitanism. Our collective endeavor will be to think about narrative forms as modes of mediating and engaging with the vast and complex world we inhabit today. See COML website for current semester's description at https://complit.sas.upenn.edu/course-list/2019A

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 100
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 103 Cinema and Revolution

Can cinema be revolutionary? From Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin to Boots Riley's Sorry to Bother You, filmmakers have long grappled with political revolution. In this course we'll study films that take moments of revolutionary upheaval as their subject, and cinema made during times of revolution. Can cinematic techniques challenge the status quo? How have filmmakers navigated the complex politics of cinematic production and distribution in moments of censorship and repression? Are art and propaganda always different? Students will give two oral presentations: one will be a detailed analysis of a single scene, and another will consider the politics of a film of their choosing. Open to all, including those with no prior background in cinema studies.

Taught by: Schlesinger
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CIMS 105
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 104 Study of a Period

This is an introduction to literary study through a survey of works from a specific historical period—often the 20th century; but some versions of this course will focus on other times. We will explore the period's important artistic movements, ideas, and authors, focusing on interconnectedness of the arts to other aspects of culture.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 104, ENGL 104
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 105 Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece and Rome
What is being a man, being a woman, being masculine, being feminine, being neither, being both? Is sex about pleasure, domination, identity, reproduction, or something else? Are sexual orientation and gender identity innate? How can words, myths and stories inform cultural assumptions about sex and gender? Did people in ancient times have a concept of sexuality? How do gendered English terms (like “girly”, “effeminate”, or “feisty”) compare to gendered ancient Greek and Latin terms, like virtus, which connotes both “virtue” and “masculinity”? Why did the Roman and English speaking worlds have to borrow the word “clitoris” from the ancient Greeks? How did people in antiquity understand consent? Can we ever get access to the perspectives of ancient women? In this introductory undergraduate course, we will learn about sex and gender in ancient Greece and Rome. We will discuss similarities and differences between ancient and modern attitudes, and we will consider how ancient texts, ancient art, ancient ideas and ancient history have informed modern western discussions, assumptions and legislation. Our main readings will be of ancient texts, all in English translation; authors studied will include Ovid, Aristophanes, Plato, Euripides, and Sappho. Class requirements will include participation in discussion as well as quizzes, reading responses, and a final exam.
Taught by: Wilson
Also Offered As: CLST 101, GSWS 104
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 106 Ancient Drama
This course will introduce students to some of the greatest works of dramatic literature in the western canon. We will consider the social, political, religious and artistic functions of drama in ancient Greece and Rome, and discuss both similarities and differences between ancient drama and modern art forms. The course will also pursue some broader goals: to improve students skills as readers and scholarly critics of literature, both ancient and modern; to observe the implications of form for meaning, in considering, especially, the differences between dramatic and non-dramatic kinds of cultural production: to help students understand the relationship of ancient Greek and Roman culture to the modern world; and to encourage thought about some big issues, in life as well as in literature: death, heroism, society, action and meaning.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 107
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 107 Topics: Freshman Seminar
Topics vary. See the Department’s website at https://complit.sas.upenn.edu/course-list/2019A
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CIMS 014, ITAL 100
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 108 Greek & Roman Mythology
Myths are traditional stories that have endured many years. Some of them have to do with events of great importance, such as the founding of a nation. Others tell the stories of great heroes and heroines and their exploits and courage in the face of adversity. Still others are simple tales about otherwise unremarkable people who get into trouble or do some great deed. What are we to make of all these tales, and why do people seem to like to hear them? This course will focus on the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as a few contemporary American ones, as a way of exploring the nature of myth and the function it plays for individuals, societies, and nations. We will also pay some attention to the way the Greeks and Romans themselves understood their own myths. Are myths subtle codes that contain some universal truth? Are they a window on the deep recesses of a particular culture? Are they entertaining stories that people like to tell over and over? Are they a set of blinders that all of us wear, though we do not realize it? We investigate these questions through a variety of topics creation of the universe between gods and mortals, religion and family, sex, love, madness, and death.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Struck
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CLST 100
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 114 Literature of the South Asian City: Space, Culture, Politics
The South Asian city as a way of organizing space and social relations, as a symbol, as a memory is the subject of this course. Through primarily, though by no means exclusively, readings of literature in translation, we will gain a sense for the history of the city and the ways in which it is a setting for protest and nostalgia, social transformation and solitary flâneurie. We will see reflections of the city in poetry recited in its homes, detective novels sold in its train stations, stories scribbled in its cafes, plays staged in its theaters, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia, and will include works by writers such as Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Vijay Tendulkar. We will examine these works in the context of secondary readings, including histories and ethnological works that take up life in the modern city. Students will finish this course prepared to pursue projects dealing with the urban from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This course is suitable for anyone interested in the culture, society, or literature of South Asia, and assumes no background in South Asian languages.
Taught by: Goulding
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 120, URBS 120
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 118 Poetics of Screenwriting
This course studies scriptwriting in a historical, theoretical and artistic perspective. We discuss the rules of drama and dialogue, character development, stage vs. screen-writing, adaptation of nondramatic works, remaking of plots, author vs. genre theory of cinema, storytelling in silent and sound films, the evolvement of a script in the production process, script doctoring, as well as screenwriting techniques and tools. Coursework involves both analytical and creative tasks.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 111, REES 111
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 120 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion
This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.
Taught by: Entezari
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 118, GSWS 118, NELC 118, NELC 618
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 122 Prague: The Making of a European Nation
Even though such “supercities” as New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, Washington, Boston, and San Francisco claim a special place in the minds and hearts of Americans, no American city plays as crucial a role in the formation of national identity among Americans as Prague does among the Czechs. One may even argue that the formation of a national identity associated with a nation’s urban center is a European phenomenon. The focus of the proposed course is Prague, the capital of the Czech Republic and the geographical center of Europe. From the 14th century, when it became a seat of the Holy Roman Emperor, to the Hussite Revolution; from the 19th-century national revival and the birth of the independent Czechoslovakia in 1918, to the ”Prague Offensive,” the last major operation of the Soviet Army in World War II and the re-appearance of the Soviet tanks after the ”Prague Spring” in 1968, to the ”Velvet” Revolution in 1989, and on to the present day as an EU member, Prague has been the site of major European developments and is where the Czech national identity was forged. Today a popular tourist destination with a uniquely preserved historical center that is part of the UNESCO World Heritage List, Prague combines national character with an increasingly cosmopolitan flavor. Focusing on what makes Prague a national capital, we will note how the ”national” negotiates its place with the ”global.” As a cultural hub and political center, Prague is the repository of a cultural collective memory and of historical and emotional records. It thus presents an excellent case study of how a national identity could be formed around a single urban center. The study of the many layers of Prague’s urban landscape allows us to observe how history is built into the physical environment, while the analysis of literary and artistic production reveals how the city has become perceived as a national shrine, embodied in word and image. Students will read the ”Prague text” as humanists, anthropologists, and historians. They will learn to apply methods of literary, cultural, and historical analyses, and will ask questions of what it means to be a Czech, a Central European, a European, and even, perhaps, an American. The travel component will further one of the key goals of this seminar: to develop cultural knowledge and sensitivity together with the appreciation of socio-cultural differences. Prerequisite: Application required through Penn Global: https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 119
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Application required through Penn Global: <a href='https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs'>https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs</a>
COML 123 World Film History to 1945
This course surveys the history of world film from cinema’s precursors to 1945. We will develop methods for analyzing film while examining the growth of film as an art, an industry, a technology, and a political instrument. Topics include the emergence of film technology and early film audiences, the rise of narrative film and birth of Hollywood, national film industries and movements, African-American independent film, the emergence of the genre film (the western, film noir, and romantic comedies), ethnographic and documentary film, animated films, censorship, the MPPDA and Hays Code, and the introduction of sound. We will conclude with the transformation of several film industries into propaganda tools during World War II (including the Nazi, Soviet, and US film industries). In addition to contemporary theories that investigate the development of cinema and visual culture during the first half of the 20th century, we will read key texts that contributed to the emergence of film theory. There are no prerequisites. Students are required to attend screenings or watch films on their own.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Decherney
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ARTH 108, CIMS 101, ENGL 091
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Fulfills the Arts and Letters Sector (All Classes)

COML 124 World Film History 1945-Present
Focusing on movies made after 1945, this course allows students to learn and to sharpen methods, terminologies, and tools needed for the critical analysis of film. Beginning with the cinematic revolution signaled by the Italian Neo-Realism (of Rossellini and De Sica), we will follow the evolution of postwar cinema through the French New Wave (of Godard, Resnais, and Varda), American movies of the 1950s and 1960s (including the New Hollywood cinema of Coppola and Scorsese), and the various other new wave movements of the 1960s, 1970s and 1980s (such as the New German Cinema). We will then selectively examine some of the most important films of the last two decades, including those of U.S. independent film movement and movies from Iran, China, and elsewhere in an expanding global cinema culture. There will be precise attention paid to formal and stylistic techniques in editing, mise-en-scene, and sound, as well as to the narrative, non-narrative, and generic organizations of film. At the same time, those formal features will be closely linked to historical and cultural distinctions and changes, ranging from the Paramount Decision of 1948 to the digital convergences that are defining screen culture today. There are no prerequisites. Requirements will include readings in film history and film analysis, an analytical essay, a research paper, a final exam, and active participation.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Corrigan
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ARTH 109, CIMS 102, ENGL 092
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 125 Narrative Across Cultures
The purpose of this course is to present a variety of narrative genres and to discuss and illustrate the modes whereby they can be analyzed. We will be looking at shorter types of narrative: short stories, novellas, and fables, and also some extracts from longer works such as autobiographies. While some works will come from the Anglo-American tradition, a larger number will be selected from European and non-Western cultural traditions and from earlier time-periods. The course will thus offer ample opportunity for the exploration of the translation of cultural values in a comparative perspective.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Loomba
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 103, NELC 180, SAST 124, THAR 105
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 126 The Fantastic and Uncanny in Literature: Ghosts, Spirits & Machines
Do we still believe in spirits and ghosts? Do they have any place in an age of science of technology? Can they perhaps help us to define what a human being is and what it can do? We will venture on a journey through literary texts from the late eighteenth century to the present to explore the uncanny and fantastic in literature and life. Our discussions will be based on a reading of Sigmund Freud’s essay on the uncanny, and extraordinary Romantic narratives by Ludwig Tieck, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Prosper Merimee, Villiers de l’Isle-Adam, and others. All readings and lectures in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 242, GSWS 243
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 127 Sex and Representation
This course explores literature that resists normative categories of gender and sexuality. By focusing on figures writing from the margins, we will explore how radical approaches to narrative form and subject-matter invite us to think in new ways about desire and identity. We will read texts that blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, hybridizing the genres of poetry, drama, and autobiography to produce new forms of expression, such as the graphic novel, auto-fiction, and prose poetry. From Virginia Woolf’s gender-bending epic, Orlando, to Tony Kushner’s Angels in America, this course traces how non-normative desire is produced and policed by social and literary contexts - and how those contexts can be re-imagined and transformed.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Halstead
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 125, GSWS 125
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and discussions in English.
COML 133 Creative Writing and the World
A creative writing workshop devoted to writing in and across various social, political, geographical, and historical contexts. Offerings may include Writing for a Diasporic World, Writing the City, the Environment, or other topics and themes. See the Comparative Literature Program's website at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/ for current offerings.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 127, URBS 127
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 140 Topics In Modernism
This course explores an aspect of literary modernism intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. Past offerings have included seminars on the avant-garde, on the politics of modernism, and on its role in shaping poetry, music, and the visual arts. See the English Department's website at www/english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings. Prerequisite: Some knowledge of 20th-century poetry.
Spaces will be reserved for English majors
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 385, ENGL 259, FREN 259, GRMN 249
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Critical Speaking

COML 141 Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Communities
What do the ancient Greek comedian Aristophanes, the Roman satirist Juvenal, have in common with rappers Snoop Dogg and Eminem? Many things, in fact, but perhaps most fundamental is their delight in shocking audiences and upending social norms. This course will examine the various arts (including literary, visual and musical media) that transgress the boundaries of taste and convention in ancient Greco-Roman culture and our own era. We will consider, among other topics, why communities feel compelled to repudiate some forms of scandalous art, while turning others - especially those that have come down to us from remote historical periods - into so-called classics.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Rosen
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 140
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Critical Speaking

COML 143 Foundations of European Thought: from Rome to the Renaissance
This course offers an introduction to the world of thought and learning at the heart of European culture, from the Romans through the Renaissance. We begin with the ancient Mediterranean and the formation of Christianity and trace its transformation into European society. Along the way we will examine the rise of universities and institutions for learning, and follow the humanist movement in rediscovering and redefining the ancients in the modern world.
For BA Students: History and Tradition Sector
Taught by: Moyer
Also Offered As: HIST 143
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 144 Belief and Unbelief in Modern Thought
"God is dead," declared Friedrich Nietzsche, "and we have killed him." Nietzsche's words came as a climax of a longer history of criticism of, and dissent toward, the religious foundations of European society and politics. The critique of religion had vast implications for the meaning of human life, the nature of the person, and the conception of political and social existence. The course will explore the intensifying debate over religion in the intellectual history of Europe, reaching from the Renaissance, through the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, to the twentieth century. Rousseau, Voltaire, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. These thinkers allow us to trace the varieties of irreligious experience that have emerged in modern European thought and their implications for both historical and philosophical understanding. Rather than drawing a straight line from belief to non-belief, however, we will also consider whether religion lingers even in secular thought and culture.
Taught by: Breckman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 144
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 150 War and Representation
This class will explore complications of representing war in the 20th and 21st centuries. War poses problems of perception, knowledge, and language. The notional "fog of war" describes a disturbing discrepancy between agents and actions of war; the extreme nature of the violence of warfare tests the limits of cognition, emotion, and memory; war's traditional dependence on declaration is often warped by language games--"police action," "military intervention," "nation-building," or palpably unnamed and unacknowledged state violence. Faced with the radical uncertainty that forms of war bring, modern and contemporary authors have experimented in historically, geographically, experientially and artistically particular ways, forcing us to reconsider even seemingly basic definitions of what a war story can be. Where does a war narrative happen? On the battlefield, in the internment camp, in the suburbs, in the ocean, in the ruins of cities, in the bloodstream? Who narrates war? Soldiers, refugees, gossips, economists, witnesses, bureaucrats, survivors, children, journalists, descendants and inheritors of trauma, historians, those who were never there? How does literature respond to the rise of terrorist or ideology war, the philosophical and material consequences of biological and cyber wars, the role of the nuclear state? How does the problem of war and representation disturb the difference between fiction and non-fiction? How do utilitarian practices of representation--propaganda, nationalist messaging, memorialization, xenophobic depiction--affect the approaches we use to study art? Finally, is it possible to read a narrative barely touched or merely contextualized by war and attend to the question of war's shaping influence? The class will concentrate on literary objects--short stories, and graphic novels--as well as film and television. Students of every level and major are welcome in and encouraged to join this class, regardless of literary experience.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Irele
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 085, REES 193
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 151 Water Worlds: Cultural Responses to Sea Level Rise & Catastrophic Flooding
As a result of climate change, the world that will take shape in the course of this century will be decidedly more inundated with water than we’re accustomed to. The polar ice caps are melting, glaciers are retreating, ocean levels are rising, polar bear habitat is disappearing, countries are jockeying for control over a new Arctic passage, while low-lying cities and small island nations are confronting the possibility of their own demise. Catastrophic flooding events are increasing in frequency, as are extreme droughts. Hurricane-related storm surges, tsunamis, and raging rivers have devastated regions on a local and global scale. In this seminar we will turn to the narratives and images that the human imagination has produced in response to the experience of overwhelming watery invasion, from Noah to New Orleans. Objects of analysis will include mythology, ancient and early modern diluvialism, literature, art, film, and commemorative practice. The basic question we’ll be asking is: What can we learn from the humanities that will be helpful for confronting the problems and challenges caused by climate change and sea level rise? For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Richter, Simon
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 152, ENVS 151, GRMN 150
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 152 Liquid Histories and Floating Archives
Climate change transforms the natural and built environments, and it is re-shaping how we understand, make sense, and care for our past. Climate changes history. This course explores the Anthropocene, the age when humans are remaking earth’s systems, from an on-water perspective. In on-line dialogue and video conferences with research teams in port cities on four continents, this undergraduate course focuses on Philadelphia as one case study of how rising waters are transfiguring urban history, as well as its present and future. Students projects take them into the archives at the Independence Seaport Museum and at Bartram’s Garden. Field trips by boat on the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers and on land to the Port of Philadelphia and to the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge invite transhistorical dialogues about how colonial and then industrial-era energy and port infrastructure transformed the region’s vast tidal marshlands wetlands. Excursions also help document how extreme rain events, storms, and rising waters are re-making the built environment, redrawing lines that had demarcated land from water. In dialogue with one another and invited guest artists, writers, and landscape architects, students final projects consider how our waters might themselves be read and investigated as archives. What do rising seas subsume and hold? Whose stories do they tell? What floats to the surface?
Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 154, ENGL 052, ENVS 152, GRMN 152, HIST 152
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 153 Is Europe Facing a Spiritual Crisis?
Is Europe Facing a Spiritual Crisis? On Contemporary Debates about Secularization, Religion and Rationality. Point of departure for this course is the difference between Europe and the US as to the role of religion in the unfolding of their respective “cultural identities” (cf. Charles Taylor, A Secular Age, 522-530). As a rule, both the US and Western Europe are now defined as secularized cultures, even if their histories and specific identities are strongly rooted in the Christian heritage. Given this contemporary situation, four research questions will be dealt with in this course. 1) What is meant by secularization? In answer to that question, two secularization theories are distinguished: the classic versus the alternative secularization thesis; 2) What is the historical impact of the nominalist turning-point at the end of the Middle Ages in this process towards secularization? 3) How did the relation between rationality and religion develop during modern times in Europe? 4) What is the contemporary outcome of this evolution in so-called postmodern / post-secular Europe and US? We currently find ourselves in this so-called postmodern or post-secular period, marked by a sensitivity to the boundaries of (modern) rationality and to the fragility of our (modern) views on man, world and God. In this respect, we will focus on different parts of Europe (Western and Eastern Europe alike) and will refer to analogies and differences between Western Europe and US. This historical-thematic exposition is illustrated by means of important fragments from Western literature (and marginally from documents in other arts) and philosophy. We use these fragments in order to make more concrete the internal philosophical evolutions in relation to corresponding changes in diverse social domains (religion, politics, economy, society, literature, art...).
Taught by: Vanheeswijck
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: DTCH 153, GRMN 153
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 154 Forest Worlds: Mapping the Arboreal Imaginary in Literature and Film
The destruction of the world’s forests through wild fires, deforestation, and global heating threatens planetary bio-diversity and may even, as a 2020 shows, trigger civilizational collapse. Can the humanities help us think differently about the forest? At the same time that forests of the world are in crisis, the “rights of nature” movement is making progress in forcing courts to acknowledge the legal “personhood” of forests and other ecosystems. The stories that humans have told and continue to tell about forests are a source for the imaginative and cultural content of that claim. At a time when humans seem unable to curb the destructive practices that place themselves, biodiversity, and forests at risk, the humanities give us access to a record of the complex inter-relationship between forests and humanity. Forest Worlds serves as an introduction to the environmental humanities. The environmental humanities offer a perspective on the climate emergency and the human dimension of climate change that are typically not part of the study of climate science or climate policy. Students receive instruction in the methods of the humanities - cultural analysis and interpretation of literature and film - in relation to texts that illuminate patterns of human behavior, thought, and affect with regard to living in and with nature.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Richter
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CIMS 152, ENVS 151, GRMN 151
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 156 Queer German Cinema
Taught in English. This course offers an introduction into the history of German-language cinema with an emphasis on depictions of lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans and queer themes. The course provides a chronological survey of Queer German Cinema from its beginnings in the Weimar Republic to its most recent and current representatives, accompanied throughout by a discussion of the cultural-political history of gay rights in the German-speaking world. Over the course of the semester, students will learn not only cinematic history but how to write about and close-read film. No knowledge of German or previous knowledge required.
Taught by: Fleishman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 156, GRMN 156, GSWS 156
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 191 World Literature
How do we think "the world" as such? Globalizing economic paradigms encourage one model that, while it connects distant regions with the ease of a finger-tap, also homogenizes the world, manufacturing patterns of sameness behind simulations of diversity. Our current world-political situation encourages another model, in which fundamental differences are held to warrant the consolidation of borders between Us and Them, "our world" and "theirs." This course begins with the proposal that there are other ways to encounter the world, that are politically compelling, ethically important, and personally enriching—and that the study of literature can help tease out these new paths. Through the idea of World Literature, this course introduces students to the appreciation and critical analysis of literary texts, with the aim of navigating calls for universality or particularity (and perhaps both) in fiction and film. "World literature" here refers not merely to the usual definition of "books written in places other than the US and Europe, "but any form of cultural production that explores and pushes at the limits of a particular world, that steps between and beyond worlds, or that heralds the coming of new worlds still within us, waiting to be born. And though, as we read and discuss our texts, we will glide about in space and time from the inner landscape of a private mind to the reaches of the farthest galaxies, knowledge of languages other than English will not be required, and neither will any prior familiarity with the literary humanities. In the company of drunken kings, botanical witches, ambisexual alien lifeforms, and storytellers who've lost their voice, we will reflect on, and collectively navigate, our encounters with the faraway and the familiar—and thus train to think through the challenges of concepts such as translation, narrative, and ideology. Texts include Kazuo Ishiguro, Ursula K. LeGuin, Salman Rushdie, Werner Herzog, Jamaica Kincaid, Russell Hoban, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Arundhati Roy, and Abbas Kiarostami.
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CLST 191, ENGL 277
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 192 Classics of the World II
This class provides a survey of works drawn from the Western literary canon from the Renaissance to the 20th century. Work may be drawn in part from the following authors: Montaigne, Shakespeare, Webster, Moliere, Milton, Behn, Laclos, Rousseau, Sterne, the Romantic poets, Austen, Dickens, Bronte, Wilde, Woolf and Joyce.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 193 Great Story Collections
This course is intended for those with no prior background in folklore or knowledge of various cultures. Texts range in age from the first century to the twentieth, and geographically from the Middle East to Europe to the Unite States. Each collection displays various techniques of collecting folk materials and making them concrete. Each in its own way also raises different issues of genre, legitimacy, canon formation, cultural values and context.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Peeney
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 197, REES 697
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 197 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture
Is "insanity" today the same thing as "madness" of old? Who gets to define what it means to be "sane," and why? Are the causes of madness biological or social? In this course, we will grapple with these and similar questions while exploring Russia's fascinating history of madness as a means to maintain, critique, or subvert the status quo. We will consider the concept of madness in Russian culture beginning with its earliest folkloric roots and trace its depiction and function in the figure of the Russian "holy fool," in classical literature, and in contemporary film. Readings will include works by many Russian greats, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Bulgakov and Nabokov.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Azzolina
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 099, FOLK 241
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 199 Study Abroad
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 201 Topics in Film History
This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Comparative Literature website <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/> for a description of the current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 391, CIMS 201, ENGL 291
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 203 Masterpieces-Italian Literature
This course surveys the history of Italian literature through its major masterpieces. Beginning with Dante’s Divine Comedy, Petrarcha’s love poems, and Boccaccio’s Decameron, we will follow the development of Italian literary tradition through the Renaissance (Machiavelli’s political theory and Ariosto’s epic poem), and then through Romanticism (Leopardi’s lyric poetry and Manzoni’s historical novel), up to the 20th century (from D’annunzio’s sensual poetry to Calvino’s post-modern short stories). The course will provide students with the tools needed for analyzing the texts in terms of both form and content, and for framing them in their historical, cultural, and socio-political context. Classes and readings will be in Italian. ITAL 203 is mandatory for Majors in Italian Literature and Minors in Italian Literature. If necessary, ITAL 201 can be taken at the same time as ITAL 203. Prerequisite: Open to students who have completed ITAL 201 or equivalent. The course counts toward the Minor in Global Medieval Studies.
Taught by: Del Soldato
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ITAL 203
Prerequisite: ITAL 201
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 204 Tolstoy
Few authors have ever been able to combine their moral and artistic visions as closely as Tolstoy. Over the course of the semester, we will plot Tolstoy’s ethical concerns changed over the course of his life and how this was reflected in works, which include some of the greatest prose ever written. We will begin by surveying the majestic and far-reaching world of his novels and end with some of Tolstoy’s short later works that correspond with the ascent of “Tolstoyism” as virtually its own religion.
Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 202
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 206 Italian History on Screen: How Movies Tell the Story of Italy
How has our image of Italy arrived to us? Where does the story begin and who has recounted, rewritten, and rearranged it over the centuries? In this course, we will study Italy’s rich and complex past and present. We will carefully read literary and historical texts and thoughtfully watch films in order to attain an understanding of Italy that is as varied and multifaceted as the country itself. Group work, discussions and readings will allow us to examine the problems and trends in the political, cultural and social history from ancient Rome to today. We will focus on: the Roman Empire, Middle Ages, Renaissance, Unification, Turn of the Century, Fascist era, World War II, post-war and contemporary Italy.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 206, ITAL 204
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 208 Sicily on Page and Screen
What images come to mind when we hear the words Sicily and Sicilians? Often our thoughts range from scenic vacation spots, delicious seafood and cannoli, and sweet grandmothers dressed in black, to mafia violence, vendettas, and the deep-rooted code of silence, omerta. But, how did these ideas get to us? Is there truth in them? Is there more to this island and its people? Through careful analysis of literary and cinematic representations of this Italian region, and those that do and have inhabited it, we will trace and analyze how Sicilians have represented themselves, how mainland Italians have interpreted Sicilian culture, how outsiders have understood these symbols, how our own perceptions shaped what we thought we knew about this place and, finally, how our own observations will have evolved throughout our studies. We will watch films such as Tornatore’s Cinema paradiso and Coppola’s The Godfather II, and read texts such as Lampedusa’s The Leopard and Maraini’s Bagheria. This course aims to increase students’ understanding and knowledge of the Sicilian socio-cultural system. It will help students develop their ability to understand and interpret Sicilian culture through close analysis of its history, values, attitudes, and experiences, thereby allowing them to better recognize and examine the values and practices that define their own, as well as others’, cultural frameworks.
Taught by: Broccia
Course usually offered summer term only
Also Offered As: CIMS 204, ENGL 083, ITAL 205
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Course taught in English. Course Materials in English. There are no prerequisites for this course.

COML 209 Sustainability & Utopianism
This seminar explores how the humanities can contribute to discussions of sustainability. We begin by investigating the contested term itself, paying close attention to critics and activists who deplore the very idea that we should try to sustain our, in their eyes, dystopian present, one marked by environmental catastrophe as well as by an assault on the educational ideals long embodied in the humanities. We then turn to classic humanist texts on utopia, beginning with More’s fictive island of 1517. The “origins of environmentalism” lie in such depictions of island edens (Richard Grove), and our course proceeds to analyze classic utopian texts from American, English, and German literatures. Readings extend to utopian visions from Europe and America of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as literary and visual texts that deal with contemporary nuclear and flood catastrophes. Authors include: Bill McKibben, Jil Kerr Conway, Christopher Newfield, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Karl Marx, Henry David Thoreau, Robert Owens, William Morris, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ayn Rand, Christa Wolf, and others. Taught in English.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 275, ENV 239, GRMN 239
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 211 Literature of Dissent: Art as Protest in 20th-Century Poland and Czechoslovakia
Eastern and Central Europe was the site of monumental political changes in the twentieth century, including the disillusion of monarchical empires in the First World War and the expansion of Soviet-style communism. At every point, artists have taken part in political debates, sometimes advancing radical agendas, sometimes galvanizing movements, sometimes simply shouting into the void to register their own dissatisfaction. In this course, we will consider texts including literature, political philosophy and film that pushed back against the dominant political norms. In so doing, we will investigate Aesopian language, the mechanics of censorship, the repercussions of dissent, performativity, samizdat and the rise of an alternative culture. We will contextualize our readings of literature with the sociological and historical work of Benedict Anderson, Tony Judt, Jonathan Bolton, Shana Penn, Alexei Yurchak and the series Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe. As well as becoming familiar with major thinkers and movements in Eastern and Central Europe, students will develop a sense of art as a tool of political protest.
Taught by: Weil
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 211
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 212 Modern Middle Eastern Literature in Translation
The Middle East boasts a rich tapestry of cultures that have developed a vibrant body of modern literature that is often overlooked in media coverage of the region. While each of the modern literary traditions that will be surveyed in this introductory course—Arabic, Hebrew, Persian and Turkish—will be analyzed with an appreciation of the cultural context unique to each body of literature, this course will also attempt to bridge these diverse traditions by analyzing common themes such as modernity, social values, the individual and national identity as reflected in the genres of poetry, the novel and the short story. This course is in seminar format to encourage lively discussion and is team-taught by four professors whose expertise in modern Middle Eastern literature serves to create a deeper understanding and aesthetic appreciation of each literary tradition. In addition to honing students’ literary analysis skills, the course will enable students to become more adept at discussing the social and political forces that are reflected in Middle Eastern literature, explore important themes and actively engage in reading new Middle Eastern works on their own in translation. All readings are in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: NELC 201
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 213 Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Tradition
This course is about Russian cultural imagination, which is populated with “saints” and “devils”: believers and outcasts, the righteous and the sinners, virtuous women and fallen angels, holy men and their most bitter adversary— the devil. In Russia, where people’s frame of mind has been formed by a mix of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and earlier pagan beliefs, the quest for faith, spirituality, and the meaning of life has invariably been connected with religious matters. How can one find the right path in life? Can a sinner be redeemed? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist? In "Saints and Devils," we read works of the great masters of Russian literature and learn about the historic trends that have filled Russia’s literature and art with religious and mystical spirit. Among our readings are old cautionary tales of crafty demons and all-forsaking saints, about virtuous harlots and holy fools, as well as fantastic stories by Nikolai Gogol about pacts with the devil, and a romantic vision of a fallen angel by Yury Lermontov. We will be in awe of the righteous portrayed by Nikolai Leskov and follow the characters of Fedor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov, as they ponder life and death and search for truth, faith, and love. In sum, over the course of this semester we will talk about ancient cultural traditions, remarkable works of art, and the great artists who created them. In addition to providing a basic introduction to Russian literature, religion, and culture, the course introduces students to literary works of various genres and teaches basic techniques of literary analysis. (No previous knowledge of Russian literature necessary. All readings are in English).
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Verkholantsiev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 213, RELS 218
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 215 Introduction to Persian Poetic Tradition
This course introduces some of the major genres and themes of the millennium-old Persian poetic tradition from ancient to modern Iran. Epic and romance, love and mysticism, wine and drunkenness, wisdom and madness, body and mind, sin and temptation are some of the key themes that will be explored through a close reading of poems in this course. The course suits undergraduate students of all disciplines, as it requires no prior knowledge of or familiarity with the Persian language or the canon of Persian literature. All teaching materials are available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Shams
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: GSWS 214, HIST 226, NELC 216, NELC 516
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 216 CU In India - Topics Course
C.U. in India is a hybrid, domestic/overseas course series which provides students with the opportunity to have an applied learning and cultural experience in India. The 2-CU course requires: 1) 15 classroom hours at Penn in the Fall term 2) A 12-Day trip to India with the instructor during the winter break to visit key sites and conduct original research (sites vary) 3) 15 classroom hours at Penn in the Spring term and 4) A research paper, due at the end of the spring term. Course enrollment is restricted to students admitted to the program. For more information, and the program application, go to http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/cuinindia
Two terms. student must enter first term.
Also Offered As: ARTH 317, GSWS 217, SAST 217, SAST 517
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 218 Perspectives in French Literature
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. Students are expected to take an active part in class dicussion in French. French 231 has as its theme the presentation of love and passion in French literature.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: FREN 231
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 219 Perspectives in French Literature: The Individual and Society
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. Special emphasis is placed on close reading of texts in order to familiarize students with major authors and their characteristics and with methods of interpretation. Students are expected to take an active part in class dicussion in French. French 232 has as its theme the Individual and Society. Prerequisite: Two 200-level courses taken at Penn or equivalent.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: FREN 232
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 220 Russia and the West
This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia's own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers' letters, diaries, and historiosophical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late Nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussion, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Biareishyk
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 220
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 221 Creating New Worlds: The Modern Indian Novel
Lonely bureaucrats and love-struck students, Bollywood stars and wayward revolutionaries: this course introduces students to the worlds of the Indian novel. From the moment of its emergence in the 19th century, the novel in India grappled with issues of class and caste, colonialism and its aftermath, gender, and the family. Although the novel has a historical origin in early modern Europe, it developed as a unique form in colonial and post-colonial India, influenced by local literary and folk genres. How did the novel in India--and in its successor states after 1947--transform and shift in order to depict its world? How are novels shaped by the many languages in which they are written, including English? And how do we, as readers, engage with the Indian novel in its diversity? This course surveys works major and minor from the past 200 years of novel-writing in India--with surveys both into predecessors of the Indian novel and parallel forms such as the short story. Readings will include works in translation from languages such as Hindi, Bangla, Urdu, Telugu, and Malayalam, as well as works written originally in English. Students will leave this course with an understanding of the Indian novel, along with the social conditions underlaying it, especially those relating to caste and gender.
Taught by: Goulding
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 220
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 229 National Antiquities: Genealogies, Hagiographies, Holy Objects

Human societies have always wanted to know about their origins, the reasons for their customs, the foundations of their social institutions and religious beliefs, and the justification of their power structures. They have conceived of creation myths and of origins stories for their communities in order to position themselves within the past and present of the natural and human worlds. The newly Christianized kingdoms of Medieval Europe faced the challenge of securing a place in the new vision of universal Providential history, and they inscribed their own histories into the narratives they knew from the authoritative sources of the time - biblical genealogies and heroic stories inherited from the poets of classical antiquity. The deeds and virtues of saintly kings and church hierarchs provided a continuity of historical narrative on the sacred map of time and space. In the 19th century, while interest in medieval antiquity as a source of inspiration for political and cultural renewal brought about a critical study of evidence, it also effected reinterpretation and repurposing of this evidence vis-a-vis a new political concept - that of a nation. This seminar will focus on central, eastern and southeast European nations and explore three categories of "national antiquities" that have been prominent in the workings of their modern nationalisms: (1) stories of ethnogenesis (so-called, origo gentis) that narrate and explain the beginnings and genealogy of peoples and states, as they are recorded in medieval and early modern chronicles, (2) narratives about holy people, who are seen as national patron-saints, and (3) material objects of sacred significance (manuscripts, religious ceremony objects, crowns, icons) that act as symbols of political, cultural and national identities. Our approach will be two-fold: On the one hand, we will read medieval sources and ask the question of what they tell us about the mindset of the authors and societies that created them. We will think about how the knowledge of the past helped medieval societies legitimize the present and provide a model for the future. On the other hand, we will observe how medieval narratives and artifacts have been interpreted in modern times and how they became repurposed - first, during the "Romantic" stage of national awakening, then in the post-imperial era of independent nation-states, and, finally, in the post-Soviet context of reimagined Europe. We will observe how the study of nationalistic mentality enhances our understanding of how the past is represented and repurposed in scholarship and politics.

Taught by: Verkholantsev
Also Offered As: HIST 263, REES 229
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 230 Words Are Weapons: Protests and Political Activism in South Asian Literature

This course focuses on the key themes of protest and resistance in contemporary South Asian literature. Most South Asian countries have been witnessing an endless wave of protests and resistance from various sections of public life for the last three decades. In India, for example, protest literature emerges not only from traditionally marginalized groups (the poor, religious and ethnic minorities, depressed castes and tribal communities), but also from upper-caste groups, whose protest literature expresses concerns over economic oppression, violence and the denial of fundamental rights. Literature is becoming an immediate tool to articulate acts of resistance and anger, as many writers and poets are also taking on new roles as political activists. In this class, we will read various contemporary works of short fiction, poetry and memoirs to comprehend shifts in public life toward political and social activism in South Asia. We will also watch two or three documentaries that focus on public protests and resistance. No pre-requisites or South Asian language requirements. All literary works will be read in English translations.

Taught by: Mohammad
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 534, SAST 223, SAST 523
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 236 Napoleonic Era & Tolstoy

In this course we will read what many consider to be the greatest book in world literature. This work, Tolstoy's War and Peace, is devoted to one of the most momentous periods in world history, the Napoleonic Era (1789-1815). We will study both the novel and the era of the Napoleonic Wars: the military campaigns of Napoleon and his opponents, the grand strategies of the age, political intrigues and diplomatic betrayals, the ideologies and human dramas, the relationship between art and history. How does literature help us to understand this era? How does history help us to understand this great novel?

Taught by: Holquist
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: HIST 333, REES 240
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

Notes: All readings and lectures in English.
COML 237 Berlin: History, Politics, Culture
What do you know about Berlin's history, architecture, culture, and political life? The present course will offer a survey of the history of Prussia, beginning with the seventeenth century, and the unification of the small towns of Berlin and Koelvin to establish a new capital for this country. It will tell the story of Berlin's rising political prominence in the eighteenth century, and its position as a center of the German and Jewish Enlightenment. It will follow Berlin's transformation into an industrial city in the nineteenth century, its rise to metropolis in the early twentieth century, its history during the Third Reich, and the post-war cold war period. The course will conclude its historical survey with a consideration of Berlin's position as a capital in reunified Germany. The historical survey will be supplemented by a study of Berlin's urban structure, its significant architecture from the eighteenth century (i.e. Schinkel) to the nineteenth (new worker's housing, garden suburbs) and twentieth centuries (Bauhaus, Speer designs, postwar rebuilding, GDR housing projects, post-unification building boom). In addition, we will read literary texts about the city, and consider the visual art and music created in and about Berlin, and focus on Berlin's Jewish history. The course will be interdisciplinary with the fields of German Studies, history, history of art, urban studies, and German-Jewish studies. It is also designed as a preparation for undergraduate students who are considering spending a junior semester with the Penn Abroad Program in Berlin. All readings and lectures in English.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 237, GRMN 237, HIST 237, URBS 237
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English

COML 241 Global Sustainabilities
This research-oriented seminar focuses on the ways in which "sustainability" and "sustainable development" are linguistically and culturally translated into the world's languages. We may take the terms for granted, but they have only really been on the global stage since they were widely introduced in the 1987 United Nations report, Our Common Future. Seminar participants will first become acquainted with the cultural and conceptual history of the terms and the UN framework within which sustainability efforts directly or indirectly operate. Having established the significance of cultural and linguistic difference in conceiving and implementing sustainability, participants will collaboratively develop a research methodology in order to begin collecting and analyzing data. We will draw heavily on Penn's diverse language communities and international units. Seminar members will work together and individually to build an increasingly comprehensive website that provides information about the world's languages of sustainability.
Taught by: Richter
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: GRMN 240
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Benjamin Franklin Seminar. All readings and lectures in English.

COML 245 Study of a Theme
This is an introduction to literary study through the works of a compelling literary theme. (For offerings in a given semester, please see the online course descriptions on the English Department website). The theme's function within specific historical contexts, within literary history generally, and within contemporary culture, are likely to be emphasized. For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 112, ENGL 102, GSWS 102
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 247 Free Radicals: Marx, Marxism, and the Culture of Revolution
"A spectre is haunting Europe--the spectre of Communism": This, the famous opening line of The Communist Manifesto, will guide this course's exploration of the history, legacy, and potential future of Karl Marx's most important texts and ideas, even long after Communism has been pronounced dead. Contextualizing Marx within a tradition of radical thought regarding politics, religion, and sexuality, we will focus on the philosophical, political, and cultural origins and implications of his ideas. Our work will center on the question of how his writings seek to counter or exploit various tendencies of the time; how they align with the work of Nietzsche, Freud, and other radical thinkers to follow; and how they might continue to haunt us today. We will begin by discussing key works by Marx himself, examining ways in which he is both influenced by and appeals to many of the same fantasies, desires, and anxieties encoded in the literature, arts and intellectual currents of the time. In examining his legacy, we will focus on elaborations or challenges to his ideas, particularly within cultural criticism, postwar protest movements, and the cultural politics of the Cold War. In conclusion, we will turn to the question of Marxism or Post-Marxism today, asking what promise Marx's ideas might still hold in a world vastly different from his own. All readings and lectures in English.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 247, PHIL 247
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 248 Topics in European History
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CLST 230, GRMN 232, HIST 230, ITAL 230, JWST 230
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for the each semester's topic: http://ccat/sas.upenn.edu/Complit/.
COML 252 Freud's Objects
How do we look at objects? And which stories can objects tell? These questions have been asked quite regularly by Art Historians or Museum Curators, but they take a central place within the context of psychoanalytic studies as well. The seminar "Freud's Objects" will offer an introduction to Sigmund Freud's life and times, as well as to psychoanalytic studies. We will focus on objects owned by Freud that he imbued with special significance, and on of Freud's writings that focus specifically on objects. Finally, we will deal with a re-interpretation of the "object" in psychoanalytic theory, via a discussion of texts by British psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 356, CLST 254, ENGL 095, GRMN 254
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 253 Freud: The Invention of Psychoanalysis
No other person of the twentieth century has probably influenced scientific thought, humanistic scholarship, medical therapy, and popular culture as much as Sigmund Freud. This seminar will study his work, its cultural background, and its impact on us today. In the first part of the course, we will learn about Freud's life and the Viennese culture of his time. We will then move to a discussion of seminal texts, such as excerpts from his Interpretation of Dreams, case studies, as well as essays on psychoanalytic practice, human development, definitions of gender and sex, neuroses, and culture in general. In the final part of the course, we will discuss the impact of Freud's work. Guest lecturers from the medical field, history of science, psychology, and the humanities will offer insights into the reception of Freud's work, and its consequences for various fields of study and therapy.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 253, GSWS 252, HIST 253
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 254 Metropolis: Culture of the City
An exploration of modern discourses on and of the city. Topics include: the city as site of avant-garde experimentation; technology and culture; the city as embodiment of social order and disorder; traffic and speed; ways of seeing the city; the crowd; city figures such as the detective, the criminal, the flaneur, the dandy; film as the new medium of the city. Special emphasis on Berlin. Readings by, among others, Dickens, Poe, Baudelaire, Rilke, Doebelin, Marx, Engels, Benjamin, Kracauer. Films include Fritz Lang's Metropolis and Tom Tykwer's Run Lola Run. All lectures and readings in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: MacLeod
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 244, GRMN 244, URBS 244
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 256 Contemporary Fiction & Film in Japan
This course will explore fiction and film in contemporary Japan, from 1945 to the present. Topics will include literary and cinematic representation of Japan's war experience and post-war reconstruction, negotiation with Japanese classics, confrontation with the state, and changing ideas of gender and sexuality. We will explore these and other questions by analyzing texts of various genres, including film and film scripts, novels, short stories, manga, and academic essays. Class sessions will combine lectures, discussion, audio-visual materials, and creative as well as analytical writing exercises. The course is taught in English, although Japanese materials will be made available upon request. No prior coursework in Japanese literature, culture, or film is required or expected; additional secondary materials will be available for students taking the course at the 600 level. Writers and film directors examined may include: Kawabata Yasunari, Hayashi Fumiko, Abe Kobo, Mishima Yukio, Oe Kenzaburo, Yoshimoto Banana, Ozu Yasujirō, Naruse Mikio, Kurosawa Akira, Imamura Shohei, Koreeda Hirokazu, and Beat Takeshi.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Kano
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 151, EALC 151, EALC 551, GSWS 257
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 257 Medieval Jewish Writings in Translation
Through close readings of primary sources, students will explore products of Jewish culture written in both Christian and Muslim lands between the 10th and 16th centuries, within their historical and cross-cultural contexts. Works will include selections from poetry, philosophy, Bible exegesis, polemics, ethical wills, historiography, pietism, mysticism and legal writings. Students with appropriate language skills will read Hebrew sources in the original. Graduate students will have additional assignments and meetings.
Taught by: Fishman
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: JWST 153, NELC 158, NELC 458
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 259 Jewish Humor
In modern American popular culture Jewish humor is considered by Jews and non-Jews as a recognizable and distinct form of humor. Focusing upon folk-humor, in this course we will examine the history of this perception, and study different manifestations of Jewish humor as a particular case study of ethnic in general. Specific topics for analysis will be: humor in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish humor in Europe and in America, JAP and JAM jokes, Jewish tricksters and pranksters, Jewish humor in the Holocaust and Jewish humor in Israel. The term paper will be collecting project of Jewish jokes.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Ben-Amos
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: FOLK 296, JWST 102, NELC 254
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 261 Topics in German Cinema
This is a topics course. Specific topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 259, GRMN 259, GRMN 550
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 262 Topics In 20th-Century American Literature
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century American literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. See the Comp Lit website for current course description at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 263
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 256 Jewish Films and Literature
From the 1922 silent film "Hungry Hearts" through the first "talkie," "The JazzSinger," produced in 1927, and beyond "Schindler's List," Jewish characters have confronted the problems of their Jewishness on the silver screen for a general American audience. Alongside this Hollywood tradition of Jewish film, Yiddish film blossomed from independent producers between 1911 and 1939, and interpreted literary masterpieces, from Shakespeare's "King Lear" to Sholom Aleichem's "Teyve the Dairyman," primarily for an immigrant, urban Jewish audience. In this course, we will study a number of films and their literary sources (in fiction and drama), focusing on English language and Yiddish films within the framework of three dilemmas of interpretation: a) the different ways we "read" literature and film, b) the various ways that the media of fiction, drama, and film "translate" Jewish culture, and c) how these translations of Jewish culture affect and are affected by their implied audience. All readings and lectures in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Hellerstein
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 279, ENGL 279, GRMN 261, JWST 263
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 266 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature: Short Story Reinvented
The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students’ literary understanding.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: JWST 259, NELC 259, NELC 559
Prerequisite: HEBR 054
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 269 Fascist Cinemas
Cinema played a crucial role in the cultural life of Nazi Germany and other fascist states. As cinema enthusiasts, Goebbels and Hitler were among the first to realize the important ideological potential of film as a mass medium and saw to it that Germany remained a cinema powerhouse producing more than 1000 films during the Nazi era. In Italy, Mussolini, too, declared cinema "the strongest weapon." This course explores the world of "fascist" cinemas ranging from infamous propaganda pieces such as The Triumph of the Will to popular entertainments such as musicals and melodramas. It examines the strange and mutually defining kinship between fascism more broadly and film. We will consider what elements mobilize and connect the film industries of the Axis Powers: style, genre, the aestheticization of politics, the creation of racialized others. More than seventy years later, fascist cinemas challenge us to grapple with issues of more subtle ideological insinuation than we might think. Weekly screenings with subtitles. All readings and discussions in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: MacLeod
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 257, GRMN 257, ITAL 257
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and discussions in English.

COML 270 German Cinema
An introduction to the momentous history of German film, from its beginnings before World War One to developments following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German reunification in 1990. With an eye to film's place in its historical and political context, the course will explore the "Golden Age" of German cinema in the Weimar Republic, when Berlin vied with Hollywood; the complex relationship between Nazi ideology and entertainment during the Third Reich; the fate of German film-makers in exile during the Hitler years; post-war film production in both West and East Germany; the call for an alternative to "Papa's Kino" and the rise of New German Cinema in the late 1960's. All readings and discussions in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: MacLeod
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 258, GRMN 258
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 271 Topics In 20th-Century Literature
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 361
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 272 French Literature in Translation
The content of the course will vary from semester to semester. All works read in English. Please check the department's website for a description.
https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pb. Prerequisite: Two 200-level French courses taken at Penn or equivalent.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 360, FREN 250, HIST 251
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.
COML 274 Topics: Twentieth Century Poetry
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century poetry intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 262
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 275 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature
Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and 'queerness' in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.
Taught by: Shams
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COML 574, GSWS 275, GSWS 575, NELC 290, NELC 574
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

COML 277 Jewish American Literature
What makes Jewish American literature Jewish? What makes it American? This course will address these questions about ethnic literature through fiction, poetry, drama, and other writings by Jews in America, from their arrival in 1654 to the present. We will discuss how Jewish identity and ethnicity shape literature and will consider how form and language develop as Jewish writers "immigrate" from Yiddish, Hebrew, and other languages to American English. Our readings, from Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology, will include a variety of stellar authors, both famous and less-known, including Isaac Mayer Wise, Emma Lazarus, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Celia Dropkin, Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, and Allegra Goodman. Students will come away from this course having explored the ways that Jewish culture intertwines with American culture in literature. All readings and lectureuse in English.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Hellerstein
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 263, JWST 277
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 280 Contemporary Italy: Pop Culture, Politics, and Peninsular Identity
Is the land of good food, beautiful landscapes, and la bella vita really how it looks in the movies? Where do our ideas about Italy come from and how do they compare to the realities of its cultural production and its contemporary day-to-day life? This cultural survey course on contemporary Italy will investigate the similarities and divergences of these perceptions by researching current social, political, and media trends and putting them face to face with our preconceived notions. The course will cover major cultural trends from fashion and food trends, to eco-Italy, criminality and the Anthropocene, to immigration, to Black and LGBTQ Italia, to contemporary transfeminism, to Berlusconismo and Populism, to Netflix Italia and Social media culture. Through written assignments both in and outside the classroom, oral presentations, and multimedia projects we will critically reflect on these contemporary issues and gain a stronger understanding of the socio-cultural specificity of the Italian cultural landscape and its relationship to contemporary global socio-political trends and identities.
Taught by: Dr. Julia Heim
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ITAL 282
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 281 Topics Poetry and Poetics
This course explores an aspect of poetry and poetics intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. Prerequisite: Spaces will be reserved for English majors See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 269
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 282 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation: Autobiography
Like James Joyce's Dublin, Carl Sandburg's Chicago, or even Woody Allen's Paris, cities have long been the object of yearning and the subject of art. In the time of a pandemic, the idea of the city is associated with new challenges and emotions. This course examines how cities are forged in cinema, literature and scholarship as well as the role of their architecture. While we focus on Israeli cities like Jerusalem, Tiberias, or Tel Aviv, we'll compare their artistic portrayals to those of American, German, and Iraqi cities, among others. The psychological and physical bond between writers or directors and their respective places is metabolized in their poetry, prose, and films, and so artistic representations of cities often reflect the inner world, personal relations, or social and national conflicts.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 159, JWST 154, NELC 159
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
COML 283 Jewish Folklore
The Jews are among the few nations and ethnic groups whose oral tradition occurs in literary and religious texts dating back more than two thousand years. This tradition changed and diversified over the years in terms of the migration of Jews into different countries and historical, social, and cultural changes that these countries underwent. The course attempts to capture the historical and ethnic diversity of Jewish folklore in a variety of oral literary forms.
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FOLK 280, JWST 260, NELC 258
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 284 Black Italy: Transnational Identities and Narratives in Afro-Italian Literature
This course focuses on how the migration movements to Italy, mainly from the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa in the '80s and '90s contributed to change Italy's status and image. From a country of emigration to other parts of the world, Italy became - as many historians, geographers, and scholars have observed - an immigration site, playing a pivotal role in the African diaspora. In the shadow of Italy's colonialist heritage (a past that Italy still has not fully confronted), these phenomena of mass migration challenge, complicate, and develop the notion of Italian-ness and undermine the fixity of an Italian identity in favor of multicultural and transnational identities. This course focuses on several Black Italian artists, writers, filmmakers, and activists of Somali, Eritrean, Tunisian, Ethiopian, and Egyptian origins (e.g. migrants or children of immigrants who were born or raised in Italy and children of mixed-race unions) who contribute to broaden the definition of Italian-ness and to challenge its racial, social, and cultural boundaries. Students will analyze short stories, novels, documentaries, songs, blogs, journal articles by Igiaba Scego, Cristina Ali Farah, Gabriella Ghermandi, Medhin Paolos, Fred Kudjo Kuwornu, Amir Issaa, Amara Lakhouss, Pap Khouma, and Kaha Mohamed Aden, among others. They describe their multicultural identities, their senses of belonging, their feelings for the place that is depriving them of foundational rights (such as citizenship or a legal status), their nostalgia for their homeland or the countries where their parents were born, their fights to find or create a social and literal space where being recognized as foreigners or worse as “clandestini.” Their works offer an original, complex, and multilayered depiction of contemporary Italy and its social and cultural changes, where the African community is becoming larger and better represented. Some questions this course will ask include: what are the historical and geographical components of blackness in Italy? How, if at all, have these phenomena of migration changed Italian identity? How do black Italians live within the context of anti-blackness? How do these Italian writers and artists relate to African American and Latinx theatre and performance from a hemispheric perspective. In particular, we will study how Latin American and Latinx artists engage with notions of identity, nation, and geo-political and geo-cultural borders, asking how we might study “national” theatres in an age of transnational globalization. Our consideration of plays, performances, and theoretical texts will situate Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance within the context of its politics, culture, and history.
Taught by: Thompson
Also Offered As: ENGL 049, LALS 286, THAR 286
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 285 Theatre and Politics
This course will examine the relationship between theatre and politics in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. How do theatre artists navigate their artistic and political aims? How do we distinguish between art and propaganda? Throughout the semester we will ask how the unique components of theatre—its poetic structure, engagement with spectators, aesthetics of representation, relationship to reality, and rehearsal process—contribute to its political capacity. Students will read a variety of plays drawn from late twentieth century and contemporary global theatre practice alongside political and aesthetic theory to interrogate the relationship between artistic production, power, and resistance. We will conclude with a consideration of the ways politics is itself a performance, considering how power is supported by theatrical means and how performance functions in resistance movements.
Taught by: Thompson
Also Offered As: ENGL 287, THAR 282
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 286 Latin American and Latinx Theatre and Performance
This course will examine contemporary Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance from a hemispheric perspective. In particular, we will study how Latin American and Latinx artists engage with notions of identity, nation, and geo-political and geo-cultural borders, asking how we might study “national” theatres in an age of transnational globalization. Our consideration of plays, performances, and theoretical texts will situate Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance within the context of its politics, culture, and history.
Taught by: Thompson
Also Offered As: ENGL 287, LALS 286, THAR 286
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 287 Ethnic Humor
Humor in ethnic societies has two dimensions: internal and external. The inside humor of an ethnic group is accessible to its members; it draws upon their respective social structures, historical and social experiences, languages, cultural symbols, and social and economic circumstances and aspirations. The external humor of an ethnic group targets members of other ethnic groups, and draws upon their stereotypes, and attributed characteristics by other ethnic groups. The external ethnic humor flourishes in immigrant and ethnically heterogenic societies. In both cases jokes and humor are an integral part of social interaction, and in their performance relate to the social, economic, and political dynamics of traditional and modern societies.
Taught by: Ben-Amos, D.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FOLK 202, NELC 287
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 290 Topics In Gender, Sexuality, and Literature
The advanced women's studies course in the department, focusing on a particular aspect of literature by and about women. Topics might include: “Victorian Literary Women”; “Women, Politics, and Literature”; “Feminist Literary Theory”; and similar foci.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 290, ENGL 290, GSWS 290
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 291 Topics In Literary Theory
This course explores an aspect of literary theory intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year. Prerequisite: Spaces will be reserved fr English majors
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 294, GSWS 296
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 292 Topics Film Studies
Specific course topics vary from year to year.
Taught by: Beckman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 289, CIMS 202, ENGL 292
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 295 Topics in Cultural Studies
This course explores an aspect of cultural studies intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 293, CIMS 295, ENGL 295
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 299 Cinema and Media
This course will provide an introduction to some of the most important film theory debates and allow us to explore how writers and filmmakers from different countries and historical periods have attempted to make sense of the changing phenomenon known as “cinema,” to think cinematically. Topics under consideration may include: spectatorship, authorship, the apparatus, sound, editing, realism, race, gender and sexuality, stardom, the culture industry, the nation and decolonization, what counts as film theory and what counts as cinema, and the challenges of considering film theory in a global context, including the challenge of working across languages. There will be an asynchronous weekly film screening for this course. No knowledge of film theory is presumed.
Taught by: Redrobe/Mazaj
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 295, ARTH 695, CIMS 305, ENGL 305, GSWS 295
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 300 Topics in Italian History, Literature, and Culture
Topics vary. Please check the department’s website for course description: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/complit/
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 300, ENGL 231, ITAL 300
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. Topics will vary from year to year.

COML 302 Odyssey & Its Afterlife
As an epic account of wandering, survival, and homecoming, Homer’s Odyssey has been a constant source of themes and images with which to define and redefine the nature of heroism, the sources of identity, and the challenge of finding a place in the world.
Taught by: Murnaghan
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: CLST 302
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 304 Topics In Classicism and Literature: Epic Tradition
This advanced seminar will examine the classical backgrounds of western medieval literature, in particular the reception of classical myth and epic in the literature of the Middle Ages. Different versions of the course will have different emphases on Greek or Latin backgrounds and on medieval literary genres. Major authors to be covered include Virgil, Ovid, Chaucer, and the Gawain-poet.
Taught by: Copeland
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 360, ENGL 229, GSWS 228
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 307 Love, Lust and Violence in the Middle Ages
Medieval Europe was undoubtedly gruff and violent but it also gave birth to courtly culture - raw worries transformed into knights who performed heroic deeds, troubadours wrote epics in their honor and love songs about their ladies, women of the elite carved out a place in public discourse as patrons of the arts, and princely courts were increasingly defined by pageantry from jousting tournaments to royal coronations. This course will trace the development of this courtly culture from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, from its roots in Southern France to its spread to Northern France and then to various kingdoms in Europe. Central themes will include the transformation of the warrior into the knight, the relationship between violence and courtliness, courtly love, cultural production and the patronage, and the development of court pageantry and ceremony. This is a class cultural history and, as such, will rely on the interpretation of objects of art and material culture, literature as well as historical accounts.
Taught by: KUSKOWSKI
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: GSWS 307, HIST 307
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 308 Imagining Environmental Justice
What does it mean to imagine environmental justice? Our course explores a range of narrative forms from distinct global contexts, to ask what environmental justice looks like in a world where the effects of colonialism and climate change are unevenly distributed across populations. Sustained engagement with Indigenous North American, African American, Palestinian, and South African imaginary traditions will highlight diverse ways of relating to land, water and nonhuman animals challenge that challenge capitalist and colonial logics of extraction. This course asks students to comparatively and critically reflect on literary, filmic, and fictional narratives that engage in different ways with the question of justice. Course materials highlight not only instances of spectacular environmental catastrophe but also more subtle effects on bodies and landscapes, attending to the complex ways that environmental crisis intersects with race, gender and sexuality. The class will enable participants to translate these ideas into practice by producing public-facing content through creative modes of enquiry. Ultimately, we will strive to understand how various forms of artistic and creative expression might enable us to imagine more equitable futures.
Taught by: Macklin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 339, ENGL 309
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 321 National Literatures
A course that traces how particular literary texts, very often medieval, are adopted to become foundational for national literatures. Key moments of emphasis will be the early nineteenth century, the 1930s, and (to some extent) the unfolding present. Research subsuming this offering has been conducted over the last years, both in my editing of Europe: A Literary History, 1348-1418 (2 vols and 82 chapters, Oxford UP, 2016) and in preparation for "Medieval Studies in Troubled Times: the 1930s," to be offered as Presidential plenary at the Medieval Academy of America convention at Penn on 9 March 2019. I have also travelled and lectured extensively for Penn Alumni Travel over the last decade, crossing national boundaries and also pondering how complex literary issues might be framed for a broad (but exceptionally intelligent) audience. Issues arising in traversing Mediterranean space are explored in an article published (in Italian) in Studi migranti. Some texts immediately suggest themselves for analysis. The Song of Roland, for example, has long been fought over between France and Germany; each new war inspires new editions on both sides. The French colonial education system, highly centralized, long made the Chanson de Roland a key text, with the theme of Islamic attack on the European mainland especially timely, it was thought, during the Algerian war of independence. Germany also sees the Niebelungenlied as a key text, aligning it with the Rhine as an impeccably Germanic: but the Danube, especially as envisioned by Stefan Zweig, offers an alternative, hybridized, highly hyphenated cultural vision in running its Germanic-Judaic-Slavic-Roman course to the Black Sea. The course will not be devoted exclusively to western Europe. Delicate issues arise as nations determine what their national epic needs to be. Russia, for example, needs the text known as The Song of Igor to be genuine, since it is the only Russian epic to predate the Mongol invasion. The text was discovered in 1797 and then promptly lost in Moscow's great fire of 1812; suggestions that it might have been a fake have to be handled with care in Putin's Russia. Similarly, discussing putative Mughal (Islamic) elements in so-called "Hindu epics" can also be a delicate matter. Some "uses of the medieval" have been exercised for reactionary and revisionist causes in the USA, but such use is much more extravagant east of Prague. And what, exactly, is the national epic of the USA? Preference given to Ben Franklin students.
Taught by: Wallace
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 321
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Preference given to Ben Franklin students

COML 322 Advanced Topics in Global Gender and Sexuality Studies
How do sex and gender become sites of cultural production, identity-formation, and contentious politics? This seminar engages these questions in the context of the "Middle East" as a constructed geopolitical space for imperial politics and political intervention. The class is divided into three units. In the first unit, we engage feminist and queer theories to discuss the shifting meanings of "sex" and "gender" in transnational and postcolonial contexts. In the second unit we explore the contextual and shifting notions of "private" and "public" as they have been elaborated in political theory, feminist theory, and media studies. We also consider how different media technologies enable and constrain the performance and expression of gender and sexual identities. In the last unit, we examine the material and symbolic construction of sex and gender in the shadow of Orientalism, the War on Terror, Multiculturalism, and the recent Arab uprisings. In this unit, we consider how geopolitics are refracted in public controversies around issues like gay rights, female genital mutilation, the veil, and honor killing.
Also Offered As: GSWS 322, SOCI 322
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 324 Sanskrit Literature in Translation
This course will focus solely on the specific genres, themes, and aesthetics of Sanskrit literature (the hymn, the epic, the lyric, prose, drama, story literature, the sutra, etc.) and a study of the history and specific topics of Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy. All readings will be in translation.
Taught by: Patel
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 624, SAST 324, SAST 624
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 333 Dante's Divine Comedy
In this course we will read the Inferno, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso, focusing on a series of interrelated problems raised by the poem: authority, fiction, history, politics and language. Particular attention will be given to how the Commedia presents itself as Dante's autobiography, and to how the autobiographical narrative serves as a unifying thread for this supremely rich literary text. Supplementary readings will include Virgil's Aeneid and selections from Ovid's Metamorphoses. All readings and written work will be in English. Italian or Italian Studies credit will require reading Italian texts in the original language and writing about their themes in Italian. This course may be taken for graduate credit, but additional work and meetings with the instructor will be required. When crosslisted with ENGL 323, this is a Benjamin Franklin Seminar.
Taught by: Brownlee
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 323, ITAL 333
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 334 A Survey of Sanskrit, Pakrit, and Classical Tamil Literature in Translation
This course will cover most of the genres of literature in South Asia's classical languages through close readings of selections of primary texts in English translation. Special focus will be given to epics, drama, lyric poetry, satirical works, and religious literature.
Taught by: Patel
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 334, SAST 534
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 343 Nineteenth Century European Intellectual History
Starting with the dual challenges of Enlightenment and Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century, this course examines the emergence of modern European thought and culture in the century from Kant to Nietzsche. Themes to be considered include Romanticism, Utopian Socialism, early Feminism, Marxism, Liberalism, and Aestheticism. Readings include Kant, Hegel, Burke, Marx, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Darwin, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.
Taught by: Breckman
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: HIST 343
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 344 20th Century European Intellectual History
European intellectual and cultural history from 1870 to 1950. Themes to be considered include aesthetic modernism and the avant-garde, the rebellion against rationalism and positivism, Social Darwinism, Second International Socialism, the impact of World War One on European intellectuals, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and the ideological origins of fascism. Figures to be studied include Nietzsche, Freud, Woolf, Sartre, Camus, and Heidegger.
Taught by: Breckman
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: HIST 344
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 353 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory
This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.
Taught by: Fakhreddine
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COML 505, NELC 494
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 357 Myth In Society
In this course we will explore the mythologies of selected peoples in the Ancient Near East, Africa, Asia, and Native North and South America and examine how the gods function in the life and belief of each society. The study of mythological texts will be accompanied, as much as possible, by illustrative slides that will show the images of these deities in art and ritual.
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FOLK 229, NELC 249
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 359 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature
This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: JWST 359, JWST 659, NELC 359, NELC 659
Prerequisite: HEBR 059
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 369 Literary Translation
This course is for graduate students and undergraduates with permission of the instructor. All students enrolled must have knowledge of at least one language other than English. We will study the history, theory and practice of literary translation, and participate in it. Readings will include theoretical works in translation studies, using selections from Lawrence Venuti’s Translation Studies Reader and Schulte/Biguenet's Translation Theory Reader, with some supplemental readings; we will also look at comparative cases of multiple translations of the same original, and analyze how different translators make different interpretative/formal/aesthetic choices. Course assignments will include both a research paper, on the history and/or theory of translation, and an extended practical translation exercise, to be worked over the course of the semester, consisting of a literary translation of a text of the student’s choice.
Taught by: Wilson
Also Offered As: CLST 369, CLST 569
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 378 Topics in Literature and Society
This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 293
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 380 The Bible in Translation
This course introduces students to one specific Book of the Hebrew Bible. "The Bible in Translation" involves an in-depth reading of a biblical source against the background of contemporary scholarship. Depending on the book under discussion, this may also involve a contextual reading with other biblical books and the textual sources of the ancient Near East. Although no prerequisites are required, this class is a perfect follow-up course to "Intro to the Bible."
Taught by: Cranz
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: JWST 255, NELC 250, NELC 550, RELS 224
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 383 French & Italian Modern Horror
This course will consider the horror genre within the specific context of two national cinemas: France and Italy. For France, the focus will be almost exclusively on the contemporary period which has been witnessing an unprecedented revival in horror. For Italy, there will be a marked emphasis on the 1960s-1970s, i.e. the Golden Age of Gothic horror and the giallo craze initiated by the likes of Mario Bava and Dario Argento. Various subgenres will be examined: supernatural horror, ghost story, slasher, zombie film, body horror, cannibalism, etc. Issues of ethics, gender, sexuality, violence, spectatorship will be examined through a variety of critical lenses (psychoanalysis, socio-historical and cultural context, aesthetics, politics, gender, etc.).
Taught by: Met
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 383, FREN 383, ITAL 383
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 384 Capitalism, (Neo)Colonialism, Racism, and Resistance
This interdisciplinary seminar examines theory and artistic productions, including literature, films, and performance art, that analyze and critique capitalism, imperialism and (neo)colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. It examines history and culture from an international perspective, giving particular attention to works from the Global South (and from Latin America, especially) as well as works addressing the history of racialized groups within the Global North. The course will focus on the 20th and 21st centuries, although it will also address earlier histories of capitalism and colonialism in order to trace their co-constitution and the emergence of modern racism. We will consider questions such as the following: What is the role of culture and literature in (neo)colonial domination and anticolonial resistance? What is globalization, how does it perpetuate global inequality, and how has art contributed to the international anti-globalization movement? How have people sought liberation from oppression and exploitation, and how have they mobilized cultural productions to this end? Why are immigrants targeted for repression and what can stories about immigrants’ lives teach us about contemporary capitalism, including U.S. imperialism? What forces have given rise to 21st century fascism and how are intellectuals, activists and artists contesting it? The course will address key theories and concepts from anticolonial and postcolonial thought, Marxist social and literary theory, critical development studies, world systems analysis, and transnational Latin American & Latinx studies.
Taught by: Ponce de Leon
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 370, LALS 370
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 385 Japanese Theater
Japan has one of the richest and most varied theatrical traditions in the world. In this course, we will examine Japanese theatre in historical and comparative contexts. The readings and discussions will cover all areas of the theatrical experience (script, acting, stage, design, costumes, music, audience). Audio-visual material will be used whenever appropriate and possible. Requirements include short writing assignments, presentations, and one research paper. Reading knowledge of Japanese and/or previous course-work in literature/theatre will be helpful, but not required. The class will be conducted in English, with all English materials.
Taught by: Kano
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: EALC 255, EALC 655, FOLK 485, THAR 485
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 390 Introduction to Spanish American Literature
Topics vary. Please see the Spanish Department’s website for the current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/hispanic-portuguese-studies/pc
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 390, GSWS 391, LALS 396, SPAN 390
Prerequisite: SPAN 219 OR SPAN 223
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 391 Topics In Film Studies
This topic course explores aspects of Cinema Studies intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the COML website at <http://comlit.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 389, CIMS 392, ENGL 392
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 392 Topics in Postcolonial Literature
This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 393, SAST 323
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Benjamin Franklin Seminar

COML 393 Queering North African Subjectivities
This seminar will explore the ways in which literary and visual representations of sexual difference and gender roles disrupt the cultural imagination of everyday life in North Africa and its Diasporas. Special attention will be given to representations of Arab women and queer subjectivities as sites of resistance against dominant masculinity. We will analyze the ways in which representations of gender have allowed for a redeployment of power, a reconfiguration of politics of resistance, and the rewriting of longstanding images of Islam in France. Finally, we will question how creations that straddle competing cultural traditions, memories and material conditions can queer citizenship. Course taught in English.
Taught by: Gueydan-Turek
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: AFRC 392, FREN 392, GSWS 392
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 396 History of Literary Criticism
This is a course on the history of literary theory, a survey of major debates about literature, poetics, and ideas about what literary texts should do, from ancient Greece to examples of modern European thought. The first half of the course will focus on early periods: Greek and Roman antiquity, especially Plato and Aristotle; the medieval period (including St. Augustine, Dante, and Boccaccio), and the early modern period (such as Philip Sidney and Giambattista Vico). In the second half of the course we will turn to modern concerns by looking at the literary (or "art") theories of some major philosophers and theorists: Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Walter Benjamin. We end the course in the mid-twentieth century. The purpose driving this course is to consider closely how this tradition generated questions that are still with us, such as: what is the act of interpretation; what is the "aesthetic"; what is "imitation" or mimesis; and how are we to know an author's intention. During the semester there will be four short writing assignments in the form of analytical essays (3 pages each). Students may use these small essays to build into a long piece of writing on a single text or group of texts at the end of the term. Most of our readings will come from a published anthology of literary criticism and theory; a few readings will be on Canvas.

Taught by: Copeland
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 396, ENGL 396
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 397 Psychoanalysis and Autobiography
Both psychoanalysis and autobiography are ways of re-telling a life. Psychoanalysis is often called "the talking cure" because, as patients tell the analyst more and more about their lives (their thoughts, dreams, memories, hopes, fears, relationships, jobs, and fantasies), they start to recognize themselves in new ways, and this can help them overcome conflicts, impasses, bad feelings, and even psychiatric illnesses that have kept them from flourishing. Autobiographers do something similar as they remember, re-examine, and re-tell their lives - though one very important difference is that they do so, not privately in a psychoanalyst's office, but publicly in books that anyone may read. This seminar is a comparative exploration of these different ways of a re-telling a life. We'll ask: What sorts of narratives do patients and autobiographers construct? What is the "truth" of such narratives? How complete can they be? What are the potential risks and benefits of re-telling one's life, either (aloud) in psychotherapy or (in writing) in an autobiography? What is the role of the analyst/reader in the construction of such narratives? What are the possibilities and limits of self-analysis? Students will come away from the course with a general understanding of 1) psychoanalytic theory and practice from Freud to the present, 2) the literary genre of autobiography, and 3) the meaning and importance of narrative in all of our lives. Seminar readings will include 1) famous psychoanalytic case-histories and other major works of clinical theory and metapsychology by such authors as Christopher Bollas, Muriel Dimen, Erik Erikson, Sigmund Freud, Kay Redfield Jamison, Deborah Luepnitz, Theodor Reik, and Roy Schafer, and 2) major autobiographical works by such authors as St. Augustine, James Baldwin, Alison Bechdel, Vladimir Nabakov, Friedrich Nietzsche, Annie Rogers, Lauren Slater, and Barbara Taylor. In addition to the required reading and regular participation in seminar discussion, students will write several very short essays, prepare and deliver a brief presentation to the class, and write/produce a hybrid creative-scholarly autobiographical project that will be due at the end of the semester.

Like most courses affiliated with the Psychoanalytic Studies Minor, this seminar will be team-taught by a humanities scholar (Prof. Cavitch) and a practicing psychoanalyst (Dr. Moore), who designed the course together. Feel free to contact them if you have any questions about this seminar: cavitch@english.upenn.edu / markmoorephd@icloud.com.

Taught by: Cavitch
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: ENGL 395, GSWS 389
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 399 Independent Study
Supervised study for Juniors.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COML 411 Introduction to Written Culture, 14th - 18th Centuries
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for each semester's topic: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/

Taught by: Chartier/Stallybrass
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 234, HIST 411
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 418 Europe Intellectual History Since 1945
This course concentrates on French intellectual history after 1945, with some excursions into Germany. We will explore changing conceptions of the intellectual, from Sartre's concept of the 'engagement' to Foucault's idea of the 'specific intellectual'; the rise and fall of existentialism; structuralism and poststructuralism; and the debate over 'postmodernity.'
Taught by: Breckman
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: HIST 418
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 432 Arabic Readings in Belles-Lettres
This course aims to improve reading skills and vocabulary by introducing students to extensive passages taken from a variety of Arabic literary genres from all periods. Taught in MSA with writing assignments in MSA.
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: ARAB 432
Prerequisite: ARAB 036 OR ARAB 636
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 498 Honors Thesis
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COML 499 Independent Study
Supervised study for Seniors.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study
1.0 Course Unit

COML 501 History of Literary Theory
Over the last three decades, the fields of literary and cultural studies have been reconfigured by a variety of theoretical and methodological developments. Bracing and often confrontational dialogues between theoretical and political positions as varied as Deconstruction, New Historicism, Cultural Materialism, Feminism, Queer Theory, Minority Discourse Theory, Colonial and Post-colonial Studies and Cultural Studies have, in particular, altered disciplinary agendas and intellectual priorities for students embarking on the professional study of literature. In this course, we will study key texts, statements and debates that define these issues, and will work towards a broad knowledge of the complex rewriting of the project of literary studies in process today. The reading list will keep in mind the Examination List in Comparative Literature. We will not work towards complete coverage but will ask how crucial contemporary theorists engage with the longer history and institutional practices of literary criticism.
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: CLST 511, ENGL 601, GRMN 534, REES 500
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 504 Electronic Literary Studies Proseminar
This course is designed to introduce advanced undergraduate and graduate students to the range of new opportunities for literary research afforded by recent technological innovation.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 506, CIMS 505, ENGL 505
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 505 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory
This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.
Taught by: Fakhreddine
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COML 353, NELC 434
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 509 Modernist Jewish Poetry
One version of this seminar considers works by Jewish women who wrote in Yiddish, Hebrew, English, and other languages in the late 19th through the 20th century. The texts, poetry and prose, will include both belles lettres and popular writings, such as journalism, as well as private works (letters and diaries) and devotional works. The course will attempt to define "Jewish writing," in terms of language and gender, and will consider each writer in the context of the aesthetic, religious, and national ideologies that prevailed in this period. Because students will come with proficiency in various languages, all primary texts and critical and theoretical materials will be taught in English translation. However, those students who can, will work on the original texts and share with the class their expertise to foster a comparative perspective. Because we will be discussing translated works, a secondary focus of the course will, in fact, be on literary translation's process and products.
Taught by: Hellerstein
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: GRMN 509, GSWS 509, JWST 509, YDSH 509
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 510 Masters in Liberal Arts Seminar
This MLA course in the history of art explores an aspect of Art History and Theory, specific course topics vary. Please see the College of Liberal and Professional Studies Course Guide for a description of current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 505, CIMS 502, GSWS 574
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 511 Life Writing: Autobiography, Memoir, and the Diary
This course introduces three genres of life writing: Autobiography, Memoir and the Diary. While the Memoir and the diary are older forms of first persons writing the Autobiography developed later. We will first study the literary-historical shifts that occurred in Autobiographies from religious confession through the secular Eurocentric Enlightenment men, expanded to women writers and to members of marginal oppressed groups as well as to non-European autobiographies in the twentieth century. Subsequently we shall study the rise of the modern memoir, asking how it is different from this form of writing that existed already in the middle ages. In the memoirs we see a shift from a self and identity centered on a private individual autobiographer to ones that comes from connections to a community, a country or a nation; a self of a memoirist that represents selves of others. Students will attain theoretical background related to the basic issues and concepts in life writing: genre, truth claims and what they mean, the limits of memory, autobiographical subject, agency or self, the autonomous vs. the relational self. The concepts will be discussed as they apply to several texts. Some examples are: parts of Jan Jacques Rousseau’s Confessions; the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin; selected East European autobiographies between the two world wars; the memoirs of Lady Ann Clifford, Sally Morgan, Mary Jamison and Saul Friedlander. The third genre, the diary, is a person account, organized around the passage of time, and its subject is in the present. We will study diary theories, diary's generic conventions and the canonical text, trauma diaries and the testimonial aspect, the diary's time, decoding emotions, the relation of the diary to an audience and the process of transition from archival manuscript to a published book. The reading will include travel diaries (for relocation and pleasure), personal diaries in different historical periods and countries, diaries in political conflict (as American Civil War women’s diaries, Holocaust diaries, Middle East political conflicts diaries). We will conclude with diaries online, and students will have a chance to experience and report about differences between writing a personal diary on paper and diaries and blogs on line. Each new subject in this online course will be preceded by an introduction. Specific reading and written assignments, some via links to texts will be posted weekly ahead of time. We will have weekly videos and discussions of texts and assigned material and students will post responses during these sessions and class presentations in the forums.
Taught by: Ben-Amos, B.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Online Course
1.0 Course Unit

COML 513 A Black Seed (He) Sowed: An Introduction to Paleography & History of Books
Writing and reading are common actions we do every day. Nonetheless they have changed over the centuries, and a fourteenth century manuscript appears to us very different from a Penguin book. The impact of cultural movements such as Humanism, and of historical events, such as the Reformation, reshaped the making of books, and therefore the way of reading them. The course will provide students with an introduction to the history of the book, including elements of paleography, and through direct contact with the subjects of the class: manuscripts and books. Furthermore, a section of the course will focus on digital resources, in order to make students familiar with ongoing projects related to the history of book collections (including the "Philosophical Libraries” and the "Provenance” projects, based at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and at Penn). The course will be conducted in English; a basic knowledge of Latin is desirable but not required.
Taught by: Del Soldato
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: ITAL 511
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 518 Old Church Slavonic: History, Language, Manuscripts
The language that we know today as Old Church Slavonic was invented, along with the Slavic alphabet(s), in the 9th century by two Greek scholars, Sts. Cyril and Methodius. They had been tasked by the Byzantine Emperor with bringing the Christian faith to the Slavic-speaking people of Great Moravia, a powerful medieval state in central Europe. From there, literacy, along with the Christian faith, spread to other Slavs, and even non-Slavic speakers, such as Lithuanians and Romanians. Church Slavonic and its regional variants were used to compose the oldest texts of the Slavic-speaking world, which today is comprised of Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Knowledge of this language and tradition aids in understanding the cultural, literary, and linguistic history of any modern Slavic language. For learners of Russian and other Slavic languages, Church Slavonic provides a layer of elevated stylistic vocabulary and conceptual terminology, similar to, and even greater than, the role of Latin and Greek roots in the English language. For historical linguists, Church Slavonic provides unique material for comparison with other ancient Indo-European languages, such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. For medievalists and cultural historians, it opens the door into the Slavic Orthodox tradition that developed in the orbit of the Byzantine Commonwealth. The course introduces students to the linguistic basics of Old Church Slavonic and its later variants, paying special attention to its cultural and historical context and its material culture - manuscripts. We will focus on the Russian variant of Church Slavonic but can also examine other variants (Serbian, Croatian, Bulgarian, or Ruthenian, should there be interest). The course is suitable for advanced undergraduate and graduate students. Knowledge of a Slavic language is a significant advantage but is not necessary.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 518
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 519 Translating Literature: Theory and Practice
Taught by: Hellerstein
Also Offered As: GRMN 537, JWST 537
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 522 Chaucer
An advanced introduction to Chaucer's poetry and Chaucer criticism. Reading and discussion of the dream visions, Troilus and Criseyde, and selections from Canterbury Tales, from the viewpoint of Chaucer's development as a narrative artist. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 525, GSWS 524, ITAL 525
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 523 The Trouble with Freud: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture
For professionals in the field of mental care, Freud's work is often regarded as outdated, if not problematic psychologists view his work as non-scientific, dependent on theses that cannot be confirmed by experiments. In the realm of literary and cultural theory, however, Freud's work seems to have relevance today, and is cited often. How do we understand the gap between a medical/scientific reading of Freud's work, and a humanist one? Where do we locate Freud's relevance today? The graduate course will concentrate on Freud's descriptions of psychoanalytic theory and practice, as well as his writings on literature and culture. Prerequisite: Readings and discussions in English.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 526, GSWS 525
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Reading and discussions in English.

COML 524 Petrarch
This course will study Petrarch's lyric poetry with reference to its Italian roots (Sicilian school, dolce stil nuovo) and European posterity, Renaissance and Baroque Petrarchism as well as impingement on the Romantics.
Taught by: Brownlee
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ITAL 535
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 533 Dante's Divine Comedy I
"Divine Comedy" in the context of Dante's medieval worldview and culture.
Taught by: Brownlee, K.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ITAL 531
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 534 Words are Weapons
This course focuses on the key themes of protest and resistance in contemporary South Asian literature. Most South Asian countries have been witnessing an endless wave of protests and resistance from various sections of public life for the last three decades. In India, for example, protest literature emerges not only from traditionally marginalized groups (the poor, religious and ethnic minorities, depressed castes and tribal communities), but also from upper-caste groups, whose protest literature expresses concerns over economic oppression, violence and the denial of fundamental rights. Literature is becoming an immediate tool to articulate acts of resistance and anger, as many writers and poets are also taking on new roles as political activists. In this class, we will read various contemporary works of short fiction, poetry and memoirs that focus on public protests and resistance. No pre-requisites or South Asian language requirements. All literary works will be read in English translations.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: COML 230, SAST 223, SAST 523
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit

COML 537 Topics in Cultural History
Topic for Fall 2021: Making and Marking Time. What is time? In the late 19th century, the questions of how to define time, how to slow it down, and, above all, how to accelerate movement have become a focus of the work by many European philosophers who have tried to come to terms with what is now termed as the Industrial Revolution, and the idea of "progress." And can time be understood as something continuous, or is it fragmented, proceeding in fits and bursts? Such contemplations on time have deeply influenced writers and visual artists alike. Marcel Proust was a reader of Henri Bergson and translated his theories of time into a concept of memory. Impressionist painters insisted on picturing fleeting moments, and composers experimented with temporal sequences. Thomas Mann has tried to navigate timelessness in a novel set on a "Magic Mountain." Virginia Woolf and James Joyce have pictured an entire universe in a single day (Mrs. Dalloway, Ulysses). Early 20th century Italian Futurists made the contemplation of time part of their manifestos, and expressionist writers and artists, as well as the supporters of the DADA movement in Germany or elsewhere in Europe were theorizing about time as well. This would influence their choice of genre and form, their writerly practice and technique. Pictures were set into motion in scholarly studies by photographer Eadweard Muybridge and finally in the new medium film. We may be able to understand a reconsideration of time as driving force for the modern movement, or simply "modernity." In this seminar, we will study a selection of literary texts of the late 19th century and the modernist movement, consider the philosophical background and changes in historiography, and consider the development in the visual arts at this time, in particular painting and the new media of photography and film.
Taught by Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 584, ENGL 563, GRMN 541
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 540 Franz Kafka and J. M. Coetzee
This seminar will listen attentively to the echoes of Franz Kafka in the novels of J.M. Coetzee. Building on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari’s concept of a minor literature, elaborated on the example of Kafka’s oeuvre, we will situate Kafka against the backdrop of the German-speaking Jewish community of Habsburg-era Prague and read Coetzee within the context of apartheid and his native South Africa. Beyond an investigation of empire and its aftermath, this course will consider the arguably posthuman ethics of these authors, examining them through the lens of animal studies and the environmental humanities in order to reveal how they anticipate and participate in current thinking on the Anthropocene. Reading Kafka’s fables beside Coetzee’s allegorical narratives, the seminar will follow the twisted course taken by literary justice from the Josef K. of Kafka’s Trial to Coetzee’s Life and Times of Michael K. Alongside these two towering figures, the influence of and affinities with other German-language authors (Heinrich von Kleist, Hugo von Hofmannsthall, Robert Walser) and Anglophone contemporaries (Samuel Beckett, Nadine Gordimer, Cormac McCarthy) will also be considered. Other works to be read will include Kafka’s Castle, In the Penal Colony, Metamorphosis and late animal stories as well as Coetzee’s The Life and Times of Michael K. In the Heart of the Country. Taught by: Fleishman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 640, GRMN 540
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 541 18th-century Visual Cultures of Race & Empire
This course approaches the Western history of race and racial classification (1600-1800) with a focus on visual and material culture, natural history, and science that connected Atlantic and Pacific worlds. Across the long eighteenth century, new knowledges about human diversity and species distinctions emerged alongside intensifications of global trade with Asia. The course will include case studies of chinoiserie textiles, portraits of consuming individuals, natural history prints and maps, Chinese export porcelain and furnishings, and "blackamoor" sculpture. Objects of visual and material culture will be studied alongside readings on regional and world histories that asserted universal freedoms as well as hierarchies of human, animal, and plant-kind. Keeping in mind that the idea of race continues to be a distributed phenomenon - across color, gender, class, religion, speech, culture - we will explore changing vocabularies of difference, particularly concerning skin color, across a range of texts and images. Knowledge often does not take written or literary form, and for this reason, we will study examples of visual and material culture as well as forms of technology that were critical to defining human varieties, to use the eighteenth-century term. Although we will be reading texts in English, some in translation, we will also account for European and non-European traditions - vernacular, indigenous - that informed scientific and imaginative writings about the globe. Topics may include cultural and species distinction, global circulations of commodities between the East and West Indies, the transatlantic slave trade, the casta system of racial classification in the Americas, religious and scientific explanations of blackness and whiteness, and visual representations of non-European people.
Taught by: Yang
Course usually offered in spring term
Also Offered As: ARTH 568, ENGL 544
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 542 Topics in Eighteenth-Century British Literature
This course covers topics in eighteenth-century British literature. Its emphases varies with instructor.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 542
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 543 The Elemental Turn
The unfolding effects of climate change—rising sea level, melting ice sheets, subsiding land masses, drought stricken regions, wild fires, air laden with greenhouse gases, and inundated cities—heighen our awareness of the elements: air, earth, fire and water. Within the context of the new materialism, philosophers, eco-critics, and writers are re-turning to the elements and encountering, at the same time, predecessor texts that assume new relevance. This seminar will place current thinking and writing about the elements into dialogue with older traditions ranging from the classical (Empedocles, Plato, Lucretius) to writers and thinkers of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., Goethe, Novalis, Tieck, Stifter, Bachelard, Heidegger, Boehme).
Taught by: Richter
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 535
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 545 Plato and Aristotle in the Renaissance
In one of the most evocative frescoes of the Renaissance, Raphael juxtaposes Plato and Aristotle. The pairing would seem obvious, since the two thinkers had been for centuries symbols of philosophy and wisdom. But only the recent revival of Plato, begun in the mid-fifteenth century, had allowed Latin West to gain a better understanding of Platonic philosophy and therefore to compare Plato’s doctrines directly to those of Aristotle. Were master and disciple in harmony? And if not, which of the two should be favored? Such questions were less innocent than one might think, and the answers to them had implications for philosophy, theology, speculation on the natural world, and even politics. The course will offer an overview of Renaissance philosophy and culture by focusing on the different ways in which Plato and Aristotle were read, interpreted and exploited between the fifteenth and seventeenth centuries. The course will be conducted in English; a basic knowledge of Latin is desirable but not required.
Taught by: Del Soldato
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 540, ITAL 540, PHIL 545
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Although the starting point for the Anthropocene is still under discussion, there is broad agreement that the industrial revolution and the turn to fossil fuels mark an intensification of humanity’s impact on the Earth. It may not be a coincidence that Kant’s proclamation of the Copernican revolution in philosophy, according to which human reason replaces the natural light of traditional metaphysics, falls roughly in the same period. Human finite cognition became the measure for God and his creation. The dawn of the era of human freedom and the ramped up exploitation of resources coincide. It is against this background that the Naturphilosophie of F. W. J. Schelling can become particularly interesting. The genesis of German idealism is closely related with the opposition between freedom and necessity that lies at the heart of Kant’s critical project. Kant associated the former with man and the latter with nature. In trying to bridge the gap between them, Schelling reinstates nature as an autonomous actor in its own right. Schelling’s thinking about nature chimed with the literary and empirical-scientific work of his contemporary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In the productive interplay of poetry, science, religion, and philosophical thought, Goethe and Schelling offer a critical alternative to philosophy in the aftermath of the Copernican revolution that may be viable or useful today as humanity tries to come to terms with anthropogenically induced climate change. This co-taught interdisciplinary seminar will focus on works by Schelling (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature, First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, On the World Soul) and Goethe (scientific writings, Faust I & II), in addition to engaging recent scholarship of Schelling and Goethe in relation to environmental humanities.
Taught by: Richter/Hahmann
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 525, PHIL 567
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 550 Stalinist Culture
This course will explore the cultural context in which the so-called Romantic Movement prospered, and will pay special attention to the relationship between the most notorious popular genres of the period (Gothic fiction and drama) and the poetic production of both canonical and emerging poets.
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: REES 549
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 552 Transalpine Tensions: Franco-Italian Rivalries in the Renaissance
In the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, France and the Italian States were bound together by linguistic, economic, political, and religious ties, and intellectual developments never flowed unilaterally from one country to the other. On the contrary, they were transnational phenomena, and French and Italian thinkers and writers conceived of themselves and their work both in relation to and in opposition to one another. This course will consider the most fundamental aspects of Franco-Italian cultural exchange in the medieval and early modern period, with an emphasis on humanism, philosophical and religious debates, political struggles, and the rise of vernacular languages in literary and learned discourse. Authors to be studied include Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Castiglione, Bembo, Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre, Du Bellay, Machiavelli, and Montaigne. In addition to learning the material covered in the course, students will gain expertise in producing professional presentations and research papers, and will also have the opportunity to consult original material from the Kislak Center. This course is open to undergraduates with permission of the instructors. It counts toward the undergraduate minor in Global Medieval Studies and the graduate certificate in Global and Medieval Renaissance Studies. Undergraduates must obtain permission from instructor to enroll.
Taught by: Soldato
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 541, ITAL 541
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 554 British Women Writers
A study of British women writers, often focusing on the women authors who came into prominence between 1775 and 1825.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 553, GSWS 553
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 555 Affect Theory and Power
This seminar will examine contemporary affect theory and its relationship with Michel Foucault’s theory of power. We will begin by mapping out Foucault’s “analytics of power,” from his early work on power knowledge to his late work on embodiment, desire, and the care of the self. We will then turn to affect theory, an approach which centralizes the non-rational, emotive force of power. No previous knowledge of theory is required.
Taught by: Schaefer
Also Offered As: GSWS 554, RELS 552
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 558 Major Renaissance Writers
This is a monographic course, which may be on Spenser, Milton, or other major figures of the period. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a complete description of the current offerings.
Taught by: Sanchez
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 538
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
**COML 559 Myth Through Time and In Time**
The textual and physical remains of Greek and Roman culture and belief as 'myth' entranced the post-antique European world and its neighbors. Makers, patrons and viewers manipulated those survivals to challenge and speak to a contemporary world. This course focuses on how and why artists and their patrons engaged the mythic and examines the various areas of political and religious life that sought animation through an evocation of narratives from the past. Readings and case studies will engage with very late antique, medieval, and early modern art, turning to the modern and contemporary as well. Moving to the modern lets us examine, among other things, how artists address the exclusionary histories of the past, to enable critiques of myths of supremacy by one gender, race, or culture over others.

Taught by: Kuttner, Brisman
Also Offered As: AAMW 559, ARTH 559, CLST 559, GRMN 559
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

**COML 561 Eighteenth-Century Novel**
Please check the Comp Lit website for the course descriptions.

Taught by: DeJean
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 660, FREN 560
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

**COML 562 Public Environmental Humanities**
This broadly interdisciplinary course is designed for Graduate and Undergraduate Fellows in the Penn Program in Environmental Humanities (PPEH) who hail from departments across Arts and Sciences as well as other schools at the university. The course is also open to others with permission of the instructors. Work in environmental humanities by necessity spans academic disciplines. By design, it can also address and engage publics beyond traditional academic settings. This seminar, with limited enrollment, explores best practices in public environmental humanities. Students receive close mentoring to develop and execute cross-disciplinary, public engagement projects on the environment.

Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ANTH 543, ENV 544, GRMN 544, URBS 544
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

**COML 564 Modern British Literature**
An introduction to British Literary Modernism. Specific emphasis will depend on instructor.

Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 564
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

**COML 565 Reading Benjamin Reading Kafka**
Readings and discussions in English. Walter Benjamin's study of the works of Franz Kafka is as enlightening as it can be bewildering. Moving from philology to Marxism, metaphysics to messianism, Daoism to Talmud, this densely argued piece elliptically touches on almost all of Kafka's published works in just four short sections. This seminar proposes a line-by-line reading Benjamin's 1934 "Franz Kafka on the Tenth Anniversary of His Death" with an eye to its literary, philosophical and religious contexts as well as to the rich history of its intellectual reception. Reading Kafka's works as the essay evokes them, we will situate this piece with regard to Benjamin's other writings, the essay's interlocutors (Brod, Scholem, Lukacs, Brecht) and its most illustrious interpreters (Adorno, Arendt, Celan, Hamacher).

Taught by: Fleishman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 545, JWST 565
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

**COML 566 The Long Nineteenth Century: Literature, Philosophy, Culture**
The present course will discuss German literature and thought from the period of the French Revolution to the turn of the twentieth century, and put it into a European context. In regard to German literature, this is the period that leads from the Storm and Stress and Romanticism to the political period of the Vormarz, Realism, and finally Expressionism; in philosophy, it moves from German Idealism to the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and neo-Kantian thought. It is also the period that saw the rise of the novel, and new forms of dramatic works. Painting moved out of the studio into plein air; the invention of photography made an imprint on all arts, and the rise of the newspaper led to new literary genres such as the feuilleton. Economically, Germany experienced the industrial revolution; politically, it was striving for a unification that was finally achieved in 1871. The nineteenth century saw the establishment of the bourgeoisie, the emergence of the German working class, and the idea of the nation state; it also saw Jewish emancipation, and the call for women's rights. Readings will focus on a variety of literary, political, and philosophical texts; and consider a selection of art works.

Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 777, GRMN 558
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 570 Topics in Criticism & Theory
Topic for Spring 2021: Cultures of Reading in Imperial Russia What did it mean to be a reader in imperial Russia? What did people read, and to what ends? How was literacy cultivated, and what were the social implications? In this course, students will read several canonical works of nineteenth-century Russian literature that thematize and foreground the act of reading: as a pursuit undertaken for the betterment of self, society, nation, and world; as a light pastime for the bored or underemployed; but also as an enterprise fraught with potential for moral or civic ruin. In addition to closely investigating allusions to the specific texts and authors read by literary characters, we will also examine the reading habits of our own authors as both consumers and producers of literary culture. We will consider these dynamics against a backdrop of constant fluctuations in educational policies, the book market, and the circulation of texts within and beyond Russia as we work together to develop an understanding of the imperial Russian reading public(s).
Taught by: Kim, Brian
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 573, CIMS 515, ENGL 573, GRMN 573, REES 683
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This course covers topics in literary criticism and theory. It’s specific emphasis varying with instructor.

COML 573 Inside the Archive
What is an archive, and what is its history? What makes an archival collection special, and how can we work with it? In this course, we will discuss work essays that focus on the idea and concept of the archive by Jacques Derrida, Michel de Certeau, Benjamin Buchloh, Cornelia Vismann, and others. We will consider the difference between public and private archives, archives dedicated to specific disciplines, persons, or events, and consider the relationship to museums and memorials. Further questions will involve questions of property and ownership as well as the access to material, and finally the archive’s upkeep, expansion, or reduction. While the first part of the course will focus on readings about archives, we will invite curators, and visit archives (either in person or per zoom) in the second part of the course. At Penn, we will consider four archives: (1) the Louis Kahn archive of architecture at Furness, (2) the Lorraine Beitler Collection of material relating to the Dreyfus affair, (3) the Schoenberg collection of medieval manuscripts and its digitalization, and (4) the University archives. Outside Penn, we will study the following archives and their history: (1) Leo Baeck Institute for the study of German Jewry in New York, (2) the Sigmund Freud archive at the Library of Congress, Washington, D.C., (3) the German Literary Archive and the Literturmuseum der Moderne in Marbach, Germany, and (4) the archives of the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 569, ENGL 671, GRMN 577, JWST 577
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 574 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality, and the Erotic in Persian Literature
Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various faces and shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and queerness in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homoeroticism in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.
Taught by: Shams
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: COML 275, GSWS 275, GSWS 575, NELC 290, NELC 574
Activity: Lecture
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: No prior knowledge of Persian is required as all literary works will be available in English translation. Students are expected to attend seminars and take part in discussions. Please note that this syllabus is subject to change.

COML 575 Topics in African Literature
This course is based on a selection of representative texts written in English, as well as a few texts in English translation. It involves, a study of themes relating to social change and the persistence of cultural traditions, followed by an attempt at sketching the emergence of literary tradition by identifying some of the formal conventions established writers in their use of old forms and experiments with new.
Taught by: Barnard
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 572, CIMS 572, ENGL 572
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 576 Italian Thought
This graduate seminar will explore how Italian writers, philosophers and film-makers responded to the impact of European modernity, touching upon difficult episodes such as the formation of race and nationalisms in the nineteenth century, the rise of fascism in the 1920s, the Second World War and the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary liberal democracies. A late-comer in the league of modern European nations and "backward" from many economic and cultural standards, Italy became, within a few short decades, a political laboratory of some of the most defining ideological forces of the 20th-century, including the rise of racial science and criminal anthropology, which paved the way to Nazi eugenics, Mussolini’s fascism, Gramsci’s original contribution of an "Italian-way" to Communism, and the birth of so-called Italian theory in contemporary philosophy. How did writers, authors and film-makers react to these ideological formations and political events? What forms and genres emerged in response to these dramatic historical forces? In tackling these questions, this course will put novels and films in conversation with theoretical texts at the intersection of postcolonial studies, queer studies, feminist studies, critical theory, and cultural anthropology, focusing on a number of overlapping areas. We will address, for example, the long-lasting impact that the Holocaust had in European culture in Primo Levi’s The Drowned and the Saved through Giorgio Agamben’s analysis of the relationship between biopolitics and fascism in Homo Sacer. We will read Elsa Morante’s novel History in conversation with Carlo Ginzburg’s notion of micro-history. And we will analyze Pasolini’s cinema in connection to scholarship in postcolonial studies, reading his representation of the Roman periphery as a synecdoche of the Global South. Critical readings may include texts by Ernesto De Martino, Antonio Gramsci, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Giorgio Agamben, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Walter Benjamin, Sigmund Freud, Fredric Jameson, Gilles Deleuze, Heather Love, Carla Freccero, Lee Edelman among others.
Taught by: Trentin
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: CIMS 585, ITAL 585
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 577 20th Century Poetry
Taught by: Bernstein
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 589
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 578 Spinoza After Marx
This seminar will focus on the thought of Baruch Spinoza and Karl Marx, tracing the effects of their encounter, not only in philosophy and critical theory, but in fields ranging from literary studies to environmental humanities. The second half of the twentieth century saw a revival of interest in Spinoza across the humanities and social sciences as a means of rethinking the very terms of philosophical and political debates of modernity. Mobilized for political purposes and contemporary demands, especially among Marxist theoreticians, Spinoza’s philosophy became virtually unrecognizable from its earlier forms of reception. This seminar departs from the following observation: on the one hand, this revival of Spinoza proved especially fruitful among Marxist theoreticians; on the other hand, the modes of interpretation of Spinoza and the adaptations of Spinoza and Marxism are highly heterogeneous and often conflictual. The seminar will ask: what is it about Spinoza’s thought that lends itself to a revival of Marxism? To what extent is Marx’s thought necessary for a reevaluation of Spinoza? Why Spinoza today? To address these questions, we will trace the multiple traditions that think Marx and Spinoza together: the deployment of Spinoza against Hegel to rejuvenate Marxism in France (Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, Gilles Deleuze, Chantal Jaquet); the development of theories of the multitude in the tradition of Autonomism in Italy (Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno); the vicissitudes of Spinozism among the Soviet Marxists (Lyubov Axelrod, Abram Deborin, Evald Ilyenkov). Likewise, we will investigate the most recent turn to the Marx-Spinoza tradition in psychoanalysis (A. Kiara Kordela), rethinking finance capitalism (Frederic Lordon), feminist theory (Moira Gatens), literary studies (Pierre Macherey, Anthony Uhlmann), and environmental humanities (Hasana Sharp, Beth Lord).
Taught by: Biareishyk
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 579
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 579 Slavic Literary Theory in Western Context
This course will compare selected theoretical concepts advanced by Russian Formalists, Prague Structuralists, and the Bakhtin group (e.g., defamiliarization, aesthetic sign, dialogue) with similar or analogous notions drawn from Western intellectual tradition.
Taught by: Steiner
Also Offered As: REES 575
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 580 Introduction to Bibliography
This course offers an introduction to the principles of descriptive and analytic bibliography and textual editing. The history of authorship, manuscript production, printing, publishing, and reading will be addressed as they inform an understanding of how a particular text came to be the way it is. Diverse theories of editing will be studied and put into practice with short passages. The course is generally suitable for students working in any historical period, but particular emphases specified in the current offerings on the English website. www.english.upenn.edu
Course offered fall; even-numbered years
Also Offered As: ENGL 574, HIST 574
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 582 Topics in Aesthetics
Topic title for Spring 2018: Walter Benjamin. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) is a philosopher whose writings on art, literature, and politics have had tremendous influence on many disciplines in the Humanities and Social Studies. He has been variously described as one of the leading German-Jewish thinkers, and a secular Marxist theorist. With the publication of a four-volume collection of this works in English, many more of his writings have been made accessible to a wider public. Our seminar will undertake a survey of his work that begins with his studies on language and allegory, and continues with his autobiographical work, his writings on art and literature, and on the imaginary urban spaces of the nineteenth-century.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 560, GRMN 580, JWST 582, PHIL 480
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 583 Materialism
How do we recognize materialism? This seminar poses this question by acknowledging "materialism" as a contested category with disparate and contradictory historical meanings: as a synonym for dogmatism, as the arch-enemy of reason and morality, as the scientific philosophy of the revolutionary workers' movement, as an alternative to (idealist) metaphysics, as a poetic practice, or as a central concern for material nature and environment, among others. Less concerned with enumerating philosophical systems, we will search out "family resemblances" and materialist tendencies among a wide range of texts. To this end, we will not only read the major historical texts of the so-called materialists (from Lucretius to Spinoza, from La Mettrie to Lenin), but also engage with materialism's supposed critics and antagonists (from Plato to Kant and Hegel). A special emphasis will be placed on the attempts to recuperate materialism as a positive category in recent critical theory and continental philosophy, for example, in the reinventions of Marxist and Spinozist traditions. We will also survey the attempts that found new traditions, such as aleatory materialism or various new materialisms. By reading exemplary literary texts that engage with the problem of materialism the seminar will also ask: can one speak of materialist poetics?
Taught by: Biareishyk
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 572
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 589 Fantastic Literature 19th/20th Centuries
This course will explore fantasy and the fantastic in short tales of 19th- and 20th-century French literature. A variety of approaches - thematic, psychoanalytic, cultural, narratological - will be used in an attempt to test their viability and define the subversive force of a literary mode that contributes to shedding light on the dark side of the human psyche by interrogating the "real," making visible the unseen and articulating the unsaid. Such broad categories as distortions of space and time, reason and madness, order and disorder, sexual transgressions, self and other will be considered. Readings will include "recits fantasstiques" by Merimee, Gautier, Nerval, Maupassant, Breton, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Jean Ray and others.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 582, FREN 582
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 590 Recent Issues in Critical Theory
This course is a critical exploration of recent literary and cultural theory, usually focusing on one particular movement or school, such as phenomenology, psychoanalysis, the Frankfurt School, or deconstruction. Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 580, ENGL 590, GSWS 589, LALS 590
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 591 Theories of Nationalism
You cannot build a wall to stop the free flow of literary and creative ideas. But in constructing narratives of national identity, states have long adopted particular texts as "foundational." Very often these texts have been epics or romances designated "medieval," that is, associated with the period in which specific vernaculars or "mother tongues" first emerged. France and Germany, for example, have long fought over who "owns" the Strasbourg oaths, or the Chanson de Roland; new editions of this epic poem, written in French but telling of Frankish (Germanic) warriors, have been produced (on both sides) every time these two countries go to war. In this course we will thus study both a range of "medieval" texts and the ways in which they have been claimed, edited, and disseminated to serve particular nationalist agendas. Particular attention will be paid to the early nineteenth century, and to the 1930s. Delicate issues arise as nations determine what their national epic needs to be. Russia, for example, needs the text known as The Song of Igor to be genuine, since it is the only Russian epic to predate the Mongol invasion. The text was discovered in 1797 and then promptly lost in Moscow's great fire of 1812; suggestions that it might have been a fake have to be handled with care in Putin's Russia. Similarly, discussing putative Mughal (Islamic) elements in so-called "Hindu epics" can also be a delicate matter. Some "uses of the medieval" have been exercised for reactionary and revisionist causes in the USA, but such use is much more extravagant east of Prague. And what, exactly, is the national epic of the USA? What, for that matter, of England? Beowulf has long been celebrated as an English Ur-text, but is set in Denmark, is full of Danes (and has been claimed for Ulster by Seamus Heaney). Malory's Morte Darthur was chosen to provide scenes for the queen's new robing room (following the fire that largely destroyed the Palace of Westminster in 1834), but Queen Victoria found the designs unacceptable: too much popery and adultery. Foundations of literary history still in force today are rooted in nineteenth-century historiography: thus we have The Cambridge History of Italian Literature and The Cambridge History of German Literature, each covering a millennium, even though political entities by the name of Italy and Germany did not exist until the later nineteenth century. What alternative ways of narrating literary history might be found? Itinerary models, which do not observe national boundaries, might be explored, and also the cultural history of watercourses, such as the Rhine, Danube, or Nile. The exact choice of texts to be studied will depend in part on the interests of those who choose to enroll. Faculty with particular regional expertise will be invited to visit specific classes.
Taught by: Wallace
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 594, ITAL 594
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 592 Topics in Contemporary Theory
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 592, ENGL 592
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.
COML 593 Modern/Contemporary Italian Culture
This is a topics course. One topic may be "Futurism, Classicism, Fascism" or "Philology and History." Please see the Comparative Literature website for the description.
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ITAL 581, JWST 581
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 596 Introduction to Francophone Studies
An introduction to major literary movements and authors from five areas of Francophonie: the Maghreb, West Africa, Central Africa, the Caribbean and Quebec.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 591, FREN 590
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 598 Theories of Gender & Sexuality
This course addresses the history and theory of gender and sexuality. Different instructors will emphasize different aspects of the topic. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a complete description of the current offerings.
Also Offered As: ENGL 598, GSWS 593
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 599 Topics in Cinema and Media
Spring 2016: Taking its title from a recent special issue in the journal Framework, this seminar will engage the where of film and media theory. At a moment when this discourse, often presumed to have roots in Anglo and Western European traditions, is purportedly undergoing a global turn, we will consider how some of film and media theory's key terms and preoccupations including realism, documentary, genre, identity, sound, spectatorship, nation, auteur, and screens are being inflected by expanded geographic, linguistic, aesthetic and cultural frames. We will grapple with some of the logistical challenges, motivations, resistances, and questions that scholars encounter as they attempt to shift film and media theory's borders; compare contemporary efforts to broaden the discourse's geographic horizon with earlier efforts to do the same; and consider what happens to the viewer's sense of space and place in different media environments. Course requirements: full participation in readings, screenings, discussion, and class presentations; 20-25 page research paper + annotated bibliography. Permission of instructor required for advanced undergraduates.
Taught by: Redrobe
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 593, CIMS 590, ENGL 593
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 600 Modern Literary Theory and Criticism
This course will provide an overview of major European thinkers in critical theory of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will pay particular attention to critical currents that originated in Eastern European avant-garde and early socialist contexts and their legacies and successors. Topics covered will include: Russian Formalism and its successors in Structuralism and Deconstruction (Shklovsky, Levi-Strauss, Jakobson, Derrida); Bakhtin and his circle, dialogism and its later western reception; debates over aesthetics and politics of the 1930s (Lukacs, Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin, Radek, Clement Greenberg); the October group; Marxism, new Left criticism, and later lefts (Althusser, Williams, Eagleton, Jameson, Zizek).
Taught by: Platt
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 605, FREN 605, GRMN 605, REES 605
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 603 Poetique de Recit
Please see the department's website for current course description:
https://www.sas.upenn.edu/COML/
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 603
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 605 Modern Literary Theory and Criticism
This course will provide an overview of major European thinkers in critical theory of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will pay particular attention to critical currents that originated in Eastern European avant-garde and early socialist contexts and their legacies and successors. Topics covered will include: Russian Formalism and its successors in Structuralism and Deconstruction (Shklovsky, Levi-Strauss, Jakobson, Derrida); Bakhtin and his circle, dialogism and its later western reception; debates over aesthetics and politics of the 1930s (Lukacs, Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin, Radek, Clement Greenberg); the October group; Marxism, new Left criticism, and later lefts (Althusser, Williams, Eagleton, Jameson, Zizek).
Taught by: Platt
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: ENGL 605, FREN 605, GRMN 605, REES 605
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 607 The Iliad and its Receptions
We will read selections from the Greek poem together, alongside some modern scholarship on it. We will also read Plato's Ion and the Battle of the Mice and Frogs, as evidence for Homer's ancient philosophical, rhetorical and poetic receptions. We will discuss the history of the poem's translation into English, focusing on earlier translations (Chapman, Hobbes, Pope) and discussing the instructor's goals and challenges in producing a new re-translation. We will also talk about two recent novelizations of the poem, Pat Barker's Silence of the Girls and Madeline Miller's Song of Achilles. The course is primarily intended for graduate students in Classical Studies and Ancient History, but it is also open to students in other programs, including those whose Greek might be less advanced. Prerequisite: most students should have a reading knowledge of Homeric Greek. If your Greek is rudimentary or non-existent, but you are keen to take the class and can bring other kinds of expertise to our discussions, please contact the instructor to discuss the possibility!
Taught by: Wilson
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GREK 607
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.
COML 608 Global France
The purpose of this course is to examine the various modalities of interaction between anthropology and literature in modern French culture. Our guiding thesis is that the turn toward other cultures has functioned as a revitalizing element in the production of cultural artifacts while providing an alternative vantage point from which to examine the development of French culture and society in the contemporary period. The extraordinary innovations of "ethnosurrealism" in the twenties and thirties by such key figures of the avant-garde as Breton, Artaud, Bataille, Callois, and Leiris, have become acknowledged models for the postwar critical thought of Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault, as well as inspiring a renewal of "anthropology as cultural critique in the United States." Besides the authors just indicated, key texts by Durkheim, Mauss and Levi-Strauss will be considered both on their own terms and in relation to their obvious influence. The institutional fate of these intellectual crossovers and their correlative disciplinary conflicts will provide the overarching historical frame for the course, from the turn of the century to the most recent debates.
Taught by: Richman
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 609
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 609 Italian Literary Theory
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ITAL 601
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 610 Ancient and Medieval Theories and Therapies of the Soul
This seminar focuses on premodern conceptions of the 'soul', the force felt to animate and energize a human body for as long as it was considered alive, and to activate virtually all aspects of its behavior through time. Premodern concepts of the soul attempted to account for a person's emotions and desires, perceptions, thoughts, memory, intellect, moral behavior, and sometimes physical condition. The course will trace the various ancient theories of the soul from the Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Stoic thought in Greek and Latin, medical writers (Hippocratics, Hellenistic doctors, Galen), and Neoplatonists, to the medieval receptions and transformations of ancient thought, including Augustine and Boethius, Avicenna's interpretation of Aristotle and its medieval influence, and Aquinas and other later medieval ethicists. These premodern conceptions of the soul have a surprisingly long afterlife, reaching into the literary cultures and psychological movements of early modernity and beyond. Knowledge of Greek or Latin not required, but see the following: The seminar will meet for one two-hour session per week, and a separate one-hour 'breakout' session during which students who have registered for GREEK 608 will meet to study a selection texts in Greek, and students who have registered for COML/ENGL will meet to discuss medieval or early modern texts relevant to their fields of study.
Taught by: Rosen and Copeland
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 706, GREEK 608
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 612 Hannah Arendt: Literature, Philosophy, Politics
The seminar will focus on Arendt's major work, The Origins of Totalitarianism (and its three parts, Anti-Semitism, Imperialism, Totalitarianism). We will also discuss the reception of this work and consider its relevance today.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 612, GRMN 612, JWST 612, PHIL 581
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 616 Approaches to Literary Texts
Most seminars focus on literary texts composed during a single historical period; this course is unusual in inviting students to consider the challenges of approaching texts from a range of different historical eras. Taught by a team of literary specialists representing diverse periods and linguistic traditions and conducted as a hands-on workshop, this seminar is designed to help students of literature gain expertise in analysis and interpretation of literary works across the boundaries of time, geography, and language, from classic to modern. Students will approach literature as a historical discipline and learn about key methodological issues and questions that specialists in each period and field ask about texts that their disciplines study. The diachronic and cross-cultural perspectives inform discussions of language and style, text types and genres, notions of alterity, fictionality, literariness, symbolism, intertextuality, materiality, and interfaces with other disciplines. This is a unique opportunity to learn in one course about diverse literary approaches from specialists in different fields. Master classes are taught by Kevin Brownlee, Linda Chance, Eva del Soldato, Huda Fakhreddine, Scott Francis, Nili Gold, Bridget Murnghan, Deven Patel, Kevin Platt, Michael Solomon, Emily Stein, Julia Verkholantsev, and Emily Wilson.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 636, EALC 715, ENGL 616, REES 616, ROML 616
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 618 Medieval Poetics
This course may include some of the following fields: studies of medieval stylistic practices, formal innovations, and theories of form; medieval ideas of genre and form; medieval thought about the social, moral, and epistemological roles of poetry; interpretive theory and practice; technologies of interpretation; theories of fiction (fabula) and allegory; sacred and secular hermeneutics; theories of language and the histories of the language arts; vernacular(s) and Latinitry; material texts.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 628, ENGL 721
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 620 Studies in the Eighteenth Century
This course varies in its emphases, but in recent years has explored the theory of narrative both from the point of view of eighteenth-century novelists and thinkers as well as from the perspective of contemporary theory. Specific attention is paid to issues of class, gender, and ideology.
Course usually offered in fall term
Also Offered As: FREN 660
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 622 Postmodernism
An advanced seminar on postmodernist culture. Recently offered as a study of relationship between poetry and theory in contemporary culture, with readings in poststructuralist, feminist, marxist, and postcolonial theory and in poets of the Black Mountain and Language groups.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 774
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 623 Literary History and Aesthetics in South Asia
This seminar surveys the multiple components of literary culture in South Asia. Students will engage critically with selected studies of literary history and aesthetics from the past two millennia. In order to introduce students to specific literary cultures (classical, regional, contemporary) and to the scholarly practices that situate literature in broader contexts of culture and society, the course will focus both on the literary theories - especially from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries - that position South Asia's literary cultures within broader disciplinary frameworks that use literary documents to inform social, historical and cultural research projects. The aim is to open up contexts whereby students can develop their own research projects using literary sources.
Taught by: Patel
Also Offered As: SAST 623
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 625 Global Perspectives in French Studies
This course explores the literal and literary landscapes of 19th-century Paris and Philadelphia, paying particular attention to the ways in which the built environment is shaped by and shapes shifting ideologies in the modern age. Although today the luxury and excesses of the "City of Light" may seem worlds apart from the Quaker simplicity of the "City of Brotherly Love," Paris and Philadelphia saw themselves as partners and mutual referents during the 1800's in many areas, from urban planning to politics, prisons to paleontology. This interdisciplinary seminar will include readings from the realms of literature, historical geography, architectural history, and cultural studies as well as site visits to Philadelphia landmarks, with a view to uncovering overlaps and resonances among different ways of reading the City. We will facilitate in-depth research by students on topics relating to both French and American architectural history, literature, and cultural thought.
Taught by: Goulet/Wunsch
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 620
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 626 Nineteenth-Century Novels: Representations of Work
A study of the tradition of "serio-comic" literature from ancient times to the present, focusing on works that combine ostensibly incompatible tones, genres, and themes to produce a particular sense of man in history. Readings include: the dialogues of Lucian, Petronius' SATYRICON, extracts from Rabelais and Boccaccio, GULLIVER'S TRAVELS, extracts from Sterne, and Gogol's DEAD SOULS. Students will be expected to attend a series of undergraduate lectures on these works; an additional hour will be scheduled in which the history and theory of menippean satire will be discussed. Special attention is given to general problems of genre theory that are raised by works that seem to challenge generic norms.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SPAN 630
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 627 South Asia Literature as Comparative Literature
The extent to which the narrative reflexes of the novel can accommodate and express the nature of human work are explored primarily in a study of two nineteenth-century writers, Eliot and Hardy. Reading for the course also includes novels and short stories of other nineteenth-century writers (Dickens, Zola, tolstoy, Stowe, Melville), and background reading on the social and philosophic theory of work.
Taught by: Goulding
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 627
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 630 Introduction to Medieval Literature
Topics vary. Previous topics include The Grail and the Rose, Literary Genres and Transformations, and Readings in Old French Texts. Please see the department's website for current course description:
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: FREN 630
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.
COML 632 The Sanskrit Epics
Ancient India’s two epic poems, composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, and emotional worlds of millions of people around the world. The epic Mahabharata, which roughly translates to The Great Story of the Descendants of the Legendary King Bharata, is the longest single poem in the world (100,000 lines of Sanskrit verse) and tells the mythic history of dynastic power struggles in ancient India. An apocalyptic meditation on time, death, and the utter devastation brought upon the individual and the family unit through social disintegration, the epic also houses one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), which offers a buoy of hope and possibility in the dark ocean of the epic’s violent narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama’s Journey), though essentially tragic, offers a brighter vision of human life, how it might be possible to live happily in an otherwise hopeless situation. It is about struggles for power in ancient India but it offers characters—especially Rama—that serve as ideals for how human beings might successfully negotiate life’s great challenges. It also provides a model of human social order that contrasts with dystopic polities governed by animals and demons. Our course will engage in close reading of selections from both of these epic poems (in English translation, of course) and thus learn about the epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting the epic. We will also look at the reception of these ancient works in modern forms of media, such as the novel, television, theater, cinema and the comic book/anime. In the process, through selected essays and reflections, we will pay special attention to the ways in which the ancient epics remain deeply relevant in the modern world, reflecting on topics such as the aesthetics of war, the psychic life of social ideals, and creative responses to ethical conflicts.
Taught by: Patel
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: SAST 631
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 643 Studies in the Renaissance
Topics vary. Previous topics have included Rabelais and M. de Navarre, Montaigne, and Renaissance and Counter-Renaissance. Please see department’s website for current course description:
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 640, GSWS 640
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 649 Socialist and Post-Socialist Worlds
In 1989-1991, a whole world, perhaps many worlds, vanished: the worlds of socialism. In this graduate seminar we will investigate key cultural works, theoretical constructs and contexts spanning the socialist world(s), focused around the USSR, which was for many the (not uncontested) center of the socialist cosmos. Further, we will study the cultural and political interrelationships between the socialist world(s) and anticolonial and left movements in the developing and the capitalist developed nations alike. Finally, we will investigate the aftermaths left behind as these world(s) crumbled or were transformed beyond recognition at the end of the twentieth century. Our work will be ramified by consideration of a number of critical and methodological tools for the study of these many histories and geographies. The purview of the course is dauntingly large - global in scale - and therefore “coverage” will of necessity be incomplete. In addition to the lead instructor, a number of guest instructors from Penn and from other institutions will join us to lead our investigations into specific geographies, moments and areas. Additionally, four weeks have been left without content, to be filled in via consensus decision by the members of the seminar.
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 649, REES 649
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 653 Topics in Russian and Soviet Cultural History
Course is topical. Please see department for most recent description.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 591, REES 653
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. Please see COML website for current description. 
<a href='http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/'>http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/</a>

COML 657 Becoming Modern
Yuri Slezkine described the twentieth century as a “Jewish Age” to be modern would essentially mean to be a Jew. In German historical and cultural studies, this linkage has long been made—only in reference to the last years of the German monarchy and the time of the Weimar Republic. Indeed, what has become known as “modern” German culture—reflected in literature, music, and the visual arts and in a multitude of public media—has been more often than not assigned to Jewish authorship or Jewish subjects. But what do authorship and subject mean in this case? Do we locate the German-Jewish experience as the driving force of this new “modernity” or is our understanding of this experience the result of this new “modern” world?
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 657, JWST 657
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 675 Topics in 19th Century Literature
Edgar Allan Poe was considered a vulgar hack by many of his fellow Americans, but in 19th-century France, he was touted as an ill-fated poetic genius, the original poete maudit. Through the translations and biographical essays of Charles Baudelaire, who found in Poe a kindred spirit in the "gout de l'infini," French intellectuals came to know the American writer as a model of compositional lucidity and morbid mastery. From his inklings of an urban modernity in "The Man in the Crowd" to the nevrotic perversity of "Berenice," Poe's aesthetics have cast an influential shadow on French culture. Beginning with Baudelaire, we will explore in this course the many literary and artistic movements in France that were directly inspired by Poe's uncanny mix of the macabre and the methodical: Symbolist poetry (Valery, Mallarme), the Scientific Fantastic (Maupassant, Villers de l'Isle-Adam), fin-de-siecle Decadence (Huysman, Odilon Redon), Science Fiction, (Verne), the detective novel (Gaboriau), and 20th-century Surrealism (Breton, Max Ernst).
Taught by: Goulet
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 675
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 677 The Life of Forms: Ontogenesis, Morphology, Literature
In recent years, the notions of form, formalism, and morphology have reentered contemporary debates across the humanities. This seminar considers the current resurgence of interest in form by tracing form's evolving concepts throughout modernity. It departs from the observation that experimentation with and debates on form in art and literature are inextricably linked to various notions of life and the living. These debates, this is the provisional thesis of the seminar, are the battlefield where literary and art criticism undermine the major presuppositions of the western metaphysical tradition (e.g., determinations of inside-outside, form-content, living-inorganic). On the one hand, the seminar will explore a selective genealogy of various attempts to dynamize the concept of form through theories of 1) ontogenesis (e.g., Spinoza, Simondon, Malabou), 2) morphology (e.g., Goethe, Propp, Goldstein), and 3) aesthetics (e.g., Baumgarten, Schlegel brothers, Adorno). On the other hand, in order to investigate the political, ideological, and methodological implications of differing concepts of form, the seminar will bring together texts from different disciplines, including literary studies (literary morphology, Russian Formalism), art history (Focillon, Kubler). On the other hand, in order to investigate the political, ideological, and methodological implications of differing concepts of form, the seminar will bring together texts from different disciplines ranging from literary studies (e.g., Jolles, Russian Formalism, Jauss), art history (e.g., Panofsky, Focillon, Kubler), philosophy (e.g., Wittgenstein, Blumenberg, Macherey), history of science (e.g., Vygotsky, Varela), and sociology (e.g., Tarde, DeLanda). Finally, the seminar will engage in close reading of exemplary literary and art works, and situate the findings on the conjunction of form and life in current debates on New Formalisms (e.g., Levine, Levinson, Kombluh) and New Materialisms (e.g., Bennett, Grosz).
Taught by: Biareishyk
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: GRMN 677
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: Graduate Seminar. Taught in English.

COML 680 Topics: Literature and Film
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for description.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 682, GSWS 682, ITAL 682
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 682 Seminar on Literary Theory
Topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 571, SPAN 682
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 683 Collective Violence, Trauma, and Representation
This seminar is organized as a laboratory space for graduate students and faculty working in a number of adjacent fields and problems. Seminar discussions will be led not only by the primary instructors, but also by a number of guests drawn from the Penn faculty. For the first weeks of the course, we will focus on seminal works in the interlinked areas of history and memory studies, cultural representations of collective violence, trauma studies, and other related topics. Beginning with the Xth week of the course, we will turn to case studies in a variety of geographic, cultural and historical contexts. Additionally, some later sessions of the course will be devoted to a presentation and discussion of a work in progress of a Penn graduate student, faculty member or a guest lecturer.
Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 791, LALS 683, REES 666
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 685 Literary Criticism and Theory in Japanese Literature
While the focus of this seminar will shift from year to year, the aim is to enable students to gain 1) a basic understanding of various theoretical approaches to literature, 2) familiarity with the histories and conventions of criticism, literary and otherwise, in Japan; 3) a few theoretical tools to think in complex ways about some of the most interesting and controversial issues of today, such as nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, postmodernism, and feminism, with particular focus on Japan's position in the world. The course is primarily intended for graduate students but is also open to advanced undergraduates with permission of the instructor. The course is taught in English, and all of the readings will be available in English translation. An optional discussion section may be arranged for those students who are able and willing to read and discuss materials in Japanese. This course will be taught in English and all texts will be read in English translation.
Taught by: Kano
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EALC 755
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 686 Topics: Literature and Film
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for description.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CIMS 682, GSWS 682, ITAL 682
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 687 Seminar on Literary Theory
Topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 571, SPAN 682
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 688 Literary Criticism and Theory in Japanese Literature
While the focus of this seminar will shift from year to year, the aim is to enable students to gain 1) a basic understanding of various theoretical approaches to literature, 2) familiarity with the histories and conventions of criticism, literary and otherwise, in Japan; 3) a few theoretical tools to think in complex ways about some of the most interesting and controversial issues of today, such as nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, postmodernism, and feminism, with particular focus on Japan's position in the world. The course is primarily intended for graduate students but is also open to advanced undergraduates with permission of the instructor. The course is taught in English, and all of the readings will be available in English translation. An optional discussion section may be arranged for those students who are able and willing to read and discuss materials in Japanese. This course will be taught in English and all texts will be read in English translation.
Taught by: Kano
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EALC 755
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 696 Postcolonial Theory in Francophone Contexts
This seminar will introduce students to key texts and influential figures coming from, focusing on, or relevant to Francophone postcolonial contexts. Following a brief review of Anglophone postcolonial criticism, readings for the course will fall under three categories: Authors from the 1940s to present who have focused exclusively on (post)colonial issues pertaining to Africa, the Caribbean and/or postcolonial France; contemporary European, African and North American literary critics; humanities scholars whose work would not necessarily be labeled "postcolonial" but is nevertheless relevant to postcolonial criticism.
Taught by: Moudileno
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: FREN 696
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 700 African Literature and Society
An advanced seminar in anglophone African literature, possibly including a few works in translation.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 775, ENGL 775
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 710 Political Economy and Social History of Africa and the African Diaspora
This course provides the opportunity for students to investigate the relationship between the emergence of African peoples as historical subjects and their location within specific geopolitical and economic circumstances.
Taught by: Hanchard
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 710, LALS 710, PSCI 711
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 711 Theory in/and East Asia
"Theory" can be exciting and seductive to some scholars, but intimidating or pretentious to others. Unfortunately, this difference in feeling about theoretical scholarship and discussion has a tendency to produce a divide in academia between those who "do theory" and those who do not. This graduate seminar pursues the question of how theory can be engaged in the context of East Asian cultural studies, with the goal of collectively working through texts to understand how theoretical reflection opens up possibilities for productive conversations across disciplinary boundaries. Many critiques have been made of the way "traveling theory" serves as a Euro-American universal applied to the "raw material" of East Asian texts, or a transdisciplinary common language in the Humanities and Social Sciences. Instead, we will take such critiques as a starting point to pragmatically and creatively explore the intersections and interactions of "theory" and "East Asia," emphasizing the archival, historical, political, and institutional contexts that motivate theorization. In that spirit, special attention will be given to discussing what problems we find in our own work that require theoretical consideration, and how such considerations might contribute to, challenge, or transform but may also include Japanese, Chinese, or Korean depending on student interest and language abilities.
Taught by: Poland
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: EALC 711
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 714 Middle English Literature
This seminar will study a number of selected Middle English texts in depth. Attention will be paid to the textual transmission, sources, language, genre, and structure of the works. Larger issues, such as the influence of literary conventions (for example, "courtesy love"), medieval rhetoric, or medieval allegory will be explored as the chosen texts may require.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: CLST 610, ENGL 715
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 730 Topics in 16th-Century History and Culture
This is an advanced course treating topics in 16th Century history and culture particular emphasis varying with instructor.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 730
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 734 Renaissance Drama
This is a topics course. For Spring 2015, the topic is Genre and Performative Media.
Taught by: Bushnell
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 734
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 736 Renaissance Studies
This is an advanced topics course treating some important issues in contemporary Renaissance studies.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 736
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 738 Victorian British Literature
An advanced seminar treating some topics in Victorian British Literature, usually focusing on non-fiction or on poetry. See the Comparative Literature and Literary Theory Program's website for descriptions of the current offerings at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/
Also Offered As: ENGL 753
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 767 Modernism
An interdisciplinary and international examination of modernism, usually treating European as well as British and American modernists.
Taught by: Saint-Amour
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 773
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 769 Feminist Theory
Specific topic varies. The seminar will bring together the study of early modern English literature and culture with histories and theories of gender, sexuality and race. Contact with ‘the East’ (Turkey, the Moluccas, North Africa and India) and the West (the Americas and the Caribbean) reshaped attitudes to identity and desire. How does this history allow us to understand, and often interrogate, modern theories of desire and difference? Conversely, how do postcolonial and other contemporary perspectives allow us to re-read this past?
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 769, GSWS 769, NELC 783, SAST 769
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 781 Writing Sound--Sounding Literature
Seminar on selected topics in sound studies. Please see department website http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/ for current term course descriptions.
Taught by: Waltham-Smith
One-term course offered either term
Also Offered As: MUSC 781
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 786 Topics in 20th Century Art
Topics vary from year to year.
Taught by: Poggi
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ARTH 786, ITAL 685
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit

COML 790 Recent Issues in Critical Theory
Course varies with instructor.
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: ENGL 790, GSWS 790
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 791 African Film and Media Pedagogy
This graduate seminar offers an intensive, critical, and collaborative study of contemporary African film and media production. The past three decades have seen an unprecedented shift in the African media landscape. Not only has the wide availability of satellite media across the continent made international film and television programming part of African popular culture, but moreover the growing film industries within the continent, most notably Nollywood, have altered how Africans are carving an image of themselves on the big and small screens. In partnership with local, regional, and international film and media centers, we will study a range of films--features, shorts, documentaries, and television shows--paying close attention to the means and sites of production as well as the formal qualities that distinguish these works. Many of the films we will analyze stand out both for their exceptional aesthetic quality as well as their remarkable ability to confront pressing political and social themes. But we will also think about trash: what counts as trashy media, and for whom? Who watches it, where, and why? Other questions we will ask include: What particular indigenous modes of storytelling do African films employ? What categories begin to emerge under the umbrella category of “African film and media?” and where do diasporan film and media practitioners and critics fit in this landscape? How are these films tackling some of the urgent questions of our times, including migration and globalization; ethnic, political, and economic polarization; gender and sexuality; and massive urbanization and industrialization sweeping Africa and other parts of the Global South? What role do festivals in various countries play in shaping media production and distribution? How important is the concept of authorship in this context? And how do these films challenge the dominant western trope of Africa as a spectacle, instead offering novel ways of picturing everyday African experiences that we rarely glimpse in western media?
To explore these questions, we will visit multiple sites of film production, distribution, exhibition, and education, including Scribe Video Center in Philadelphia, Sankofa Films in Washington, D.C., and the College of Performing and Visual Art at Addis Ababa University in Ethiopia. Location and knowledge production are inextricably connected, and by considering African media production from these multiple sites, and collaborating with multiple stakeholders, this course offers a directly engaged pedagogy of the complex artistic, cultural, social, and political dynamics of African audiovisual creation. The travel component of this course entails a day trip to Washington, D.C. during the semester (tentative date: April 2, 2020) and a week-long trip to Addis Ababa at the end of the spring term (students applying for this course should be prepared to travel to Addis Ababa May 30, 2020-June 7, 2020). All expenses for travel, accommodation, and food will be covered, but students will need to hold a passport. Ultimately, this course aims to use film and media production to intervene in a larger discourse on how Africa is figured in the global humanities, not as an absent or passive actor but one actively engaged in producing art and humanistic knowledge that has much to teach us and the world. Admission to the course will be by permission only and students are required to submit a short statement of interest (max. 250 words) to dagw@english.upenn.edu and redkaren@sas.upenn.edu. Students must be prepared to travel to Addis Ababa and Washington D.C. as described in the syllabus, and must hold a passport.
Taught by: Redrobe/Woubshet
Course not offered every year
Also Offered As: AFRC 791, ARTH 791, CIMS 791, ENGL 777
Activity: Seminar
1.0 Course Unit
COML 981 M.A. Exam Prep
Course open to first-year Comparative Literature graduate students in preparation for required M.A. exam taken in spring of first year. 
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar 
1.0 Course Unit

COML 998 Independent Study and Research
Designed to allow students to pursue a particular research topic under the close supervision of an instructor.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study 
1.0 Course Unit

COML 999 Independent Reading and Research
May be taken for multiple course credit to a maximum of two for the M.A. and four for the Ph.D. Designed to allow students to broaden and deepen their knowledge of literary theory, a national literature, and/or an area of special interest.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Independent Study 
1.0 Course Unit