

# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COML)

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## COML 0004 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: SAST 0004

1 Course Unit

## COML 0006 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: RELS 0006, SAST 0006

1 Course Unit

## COML 0007 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, and the Arts and Letters sector requirement.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: SAST 0007

1 Course Unit

## COML 0011 In Praise of the Small in Literature and the Arts

We can memorize aphorisms and jokes, carry miniature portraits with us, and feel playful in handling 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 0011

1 Course Unit

## COML 0015 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: How 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.

Spring, odd numbered years only

Also Offered As: ENGL 1745, GSWS 0051

1 Course Unit

## COML 0017 Hipster Philosophy from Marx to Zizek

From Wes Anderson to Williamsburg, hipster culture is everywhere. And yet the very notion of the hipster remains notoriously difficult to define—whether we perceive this cultural phenomenon as the waste product of the postmodern, as a new form of consumerism, as a peculiar attitude toward irony and authenticity, as scenester posturing or as just plain cool. This course addresses such tensions through an examination of the intellectual history of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Each week pairs philosophical and theoretical readings with an artifact of hipster culture: reading Instagram beside Walter Benjamin, ironic facial hair with Friedrich Nietzsche, Facebook through the lens of Georg Lukacs and indie music alongside Theodor Adorno. No previous knowledge of skinny jeans required.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 0015

1 Course Unit

**COML 0021 Study of a Theme in Cinema**

This introduction to literary study examines a compelling theme central to a set of cinematic texts. The theme's function within specific historical contexts, within varying media technologies, and within contemporary culture, will all be emphasized. In presenting a range of materials and perspectives, this course is an ideal introduction to literary study. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 0021, ENGL 0021

1 Course Unit

**COML 0022 Study of a Theme in Global Literature**

This introduction to literary study examines a compelling literary theme by attending to texts from around the globe. The theme's function within multiple historical and regional contexts, within literary history generally, and within contemporary culture, will all be emphasized. In presenting a range of materials and perspectives, this course is an ideal introduction to literary study. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 0022

1 Course Unit

**COML 0030 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.

Fall

Also Offered As: ENGL 0160, ENGL 2303, GSWs 0003

1 Course Unit

**COML 0038 Study of a Genre: World Autobiography**

An introduction to literary study through world literature. The course will introduce you to the manifold connections between theories of world literature and fields such as globalization studies, translation studies, comparative literature, and postcolonial studies. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0038

1 Course Unit

**COML 0041 Study of a Period in Cinematic History**

This is an introduction to the study of cinema and culture through a survey of works from a specific historical period. This course is ideal for students wishing to explore a significant era, and it presents a range of films and contexts for understanding the cultural products of a period. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 0041, ENGL 0041

1 Course Unit

**COML 0052 Literature and Society: Introduction to Psychoanalysis**

The course will introduce students to the broad and ever-expanding spectrum of psychoanalytic ideas and techniques, through reading and discussion of major works by some of its most influential figures. We will also read some literary, historical, philosophical, and anthropological works that have special relevance to the psychoanalytic exploration of the human condition. In addition to the other requirements it satisfies, this course may also be counted toward completion of the Psychoanalytic Studies minor (<http://web.sas.upenn.edu/psys/>). See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0052

1 Course Unit

**COML 0080 Laughter and Tricky Topics**

This course takes a comparative approach to studying the philosophy and praxis of laughter in a variety of artistic media — texts, films, performances and memes. We will seek to develop a critical apparatus to answer the following questions: How does laughter unite us? How does it divide us? How does it contribute to identity and community formation? We will focus on humoristic expression produced in contexts considered too serious for lightheartedness, such as death, race and gender-related oppression, and disenfranchisement. Together, we will wonder whether everything can be a laughing matter, if irony is even funny (and what does it mean anyway?), and whether humor has the potential to effect meaningful sociopolitical change. Our theoretical corpus will include works by Bakhtin, Baudelaire, Bergson, and Freud, who conceptualized laughter in wildly different ways—respectively as carnivalesque, satanic, social, and as a coping mechanism. In the 1940s, René Ménéil, a Franco-Caribbean philosopher, synthesized these early theories and further developed them into a means of resistance for colonial subjects. To see these concepts in action, we will engage with materials spanning three centuries, from a short story written by Jonathan Swift to contemporary French comedies (subtitled in English). Should laughter occur throughout the semester, its causes will be dutifully analyzed and presented in diverse oral and written assignments.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 0080, FREN 0080

1 Course Unit

**COML 0081 Decolonizing French Food**

Wine and cheese, baguettes and croissants, multiple courses and fresh ingredients straight from the market—these are the internationally recognized hallmarks of French food. Yet, even as the practices surrounding the mythical French table have been deemed worthy of a place on UNESCO's World Heritage List since 2010, culinary traditions in France remain persistently rooted in legacies of colonialism that are invisible to many. In order to “decolonize” French food, this seminar turns to art, literature, and film, as well as archival documents such as advertisements, maps, and cookbooks. In what ways do writers and filmmakers use food to interrogate the human, environmental, and cultural toll that French colonialism has taken on the world? How do their references to food demonstrate the complex cultural creations, exchanges, and asymmetries that have arisen from legacies of colonialism? We will interpret artworks, read literature (in English or in translation), and watch films (subtitled in English) that span the twentieth and twenty-first centuries by authors and directors from across the Francosphere—from Haiti, Guadeloupe, and Martinique in the Caribbean; to Mauritius in the Indian Ocean; from the Vietnamese diaspora in France, Canada, and the United States; to North, Central, and West Africa. Just as food can be examined from many angles, our discussions will focus on art, literature, and film, but also take into account perspectives from the fields of history, anthropology, and environmental studies. Moreover, we will employ the theoretical tools supplied by food studies, feminist and gender studies, critical race studies, and postcolonial studies.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 0081, FREN 0081

1 Course Unit

**COML 0082 Caribbean Literature**

This course will introduce students to Caribbean literature. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 0082, ENGL 1220

1 Course Unit

**COML 0087 Desire and Deception in Medieval Erotic Literature**

In this course, we will investigate the ideology, content, and material forms of love literature from Dante Alighieri to Francesco Petrarca. Through close readings of such texts as Dante's *Vita nova* (ca. 1295), Giovanni Boccaccio's *Decameron* (ca. 1353), and Petrarca's *Rerum vulgarium fragmenta* (often referred to as the poetry book par excellence: *il canzoniere*, ca. 1374), we will unveil the literary and fictitious nature of medieval erotic literature. We will explore the origins of love poetry in medieval France and its subsequent interpretation and rewriting in Italian courts and comuni. We will inquire into the cultural constructions of the medieval notion of lyrical self and how it still has an impact on our own notion of consciousness. We will study the forms, themes, and characters that populate 'love stories' in the Middle Ages. We will analyze the dynamics of composition, circulation, and reception in manuscript culture. Our close analysis of the texts as they have been preserved in manuscript form will help us gauge the differences between medieval and contemporary ways of writing, reading, and loving.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GSWS 0087, ITAL 0087

1 Course Unit

**COML 0090 The Fantastic Voyage from Homer to Science Fiction**

Tales of voyages to strange lands with strange inhabitants and even stranger customs have been a part of the Western literary tradition from its inception. What connects these tales is that their voyages are not only voyages of discovery, but voyages of self-discovery. By describing the effects these voyages have on the characters who undertake them, and by hinting at comparisons between the lands described in the story and their own society, authors use fantastic voyages as vehicles for incisive commentary on literary, social, political, and scientific issues. In this course, we will see how voyage narratives as seemingly distant as Homer's *Odyssey* and Pierre Boullé's *Planet of the Apes* fit into a bigger tradition of speculative fiction. We will determine what the common stylistic elements of speculative fiction are, such as the frame narrative, or story-within-a-story, and what purpose they serve in conveying the tale's messages. We will see how voyagers attempt to understand and interact with the lands and peoples they encounter, and what these attempts tell us about both the voyagers and their newly discovered counterparts. Finally, we will ask ourselves what real-world issues are commented upon by these narratives, what lessons the narratives can teach about them, and how they impart these lessons to the reader. Readings for this course, all of which are in English or English translation, range from classics like the *Odyssey* and *Gulliver's Travels* to predecessors of modern science fiction like Jules Verne and H. G. Wells to seminal works of modern science fiction like Pierre Boullé's *Planet of the Apes*, Karel Čapek's *War with the Newts*, and Stanislaw Lem's *Solaris*. We will also look at how films like *Planet of the Apes* (1968) and *20,000 Leagues Under the Sea* (1954) or television shows like *Star Trek* and *Futurama* draw upon literary or cinematic models for their own purposes. Students will also have the opportunity to examine and present on pieces from the Mark B. Adams Science Fiction Collection at Penn's Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, which comprises over 2,000 volumes of science fiction, speculative fiction, and fantasy. This course is meant not only for SF fans who would like to become better acquainted with the precursors and classics of the genre, but for all those who wish to learn how great works of fiction, far from being intended solely for entertainment and escapism, attempt to improve upon the real world through the effect they have on the reader.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: FREN 0090

1 Course Unit

**COML 0095 Universal Language: From the Tower of Babel to Artificial Intelligence**

This is a course in European 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, it can explain the origins and meaning of human experience, and can enable universal understanding and world peace. The tantalizing question of the possibility of a universal language have been vital and thought-provoking throughout the history of humanity. The idea that the language spoken by Adam and Eve was a language which perfectly expressed the nature of all earthly objects and concepts has occupied the minds of intellectuals for almost two millennia. In defiance of the Christian biblical myth of the confusion of languages and nations at the Tower of Babel, they have over and over tried to overcome divine punishment and discover the path back to harmonious existence. By recovering or recreating a universal language, theologians hoped to be able to experience the divine; philosophers believed that it would enable apprehension of the laws of nature, while mystic cabbalists saw in it direct access to hidden knowledge. In reconstructing a proto-language, 19th-century Indo-Europeanist philologists saw the means to study the early stages of human development. Even in the 20th century, romantic idealists, such as the inventor of Esperanto Ludwik Zamenhof, strived to construct languages to enable understanding among estranged nations. For writers and poets of all times, from Cyrano de Bergerac to Velimir Khlebnikov, the idea of a universal and perfect language has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Today, this idea echoes in theories of universal and generative grammars, in approaching English as a global tongue, and in various attempts to create artificial languages, even a language for cosmic communication. Each week we address a particular period and set of theories to learn about universal language projects, but above all, the course examines fundamental questions of what language is and how it functions in human society.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1445, HIST 0822, REES 1177

1 Course Unit

**COML 0103 Doctors' Notes**

Internist. Surgeon. Essayist. Poet. When we go to the doctor, we hope to meet someone whose medical expertise will allow them to remain objective as they assess our symptoms, and, like a good detective, get to the bottom of things quickly and efficiently. What we may not expect is that the person wearing the white coat is also a staff writer for *The New Yorker*. In this course students will explore critical and creative writing by physicians deeply interested in reflecting on the medical encounter alongside intersectional and multi-ethnic narratives of illness and disability. Together, we will ask: what role does the "literary" play in medicine? How do representations of health and healing differ or change as we consider genres such as fiction writing, film, graphic novels, and autobiography from U.S., Caribbean, and Latin American perspectives? Reading these unconventional "doctors' notes" alongside patients' writing about their lived experiences of health and healing, we will reflect on how the turn to narrative reveals new facets of the doctor-patient relationship not contained by the traditional genres of medicine.

1 Course Unit

**COML 0104 On the Stage and in the Streets: An Introduction to Performance Studies**

What do Hamilton, RuPaul's Drag Race, political protest, TikTok Ratatouille, and Queen Elizabeth's funeral have in common? They all compose repertoires of performance. From artistic performances in theatres, galleries, and concert halls to an individual's comportment in everyday life, to sporting events, celebrations, courtroom proceedings, performance studies explores what happens when embodied activities are repeatable and given to be seen. In this course we ask: what is performance? How do we describe, analyze, and interpret it? What do theatre and everyday life have in common? How does performance legitimize or challenge the exercise of power? How has social media shifted our understanding of the relationship of our daily lives to performance? How does culture shape what is considered to be performance and how it functions? What isn't performance? Throughout the semester students will apply key readings in performance theory to case studies drawn from global repertoires of contemporary and historical performance. In addition to analyzing artistic performances, we will also consider sporting events, celebrations, political events, and the performance of everyday life. We will attend to the challenges provoked by performance's embodied, ephemeral, affective, effective, relational, and contingent aspects. Coursework will include discussion posts, class facilitation, and the opportunity to choose between a research paper or creative project for the final assessment.

Also Offered As: ANTH 1104, ENGL 1890, THAR 0104

1 Course Unit

**COML 0149 World Socialist Literature and Film**

In 1989-1991, a whole world, perhaps many worlds, vanished: worlds of socialism. In this course we will investigate key works of literature and film spanning the socialist world(s), focused around the USSR, which was for many the (not uncontested) center of the socialist cosmos for much of the twentieth century. 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. Readings and viewings may include works by: Tengiz Abuladze, Bertolt Brecht, Slavenka Drakulić, Sergei Eisenstein, Howard Fast, Ritwik Ghatak, Langston Hughes, Audre Lorde, Vladimir Mayakovsky, Pablo Neruda, Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, Sembène Ousmane, Jean-Marie Straub and Danièle Huillet, Rabindranath Tagore, Christa Wolf, Zhang Meng, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1460, REES 0149

1 Course Unit

**COML 0275 Montage and Revolution: Conceptual Cinema of Sergei Eisenstein**

The 1917 Russian Revolution was to inaugurate a new epoch in human history. Working with and within this time of political and cultural upheaval, Sergei Eisenstein inaugurated a revolution in montage technique that would usher a new age of cinema, a new practice of art, and a new way of thinking in images. Eisenstein's cinematic techniques aimed at producing concepts in the language of film. It also sought modes of expression inaccessible to discursive thought. Navigating a tenuous line between art and politics, Eisenstein's works explore the social and political power of affectivity and expressivity, and the cinematic potential for both representing and eliciting emotion in individual viewers and masses alike. In conversation with the tumultuous political and cultural shifts of the Soviet society from the revolutionary 1920s to the age of Stalinism and the World War II, this course will follow Eisenstein's filmography, from his monumental reconstruction of the revolutionary Petersburg in October to the engagement with representations of history during the Stalinist era in *Ivan the Terrible*. We will engage with Eisenstein's theoretical writings, his cartoons and sketches, public speeches, and his lost and unrealized projects, such as his collaboration with Hollywood and a plan to film Marx's *Capital*. In this process, we will learn basic tenets of film and aesthetic theory, while practicing the analysis of film with attention to form and content. Following the lead of Eisenstein's artistic and theoretical production, we will engage with questions his work raises: How can cinematography elicit and manipulate the emotions of its viewer? What is expressivity? Can film represent philosophical concepts? What is cinema's relation to propaganda and politics? What is revolutionary about the medium of film, and what is film's role in the revolution? No prior knowledge of Russian history, culture or society is required, nor is specialized knowledge of film history or film analysis. All readings will be in English, and all films will be subtitled in English.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 0275, REES 0275

1 Course Unit

**COML 0303 First Year Seminar: National Epics**

In this course we will consider texts that become "national epics," texts that in some sense come to "represent" a nation. How and when might such imaginative texts emerge? Nations change, and old poems may no longer serve. Can the Song of Roland, once compulsory study for all schoolchildren in France, still be required reading today— especially if I am French Muslim? What about *El Cid* in Spain? How do some texts— such as the Mahabharata in India, or *Journey to the West* in China— seem more adaptable than others? The course begins in western Europe, but then pivots across Eurasian space to become gradually more global. Most all of us have complex family histories: Chinese-American, French Canadian, Latino/a/x, Jewish American, Pennsylvania Dutch, Lenni Lenape. Some students may choose to investigate, for their final project, family histories (and hence their own, personal connection to "national epics").

Also Offered As: ENGL 0303

1 Course Unit

**COML 0310 Reading the City (First-Year Seminar)**

This first-year seminar will consider how nineteenth-century literature helped transform the city into the symbolic nerve center of modern social life, and it will follow the changing shapes of urbanism across contexts and into the present. To make sense of these conflicting meanings, we will examine what versions of the city take shape in fiction, poetry, social theory, photography, film, and contemporary writing and media. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0310

1 Course Unit

**COML 0315 Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages in Translation**

Course explores the cultural history of Jews in the lands of Islam from the time of Mohammed through the late 17th century (end of Ottoman expansion into Europe) —in Iraq, the Middle East, al-Andalus and the Ottoman Empire. Primary source documents (in English translation) illuminate minority-majority relations, internal Jewish tensions (e.g., Qaraism), and developments in scriptural exegesis, rabbinic law, philosophy, poetry, polemics, mysticism and liturgy.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: JWST 0315, MELC 0315, RELS 0315

1 Course Unit

**COML 0320 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation**

This course is designed to introduce students to the rich art of Modern Hebrew and Israeli literature and film. Poetry, short stories, and novel excerpts are taught in translation. The course studies Israeli cinema alongside literature, examining the various facets of this culture that is made of national aspirations and individual passions. The class is meant for all: no previous knowledge of history or the language is required. The topic changes each time the course is offered. Topics include: giants of Israeli literature; the image of the city; childhood; the marginalized voices of Israel; the Holocaust from an Israeli perspective; and fantasy, dreams & madness.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 0320, JWST 0320, MELC 0320

1 Course Unit

**COML 0335 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 manifestation 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: JWST 0335, MELC 0335, NELC 0335

1 Course Unit

**COML 0361 First Year Seminar: Collecting and Collectors (SNF Paideia Program Course)**

This first-year seminar examines theories and histories about the art, religion, psychology, ethics, economics, and politics of collecting. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0361, RELS 0361

1 Course Unit

**COML 0478 Banned Books: Writing Against Censorship**

This course offers a broad survey of banned, censored, suppressed, and silenced literature in Eastern Europe and the USSR during the 20th century. While the totalitarian political regimes of the 20th century sought to control the public sphere and regulate artistic production, their efforts were never entirely successful. Inevitably, works appeared that either sought to directly challenge and confront ideology, “slipped through the cracks” and were banned or censored retroactively, or seemed palatable enough to censors but proved provocative to perceptive readers skilled in reading “between the lines.” We will read and discuss banned, problematic, and controversial works written during the 20th century in contexts of political unfreedom, as we seek answers to a number of questions about the interconnection between the political and the aesthetic, such as: Do works banned for political reasons also pose aesthetic challenges to tyranny? Does suspect politics entail suspect aesthetics, or vice versa? Can radical aesthetics arise from ostensibly conformist politics? How does Sir Isaiah Berlin’s distinction between positive and negative liberty help us navigate the murky waters of art under despotism? Readings will include works by Hrabal, Kiš, Kross, Kundera, Shalamov, Voznesenskaia, Yohansen, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: REES 0478

1 Course Unit

**COML 0482 Nabokov: Art, Otherworldliness, and Morality**

This course bridges the gap between the “Russian Nabokov” and the “American Nabokov.” All of the readings in this course are in English and no knowledge of Russian is required, but the majority of the readings are translations of Nabokov’s Russian-language works. Your study of Nabokov as a celebrated émigré novelist writing in Russian in the 1920s and 30s will contextualize his second career as an American author and enrich your further study of his English-language novels. Starting with the small yet significant task of learning to pronounce his name correctly (alas, The Police got it wrong in their 1980 hit “Don’t Stand So Close to Me”), your knowledge and reading of Nabokov will grow in increasing depth and complexity over the course of the semester. The climactic novel of the semester is Nabokov’s final Russian novel, *The Gift*, which is arguably his greatest novel ever (yes, even better than *Lolita* or *Pale Fire*). The final text for study, his American *Invitation of a Small Guest*, written in tandem with *Lolita*, serves as our example of Nabokov’s prose after his transition to English. The central themes for this course are derived from the arc of inquiry in Nabokov scholarship, concerning Art (and artifice), Otherworldliness (termed, in Russian, “potustoronnost”), and Morality (an area of interest after years of claims that Nabokov’s works are amoral and/or immoral). These trends in scholarship occurred, more or less, successively, but we will consider all the themes simultaneously in each text. In addition to becoming a proficient reader of Nabokov’s challenging and fascinating fiction, you will develop and hone your critical reading skills, as well as gain competency in major areas of inquiry in literary studies, especially narrative strategies, inter-textuality, and metafiction.

Also Offered As: REES 0482

1 Course Unit

**COML 0502 BFS--Med/Red Dante in English: Creative Responses to the Divine Comedy**

A cross-period and in-depth look at Dante’s *Divine Comedy* and the many creative responses it has spawned across the globe and across languages. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0502, ITAL 3335

1 Course Unit

**COML 0507 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: 20th-Century Literature**

The course explores an aspect of 20th-Century literature intensively. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0507

1 Course Unit

**COML 0510 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: National Epics (Med/Ren)**

In this course we will consider texts that become “national epics,” texts that in some sense come to “represent” a nation. How and when might such imaginative texts emerge? Nations change, and old poems may no longer serve. Can the Song of Roland, once compulsory study for all schoolchildren in France, still be required reading today — especially if I am French Muslim? What about *El Cid* in Spain? How do some texts — such as the Mahabharata in India, or *Journey to the West* in China — seem more adaptable than others? The course begins in western Europe, but then pivots across Eurasian space to become gradually more global. Most all of us have complex family histories: Chinese-American, French Canadian, Latino/a/x, Jewish American, Pennsylvania Dutch, Lenape. Some students may choose to investigate, for their final project, family histories (and hence their own, personal connection to “national epics”). English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 0510

1 Course Unit

**COML 0518 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: Cinema and Globalization**

In this seminar, we will study a number of films (mainly feature films, but also a few documentaries) that deal with the complicated nexus of issues that have come to be discussed under the rubric of “globalization.” See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CIMS 0518, ENGL 0518

1 Course Unit

**COML 0519 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: Postcolonial Literature**

This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0519, SAST 0519

1 Course Unit

**COML 0520 Capitalism, (Neo)Colonialism, Racism, and Resistance**

This interdisciplinary seminar examines, from an international perspective, theory and artistic productions, including literature, films, and performance art, that analyze and critique capitalism, imperialism and (neo)colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0520, LALS 0520

1 Course Unit

**COML 0522 Testimony: Life-writing as Dialogue (SNF Paideia Program Course)**

Testimony: Life-writing as Dialogue This hybrid literature/creative writing course centers on the genre of testimony as a form of life-writing and self-making that is fundamentally dialogic; that is, dependent on what Dori Laub calls “a listening other” to be fully realized. We will consider the concept and practice of testimony through three intersecting avenues. First, we will explore the multivalent critical theory of testimony, drawing from a range of disciplines including memory and trauma studies; human rights scholarship and activism; feminist philosophy; queer theory; disability studies; and more. Second, we will read and analyze contemporary testimony in a variety of genres, produced by people of diverse identities and experiences from around the world. Third, we will write and share in community our own series of short testimonies, learning and practicing critical skills for this particular form of dialogic practice that are transferable beyond the course, including: deep listening, self- and other-awareness, and the capacity to embrace the other’s enduring strangeness and incomprehensibility while still recognizing their humanity. Importantly, this is not a traditional writing workshop with peer review and revision cycles. While attention to craft is part of the testimonial process, the focus here is on sharing and receiving personal narratives without critique of craft. The course is open to all majors, and no particular “talent” or identity as a writer is required. The reading list will include contemporary (post-1945) narratives from Latin America/the Caribbean, the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and their U.S.-based diasporas as well as Native and Black U.S. writers. The theory is likewise drawn from diverse and not exclusively Western/white sources.

Fall, even numbered years only

1 Course Unit

**COML 0527 The Aftermath of Slavery: Language, Storytelling, Experimentation**

This seminar explores how writers in the African Diaspora have engaged, challenged, and experimented with English and its literary forms to write about slavery. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: AFRC 0527, ENGL 0527, GSWS 0527, LALS 0527

1 Course Unit

**COML 0540 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: 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. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 3508, ENGL 0540

1 Course Unit

**COML 0590 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: Film Studies**

This course explores an aspect of film studies intensively. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3890, CIMS 0590, ENGL 0590

1 Course Unit

**COML 0615 Modern Arabic Literature**

This course is a study of modern Arabic literary forms in the context of the major political and social changes which shaped Arab history in the first half of the twentieth century. The aim of the course is to introduce students to key samples of modern Arabic literature which trace major social and political developments in Arab society. Each time the class will be offered with a focus on one of the literary genres which emerged or flourished in the twentieth century: the free verse poem, the prose-poem, drama, the novel, and the short story. We will study each of these emergent genres against the socio-political backdrop which informed it. All readings will be in English translations. The class will also draw attention to the politics of translation as a reading and representational lens.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 0615, NELC 0615

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 6505

1 Course Unit

**COML 0700 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 0700, GSWS 0700, MELC 0700, NELC 0700

1 Course Unit

**COML 0701 Medieval Road Trip: Reading and Writing with Chaucer**

This Critical-Creative Seminar reads Chaucer’s pathbreaking *The Canterbury Tales* to consider whether stories that entertain us can also make us better humans, how we should react when stories offend us; what power short stories have to challenge hierarchies and inequalities, and finally, how translating, adapting, and critiquing old stories can fashion communities of readers and writers across time. Students will have a chance to experiment with Chaucer’s language and meter and ultimately contribute either a critical or a creative piece. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of current offerings

Also Offered As: ENGL 0701, RELS 0701

1 Course Unit

**COML 0783 Writing About Music (Critical-Creative Seminar)**

This critical-creative seminar takes a dynamic and interdisciplinary look at the art of writing about music. When one writes about music what does one write about? Sound? Culture? Feeling (is feeling historical)? Technologies? Art? The course explores how one can approach the power of any of the above through writing, writing about record labels, cities, bands, musicians, and more. See the English Department’s website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0783

1 Course Unit

**COML 0784 Anne Carson and the Unclassifiable Text (Critical-Creative Seminar)**

This Critical-Creative Seminar will explore the genre-defying work of classicist, poet, and essayist Anne Carson, writing creatively to form critical understanding and honing critical interpretations to enhance creative writing. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CLST 3712, ENGL 0784

1 Course Unit

**COML 1000 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>

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1409

1 Course Unit

**COML 1003 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.

Fall

Also Offered As: CIMS 1003

1 Course Unit

**COML 1010 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 course 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1010, GSWS 1010, HIST 0820

1 Course Unit

**COML 1013 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1013

1 Course Unit

**COML 1014 King Arthur: Medieval to Modern**

In this course, we will study nearly 1000 years of literature about King Arthur from around the world. We will think about what Arthurian legends mean to the way we write history and the ways in which we view our collective pasts (and futures). See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 1014

1 Course Unit

**COML 1015 Sagas and Skalds: Old Norse Literature in Translation**

This course introduces students to the powerful and influential corpus of Old Norse literature and to the cultural and historical landscape of Viking and medieval Scandinavia. Students will explore mythological and heroic verse, court poetry, law codes, runic inscriptions, and the famed Icelandic sagas to develop a deeper understanding of one of the most significant literary traditions in high medieval Europe, and to myth-bust popular misconceptions about who 'the Vikings' were and how they lived. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1015

1 Course Unit

**COML 1018 Poetics of Screenplay: The Art of Plotting**

This course studies screenwriting 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, auteur vs. genre theory of cinema, storytelling in silent and sound films, the evolution of a script in the production process, script doctoring, as well as screenwriting techniques and tools.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1110, REES 0470

1 Course Unit

**COML 1020 Marx, Marxism, and the Culture of Revolution**

Capitalist society is the object of Karl Marx's analysis and critique—a society that is the product of history and may one day vanish. This course will trace Marx's critique by moving between the fields of philosophy, economics, and politics. We will locate key interventions of Marx's thought that transform modern conceptions of history, the relation between economics and politics, and the limits of struggle and emancipation in capitalist society. We will consider the historical conditions of Marx's writing and the development of his thought to discover many sides of Marx and many divergent Marxisms (humanist, post-structuralist, feminist, and others) that follow, often at odds with each other. Further, we will ask about what kind of horizons Marx's and Marxist interventions open up for critique and analysis of capitalist society with respect to gender, race, class, and nation. "Theory becomes a material force when it has seized the masses," argues the young Marx; indeed, his theories have fueled emancipatory movements and propped up tyrannical regimes, substantiated scientific theories and transformed philosophical debates. In examining Marx's legacy, we will focus on the elaborations and historical limitations of his ideas by examining the challenges of fascism, the communist experiment in the Soviet Union and its collapse, as well as the climate and other crises currently taking place. In conclusion, we will turn to the question of whether and to what extent Marx's ideas remain relevant today, and whether it is possible to be a Marxist in the contemporary world dominated by global capital.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1020, PHIL 1439, REES 1172

1 Course Unit

**COML 1021 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, and social traditions shaped literature at this vital and turbulent time of English history. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1021

1 Course Unit

**COML 1025 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 0039, MELC 1960, NELC 1960, SAST 1124, THAR 1025

1 Course Unit

**COML 1026 Shakespeare Now**

This course explores new trends, methods, and perspectives in Shakespearean criticism and adaptations. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 1025, GSWS 1025, THAR 1225

1 Course Unit

**COML 1027 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 1027, GSWS 1027, REES 1481

1 Course Unit

**COML 1030 Nietzsche's Modernity and the Death of God**

"God is dead." This famous, all too famous death sentence, issued by the 19th-century German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, also signaled the genesis of a radical challenge to traditional notions of morality, cultural life, and the structure of society as a whole. In this course we will examine both the "modernity" of Nietzsche's thought and the ways in which his ideas have helped to define the very concept of Modernity (and, arguably, Postmodernity) itself. In exploring the origin and evolution of Nietzsche's key concepts, we will trace the ways in which his work has been variously revered or refuted, championed or co-opted, for more than a century. We will survey his broad influence on everything from philosophy and literature to music and art, theater and psychology, history and cultural theory, politics and popular culture. Further, we will ask how his ideas continue to challenge us today, though perhaps in unexpected ways. As we will see, Nietzsche wanted to teach us "how to philosophize with a hammer."

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1030

1 Course Unit

**COML 1040 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 Koelln 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2370, GRMN 1040, HIST 0821, URBS 1070

1 Course Unit

**COML 1050 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1449, REES 1179

1 Course Unit

**COML 1054 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 1520, ENVS 1550, GRMN 1132

1 Course Unit

**COML 1060 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 Mérimée, Villiers de Isle-Adam, and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1060, GSWS 1060

1 Course Unit

**COML 1070 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1070

1 Course Unit

**COML 1071 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1070, GRMN 1070, ITAL 1930

1 Course Unit

**COML 1072 Fashion and Modernity**

In this class we will study the emergence of the Modernist concept of the "new" as a term also understood as "new fashion." We will move back and forth in time so as to analyze today's changing scene with a view to identify contemporary accounts of the "new" in the context of the fashion industry. Our texts will include poetry, novels, and films. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ARTH 2889, ENGL 1071, FREN 1071, GRMN 1065

1 Course Unit

**COML 1080 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 1960s.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1080, GRMN 1080

1 Course Unit

**COML 1081 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, Synge, Naipaul, Rushdie, Heaney, and Walcott. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1081

1 Course Unit

**COML 1090 Jewish Films and Literature**

From the 1922 silent film "Hungry Hearts" through the first "talkie," "The Jazz Singer," 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1289, GRMN 1090, JWST 1090

1 Course Unit

**COML 1095 Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture**

In Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture, we will explore these two interrelated concepts in comparative perspective over a broad historical range. As a result, the students will learn how the philosophy of fate and chance has been reflected in works of different Russian authors and in different cultural and political environments. In Russian as well as western systems of belief fate and chance represent two extreme visions of the universal order, or, perhaps, two diametrically opposed cosmic forces: complete determinism, on the one hand, and complete chaos or unpredictability, on the other. These visions have been greatly reflected by various mythopoetic systems. In this course, we will investigate religious and folkloric sources from a series of Russian traditions compared to other Indo-European traditions (Greek, East-European). Readings will include The Song of Prince Igor's Campaign, The Gambler by Dostoevsky, The Queen of Spades by Pushkin, Vij by Gogol, The Black Monk by Chekhov, The Fatal Eggs by Bulgakov, and more.

Also Offered As: REES 1471

1 Course Unit

**COML 1097 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: REES 0172

1 Course Unit

**COML 1110 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1110, JWST 1110

1 Course Unit

**COML 1111 Yiddish Literature and Culture**

This course introduces a variety of themes and genres in Yiddish literature and culture, depending on the instructor and programmatic needs. The focus of the course may include Yiddish literature and culture in America; Yiddish literature and culture in Eastern Europe; Yiddish modernism; Art and music in the Yiddish context; Yiddish theater; Yiddish journalism; Yiddish film. Readings will be in English translation, while primary sources in Yiddish will be available, as well. Classes and coursework will be in English. There will be an optional graduate component to this course.

Also Offered As: GRMN 1111, JWST 1111, YDSH 1111

Mutually Exclusive: YDSH 5111

1 Course Unit

**COML 1120 Translating Cultures: Literature on and in Translation**

"Languages are not strangers to one another," writes the great critic and translator Walter Benjamin. Yet two people who speak different languages have a difficult time talking to one another, unless they both know a third, common language or can find someone who knows both their languages to translate what they want to say. Without translation, most of us would not be able to read the Bible or Homer, the foundations of Western culture. Americans wouldn't know much about the cultures of Europe, China, Africa, South America, and the Middle East. And people who live in or come from these places would not know much about American culture. Without translation, Americans would not know much about the diversity of cultures within America. The very fabric of our world depend upon translation between people, between cultures, between texts. With a diverse group of readings—autobiography, fiction, poetry, anthology, and literary theory—this course will address some fundamental questions about translating language and culture. What does it mean to translate? How do we read a text in translation? What does it mean to live between two languages? Who is a translator? What are different kinds of literary and cultural translation? what are their principles and theories? Their assumptions and practices? Their effects on and implications for the individual and the society?

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1120, JWST 1120

1 Course Unit

**COML 1121 Community, Freedom, Violence: Writing the South Asian City**

The South Asian city—as space, symbol, and memory—is the subject of this course. Through a range of readings in English and 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 wandering. We will see reflections of the city in the detective novels sold in its train stations, the stories scribbled in its cafes, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia through a range of works, which we will examine 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1191, SAST 1120, URBS 1120

1 Course Unit

**COML 1130 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?

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1130, ENVS 1040, GRMN 1130

1 Course Unit

**COML 1131 Crime and Criminality in Early America**

This seminar examines the complex cultural history of crime and criminality in early America. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 1131, GSWS 1131

1 Course Unit

**COML 1140 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?

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 1440, ENGL 1589, ENVS 1440, GRMN 1140, HIST 0872

1 Course Unit

**COML 1141 Religion and Storytelling**

This class will explore the way religion is represented in popular literature and film. Living in a largely secular world does not mean that interest in religion has waned. If anything, the opposite is true. Religion can be quietly embedded in a story or serve as the defining element of a narrative. We will investigate religious popular literature and media geared toward two separate audiences: secular and religious. Stories in the secular realm that explore religious communities often attempt to unveil the mysteries believed to exist among insular groups and challenge the dogmatism found in devout belief systems. Expats from religious communities who write their own accounts of leaving the values of their upbringing behind and the challenges of integrating themselves into a modern, secular world also contribute to the corpus of literature on the topic. Meanwhile, religious groups create their own form of entertainment that does not include the perceived vanities and traps of secular media, in the form of serialized fiction, novels, music, and film. What are the challenges with creating and consuming various depictions of religious life? What is our role as an audience in interpreting these narratives? How do the characteristics of popular literature and media affect how religion is represented? This class will explore how religion is represented and challenged in popular literature and media, focusing particularly on bestsellers—works that appeal to large numbers of people—to consider the implications of mainstream depictions. Alongside bestselling novels, self-help guides, short stories that appear in popular magazines, and acclaimed television shows, we will integrate theory from thinkers including Emile Durkheim, Clifford Geertz, Saba Mahmood, Beth Allison Barr, and Ayala Fader to guide our discussions.

Spring, even numbered years only

Also Offered As: RELS 1140

1 Course Unit

**COML 1160 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, Jill 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1579, ENVS 1050, GRMN 1160, STSC 1160

1 Course Unit

**COML 1170 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENVS 1450, GRMN 1170

1 Course Unit

**COML 1180 The Art of Revolution**

This course offers an international and multidisciplinary tour of revolutionary art from the 20th and 21st centuries, including cinema, literature, visual art, theater, and performance art. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CIMS 1280, ENGL 1180, GSWS 1180, LALS 1180, THAR 1180

1 Course Unit

**COML 1181 Writing the Translation**

Literary translation is many things. Perhaps most of all, though, it is writing. It is a craft, and it is also a particular kind of imagination that both haunts and supersedes craft. Every translation, then, is as much the making of a new original as it is the learning from and listening to the 'old' one. We will pursue what Kornei Chukovsky calls "the high art of translation" in its multiple forms: as a discipline, as a tradition, as a force of disruption and change, and as a form of play. This is a course in two parts: seminar and workshop. We'll first read and discuss translated texts, and texts about translation, from a multiplicity of language traditions. This will help us develop a shared theoretical and imaginative language for the course's second portion, the workshop, in which you will try out your own translation work in conversation with your peers and me. A majority of the writers, poets, and theorists that we will encounter are working in the Russian-language tradition, but we will supplement this with texts by Anne Carson, John Keene, Sawako Nakayasu, among others. We will also consider translation between mediums, including video, music, and comics. And a user's note: if you are concerned that your language skills are not far enough along to participate meaningfully in class, please set that worry aside! Translation is a great way to improve your language, and this course is less about result than about process.

Also Offered As: REES 1181

1 Course Unit

**COML 1190 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature**

English is a global language with a distinctly imperial history, and this course serves 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 1190, CIMS 1190, ENGL 1190, GSWS 1190, SAST 1190

1 Course Unit

**COML 1191 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CLST 1602, ENGL 1179

1 Course Unit

**COML 1192 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, Laclous, Rousseau, Sterne, the Romantic poets, Austen, Dickens, Bronte, Wilde, Woolf and Joyce.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**COML 1200 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.

Also Offered As: CLST 1200, GSWS 1200

1 Course Unit

**COML 1201 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 1200, ITAL 1201

1 Course Unit

**COML 1210 Witnessing, Remembering, and Writing the Holocaust**

Witnessing, Remembering, and Writing the Holocaust What is a witness? What do the witnesses of the Shoah see, hear, experience? And how will they remember things, whether they are victims, perpetrators or bystanders? How are their memories translated into survivors' accounts: reports, fiction, art, and even music or architecture? And what does this teach us about human survival, and about the transmission of experiences to the next generation? The course will ask these questions by studying literature on memory and trauma, as well as novels, poetry, and non-fiction accounts of the Holocaust. We will also look at art work created by survivors or their children, and listen to video testimonies. Among the authors and artists discussed will be work by Primo Levi, Paul Celan, Jean Amery, Christian Boltanski, Daniel Libeskind. The course is supported by the USC Shoah Foundation Visual History Archives.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2871, GRMN 1210, JWST 1210

1 Course Unit

**COML 1215 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 ceremonial. 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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: GSWS 1215, HIST 1215

1 Course Unit

**COML 1220 The German-Jewish Experience: Philosophy, Literature, Religion in the early Twentieth Century**

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?

Fall

Also Offered As: GRMN 1220, JWST 1220, PHIL 1582

1 Course Unit

**COML 1231 Perspectives in French Literature: Love and Passion**

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 discussion in French. French 1231 has as its theme the presentation of love and passion in French literature.

Fall

Also Offered As: FREN 1231

1 Course Unit

**COML 1232 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 discussion in French. French 1232 has as its theme the Individual and Society.

Spring

Also Offered As: FREN 1232

1 Course Unit

**COML 1235 Autobiographical Writing**

How does one write about oneself? Who is the "author" writing? What does one write about? And is it fiction or truth? Our course on autobiographical writing will pursue these questions, researching confessions, autobiographies, memoirs, and other forms of life-writing both in their historical development and theoretical articulations. Examples will include selections from St. Augustine's confessions, Rousseau's Confessions, Benjamin Franklin's Autobiography, as well as many examples from contemporary English, German, French, and American literature.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1235

1 Course Unit

**COML 1250 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 consider how religion may linger even in "secular" thought and culture; and we will develop something of an "encounter" between critics and defenders of religion, such as Soren Kierkegaard and Martin Buber, to see how religious discourse evolved in response to the challenges of skepticism.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 1250

1 Course Unit

**COML 1260 Latinx Literature and Culture**

This course offers a broad introduction to the study of Latinx 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 Latinx 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 latinidades, 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2679, ENGL 1260, GSWS 1260, LALS 1260

1 Course Unit

**COML 1262 Tolstoy's War and Peace and the Age of Napoleon**

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 book 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 book? Because we will read War and Peace over the course of the entire semester, readings will be manageable and very enjoyable.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 1260, REES 1380

1 Course Unit

**COML 1300 Topics German Cinema**

This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu> for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1301, GRMN 1300, JWST 1300, MELC 1300, NELC 1300

1 Course Unit

**COML 1301 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 migrations of Jews into different countries and the 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: JWST 1300, MELC 1300, NELC 1300

1 Course Unit

**COML 1310 Gender, Sexuality, 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1310, GSWS 1310

1 Course Unit

**COML 1311 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature**

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. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students' literary understanding.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: JWST 1310, MELC 1310, NELC 1310

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 5400

Prerequisite: HEBR 0400

1 Course Unit

**COML 1340 In Babel: Translation and Narration in the Jewish World**

"Modern Jewish culture speaks with many voices," wrote the poet, translator, and scholar Benjamin Harshav. In this course, we will echo these voices by exploring how Jewish life was shaped by cross-cultural contact and exchange with non-Jews and other Jewish communities, by studying literary manifestations of multilingualism, translation, adaptation, and circulation of texts and ideas. With a wide variety of texts - fiction, poetry, historiography, and literary criticism - from different languages and cultural contexts, this course will address several fundamental questions about, on the one hand, the ways Jews translated texts for Jewish readers, and, on the other, how Jewish experiences and traditions were translated for broader audiences. In a broader sense, we will consider what is at stake in translating Jewishness and how cultural and linguistic borders are crossed and discussed in different historical contexts. Course assessment is comprised of two short response papers to key concepts and a literary text (with the option for a creative format), and a final paper that can be either research-based or a translation and a translator's introduction. All materials will be available in English but students are encouraged to read materials in their original languages if they are fluent.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 1340, JWST 1340, YDSH 1340

1 Course Unit

**COML 1345 Global Sephardi Culture**

The course surveys major trends in global Sephardi cultures. We will begin by exploring the origins of Sephardi culture, and especially the significance of exile within it, through medieval Hebrew poetry from the "Golden Age" of Jewish culture in Spain (8th-15th centuries) and subsequent responses to the expulsion of Jews in 1492. We will follow those exiles to new homes in the Ottoman Empire, from the period of early settlement in the 16th century to 19th- and 20th-century Ladino literature, which thrived in locations far afield from its Spanish roots, printed and disseminated in Turkey, Greece, Egypt, Austria, and the United States. We conclude with narratives of migration in the second half of the 20th century and contemporary Sephardi cinema, literature, and music from America, Turkey, and Israel, focusing on the impact of the Holocaust and the mass emigration of Jews from former Ottoman lands. Students will become acquainted with Sephardi history through literary texts translated from Ladino, Hebrew, German, French, Spanish, and Portuguese. These primary sources will be complemented by relevant scholarship in Jewish studies and European, Middle Eastern, and American history. We will study prominent writers such as Elias Canetti and Emma Lazarus alongside lesser-known writers such as Moses Almosnino, Grace Aguilar, Elia Carmona, Vitalis Danon, and Clarisse Nicoïdski.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: JWST 1345, MELC 1340

1 Course Unit

**COML 1351 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 Yasujiro, Naruse Mikio, Kurosawa Akira, Imamura Shohei, Koreeda Hirokazu, and Beat Takeshi.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 1351, EALC 1351, GSWS 1351

1 Course Unit

**COML 1400 Introduction to Literary Theory**

This course introduces students to major issues in the history of literary theory, and provides an excellent foundation for the English major or minor. 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 English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1400, GRMN 1303

1 Course Unit

**COML 1427 Wild Things: Children's Literature and the Psychoanalytic Study of the Child**

This course, framed as a psychoanalytic study of the child, focuses on English-language children's literature from the 19th Century to the present. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 1427, GSWS 1427

1 Course Unit

**COML 1500 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: CLST 1500

1 Course Unit

**COML 1601 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 differences and similarities 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 1601

1 Course Unit

**COML 1605 Ancient World Literature**

How might we read Homer's Iliad differently, if we juxtapose it with canonical ancient literature from beyond the Greek-speaking world, such as Gilgamesh or the Hebrew Bible? What shared themes or differences are there, between ancient Indian, Greek and Roman epics? Did ancient fables teach the same lessons the world over? This course focuses on canonical literary texts from the pre-modern world. We will study each in their original historical and cultural context, and also consider how each might represent "the world", "literature", and the relationship between different cultures. Students will learn about the different norms and practices for storytelling and poetic production in different ancient societies, and will be invited to make comparisons between different ancient literary traditions. The course will include discussion of what is at stake in deciding that an ancient text is canonical or "classical", and we will discuss the benefits and pitfalls of cross-cultural analysis for the ancient world.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 1605

1 Course Unit

**COML 1650 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1650, HIST 0870

1 Course Unit

**COML 1701 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 1701

1 Course Unit

**COML 1740 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1740

1 Course Unit

**COML 1810 Sounding Poetry**

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 ranges through oral and lyric traditions in Europe, the Americas, and the Commonwealth. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of current offerings.

Fall

Also Offered As: AFRC 1810, ENGL 1810

1 Course Unit

**COML 1840 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 poetries, 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1840

1 Course Unit

**COML 1859 The Play: Structure, Style, Meaning**

How does one read a play? Theatre, as a discipline, focuses on the traditions of live performance. In those traditions, a play text must be read not only as a piece of literature, but as a kind of "blueprint" from which productions are built. This course will introduce students to a variety of approaches to reading plays and performance pieces. Drawing on a wide range of dramatic texts from different periods and places, we will examine how plays are made, considering issues such as structure, genre, style, character, and language, as well as the use of time, space, and theatrical effects. Although the course is devoted to the reading and analysis of plays, we will also view selected live and/or filmed versions of several of the scripts we study, assessing their translation from page to stage.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 1859, THAR 0103

1 Course Unit

**COML 1915 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 1915, NELC 1915

1 Course Unit

**COML 1982 Study Abroad**

Study abroad for undergraduates.

1 Course Unit

**COML 2000 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 3708, ENGL 2000, GSWS 2000

1 Course Unit

**COML 2004 Tolstoy**

Leo Tolstoy is a figure who arguably needs little introduction, if only as an effigy for the kind of author who writes books like "War and Peace" — prime examples of what Henry James called the "large, loose, baggy monsters" of nineteenth-century Russian literature, the sprawling novels with several parallel plot lines and hundreds of characters who inhabit page numbers in the quadruple digits. In this seminar, we will grapple together with the intricacies of "War and Peace," learn about the social, cultural, and historical contexts not only of its depiction and genesis, but also of its wide-ranging reception, and consider the big questions that preoccupied Tolstoy throughout his lifetime. Working with a range of his texts including a wide spread of his shorter fiction and also a number of Tolstoy's non-literary writings on topics such as aesthetics, religion, education, and social and political problems, we will work toward understanding Tolstoy's work, how he became who he was, and the reverberations of his thought throughout the rest of the world.

Also Offered As: REES 0481

1 Course Unit

**COML 2007 Dostoevsky**

This seminar is a survey of the life and works of Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881). Focal texts include a selection of his major novels and a range of shorter works that span Dostoevsky's early career, his return from exile in Siberia, and the last years of his life. We will work together to understand Dostoevsky's career and self-conception as a writer, the wide-ranging philosophical implications of his work, and how his activity can be interpreted in the historical, ideological, and literary contexts of nineteenth-century Russia and Europe.

Also Offered As: REES 0480

1 Course Unit

**COML 2011 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: REES 0479

1 Course Unit

**COML 2012 Transnational Cinema**

This is a course in contemporary transnational film cultures and world cinema. The course will examine the idea of world cinema and set up a model of how it can be explored by studying contemporary film in various countries. We will explore ways in which cinemas from around the globe have attempted to come to terms with Hollywood, and look at forces that lead many filmmakers to define themselves in opposition to Hollywood norms. But we will also look at the phenomenon of world cinema in independent terms, as "waves" that peak in different places and times, and coordinate various forces. Finally, through the close case study of significant films and cinemas that have dominated the international festival circuit (Chinese, Korean, Iranian, Indian, etc.) we will engage with the questions of which films/cinemas get labeled as "world cinema," what determines entry into the sphere of world cinema, and examine the importance of film festivals in creating world cinema.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3912, CIMS 2012, ENGL 2930

1 Course Unit

**COML 2013 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-forbearing 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).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: REES 0180, RELS 0180

1 Course Unit

**COML 2014 Medieval Literature Seminar: Premodern Animals**

This course introduces students to critical animal studies via medieval literature and culture. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2014, RELS 2014

1 Course Unit

**COML 2017 Modern Iran and the West Through the Lens of Fiction**

This undergraduate level course explores key tropes and themes of Iranian modernity through a close reading of Persian novel, short story, travelogue, and memoir. Various literary genres from social realism, to surrealism, magic realism, naturalism, and absurd literature will be introduced with specific reference to Iran's literature and in light of literary theory of novel. This course does not require any prior knowledge of Persian language and literature. Throughout the course, we will be particularly concerned with the relationship between Persian fiction and the West. We will investigate this curious relationship through themes of gender, religion, politics, and war.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GSWS 2130, MELC 1710, NELC 1710

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 5720

1 Course Unit

**COML 2020 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 0824, REES 0190

1 Course Unit

**COML 2031 18th-Century Seminar: China in the English Imagination**

This course explores the material culture of china-mania that spread across England and Europe in the eighteenth century, from chinoiserie vogues in fashion, tea, porcelain, and luxury goods, to the idealization of Confucius by Enlightenment philosophers. The course texts include travel writing, poetry, essays, and plays, and is designed to provide historical background to contemporary problems of Orientalism, Sinophilia, and Sinophobia. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ASAM 2310, EALC 1321, ENGL 2031

1 Course Unit

**COML 2052 Freud's Objects**

How do we look at objects? And which stories can objects tell? These are questions that 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 Freud's writings that focus on specific 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3560, CLST 3509, ENGL 1425, GRMN 1015

1 Course Unit

**COML 2071 Global Modernism Seminar**

This course explores literary modernism as a global and cross-cultural phenomenon. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3850, ENGL 2071, GRMN 1304

1 Course Unit

**COML 2073 Modernist Animals: How to Rethink the Human-Animal Divide**

This course explores literary modernism through the lens of Animal Studies. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CIMS 2073, ENGL 2073

1 Course Unit

**COML 2082 20th-Century American Literature Seminar**

The course explores an aspect of 20th-century American literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2082

1 Course Unit

**COML 2083 Faking it: Liars, Imitators and Cheats in Literature and Film**

Deception and lies are a constant theme and a mechanism of narrative art. For a genre literally synonymous with falsehood, fiction has always been touchy about its relationship to truth: Does the novel neutrally represent reality or does it recreate it? Are characters like living, breathing real people, or are they mere simulations? And if they're just words on a page (or images on a screen), why are we so moved by their adventures, loves and misfortunes? In this class, we will explore and expand on these questions by focusing on novels and films that deal explicitly and exclusively with fakers, shapeshifters and doppelgangers, lies of necessity and of opportunity, as well as with works that revel in exposing their own manipulative artificiality. We will read psychoanalysts, sociologists, philosophers, and postcolonial thinkers and ask, What does it mean to be authentic? How malleable are our individual identity, race, gender and sexuality? What forces shape it, and how constant is this shape? Are we the same selves when we have a conversation as when we give a presentation? Do we remain ourselves when we talk to customers at our service jobs, to teachers, to students? When we "pass" as a different race? When we speak in a different accent? How do we reconcile the conflicting demands of "be yourself" and "fake it till you make it"? What is the relation between our presentation of ourselves and our selves? Novels and shorts stories for discussion might include classics like Nella Larsen's *Passing*, Vladimir Nabokov's *Despair* and Patricia Highsmith's *The Talented Mr. Ripley*, as well as movies like *Gaslight*, *The Battle of Algiers*, *The Yes Men*, and *American Psycho*. While much of the weekly work in this class will be reading-and-discussion based, oral presentations – keenly aware of their own artifice – will count toward half of the final grade. A final oral presentation will be based on a creative project in conversation with class materials. The course would satisfy those interested in fulfilling the Advanced Film and Literature and Global Literature and Film requirements. This is a CWiC course, Communication Within the Curriculum.

Spring, odd numbered years only

Also Offered As: CIMS 2083, ENGL 2083

1 Course Unit

**COML 2084 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 Lakhous, 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 not 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 histories and experiences of diaspora? How can African Italian literature contribute to a deeper understanding of the Black diaspora in Europe and elsewhere? The course will pursue answers to these questions by exploring issues of race, color, gender, class, nationality, identity, citizenship, social justice in post-colonial Italy while drawing on related disciplines such as Geography, Mediterranean Studies, Diaspora Studies, Post-Colonialism, and Media and Cultural Studies. Course taught in English. Course Material in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 1296, ITAL 2510

1 Course Unit

**COML 2086 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.

Also Offered As: ENGL 0490, LALS 2860, THAR 2860

1 Course Unit

**COML 2180 Literature of Africa and the African Diaspora**

This course explores an aspect of the literature of Africa and the African Diaspora intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2180

1 Course Unit

**COML 2190 Postcolonial Literature Seminar**

This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2190

1 Course Unit

**COML 2191 The Dictator Novel as Global Form**

In this seminar, we will explore the ways in which twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers across the globe have responded to tyrants and tyrannical regimes. Our focus will be a set of outstanding contemporary novels from Latin America, Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia.

See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2191

1 Course Unit

**COML 2192 Narrating Survival**

This course critically examines the way in which "survival" has been/continues to be defined as individual triumph in the 20th and 21st century. The intent here is to dig deeper into current buzzwords like "resilience," "wellness," "grit," and "care" to ask how such concepts have been constructed in different socio-historical moments, by and for whom, and towards what (social, cultural, political, economic) ends. We will pay special attention to the central role that the child plays in these discourses as an icon of both ultimate vulnerability and idealized resilience, and we'll consider the burdens and privileges that such centering might confer upon real-life children. We engage with a generically diverse body of contemporary multiethnic and transnational literature featuring children and young people in crisis, including texts from Black, Latine, Native, Asian and White U.S. writers as well as Dutch, Argentine, Iranian, Malaysian, and Afghan authors. All non-English texts will be read in English translation, with the option for students to read in the original language if they wish and are able. Learning to dialogue across cultures and learning from such interactions with these texts and one other will be an essential part of our approach to exploring these complex questions.

Also Offered As: ASAM 1211, ENGL 2192

1 Course Unit

**COML 2200 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SAST 2200

1 Course Unit

**COML 2201 Modern East Asian Texts**

This course is an introduction to and exploration of modern East Asian literatures and cultures through close readings and discussion of selected literary works from the early 20th century to the start of the 21st century. Focusing on China, Japan, and Korea, we will explore the shared and interconnected experiences of modernity in East Asia as well as broaden our perspective by considering the location of East Asian cultural production within a global modernity. Major issues we will encounter include: nation-building and the modern novel; cultural translation; media and technology; representations of gender, race, and class; history and memory; colonialism; war; body and sexuality; globalization. No knowledge of the original language is required.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: EALC 2201

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 6201

1 Course Unit

**COML 2217 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 or South East Asia where students participate in 1) 28 classroom hours in the Fall term 2) a 12-day trip to India or South East Asia with the instructor during the winter break visiting key sites and conducting original research (sites vary) 3) 28 classroom hours at Penn in the Spring term and 4) a research paper, due at the end of the Spring term. Course enrollment is limited to students admitted to the program. For more information and the program application go to <http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/cuinindia> This is a 2-CU yearlong course DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 31st

Two Term Class, Student must enter first term; credit given after both terms are complete

Also Offered As: ARTH 3170, GSWS 2217, SAST 2217

1 Course Unit

### COML 2225 Imagining New Futures: Science Fiction and the Fantastic in South Asian Literature

This course examines the many ways in which writers have imagined the future, the past, and the unreal in South Asia. Rather than view science fiction as an isolated, modern genre, we will situate it alongside a range of genres and approaches to the fantastic. Although literature called science fiction is today a dynamic genre across South Asian languages, with a literary history in the twentieth and nineteenth centuries, writers draw from a range of other South Asian literary and cultural traditions, including Hindu mythology, Persian Qissa story cycles, and Sanskrit literature. In this course, therefore, we will explore the many genealogies of contemporary South Asian literature. Science fiction, and fantastic literature more generally, often functions as a means to depict social and technological change, the perception of the larger world, and contemporary politics. How did writers use amazing stories of brilliant inventions, dreams of a woman-led utopia, or dark conspiracies of disease to explore a range of questions. We will also consider how popular literary genres, such as the detective story, intersect with these other genres. Students will leave this course with a knowledge of the dynamic history of South Asian science fiction as part of a long history of imaginative literature, as well as well as a deeper understanding of genre and the social history of literature.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2161, SAST 2225

1 Course Unit

### COML 2231 The Sanskrit Epics

Ancient India's two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, 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 (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) 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 serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama's Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Viṣṇu, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rāṅyā 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) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. 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.

Also Offered As: SAST 2231

Mutually Exclusive: COML 6631, SAST 6631

1 Course Unit

### COML 2251 Machiavelli and Modern Political Thought

Niccolò Machiavelli, the Renaissance author best known for *The Prince*, is frequently regarded as a consummate cynic. Yet he has been not only a provocation but an inspiration throughout the subsequent history of political thought. This was true for the entire twentieth century, which witnessed an ever-growing interest in the Florentine thinker among historians and philosophers alike. One of the most surprising dimensions of this modern engagement with Machiavelli is surely his recurring presence as figure and motif within left-wing philosophical discourse. In light of the failure of the twentieth-century's revolutionary experiments, as well as its own entanglements with those experiments, how could radical theory understand its past and imagine its future? What vision could supplant the dimming of utopia? Such questions have frequently led recent theorists into melancholic resignation, but they have also provoked innovative and rigorous attempts to rethink the project of radical politics as radical democracy. How is it that Machiavelli, a thinker indelibly associated with the cynical and amoral manipulation of politics, could become an inspiration for theorists of a robust democratic life? This course will examine this curious history of influence and transformation. Starting with an examination of key texts by Machiavelli himself, we will then trace his reception in European intellectual history, focusing upon the twentieth century. Among authors we will consider will be Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, John McCormick, and Antonio Negri.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 2251

1 Course Unit

### COML 2252 European 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'.

Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 2252

1 Course Unit

### COML 2258 Existentialism, Structuralism, Poststructuralism: French Thought Since 1945

In no other period, with the possible exception of the European Enlightenment, did French thought enjoy greater international influence than in the decades after the Second World War. From Existentialism, through Structuralism, Poststructuralism, and Postmodernism, French thinkers played a crucial role in shaping the intellectual history of the second half of the twentieth century. This seminar surveys the intellectual movements and some of the key figures of this period. While our discussion will touch on many themes, the core of our inquiry will be the status of the human subject. If late nineteenth and early twentieth-century thinkers were preoccupied by the question of the "death of God," French philosophical discourse in the late twentieth century was famously obsessed by the death of "Man". Jean-Paul Sartre opened the post-war era by declaring that the death of God heralded an unprecedented age of Man; soon that proclamation came under attack as rival thinkers of the post-war period subjected the idea of the human "subject" – the "self" or "ego" – to unprecedented criticism. With the waning of Sartrean Existentialism, the unfolding dynamics of that critique came to drive the most creative and influential figures in French intellectual life.

Also Offered As: HIST 2258

1 Course Unit

**COML 2310 Gender, Sexuality, and Literature Seminar**

This advanced seminar focuses on literary, cultural, and political expressions of gender and sexuality. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 2310, ENGL 2310, GSWS 2310

1 Course Unit

**COML 2320 Medium Matters: How to Make Books, Cuneiform to Kindle**

This course is a hands-on historical and theoretical investigation into diverse media of textual and literary expression from clay tablets to digital texts. Through the direct examination of rare books and various textual oddities from Penn's Special Collections and Archives and the Penn Museum, we will inquire into the history of the book and the history of writing. We will focus on different textual technologies and modes of composition, circulation, transmission, and reception of texts (from antiquity to the present day). By engaging in such topics as the transition from manuscript to print, from scroll to codex, and from book to Kindle, we will consider the history of literacy and literature in relation to other forms of expression (oral, visual, networked) and analyze different practices of organizing textual materials (from punctuation to annotation). We will examine paratextual elements (titles, forewords, afterwords) and various forms of verbal and visual accretion (from commentaries to illustrations). We will survey shifting notions of authorship, intellectual property, creativity, and originality and explore different systems of storage (libraries, archives, museums). By questioning the multi-faceted, non-deterministic interplay between textual artifacts and the media by which they are formalized and materially formed, we will conduct a critical reflection on the nature of textuality, writing, literature, and media. Readings will set essays in the history of the book and media studies alongside key case studies from various periods and geographical areas. And we will engage with textual materiality through the creation of book-objects of our own.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0761, ENGL 2320, ITAL 2320

1 Course Unit

**COML 2324 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SAST 2324

1 Course Unit

**COML 2334 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SAST 2334

1 Course Unit

**COML 2390 Clarice Lispector**

This seminar focuses on the work of Clarice Lispector, the Ukrainian-born Brazilian novelist and short story writer (1920-1977). See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2390, GSWS 2390, LALS 2390, PRTG 0090

1 Course Unit

**COML 2400 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GSWS 2402, MELC 2400, NELC 2400

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 6310

1 Course Unit

**COML 2401 Literature and Theory Seminar: Theories of World Literature**

This course is an introduction to efforts—beginning in the nineteenth century, but with special attention to the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries—to develop theoretical models and corresponding critical practices for the comprehensive study of world literature. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2401

1 Course Unit

**COML 2402 What is Capitalism? Theories of Marx and Marxism**

At their root, Marx and Marxisms try to examine the problems with both capitalism and the political and economic discourses that justify or ignore those problems. Today, many around the globe are also reflecting on capitalism's problems, in the hope of imagining and realizing a better future. This course will trace some of the origins of that renewed inquiry, and examine its limits and possibilities in today's world. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2402, GSWS 2410

1 Course Unit

**COML 2403 Marx's Century**

This course will introduce you to Karl Marx in the context of his century, and it will consider the nineteenth century in turn through the lens of his revolutionary social analysis. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2403

1 Course Unit

**COML 2410 Literary Theory Seminar**

This course explores an aspect of literary theory intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2400, GSWS 2960

1 Course Unit

**COML 2415 Fascism and Anti-Fascism**

This course examines fascism and anti-fascist struggles through the study of film, literature, political theory, visual art, and history. While situating fascism in a global context, it focuses on its history in North and South America and Europe from the early 20th century into the 21st. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CIMS 2415, ENGL 2415, LALS 2415

1 Course Unit

**COML 2420 Cultural Studies Seminar**

This course explores an aspect of cultural studies intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2930, CIMS 2420, ENGL 2420

1 Course Unit

**COML 2500 The Novel and Marriage**

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/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0575, ENGL 2799, FREN 2500, HIST 0722

1 Course Unit

**COML 2520 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 Berlusconi 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 2520

1 Course Unit

**COML 2595 Imagining Environmental Justice**

Advanced seminar in Environmental Humanities centered around issues of international environmental justice. 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 3390, ENGL 2595

1 Course Unit

**COML 2800 Poetry and Poetics Seminar**

This course explores an aspect of poetry and poetics intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2800

1 Course Unit

**COML 2810 Poetry and Sound Seminar: Music and Literature**

The seminar explores the relationship of poetry and music intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2810

1 Course Unit

**COML 2820 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.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2880, LALS 2820, THAR 2820

1 Course Unit

**COML 2840 20th-Century Poetry Seminar**

The course explores an aspect of 20th-century poetry intensively. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 2840

1 Course Unit

**COML 2920 Contemporary European Cinema**

This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific coursetopics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3915, CIMS 2015, ENGL 2920

1 Course Unit

**COML 2931 World Cinema**

This topic course explores aspects of Film Practice intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3902, CIMS 2022, ENGL 2931

1 Course Unit

**COML 2932 Bollywood and Beyond**

This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific coursetopics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 3916, CIMS 2016, ENGL 2932

1 Course Unit

**COML 2943 The Politics of Truth in the Global Documentary**

This course is a study of documentary film practices internationally, beginning from the invention of cinema and ending in the contemporary landscape. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ARTH 3959, CIMS 2943, ENGL 2943

1 Course Unit

**COML 2960 Digital and New Media Seminar**

This course explores a particular topic in the study of digital and new media in an intensive and in-depth manner. See the English Department's website at: [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2920, CIMS 2951, ENGL 2950

1 Course Unit

**COML 3020 Literary Translation: Theory and Practice**

In this course, we will be guided by the principle that translation is a practice that requires both carefulness and care, by the belief that it is an art form unto its own, and by the understanding that it is a practice steeped in ideological and political power. We will study several trends, theories and philosophical approaches in the field, and we will also attend to more technical concerns, such as copyright, machine translation, etc. We will compare different translations of same works (such as the ones of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*) to think through the complex relationship between author, translator and their publishing contexts. We will welcome several accomplished translators who will share their process and explain the importance of building a translation community. Students will also work on their own translations (into English), which we will workshop together.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 3020

Mutually Exclusive: FREN 5250

1 Course Unit

**COML 3040 Religious Conflict in France from Past to Present**

French history, culture, and politics have all been shaped by centuries of religious conflict, theological controversy, and civil strife. In many ways, Frenchness has always been defined against some kind of religious and/or ethnic Other: heretics, protestants, Jews, or Muslims. At the same time, however, France's unique religious environment has given rise to some of the most important thought on tolerance. What gave rise to these conflicting tendencies, and how can understanding the history of French religious conflict give us perspective on issues in contemporary France? In this course, we will attempt to answer these questions by studying a series of key historical events and episodes from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century and the present day: the Seventh and Eighth Crusades under Louis IX in the thirteenth century, the travels of Jean de Mandeville in the mid-fourteenth century, the Wars of Religion and French encounters with indigenous peoples in the Americas during the sixteenth century, Molière's *Tartuffe* and conflict between free-thinking and religious orthodoxy enforced by Catholic confraternities and their prominent role in politics and society under Louis XIV in the seventeenth century, Voltaire's conception of religious tolerance in the wake of the "Affaire Calas" in the 1760's, the "Affaire Dreyfus" (1894-1906) and antisemitism in modern France, and contemporary controversies over religion (particularly Islam) and the public sphere. In addition to discussion-based class meetings, the course will feature visits from specialists working on the materials to be studied as well as visits to the Kislak Center for Rare Books, Special Collections, and Manuscripts to examine original materials, including the Lorraine Beitler Collection of the Dreyfus Affair. This course is conducted entirely in French.

Also Offered As: FREN 3040

Mutually Exclusive: FREN 6040

1 Course Unit

**COML 3080 Soccer Beyond the Field: Sport and Politics in Italian Culture**

In recognition of the 2026 FIFA World Cup—hosted also in Philadelphia among other cities—we will explore soccer's centrality in Italian Culture. Italy is a country where cultural traditions run deep, and among its most compelling cultural phenomena is the nation's fervent attachment to soccer, or "calcio" as it is known in Italian. As historian John Foot claims, "You can't understand Italy without understanding football, and you can't understand football without understanding Italy." Indeed, beyond its role as a popular sport, calcio is a cultural phenomenon reflecting and influencing political discourses, national identities, social values, and local communities. This course seeks to explore the significance of soccer in and outside Italy, considering it not just as a pastime, but as a powerful cultural lens through which we can gain a deeper understanding of Italian society. We will analyze how calcio functions as a social institution that transcends regional differences, class divisions, and generational gaps, uniting diverse groups in shared experiences. At the same time, the course will investigate how soccer can also amplify differences, exclusion, and racist behaviors. Moreover, we will explore how soccer relates to design, architecture, music, and soccer icons (Maradona, Totti, Messi, Zidane, etc.). By examining the cultural, historical, and social dimensions of Italian soccer, this course will provide a rich framework for exploring how soccer intersects with broader cultural narratives and social dynamics in Italy and discussing crucial issues in Italian culture, such as multiculturalism, immigration, and anti-racist movements. Students will be exposed to a diverse array of films and visual, literary, theoretical, and historical materials, including Gramsci, Barthes, Nussbaum, Bourdieu, Pasolini, Saba, Soriano, Vázquez, Salvatores, and Sorrentino, among others. At the end of the course, students will gain a unique perspective on Italian culture and society, analyze the role of soccer in Italian culture and from a global perspective, understand how sports can be a lens for examining broader cultural issues, develop critical thinking skills to analyze complex social phenomena. Course taught in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 3080

1 Course Unit

**COML 3097 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. This seminar is usually team-taught by a humanities scholar and a practicing psychoanalyst.

Fall

Also Offered As: ENGL 0541, GSWS 3890

1 Course Unit

**COML 3110 French Thought After 1968**

In American academia, French thought after May '68 is often referred to as "French Theory," a heterogeneous corpus of philosophical and critical texts compacted into a set of poststructuralist premises, first introduced by and grew within humanities departments, then identified as a luxury by-product of the "literary" people. This course proposes to unpack the notion of "French Theory" and re-anchor it into its original social/historical background. We will read some of the most influential texts of its key figures, study how a post May 68 revolutionary energy is transformed into various innovative but also destabilizing ways of rethinking power relations, gender, language and subjectivity, and finally, consider in what capacities and limits these diverse critical approaches go beyond the simple label of "post-structuralism" and relate to our own epoch and personal experiences. The readings and discussions will be divided into four axes: 1. Philosophy of Desire (Lacan, Deleuze/Guattari); 2. Sexual Revolt and Body Politics (Foucault, Hocquenghem, Barthes); 3. Deconstruction and Its Impact on Feminism (Derrida, Cixous, Irigaray); 4. Consumer Society and Society of the Spectacle (Lipovetsky, Baudrillard, Debord). Several documentaries and feature films will be shown outside class time. Taught in English. Reading knowledge of French is welcome but not required.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: FREN 3110

1 Course Unit

**COML 3120 The Translation of Poetry/The Poetry of Translation**

Through poems, essays, and our own ongoing writing experiments, this course will celebrate the ways in which great poetry written different languages underscores the fact that language itself is a translation. Alternating between creative writing workshops and critical discussion, the course will be tailored to the backgrounds of students who enroll, and all are welcome. To learn more about this course, visit the Creative Writing Program at <https://creative.writing.upenn.edu>.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 3120

1 Course Unit

**COML 3211 Modern Chinese Poetry in a Global Context**

The tumultuous political and economic history of modern China has been mirrored in and shaped by equally fundamental revolutions in language and poetic expression. In this course, we will take Chinese poetry as a crucible in which we can observe the interacting forces of literary history and social change. From diplomats who saw poetry as a medium for cultural translation between China and the world, to revolutionaries who enlisted poetry in the project of social transformation, we will examine the lives and works of some of China's most prominent poets and ask, what can we learn about modern China from reading their poetry? In asking this question, we will also reckon with the strengths and limitations of using poetry as an historical source. In addition to poems, the course will include fiction, essays, photographs, and films by both Chinese and non-Chinese artists that place our poets in a broader context. We will pay close attention to how these poets represent China's place in the world, as well as the role of language in social change. Topics of discussion include: national identity, revolution, translation, gender, the body, ethnicity, and technology. Familiarity with Chinese or related cultural context is beneficial, but not required. This course introduces students to Chinese poetry in English translation. Students will leave the course with an in-depth understanding of the main figures, themes, and techniques of Chinese poetry, and will be introduced to some of the major developments in the history of China. Through a focus on primary texts, students will develop the vocabulary and analytical skills to appreciate and analyze poetry in translation and will gain confidence as writers thinking about literary texts.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ASAM 3211, EALC 3211

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 7211

1 Course Unit

**COML 3220 Advanced Topics in Global Gender and Sexuality Studies**

This is an advanced topics course, and the course description will vary from semester to semester.

Fall

Also Offered As: GSWS 3220

1 Course Unit

**COML 3252 Marx, Nietzsche, Freud: Masters of Suspicion**

In his influential book *Freud & Philosophy*, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur identified three master thinkers whose influence on the twentieth century was inestimable. What these figures shared was what Ricoeur called a "hermeneutics of suspicion"; that is, in their different ways, each developed a style of interpretation aimed at unmasking, demystifying, and exposing the real from the apparent. "Three masters, seemingly mutually exclusive, dominate the school of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud."

Taking its inspiration from Ricoeur, this seminar will explore some of the key writings of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. We will encounter the hermeneutics of suspicion above all in these authors' attempts to unmask religion and reveal its true origin and function. And we shall also pursue the hermeneutics of suspicion in the specific concerns that form the core of each thinker's work: Marx's critique of capitalism, Nietzsche's genealogy of Judaeo-Christian morality, skepticism about 'truth', and proto-deconstruction of the human self, and Freud's theory of the unconscious. The final weeks of the course will be devoted to independent research and writing of an original essay in intellectual history.

Also Offered As: HIST 3252

1 Course Unit

**COML 3303 Global Film Theory**

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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 2952, CIMS 3300, ENGL 2902, GSWS 3300

Mutually Exclusive: CIMS 6300

1 Course Unit

**COML 3330 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 their 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 0509, ITAL 3330

1 Course Unit

**COML 3501 Writing and Witnessing**

This course will explore one of the fundamental questions we face as humans: how do we bear witness to ourselves and to the world? How do we live and write with a sense of response-ability to one another? How does our writing grapple with traumatic histories that continue to shape our world and who we are in it? The very word "witnessing" contains a conundrum within it: it means both to give testimony, such as in a court of law, and to bear witness to something beyond understanding. In this class, we will explore both senses of the term "witness" as we study work by writers such as Harriet Jacobs, Paul Celan, M. NourbeSe Philip, Bhanu Kapil, Layli Long Soldier, Claudia Rankine, Juliana Spahr, and others that wrestles with how to be a witness to oneself and others during a time of ongoing war, colonialism, racism, climate change, and other disasters. Students are welcome in this class no matter what stage you are at with writing, and whether you write poetry or prose or plays or make other kinds of art. Regardless of your experience, in this class you'll be considered an "author," which in its definition also means a "witness." We will examine and question what authorship can do in the world, and we will analyze and explore the fine lines among being a witness, a bystander, a participant, a spectator, and an ally. In this class you will critically analyze and write responses to class readings; you'll do writing exercises related to the work we read; and you'll complete (and be workshopped on) a portfolio of creative writing (and/or art) that bears witness to events that matter to you.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 3501, GSWS 3501

1 Course Unit

**COML 3508 Queer Forms**

This multi-genre creative writing course will examine some of the methods contemporary LGBTQ+ writers have used to queer genre, language, and form in their writing. Students will write and workshop their own new queer forms of making as the class creates new forms of queer futurity. To learn more about this course, visit the Creative Writing Program at <https://creative.writing.upenn.edu>.

Also Offered As: ENGL 3508, GSWS 3508

1 Course Unit

**COML 3555 Japanese Theater**

Japan has one of the richest and most varied theatrical traditions in the world. In this course, we will examine Japanese theater in historical and comparative contexts. The readings and discussions will cover all areas of the theatrical experience (script, acting, stage design, costumes, music, and audience). Audio-visual material will be used whenever appropriate and possible. The class will be conducted in English, with all English materials.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: EALC 3355, THAR 3355

1 Course Unit

**COML 3603 Writing, Publishing, and Reading in Early Modern Europe and the Americas**

In this course we will consider the writing, publication, and reading of texts created on both sides of the Atlantic in early modern times, from the era of Gutenberg to that of Franklin, and in many languages. The seminar will be held in the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books and Manuscripts in Van Pelt Library and make substantial use of its exceptional, multilingual collections, including early manuscripts, illustrated books, plays marked for performance, and censored books.

Any written or printed object can be said to have a double nature: both textual and material. We will introduce this approach and related methodologies: the history of the book; the history of reading; connected history; bibliography; and textual criticism. We will focus on particular case studies and also think broadly about the global history of written culture, and about relations between scribal and print culture, between writing and reading, between national traditions, and between what is and what is not "literature." We encourage students with diverse linguistic backgrounds to enroll. As part of the seminar, students will engage in a research project which can be based in the primary source collections of the Kislak Center. History Majors or Minors may use this course to fulfill the US, Europe, or Latin America geographic requirement if that region is the focus of their research paper.

Also Offered As: ENGL 2603, HIST 3603

1 Course Unit

**COML 3701 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. This course will begin with a close reading of the *Odyssey* in translation, with particular attention to Odysseus as a post-Trojan War hero; to the roles of women, especially Odysseus' faithful and brilliant wife Penelope; and to the uses of poetry and story-telling in creating individual and cultural identities. We will then consider how later authors have drawn on these perspectives to construct their own visions, reading works, or parts of works, by such authors as Virgil, Dante, Tennyson, James Joyce, Constantine Cavafy, Derek Walcott, and Margaret Atwood. Each student will choose a work inspired by the *Odyssey* (from possibilities spanning many periods, cultural traditions, and media) on which to give a presentation and write a paper.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 3701

1 Course Unit

**COML 3704 The Iliad and its Afterlife**

As the earliest work in the western tradition, the *Iliad* has been a constant point of reference for later considerations of heroism, friendship, the search for meaning in the face of mortality, and the effects of war on individuals and societies. We will begin with a close reading of the *Iliad* in translation, with attention both to the story of its hero Achilles as he experiences disillusionment, frustration, anger, triumph, revenge, and reconciliation and to the poem's broader portrait of a society at war, which incorporates the diverse perspectives of invaders and defenders, men and women, old and young, gods and mortals, along with tantalizing glimpses of peacetime life. We will then consider how later writers and artists have drawn on the *Iliad* to present a range of perspectives of their own – whether patriotic, mock heroic, romantic, or pacifist – with particular attention to 20th and 21st century responses by such figures as W.H. Auden, Simone Weil, Cy Twombly, David Malouf, Alice Oswald, and Adrienne Rich. There are no specific prerequisites, but the course can serve as a complement to CLST 302, *The Odyssey and its Afterlife* or CLST 331 *Reading the Iliad in a Time of War*.

Also Offered As: CLST 3704

1 Course Unit

**COML 3712 From Tablets to Tablets: A Long History of Technology and Communication**

The invention of new communications technologies is often accompanied by a swell of hope. Enthusiasts expect people to become more connected, new ideas to become more accessible, and information to be shared more rapidly and in more fixed forms than ever before. While there are always nay-sayers, who warn against the effects of such inventions, the narrative linking new communications technologies and progress is so strong that these detractors are most commonly painted as luddites, and the narrative itself is used to justify and promote yet newer media as well as new configurations of state and media relations. In this class, we will examine some of the most significant transformations in the history of communications technology—from orality to writing, from tablet to scroll to codex, manuscript to print, hand-press to steam-press, print to radio, radio to tv, and tv to streaming and other forms of new media. We will ask some basic questions: How were these technologies made? How and by whom were these technologies used? How did contemporaries perceive them and the transformations they did or did not work? We will also ask some bigger questions: why do certain communications technologies emerge and get adopted when and where they do? Conversely, why are some communications technologies resisted at some times and in some places? What impacts do communications technologies have on the societies in which they appear? Do they alter the course of events? Do they change the way in which we think? If so, then how? Is the history of communication substitutive or additive? How is the digital age in which we live similar to or different from those that came before? History Majors may use this course to fulfill the pre-1800 requirement depending on the topic of their research paper.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: HIST 3712

1 Course Unit

**COML 3802 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 workshoped over the course of the semester, consisting of a literary translation of a text of the student's choice.

Also Offered As: CLST 3802

Mutually Exclusive: CLST 5802

1 Course Unit

**COML 3830 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.).

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 3830, FREN 3830, ITAL 3830

1 Course Unit

**COML 3922 European Thought and Culture in the Age of Revolution**

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.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 3922

1 Course Unit

**COML 3923 Twentieth 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: HIST 3923

1 Course Unit

**COML 3931 Participatory Community Media, 1970-Present**

What would it mean to understand the history of American cinema through the lens of participatory community media, collectively-made films made by and for specific communities to address personal, social and political needs using a range of affordable technologies and platforms, including 16mm film, Portapak, video, cable access television, satellite, digital video, mobile phones, social media, and drones? What methodologies do participatory community media makers employ, and how might those methods challenge and transform the methods used for cinema and media scholarship? How would such an approach to filmmaking challenge our understanding of terms like "authorship," "amateur," "exhibition," "distribution," "venue," "completion," "criticism," "documentary," "performance," "narrative," "community," and "success"? How might we understand these U.S.-based works within a more expansive set of transnational conversations about the transformational capacities of collective media practices? This course will address these and other questions through a deep engagement with the films that make up the national traveling exhibition curated by Louis Massiah and Patricia R. Zimmerman, *We Tell: Fifty Years of Participatory Community Media*, which foregrounds six major themes: *Body Publics* (public health and sexualities); *Collaborative Knowledges* (intergenerational dialogue); *Environments of Race and Place* (immigration, migration, and racial identities unique to specific environments); *States of Violence* (war and the American criminal justice system); *Turf* (gentrification, homelessness, housing, and urban space); and *Wages of Work* (job opportunities, occupations, wages, unemployment, and underemployment). As part of that engagement, we will study the history of a series of Community Media Centers from around the U.S., including Philadelphia's own Scribe Video Center, founded in 1982 by Louis Massiah, this course's co-instructor. This is an undergraduate seminar, but it also available to graduate students in the form of group-guided independent studies. The course requirements include: weekly screenings, readings, and seminar discussions with class members and visiting practitioners, and completing both short assignments and a longer research paper.

Also Offered As: AFRC 3932, ARTH 3931, CIMS 3931, ENGL 2970, GSWS 3931

Mutually Exclusive: ARTH 6931

1 Course Unit

**COML 3999 Independent Study**

Supervised study for Juniors.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**COML 4300 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: JWST 4300, MELC 4300

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 5410

Prerequisite: HEBR 1000

1 Course Unit

**COML 4500 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 4500

1 Course Unit

**COML 4998 Honors Thesis**

Supervised honors thesis for seniors.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**COML 4999 Independent Study**

Supervised study for Seniors.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit

**COML 5010 Comparative Literature Proseminar**

This course will survey what has come to be known in literary and cultural studies as "theory" by tracking the genealogies of a select range of contemporary practices of interpretation. We will address the following questions. What are some of the historical and rhetorical conditions of emergence for contemporary critical theories of interpretation? What does it mean to interpret literature and culture in the wake of the grand theoretical enterprises of the modern period? How do conceptions of power and authority in literature and culture change as symbolic accounts of language give way to allegorical and performative accounts? How might we bring frameworks of globality and translation to bear on literary and cultural criticism? Half of the course sessions will involve the instructor and the students reading texts that represent a range of hermeneutic approaches, in classical and contemporary forms. For the other half of the class, we will welcome one visiting instructor per week from the Comparative Literature faculty, who will assign readings and lead discussion on their own area(s) of specialization. The central, practical goals of the class will be to help first year PhD candidates in Comparative Literature prepare for their MA exam, to introduce students to a range of faculty in the Program, and to forge an intellectual community among the first year cohort.

Fall

Also Offered As: GRMN 5340

1 Course Unit

**COML 5041 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 knowledge 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.

Spring

Also Offered As: ARTH 5680, ENGL 5440

1 Course Unit

**COML 5050 Digital Humanities Studies**

This course is designed to introduce advanced undergraduate and graduate students to the range of new opportunities for literary research afforded by Digital Humanities and recent technological innovation. Digital Humanities: you've heard of it. Maybe you're excited about it, maybe you're skeptical. Regardless of your primary area of study, this course will give you the critical vocabularies and hands-on experience necessary to understand the changing landscape of the humanities today. Topics will include quantitative analysis, digital editing and bibliography, network visualization, public humanities, and the future of scholarly publishing. Although we will spend a good portion of our time together working directly with new tools and methods, our goal will not be technological proficiency so much as critical competence and facility with digital theories and concepts. We will engage deeply with media archaeology, feminist technology studies, critical algorithm studies, and the history of material texts; and we will attend carefully to the politics of race, gender, and sexuality in the field. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their own scalable digital project. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 5051, ENGL 5050

1 Course Unit

**COML 5090 Topics in Yiddish Literature: 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. Another version of this seminar presents Jewish modernism as an international phenomenon of the early 20th century. The course will attempt to define "Jewish modernism" through the prism of poetry, which inevitably, given the historical events in Europe and America during this time, grapples with aesthetic, religious, and national ideologies and methods. The syllabus will focus mainly on poetry written in Yiddish and English, and will also include German, Russian, and Hebrew verse. All poetry, critical, and theoretical materials will be taught in English translation, although students who know the languages will work on the original texts and will bring to the table a comparative perspective. Because we will be discussing translated poems, a secondary focus of the course will, in fact, be on literary translation's process and products.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5090, GSWS 5090, JWST 5090, YDSH 5090

1 Course Unit

**COML 5110 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.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

**COML 5111 Introduction to Paleography & Book History**

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.

Spring

Also Offered As: CLST 7709, ITAL 5110

1 Course Unit

**COML 5113 Topics in South Asian Art**

This seminar engages topics in the history and theory of South Asian art from antiquity to the present emphasizing global connections and comparisons. Topics vary from year to year and might include the arts of the book in South Asia; Indian Ocean art worlds; and fragments, ruins, and traces in the art of South Asia. We shall explore objects in area collections and incorporate special excursions and programs when possible. A background in South Asian studies or languages is not required. Students from related disciplines such history, anthropology, literary studies, religious studies, feminist studies, cinema and media studies, and architecture are welcome.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5110, SAST 5110

1 Course Unit

**COML 5120 Film Noir**

Topics vary. Please see the department's website for the current course description: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5120, FREN 5120

1 Course Unit

**COML 5121 Facts and Fiction in Autobiographical Writing**

The course will cover several genres of autobiographical writing. We will read and discuss auto-fiction, bildungsroman, autobiography/memoir, diary fiction, and non-fictional diary. Our texts will include Rachel Cusk's OUTLINE (compared to her memoir AFTERMATH), Natalia Ginzburg's FAMILY LEXICON, Benjamin Franklin's autobiography, Amos Oz's A TALE OF LOVE AND DARKNESS, Pepys's diary as well as conceptual readings. We shall examine the techniques used by the different genres to represent reality and individual experience. And we will ponder the question of whether and how fictive literature is competing against non-fictional literary and visual channels of representing reality, human behavior, and individual experience. There will be one final paper, and short weekly written responses to the assigned readings.

Spring, even numbered years only

1 Course Unit

**COML 5180 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: REES 5100

1 Course Unit

**COML 5240 Topics in Medieval Studies**

This course covers topics in Medieval literature. Its emphasis varies with instructor. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5240, GSWS 5240

1 Course Unit

**COML 5245 Topics in Medieval Studies: Premodern Animals (c.500-c.1500)**

From St. Cuthbert, whose freezing feet were warmed by otters, to St. Guinefort, a miracle-performing greyhound in 13th-century France, to Melusine, the half-fish, half-woman ancestress of the house of Luxembourg (now the Starbucks logo), medieval narratives are deeply inventive in their portrayal of human-animal interactions. This course introduces students to critical animals studies via medieval literature and culture. We will read a range of genres, from philosophical commentaries on Aristotle and theological commentaries on Noah's ark to werewolf poems, beast fables, political satires, saints' lives, chivalric romances, bestiaries, natural encyclopaedias, dietary treatises and travel narratives. Among the many topics we will explore are the following: animals in premodern law; comfort and companion animals; vegetarianism across religious cultures; animal symbolism and human virtue; taxonomies of species in relation to race, gender, and class; literary animals and political subversion; menageries and collecting across medieval Europe, the Near East, and Asia; medieval notions of hybridity, compositeness, trans-species identity, and interspecies relationships; art and the global traffic in animals (e.g., ivory, parchment); European encounters with New World animals; and the legacy of medieval animals in contemporary philosophy and media. No prior knowledge of medieval literature is required. Students from all disciplines are welcome.

Also Offered As: CLST 7710, ENGL 5245, RELS 6101

1 Course Unit

**COML 5250 Schelling, Goethe, Nature. Thinking Nature with Schelling and Goethe.**

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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5250

1 Course Unit

**COML 5251 Literary Translation: Theory and Practice**

In this course, we will be guided by the principle that translation is a practice that requires both carefulness and care, by the belief that it is an art form unto its own, and by the understanding that it is a practice steeped in ideological and political power. We will study several trends, theories and philosophical approaches in the field, and we will also attend to more technical concerns, such as copyright, machine translation, etc. We will compare different translations of same works (such as the ones of Frantz Fanon's *Black Skin White Masks*) to think through the complex relationship between author, translator and their publishing contexts. We will welcome several accomplished translators who will share their process and explain the importance of building a translation community. Students will also work on their own translations (into English), which we will workshop together. This course is open to graduate students and to advanced undergraduate students, with permission from the instructor.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FIGS 5250, FREN 5250

Mutually Exclusive: FREN 3020

1 Course Unit

**COML 5260 The Trouble with Freud: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture**

For professionals in the field of mental care, Freud's work is often regarded as outmoded, 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 still, 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5260, GSWS 5260

1 Course Unit

**COML 5300 Medieval Italian Literature**

Medieval Italian society, art, intellectual and political history.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 5300

1 Course Unit

**COML 5310 Dante's Commedia I**

Please check the department's website for the course description at: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses> Dante Visualizing: Dante Visualizing and Dante Visualized. Dante's *Commedia* has inspired art, but at the same time art is present within the *Comedy* itself, through images, metaphors, descriptions and even more concrete examples. This course aims at discussing these aspects, taking into consideration also the philosophical, political and religious background of these motifs. While analyzing images in and from the *Commedia*, we will look at illustrations and artistic interpretations, spanning from medieval illuminations and Renaissance printed books (mainly from Van Pelt Library) to contemporary examples, and focusing on artists such as Giotto, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Blake, Dore, and Dali. The course will be taught in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 5310

1 Course Unit

**COML 5320 After Dante's Divine Comedy: Transmission and Material Form, Creative Adaptation and Performance**

This 5000-level seminar, co-taught by Marco Aresu (Italian) and David Wallace (English, Comparative Literature), considers how Dante and the copyists of his works deployed the tools of scribal culture to shape, signal, or layer meanings beyond those conveyed in his written texts. Medieval texts, uniquely positioned to provide such perspective, are foundational to theoretical understanding of new forms and materials in our media-saturated, contemporary world. In this course, we also read later creative responses to Dante, especially in Irish and English, American and African American contexts, and in poetry and prose, video and film. We will work from a parallel text, paying attention to the Italian but with no prior experience of the language required.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5320, ITAL 5320

1 Course Unit

**COML 5350 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—heighten 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).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5350

1 Course Unit

**COML 5351 Petrarch**

Petrarch's life and work in the context of Italian and European culture and society.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 5350

1 Course Unit

**COML 5370 Translating Literature: Theory and Practice**

The greats all have something to say about translation. The Hebrew poet H. N. Bialik is attributed with saying that "he who reads the Bible in translation is like a man who kisses his bride through a veil." That, however, is a mistranslation: What Bialik really wrote was, "Whoever knows Judaism through translation is like a person who kisses his mother through a handkerchief." (<http://benyehuda.org/bialik/dvarim02.html>), a saying that he probably translated and adapted from Russian or German. (<https://networks.h-net.org/node/28655/discussions/116448/query-bialik-kissing-bride>) Robert Frost wrote, "I could define poetry this way: it is that which is lost out of both prose and verse in translation." Walter Benjamin defines it: "Translation is a form. To comprehend it as a form, one must go back to the original, for the laws governing the translation lie within the original, contained in the issue of its translatability." Lawrence Venuti rails against translation that domesticates, rather than foreignizes, thus betraying the foreign text through a contrived familiarity that makes the translator invisible. Emily Wilson wants her translation "to bring out the way I think the original text handles it. [The original text] allows you to see the perspective of the people who are being killed." (<https://bookriot.com/2017/12/04/emily-wilson-translation-the-odyssey/>) Is translation erotic? A form of filial love? Incestuous? A mode of communion, or idol worship? Is translation a magician's vanishing trick? Is translation traitorous, transcendent? Maybe translation is impossible. But let's try it anyways! In this graduate seminar, we will read key texts on the history and theory of translating literature, and we sample translations from across the centuries of the "classics," such as the Bible and Homer. We will consider competing translations into English of significant modern literary works from a variety of languages, possibly including, but not limited to German, Yiddish, French, Hebrew, and Russian. These readings will serve to frame each student's own semester-long translation of a literary work from a language of her or his choice. The seminar offers graduate students with their skills in various language an opportunity to take on a significant translation project within a circle of peers.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5370, JWST 5370

1 Course Unit

**COML 5380 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?

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5720

1 Course Unit

**COML 5384 Plato and Aristotle in the Early Modern Period**

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 the Latin world 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 5384

1 Course Unit

**COML 5400 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 Hofmannsthal, 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 *In the Heart of the Country*, *Waiting for the Barbarians* and Elizabeth Costello. Advanced undergraduates may enroll with the permission of the instructor. Readings and discussions in English.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 6400, GRMN 5400

1 Course Unit

**COML 5410 Topics in Cultural History**

Topic for Fall 2021: Making and Marking Time.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5870, ENGL 5410, GRMN 5410

1 Course Unit

**COML 5411 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 5410, ITAL 5410

1 Course Unit

**COML 5415 Orientalisms**

This course surveys the scholarly and real-world life of Edward Said's 1978 monograph, *Orientalism*. Topics may include Said's primary source material, theories of Orientalism applied to eighteenth-century literature, earlier and later forms of Orientalism, and the impact of Said's work on postcolonial studies.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5415

1 Course Unit

**COML 5420 Topics in Culture.**

Topics vary annually.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5420

1 Course Unit

**COML 5430 Environmental Humanities: Theory, Method, Practice**

Environmental Humanities: Theory, Methods, Practice is a seminar-style course designed to introduce students to the trans- and interdisciplinary field of environmental humanities. Weekly readings and discussions will be complemented by guest speakers from a range of disciplines including ecology, atmospheric science, computing, history of science, medicine, anthropology, literature, and the visual arts. Participants will develop their own research questions and a final project, with special consideration given to building the multi-disciplinary collaborative teams research in the environmental humanities often requires.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5430, ENV5 5410, GRMN 5430, SPAN 5430

1 Course Unit

**COML 5440 Public Environmental Humanities**

By necessity, work in environmental humanities spans academic disciplines. By design, it can also address and engage publics beyond traditional academic settings. This seminar explores best practices in public environmental humanities. Students receive close mentoring and build collaborative community to develop and execute cross-disciplinary, public engagement projects on the environment. This spring, this broadly interdisciplinary course is designed in conjunction with the ongoing environmental humanities project, *An Ecotopian Toolkit for the Anthropocene*. In the framework of our seminar, students will have opportunities to work with the project's curators and educators as well as Toolmakers on project-based assignments that also engage wider publics around issues of climate and environmental justice. This lab-style seminar is suitable for advanced undergraduates (with permission) and fulfills the "Capstone" requirement for the Minor in Environmental Humanities. It is also open to graduate students in departments across Arts and Sciences as well as other schools at the university.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ANTH 5440, ENV5 5440, GRMN 5440, URBS 5440

1 Course Unit

**COML 5450 Topics: Renaissance Culture**

Please see department website for a current course description at: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 7704, ITAL 5400, PHIL 5150

1 Course Unit

**COML 5460 Women's Writing in French, 1160–1823**

In this course, we will examine a representative sample of premodern women's writing in French, beginning in the Middle Ages and concluding in the Revolutionary Era. The authors studied come from differing walks of life, social classes, and religious and political identifications, and they express themselves in a wide variety of genres, including short stories, fairy tales, lyric poetry, letters, plays, and novels. Despite their many differences, these authors are united by a common tendency to question a centuries-old tradition of misogynistic discourse, patriarchal social order, and gender normativity. Authors to be studied include: - Marie de France (ca. 1160), a brilliant storyteller and poet attached to the court of Henry II of England whose fabulous tales, arguably an early form of speculative fiction, imagine alternatives to the rigidity of arranged marriages and the heterosexual couple. - Christine de Pizan (1364–ca. 1430), a court writer for Charles VI of France and several other powerful patrons who is often considered France's first professional female writer. Her *Livre de la Cité des Dames* (*Book of the City of Ladies*) systematically refutes the misogynistic pronouncements of learned male authors and holds up devotion and religious life as alternatives to accepting the assigned role of wife and mother. - Marguerite de Navarre (1492–1549), the sister of Francis I of France and a prolific author of devotional poetry, plays, and the *Heptaméron*, a collection of tales modeled on Boccaccio's *Decameron* and known for its often shocking subject matter. Throughout her oeuvre, she calls into question the social perception of women rooted in misogynistic discourse, as well as the tendency to blame sexual violence on women, while at the same time revealing the potential danger of masculinity for men and women alike and envisioning Pauline Christianity as a means of radical equality. - Pernette du Guillet (1520–1545), Louise Labé (c. 1524–1566), and Anne de Marquets (1533–1588), three poets who respond to and write against the male-centered tradition of Petrarchan love poetry. Guillet and Labé stand out for their frank and often sensual depictions of female desire and sexuality in spite of taboos against their public expression, while Marquets, a Dominican nun at the convent of Poissy, combines Petrarchan, devotional, and mystic tropes to envision religious life as an alternative to the heteronormativity of lay French society and the Protestant Reformation. - Madame de Lafayette (1634–1693) and Madame de Sévigné (1626–1696), whose writings are of monumental importance in the history of literature in French as well as invaluable testimonies to the role played by women in the intellectual developments of the early modern period, including salons, Jansenism, and free-thinking (libertinism). - Gabrielle-Suzanne de Villeneuve (1685–1755), author of the first known version of *La belle et la bête* (*Beauty and the Beast*), who, along with other female authors of fairy tales, used the conventions of the genre to challenge social conventions and criticize the treatment of women. - Claire de Duras (1777–1828), whose novel *Ourika*, much like Villeneuve's *La belle et la bête*, shows how feminist concerns might intersect with colonialism and race; a bestseller in its day, it is one of the first works in French to feature a complex and articulate black narrator and what many scholars consider to be a modern outlook on race and identity. To provide historical and theoretical context, these readings will be supplemented with relevant primary and secondary sources, as well as with modern and contemporary adaptations, such as illustrations and films. The course is open to graduate students and to advanced undergraduates with permission of the instructor. Discussions will be in English. Readings will be made available both in the original French and in English translation, and final papers may be written in English or in French.

Also Offered As: FREN 5460, GSWS 5460

1 Course Unit

**COML 5500 Etudes sur le XVII siecle**

The specific topics of the seminar vary from semester to semester, depending on the instructor and his/her choice. Among the topics previously covered, and likely to be offered again, are the following: The Theatre of Jean Racine, Fiction of Mme de Lafayette, The Moralists (La Bruyere, La Rochefoucauld, Perrault ), Realistic Novels (Sorel's Francion, Scarron's Le Roman Comique, Furetiere's Le Roman Bourgeois). Students give oral and written reports, and write a term paper.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 5500, GSWS 5500

1 Course Unit

**COML 5520 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.

Also Offered As: COMM 5520, GSWS 5520, RELS 5520

1 Course Unit

**COML 5550 Topics in Dutch Studies**

Topics vary.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: DTCH 5300, GRMN 5550

1 Course Unit

**COML 5590 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.

Also Offered As: AAMW 5590, ARTH 5590, CLST 7400, GRMN 5590

1 Course Unit

**COML 5600 Eighteenth-Century Novel**

Please check the department's website for the course description:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: FREN 5600

1 Course Unit

**COML 5650 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).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5450, JWST 5650

1 Course Unit

**COML 5660 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 Vormärz, 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. This course is taught in German. Readings will focus on a variety of literary, political, and philosophical texts and consider a selection of art works.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 7770, GRMN 5580

1 Course Unit

**COML 5700 Topics in Afro-Diasporic Literature and Culture**

This course treats some important aspect of African American and Afro-Diasporic literature and culture. Some recent versions of the course have focused on the emergence of African-American women writers, on the relation between African-American literature and cultural studies, and on the Harlem Renaissance. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 5701, ENGL 5700

1 Course Unit

**COML 5710 Literature and Multilingualism**

Since several years, the societal and cultural reality of multilingualism has become an important research field in linguistics and literary studies, as in cultural studies more generally. This graduate course will investigate how multilingual poetics challenge and resist paradigms and ideologies of innate monolingualism, linguistic mastery, absolute translatability and monocultural nationalism. To begin with, the course will introduce central aspects of scholarship on literature and multilingualism, covering concepts such as heteroglossia, code switching, translanguaging and macaronic language, and debates such as those on world literature, global English, foreignization, (un)translatability and non-translation, including their political and ethical importance. After a brief historical overview, glancing at western literary multilingualism in the Middle Ages, Romanticism and the avantgarde, the course will mainly focus on literature of the late 20th and 21st centuries taken from Germanic and Romance linguistic contexts. Using an exemplary selection, the course will cover prose, poetry and drama, and include excerpts of texts by authors such as Andrea Camilleri, Gino Chiellino, Fikry El Azzouzi, Ernst Jandl, Jackie Kay, Çağlar Köseoğlu, Monique Mojica, Melinda Nadj Abonji, Emine Sevgi Özdamar, Olivier Rolin, Yoko Tawada, Noline van Harskamp, and others. Reading these texts, we will try to determine how multilingualism manifests itself (linguistically, discursively, rhetorically, thematically, contextually etc.) and how the texts engage with linguistic, cultural and social pluralities. The course will conclude with a focus on the translator as a central character in fictional prose and movies. Classes will take place in an interactive format that stimulates discussion and exchange. Students will get the respective excerpts – both in the original version and in English translation – one week at a time so that they can prepare themselves each week for the discussion. Theoretical and contextual information will be provided via Power Point presentations.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: DTCH 5710, FREN 5710, GRMN 5710, ITAL 5710

1 Course Unit

**COML 5720 Iran and the West Through the Lens of Fiction**

This graduate level course explores key tropes and themes of Iranian modernity through a close reading of Persian novels, short stories, travelogues, and memoirs. Various literary genres from social realism, to surrealism, magic realism, naturalism, and absurd literature will be introduced with specific reference to Iran's literature and in light of literary theory of novel. This course does not require any prior knowledge of Persian language and literature. Throughout the course, we will be particularly concerned with the relationship between Persian fiction and the West. We will investigate this curious relationship through themes of gender, religion, politics, and war.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MELC 5720, NELC 5720

Mutually Exclusive: MELC 1710

1 Course Unit

**COML 5725 Songs of Dissent: African American Poetry in the 21st Century**

This course explores how poetry and poetics figure into the effort to theorize the African American subject in the 21st Century. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of the topic. Please see English.upenn.edu for a full list of course offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 5725, ENGL 5725

1 Course Unit

**COML 5730 Topics in Criticism & Theory: Object Theory**

Topics vary annually

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5730, CIMS 5730, ENGL 5730, GRMN 5730, REES 6683

1 Course Unit

**COML 5735 Topics in Criticism: What is Poetics?**

What is poetics? How does it differ from other forms of criticism in terms of both attitude or posture and method? In terms of practices of art and politics, What is its relationship to poeisis and ethics – what is poethics? – as articulated by such varied thinkers as Joan Retallack, Denise Ferreira Da Silva and R.A. Judy? What's to be observed about the current turn of black studies toward poetics? For the seminar, let's think about the above as matters of a) critical inquiry b) art practice and c) professional discipline. It may be possible to triangulate by way of "critique" and "aesthetics." Proposing the inseparability of critical inquiry and writing practice, the final assignment will be deemed experimental since the monograph-ish essay won't be presumed. Consequently, we will discuss the institutional state/status of what participants will have made. Possible readings include Michel Foucault, What is Critique?; Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, What is Philosophy?; Hortense Spillers, Black, White & in Color (selections); Joan Retallack, The Poethical Wager; Denise Ferreira Da Silva, Unpayable Debt; Boris Groys, Going Public; Rachel Zolf, No One's Witness; Leslie Scalapino, Objects in the Terrifying Tense/Longing from Taking Place.

Also Offered As: ENGL 5735

1 Course Unit

**COML 5771 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 Literaturmuseum der Moderne in Marbach, Germany, and (4) the archives of the National Library of Israel in Jerusalem.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5690, GRMN 5770, JWST 5770

1 Course Unit

**COML 5790 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. Kiarina Kordela), rethinking finance capitalism (Frederic Lordon), feminist theory (Moirá Gatens), literary studies (Pierre Macherey, Anthony Uhlmann), and environmental humanities (Hasana Sharp, Beth Lord).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 5790

1 Course Unit

**COML 5800 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 his 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5871, GRMN 5800, JWST 5800, PHIL 5389

1 Course Unit

**COML 5811 Modern/Contemporary Italian Culture**

Please see department website for current description at: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses>

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ITAL 5810, JWST 5810

1 Course Unit

**COML 5821 Topics: Literature and Film**

Please see department website for a current course description at: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5820, ITAL 5820

1 Course Unit

**COML 5840 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 fantastiques" by Merimee, Gautier, Nerval, Maupassant, Breton, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Jean Ray and others.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5821, FREN 5820

1 Course Unit

**COML 5841 Environmental Imaginaries**

This seminar considers the interplay of narrative and environment. Through primary and secondary readings we'll consider environment as, variously, object and subject of narration, event, condition, and actant in plot. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of the fields. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5840

1 Course Unit

**COML 5850 Italian Thought**

What is Italian philosophy? Does Italian philosophy have a peculiar character? Can we speak of "Italian philosophy" if Italy became a unified country only recently, and its history is complex and fragmented? Yet "Italian Thought" and its genealogy are central to today's theoretical debates on concepts such as biopolitics, reproductive labor and "empire" among others. This course will offer a diachronic review of the most important Italian thinkers, highlighting the political vocation of Italian philosophy, and its engagement with history and science, while discussing the modern supporters and opponents of the "Italian Thought" category. Readings might include Dante, Machiavelli, Bruno, Vico, Beccaria, Gramsci, Cavarero and Agamben among others.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 5850, ITAL 5850

1 Course Unit

**COML 5851 Machiavelli's Political Thought and its Modern Readers**

There is hardly an author who has been as controversial as Niccolò Machiavelli. The influence of this Italian political thinker on the theoretical imaginary of subsequent thinkers and writers has been huge. Yet, there have been strong disagreements on how to interpret Machiavelli's ideas and questions still abound on the political meaning of his thought. Is there a core message of Machiavellian politics? Is he a political philosopher or a theorist or a 'scientist' of politics? Can we call him a realist? Or is he rather a republican or a plebeian actor and thinker, as recent scholars have pointed out? If so, what kind of republicanism or plebeian ideas can be found in his context and in his works? What has been the impact of his ideas in 20th century political thought? The goal of this course is two-fold. Each class will comment and discuss passages from *The Prince* and the *Discourses* or important modern and contemporary texts based on Machiavelli's ideas. On the one hand, the course aims to directly analyze some key passage of the two main texts of Machiavelli, *The Prince* and the *Discourses*. The aim of this investigation is to stress the complexity of Machiavelli's thought in its own context, which substantially challenges any attempt to reduce him to simple labels. Machiavelli's texts will also be approached through a close and thorough reading as well as a comparison with the ideas of its own sources (especially Polybius, Dante, Petrarca, Plutarch, Plato, Aristotle, Cicero etc.). On the other hand, the course aims to analyze the influence of Machiavelli thought on some 20th century thinkers (The students will also read texts from Antonio Gramsci, Claude Lefort, Isaiah Berlin, Leo Strauss, Louis Althusser, next to the most recent scholarly historical literature in Machiavelli studies). This will allow the students to become familiar not only with Machiavelli's texts but also with several thinker who have drawn on this author from completely different perspectives to shape their own political thought.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 5851

1 Course Unit

**COML 5900 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 5900, FREN 5900

1 Course Unit

**COML 5901 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. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5900

1 Course Unit

**COML 5902 The Lessons of Horror**

The pedagogy of horror is ancient, as Michel Foucault shows in *Discipline and Punish*. Exhibiting mangled bodies served as a warning for others, the Law being reinforced by the spectacle of torture and painful death. There is a Spanish saying: "the letter can only enter with blood." Goya painted it ("La letra con sangre entra," in the Museum of Zaragoza). Jack London presented a similar pedagogy with his Nietzschean captain in *The Sea Wolf*. We will start from what Julia Kristeva called "the powers of horror" by looking at philosophical texts, literary texts, and films. We will first need to distinguish between Horror and Terror, and see how Hegel discusses the "Terror" moment in the French Revolution. We will explore parallels between Marquis de Sade and Immanuel Kant with Adorno, Horkheimer and Lacan. What are Sade's Libertines trying to teach in "The philosophy in the bedroom" and in revolutionary political pamphlets? We will follow Derrida when he meditates on cruelty and its links with the death sentence. We will ask about the rationale of terrifying acts of violence in *Prometheus Bound*, *The Spanish Tragedy*, and *Titus Andronicus*. Is there something to be learned from "torture porn" in films like *Hostel*, *Green Inferno* and *Martyrs*, from strategies of suicide bombing presented either in films (*The Terrorist*) or in historical analyses (Terror in the name of God)? What is the point of the pedagogy of horror deployed by Kafka ("*The Penitentiary Colony*") and Samuel Beckett (*How It Is*)? Is an ethics of care possible after one has perused Maggy Nelson's *On Cruelty*, and meditated on Conrad's denunciation of colonialism in *Heart of Darkness*? For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5901, ENGL 5901

1 Course Unit

**COML 5903 Freud and After**

Psychoanalysis remains the most powerful, relentlessly tested and continuously revised and refined account of human selfhood, motivation, behavior, and intersubjectivity. Despite various attempts to dismiss or domesticate its most radical insights, its conceptions of the person and the interpersonal have continued to be woven into the very fabric of critical theory, from the Frankfurt School to postmodern and contemporary critical schools and their derivatives (e.g., affect studies, critical race theory, disability studies, animal studies, etc.). Yet within the humanities and social sciences, psychoanalysis is commonly taught and applied as little more than a fixed canon of works from the early-to-mid-twentieth century—chiefly, works by Sigmund Freud, Melanie Klein, D. W. Winnicott, and Jacques Lacan. Essential though their ideas remain, they can hardly be understood, much less applied in the present without an understanding of the ways in which they've been profoundly changed: worked through and beyond by subsequent generations of psychoanalytic thinkers and practitioners. This course offers graduate students (and, by permission, advanced undergraduates in the Psychoanalytic Studies Minor) an opportunity to "rebegin" (in Laura Riding Jackson's sense) their study of psychoanalytic history, theory, and practice, from Freud to the present—and, from the vantage of the present, to rediscover psychoanalysis as a dynamic contemporary discipline and model for critical thinking. In addition to regular participation in class discussion, requirements will include some response papers, an in-class presentation, and an argument-driven essay. For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5905, GSWS 5905

1 Course Unit

**COML 5904 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5940, ITAL 5940

1 Course Unit

**COML 5910 Francophone Postcolonial Studies**

Please see the department's website for current course description:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 5910, FREN 5910

1 Course Unit

**COML 5920 Life, Death, and Revolution in Haiti**

In the last few decades, Haiti has been known on the global stage for its repeated calamities: earthquakes, hurricanes, droughts followed by floods and vice versa, dictatorships, cholera, civil unrest, etc. These media representations, which foreground trauma and failure, tend to overshadow a momentous revolutionary past as well as a long tradition of thriving avant-garde literary and artistic movements. These negative representations are part and parcel of a centuries-long practice of epistemic violence against Haiti that began well before it declared its independence from France in 1804, at the end of a bloody revolution. In this course, we will seek a more nuanced understanding of Haiti by exploring the concepts of life, death, and revolution in a selection of literary texts, essays, articles, documents, and films. Our interdisciplinary approach will allow us to discuss voodoo, the figure of the zombi, gender, the environment, modernity, and the relationship between politics and poetics. This course is taught in French and is open to advanced undergraduates and graduate students.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 5920

1 Course Unit

**COML 5921 20th-Century Literature and Theory**

This course treats some aspect of literary and cultural politics in the 20th-Century with emphasis varying by instructor. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5920, ENGL 5920

1 Course Unit

**COML 5925 The Language of Comics**

This graduate seminar introduces students to the marvelously complex and versatile language of comics. In this course, students will be exposed to some of the most innovative and wide-ranging contemporary graphic novels from around the globe. In today's attention economy, comics have risen as one of the biggest success stories of the digital age—and the graphic novel's increasing popularity has further come hand-in-hand with its growing legitimacy in academia as cutting-edge literature. As we explore the secret resources of comics via an array of genres—speculative fiction, journalism, memoir, horror, Shōnen manga, self-help, realism, experimental fiction, etc—we will also read comics theory and test the limits of our visual literacy. We will take advantage of Penn Libraries' special collections of comics, and you will be asked to select one of our hidden comics treasures to share with the group. Other possible assignments may include incorporating comics language into your criticism and writing a research paper on a comic of your choosing. Come for the visual literacy, stay for the funny pictures. For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5925, ENGL 5925

1 Course Unit

**COML 5930 Classical Film Theory**

At a moment when contemporary film and media theory has become increasingly interested in how earlier film theories can help us understand our moment of transition, this course will give students the opportunity to read closely some of those key early texts that are preoccupied with questions and problems that include: the ontology of film, the psychology of perception, the transition to sound, the politics of mass culture, realism, and ethnography. Course requirements: ; completion of all readings and screenings; participation in class discussion; weekly online responses; 20-25 page paper.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 5930, CIMS 5930, ENGL 5930, GSWS 5930

1 Course Unit

**COML 5934 The Politics of Truth in the Global Documentary**

This course is a study of documentary film practices internationally, beginning from the invention of cinema and ending in the contemporary landscape. It analyzes how documentary worldwide serves a paradoxical function: both a testament to the power of the "real," and a critique of its representation. The class thus challenges preconceived notions of a medium often connected to "cinema-truth." This class will also pay special attention to the intersection of documentary and politics to think through how the art of documentary has been historically instrumental for revolutionary politics, while also deeply complicit in fascist regimes. The course will include short writing assignments as well as a critical-creative project. The course is suitable for both graduate students and advanced undergraduate students, and advanced undergraduate students are more than welcome to apply. For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5934, ENGL 5934, REES 6286

1 Course Unit

**COML 5940 Cinema and Media Studies Methods**

This proseminar will introduce a range of methodological approaches (and some debates about them) informing the somewhat sprawling interdisciplinary field of Cinema and Media Studies. It aims to equip students with a diverse—though not comprehensive—toolbox with which to begin conducting research in this field; an historical framework for understanding current methods in context; and a space for reflecting on both how to develop rigorous methodologies for emerging questions and how methods interact with disciplines, ideologies, and theories. Students in this class will also engage scholars participating in the Cinema and Media Studies colloquium series in practical discussions about their methodological choices. The course's assignments will provide students with opportunities to explore a particular methodology in some depth through a variety of lenses that might include pedagogy, the conference presentation, grant applications, the written essay, or an essay in an alternative format, such as the graphic or video essay. Throughout, we will be trying to develop practical skills for the academic profession. Although our readings engage a variety of cinema and media objects, this course will be textually based. No prior experience needed. The course is open to upper-level undergraduates with relevant coursework in the field by permission of instructor only. Course Requirements: Complete assigned readings and actively participate in class discussion: 20%; Reading responses: 10%; Annotated bibliography or course syllabus on a particular methodology: 20%; SCMS methodology-focused conference paper proposal according to SCMS format: 10%; Research paper, grant proposal, or essay in an alternative format using the methodology explored in the syllabus or bibliography: 40%.

Fall

Also Offered As: ARTH 5933, CIMS 5933, ENGL 5933, GSWS 5933

1 Course Unit

**COML 5945 Nationalism, Globalism, and Literary Form**

This course will survey national epics and related critical theory from a range of national traditions. Emphasis will be on globalization, nationalism, and literary form. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5945

1 Course Unit

**COML 5950 Travel Literature**

Within the context of the ill-defined, heterogeneous genre of the travelogue and of today's age of globalization, CNN and the Internet, this seminar will examine the poetics of travel writing based largely albeit not exclusively on travel notebooks, or journaux/carnets de voyage, spanning the 20th century from beginning to end. One of the principal specificities of the texts studied is that they all evince to a lesser or greater degree a paradoxical resistance both to the very idea of travel(ing) as such and to the mimetic rhetoric of traditional travel narratives. We will therefore look at how modern or postmodern texts question, revisit, subvert or reject such key notions of travel literature as exoticism, nostalgia, exile, nomadism, otherness or foreignness vs. selfhood, ethnology and autobiography, etc. Authors considered will include Segalen, Morand, Michaux, Leiris, Levi-Strauss, Butor, Le Clezio, Baudrillard, Bouvier, Jouanard, Leuwers.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 5950

1 Course Unit

**COML 5960 Marxism**

This course will focus on Marxist thought as it has developed around the world from the 19th century to the present. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of Marxism and its legacy. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5960

1 Course Unit

**COML 5965 Anticolonialism & Marxism**

In spite of the recent proliferation of scholarship on the topic of decolonization, Western academics have often failed to seriously engage with the rich corpus of anticolonial theory and analysis produced in the context of struggles against imperialism. This course examines theories of imperialism, neo- and internal colonialism, and decolonization developed in the 20th and early 21st centuries, focusing on thinkers and movements from the global South, and from Latin America and the Caribbean in particular. We will address differences among contemporary discourses on decolonization, while delving deep into national liberation Marxism. Theories and debates within Marxist thought concerning national self-determination, racism, and development will figure prominently in the course, as will analyses of cultural imperialism, ideology, and the role of intellectuals and artists. The course will be conducted in English; course readings will be in English and Spanish. Students with questions about language requirements should contact the instructor.

Also Offered As: ENGL 5965, SPAN 5965

1 Course Unit

**COML 5980 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](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: ENGL 5980, GSWS 5980

1 Course Unit

**COML 6010 Italian Literary Theory**

Please see department website for current description at: <http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 6010

1 Course Unit

**COML 6030 Poetics of Narrative**

Please see the department's website for current course description:

<https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6030

1 Course Unit

**COML 6040 Religious Conflict in France from Past to Present**

French history, culture, and politics have all been shaped by centuries of religious conflict, theological controversy, and civil strife. In many ways, Frenchness has always been defined against some kind of religious and/or ethnic Other: heretics, protestants, Jews, or Muslims. At the same time, however, France's unique religious environment has given rise to some of the most important thought on tolerance. What gave rise to these conflicting tendencies, and how can understanding the history of French religious conflict give us perspective on issues in contemporary France? In this course, we will attempt to answer these questions by studying a series of key historical events and episodes from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century and the present day: the Seventh and Eighth Crusades under Louis IX in the thirteenth century, the travels of Jean de Mandeville in the mid-fourteenth century, the Wars of Religion and French encounters with indigenous peoples in the Americas during the sixteenth century, Molière's *Tartuffe* and conflict between free-thinking and religious orthodoxy enforced by Catholic confraternities and their prominent role in politics and society under Louis XIV in the seventeenth century, Voltaire's conception of religious tolerance in the wake of the "Affaire Calas" in the 1760's, the "Affaire Dreyfus" (1894-1906) and antisemitism in modern France, and contemporary controversies over religion (particularly Islam) and the public sphere. In addition to discussion-based class meetings, the course will feature visits from specialists working on the materials to be studied as well as visits to the Kislak Center for Rare Books, Special Collections, and Manuscripts to examine original materials, including the Lorraine Beitler Collection of the Dreyfus Affair. This course is conducted entirely in French.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6040

Mutually Exclusive: FREN 3040

1 Course Unit

**COML 6050 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). Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: ENGL 6050, ENGL 7905, FREN 6050, GRMN 6050, ITAL 6050, REES 6435

1 Course Unit

**COML 6060 Theory Proseminar: A Critique of Violence**

This course will examine theories regarding the fraught relationship between violence, justice and the institution of the law across key texts in French, German, Italian and English. Taking the recent centennial of Walter Benjamin's "Toward the Critique of Violence" (1921) as its impetus and conceptual center, the class will examine that essay's influences (Georges Sorrel, Carl Schmitt) as well as its influence on later thinkers (Giorgio Agamben, Werner Hamacher, Jacques Derrida, Judith Butler). Readings and discussions in English, though students are invited to read in the original wherever possible.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 6060, FIGS 6060

1 Course Unit

**COML 6090 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, Caillois, 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6090

1 Course Unit

**COML 6100 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 GREK 7203 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7060, GREK 7203

1 Course Unit

**COML 6120 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 6120, GRMN 6120, JWST 6120, PHIL 5439

1 Course Unit

**COML 6149 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 6490, REES 6149

1 Course Unit

**COML 6160 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 and related disciplines 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 7601, EALC 8290, ENGL 6160, REES 6450, ROML 6160

1 Course Unit

**COML 6170 Cultural History of Medieval Rus (800-1700)**

This course offers an overview of the literary, cultural, and political history of Medieval Rus from its origins in the 9th century up to the reign of Peter the Great (early 18th century), the period that laid the foundation for the Russian Empire. The focus of the course is on the Kievan and Muscovite traditions but we also look at the cultural space of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland (i.e., the territory of today's Belarus and Ukraine). The course takes a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of the main cultural paradigms of Russian Orthodoxy viewed in a broader European context (*vis-à-vis* Byzantium and the Latin West). We learn about the worldview of Orthodox Slavs by examining their religion, ritual, spirituality, art, music, literature, education, and popular culture. Classes are conducted in English. Readings are in Russian and English. English translations of some primary sources are available for those with limited Russian competence.

Fall

Also Offered As: REES 6400

1 Course Unit

**COML 6175 History and Memory in/of Socialism**

State socialist societies shaped the history of the twentieth century. They also intently reshaped the history of past eras. Now, decades after the collapse of the USSR and the capitalist remake of the People's Republic of China, those histories are often little more than memories, sometimes haunting the present, and sometimes weaponized for present purposes. This course will begin with consideration of state socialist societies' representations of their own pasts and of global histories, from the historicization of the October Revolution, to the mid-century retellings of deeper histories of empire and nation, to non-conformist histories of state socialist mass violence. In the latter portion of the course, we will turn to investigate the history and memory of state socialism, covering post-socialist melancholy and nostalgia, the deployment of socialist history in memory wars and real wars in formerly state socialist lands, and recent revisions of socialist history in terms of empire, nation, and post- and de-coloniality. Primary materials will range from literature and film to public discourse, monumental art, and historiography (from Maxim Gorky's "History of Factories and Plants" project [1930s] to Jasmina Wojcik's *Symphony of the Ursus Factory* [2018]). Our work will be ramified by readings in theory and method, covering social memory, invented traditions, lieux de mémoire, trauma studies, entangled and multidirectional memory, and other topics. All course materials will be available in English translation. Undergraduates may enroll with instructor's permission.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5912, REES 6175

1 Course Unit

**COML 6176 Marx and Spinoza, a Subterranean Tradition**

This seminar will focus on the thought of Baruch Spinoza and Karl Marx and trace the traditions of their encounter—traditions that extend not only to philosophy and critical theory, but also to fields ranging from literary studies to environmental humanities. Countering the dominant narrative of Hegelianism in Marxist theory, we will look at how Spinoza's philosophy shaped the dissident currents in the Social Democratic Party in Germany and gave birth to the so-called Russian Marxism in the early twentieth century. Subsequently, we will investigate how the second half of the twentieth century witnessed a revival of interest in Spinoza across humanities and social sciences as a means of rethinking the very terms of philosophical and political debates of modernity. The seminar will follow this persistent strain of Spinozan thought in modernity to the most recent publications and investigate the contradictory and conflictual Spinoza-interpretations on the political and philosophical left. The currents addressed in this seminar will include, but are not limited to: the vicissitudes of Spinozism among Soviet Marxists (Georgi Plekhanov, Lyubov Axelrod, Abram Deborin, Evald Ilyenkov); the deployment of Spinoza against Hegel to rejuvenate Marxism in France (Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, Gilles Deleuze, Chantal Jaquet, Alexandre Matheron); the development of theories of the multitude in the tradition of Autonomism in Italy (Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno); and, most recently, we will look at the Spinozan thought in contemporary Lacanian psychoanalysis (A. Kiarina Kordela), theories of finance capitalism (Frédéric Lordon, Jason Read), feminist theory (Moira Gatens), intellectual history (Tracie Matysik, Franck Fishbach, Katja Diefenbach), literary studies (Pierre Macherey, Anthony Uhlmann), and environmental humanities (Hasana Sharp, Beth Lord).

Also Offered As: FIGS 6176, REES 6176

1 Course Unit

**COML 6177 The Quest for a Universal Language**

This seminar is an exploration in European intellectual history. It traces 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 humanity. The tantalizing question of the possibility of such a language has been a vital and thought-provoking inquiry throughout human history. If recovered or invented, such a language has the potential to explain the origins, physical reality, and meaning of human experience, fostering universal understanding and world peace. Greek philosophers grappled with the capacity of names to correctly denote things. In Judaic and Christian traditions, the notion that the language spoken by Adam and Eve perfectly expressed the nature of the physical and metaphysical world captivated the minds of intellectuals for nearly two millennia. In defiance of the biblical myth of the confusion of languages and peoples at the Tower of Babel, they persistently endeavored to overcome divine punishment and rediscover the path to harmonious life. In the 19th century, Indo-Europeanist philologists perceived an avenue to explore the early stages of human development by reconstructing a proto-language. In the 20th century, romantic idealists like the inventor of Esperanto, Ludwik Zamenhof, constructed languages to further understanding among estranged nations. For writers and poets of all times, from Cyrano de Bergerac to Velimir Khlebnikov, the concept of a universal and perfect language has served as an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Today, this idea reverberates in theories of universal and generative grammars, in the approach to English as a global language, and in various attempts to devise artificial languages, including those intended for cosmic communication. Each week, we examine a particular period and a set of theories to explore universal language projects. But above all, at the core of the course lies an examination of what language is and how it is used in human society.

Also Offered As: ENGL 7177, REES 6177

1 Course Unit

**COML 6200 Paris and Philadelphia: Landscapes and Literature of the 19th Century**

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 1800s 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.

Fall

Also Offered As: FREN 6200

1 Course Unit

**COML 6201 Modern East Asian Texts**

This course is an introduction to and exploration of modern East Asian literatures and cultures through close readings and discussion of selected literary works from the early 20th century to the start of the 21st century. Focusing on China, Japan, and Korea, we will explore the shared and interconnected experiences of modernity in East Asia as well as broaden our perspective by considering the location of East Asian cultural production within a global modernity. Major issues we will encounter include: nation-building and the modern novel; cultural translation; media and technology; representations of gender, race, and class; history and memory; colonialism; war; body and sexuality; globalization. No knowledge of the original language is required.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: EALC 6201

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 2201

1 Course Unit

**COML 6207 Reading Caste Critically**

This seminar explores trends and shifts in interdisciplinary scholarship on the caste question. It serves as an introduction to foundational texts and debates in the history of critical caste studies in fields like sociology, history, Indology, and political philosophy. The course will also engage various methods, pedagogical tools, and conceptual frameworks that have emerged out of anti-oppressive writings and anti-caste transformative politics. The course draws on primary and secondary source material, from the 19th century to the present, to examine how questions of labor, gender and sexuality, colonialism, socio-religious reform, and Ambedkarite politics have shaped discourse around both caste and the politics of its annihilation.

Also Offered As: SAST 6207

1 Course Unit

**COML 6210 Reading Marx's Capital: Divergent Traditions in Europe, the Soviet Union, and the Global South**

Karl Marx's masterpiece *Capital* received little attention at the time of its publication, but gained new life in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries. The afterlives of *Capital*, however, took disparate forms across different regions and traditions globally: while working on the same text, these traditions gave rise to conflicting and contradictory interpretations, antagonistic dialogues, and cross-disciplinary encounters. This seminar will examine a series of exemplary interpretations of *Capital* with attention to detail in order to clarify the stakes of different readings and pose the question of relevance of Marx's masterpiece for the contemporary moment. We will investigate how political conjunctures, regional specificities, and ideological concerns shape disparate modes and cultures of reading. We will also examine how *Capital* is transfigured through the lens of disciplines such as literary studies and comparative literature, philosophy, political science, postcolonial studies, and economics. We will also pose the question of philosophical genealogies of *Capital*, tracing how divergent philosophical backgrounds inflect the reconfigurations of Marx's thought, e.g., in examining "Hegelian," "Spinozist," and "Epicurian" readings. The topics may include, but are not limited to, the following regions and traditions: France (Louis Althusser group), Italy (Mario Tronti and autonomia tradition), and Germany (Neue Marx Lektüre); Soviet Union (Isaak Rubin, Evald Ilyenkov); Bolivia (Alvaro Garcia Linera), and Argentina (Ernesto Laclau). Finally, we will engage with the most recent readings of *Capital* in the twenty-first century in the works of thinkers such as Sylvia Federici, Michael Heinrich, and A. Kiarina Kordela, among others.

Spring

Also Offered As: GRMN 6210, REES 6151

1 Course Unit

**COML 6300 Introduction to Medieval French 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: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6300

1 Course Unit

**COML 6381 Troubadours at the Center**

'Troubadour' is a term whose meaning has evolved from the eleventh century to our day. In the Middle Ages, a troubadour was a singer-songwriter (male or female) who composed in a language called Occitan, the language spoken in northern Italy, across southern France, and into today's Catalonia. Medieval works in this language include epic poetry, didactic texts, lengthy romances, and love poetry. Renowned and imitated throughout medieval Europe – by authors from today's Italy, Austria, Germany, France, Spain, and Portugal – the Occitan literary heritage cannot be ignored. Though sometimes presented as a dead language, Occitan is very much alive, and one purpose of this course is to introduce students to it and to its broad importance in European literary history. This course will present the literary and cultural history of the Occitan region, writ large, from the Middle Ages to the modern day. By the end of the course, students will be able to read Occitan with the aid of a dictionary; they will understand the culture of the French Midi as distinct from that of France; they will know something of the distinctive cultural elements of Occitania. They will also have a profound knowledge of at least one Occitan author, medieval, modern, or contemporary. The course will be taught in English. In addition to learning the material covered in the course, students will gain expertise in producing professional presentations and research papers.

Also Offered As: FREN 6381, GRMN 6381, ITAL 6381

1 Course Unit

**COML 6400 Studies in the Renaissance**

Topics vary. Previous topics have included *Rabelais and M. de Navarre*, *Montaigne*, and *Renaissance and Counter-Renaissance*. Please see the department's website for the current course description: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6400, GSWS 6400

1 Course Unit

**COML 6460 Linguistic Culture and Literary Development**

The opening pages of Tolstoy's "*War and Peace*" (1869), set in July 1805, feature a conversation between two nobles who are speaking in a combination of Russian and "that elegant French in which our forefathers not only spoke, but also thought." Tolstoy's remark points to a shift in the relative status – both practical and symbolic – of each of these languages in Russian high society that was occurring as the eighteenth century gave way to the nineteenth. Shifts in the functions and values of language(s) comprise the subject of this graduate-level seminar, which traces the emergence of the modern Russian literary tradition as it took place in dialogue with evolving attitudes and ideologies surrounding language, translation, nation, and empire. We will adopt a diverse array of theoretical approaches as we examine the influence of linguistic culture on literary development as well as how ideas about literature can exert their own influence on realities and discourses of language.

Also Offered As: REES 6460

1 Course Unit

**COML 6530 Russian and Soviet Cultural Institutions**

In this seminar, we will study Russian and Soviet culture through the history of its institutions, in the broader social-institutional context of land-based European empire and state socialism. The course will include material from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, but attention will be focused disproportionately on the twentieth century. Each unit will focus on a specific social institution of culture, yet will also require the reading/viewing of canonical texts and films. Topics will include: reading publics and education; authorship and professionalization; cultural management of social, ethnic, gender and national diversity (including via institutions of translation); journals and publishing houses; genres; the Union of Soviet Writers; censorship and unofficial dissemination; the film industry; cultural history and memory (jubilee celebrations); the culture industry.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5910, REES 6150

1 Course Unit

**COML 6570 Becoming Modern: The German-Jewish Experience**

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?

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 6570, JWST 6570

1 Course Unit

**COML 6592 Global Film Theory**

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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ARTH 6952, CIMS 6300, GSWS 6300

Mutually Exclusive: CIMS 3300

1 Course Unit

**COML 6600 Studies in the Eighteenth Century**

Topics of discussion will vary from semester to semester. One possible topic is "Masterpieces of the Enlightenment." We will read the most influential texts of the Enlightenment, texts that shaped the social and political consciousness characteristic of the Enlightenment—for example, the meditations on freedom of religious expression that Voltaire contributed to "affaires" such as the "affaire Calas." We will also discuss different monuments of the spirit of the age—its corruption (*Les Liaisons dangereuses*), its libertine excesses and philosophy (*La Philosophie dans le boudoir*). We will define the specificity of 18th-century prose (fiction), guided by a central question: What was the Enlightenment?

Please see department's website for current course description: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6600

1 Course Unit

**COML 6623 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SAST 6623

1 Course Unit

**COML 6627 South Asia Literature as Comparative Literature**

This course takes up the question of reading South Asian Literature both as a collection of diverse literary cultures, as well as the basis for a methodology of reading that takes language, region, and history into account. It takes as a starting point recent work that foregrounds the importance of South Asian language literatures, and their complex interactions, to an understanding of South Asian literary history, as well as critiques of the concept of world literature that question its underlying assumptions and frequent reliance on cosmopolitan languages such as English. In what ways can we describe the many complex interactions between literary cultures in South Asia, rooted in specific historical contexts, reading practices, and cultural expectations, while maintaining attention to language and literary form? How, in turn, can we begin to think of these literatures in interaction with larger conversations in the world? With these considerations in mind, we will examine works of criticism dealing with both modern and pre-modern literatures, primarily but not exclusively focused on South Asia. Topics will include the concept of the cosmopolis in literary and cultural history, the role of translation, the transformations of literature under colonialism, and twentieth century literary movements such as realism and Dalit literature. Readings may include works by Erich Auerbach, Frederic Jameson, Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Spivak, Aamir Mufti, Sheldon Pollack, David Shulman, Yigal Bronner, Shamshur Rahman Faruqi, Francesca Orsini, Subramanian Shankar, Sharankumar Kimbale, and Torlae Jatin Gajarawala. We will also examine selected works, in English and in translation, as case studies for discussion. This course is intended both for students who intend to specialize in the study of South Asia, as well as for those who focus on questions of comparative literature more broadly.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: SAST 6627

1 Course Unit

**COML 6631 The Sanskrit Epics**

Ancient India's two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, 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 (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) 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 serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama's Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Viṣṇu, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rāṅya 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) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: SAST 6631

Mutually Exclusive: COML 2231, SAST 2231

1 Course Unit

**COML 6636 The Problem of Vernacularity in Literary Modernity**

The vernacular, despite its origins in European empire and later colonialism, and its role in creating inherently oppositional relationships between different languages and literary cultures, persists as a foundational way of thinking categorizing literary cultures throughout the post-imperial and post-colonial world. How does literary history appear from the perspective of vernacularity? What might we see when we privilege literary cultures seen as vernacular rather than metropolitan languages such as English or French? How, in turn, might such a perspective inform our understanding of the larger field, across language, of world literary history during the twentieth century? This course begins with a term that indexes relations of power, hierarchy, and empire as a starting point to rethink crucial debates in twentieth century literary history. The category of the vernacular, in its move from the European post-Latin to a range of imperial, colonial, and post-colonial configurations, introduces problems of comparison that continue to trouble contemporary disciplinary understandings of literary study. Some of the implications of the vernacular, such as those highlighted by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o refusal to write in English, are obvious in their shift towards literary cultures marginalized in colonial and post-colonial contexts. But the concept of the vernacular also intervenes in ideas of reading publics, orality, and indigeneity such that it can be the basis for a wider range of inquiry into the social conditions of multilingual literary histories. This course uses the inherent tension caused by this difficult word to engage in a number of case studies in contexts including interwar Central Europe, Cold War literatures of the Third World, and Korean literature during the period of Japanese occupation; authors discussed will include Fredric Jameson, Abdelfattah Kilito, Aamir Mufti, and Shu-mei Shih. This course is open to all MA and Ph.D. students regardless of prior knowledge. Advanced undergraduates should contact the instructor to request permission to enroll and should submit a permit request via Path@Penn. Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 5636, SAST 6636

1 Course Unit

**COML 6750 Topics in 19th Century Literature**

Topics will vary. Please see department's website for current course description: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: FREN 6750

1 Course Unit

**COML 6770 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), philosophy (Wittgenstein, Macherey). 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, Kornbluh) and New Materialisms (e.g., Bennett, Grosz).

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 6770

1 Course Unit

**COML 6820 Seminar on Literary Theory**

Topics vary. See the Spanish Department's website for the current offerings. <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/hispanic-portuguese-studies/pc> Fall

Also Offered As: SPAN 6820

1 Course Unit

**COML 6830 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: LALS 6830

1 Course Unit

**COML 6840 Topics in Philosophy.**

This seminar explores political thought in Germany from the Imperial state of the early 20th century through its fragmentation and division and into the reunification of east and west Germany in 1992. Much of this period was "after idealism" philosophically and politically, the preface to pessimism and "the passing of political philosophy" as articulated in the Enlightenment (Shklar), but fascinating period of thought and argument. Among our texts are Habermas (philosophy), Weber (sociology), Schmitt (law), Juenger (literature) & their contemporaries. Students are not expected to read texts in the original, although having German will greatly expand your range and the depth of your reading.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 6840

1 Course Unit

**COML 6860 Form, Figure, Metaphor**

This course will explore the tensions and overlaps between three concepts in literary studies: form, figure, and metaphor. Through readings of works in literary theory, literature, and literary criticism, we will ask what it means to pay attention to the form of a literary text, whether at the micro scale of its literary figures or the macro scale of its overarching structure. We will historicize the shifting relations between our three key terms by exploring their role in ancient rhetoric, Victorian aesthetic theory, Russian formalism, the New Criticism, and deconstruction, among other literary-critical schools. Special attention will be paid to the notion of metaphor as it operates across genres and disciplines. While our focus will be on modern European and American literary theory, students will come away with interpretive tools beneficial to the study of literature of any period or genre.

Also Offered As: ENGL 7052

1 Course Unit

**COML 6910 Transatlantic Black Feminisms in Francophone Literatures**

This course explores the evolution of representations of the Black femme body in French and francophone imaginaries, tracing a chronological arc that begins with early colonial imagery and ends with the rise of a 2018 movement spearheaded by a collective of Black comediennes, denouncing exclusionary practices in the French entertainment industry. We will first focus on the male gaze — European, Caribbean and African — and the way it constructed the Black femme body, to better understand how Black female authors undermine, resist, parody, or continue to bear the weight of these early images when they take control of their own representation. While our primary readings will be authored by French-writing women, including Mayotte Capecia (Martinique), Marie Vieux-Chauvet (Haiti), Maryse Condé (Guadeloupe), Mariama Bâ (Senegal) and Marie Ndiaye (France), our theoretical foundation will include anglophone thinkers, such as bell hooks, Audre Lorde, Saidiya Hartman, and others. Readings and discussions will be in English.

Also Offered As: AFRC 6910, FREN 6910, GSWs 6910

1 Course Unit

**COML 6942 Impossible Innocence: the Films of Luis Buñuel**

This seminar provides an overview and introduction to the cinema of Luis Buñuel with a particular focus on the Spanish filmmaker's engagement with Surrealism. Drawing on the expertise of Professors Ignacio Javier López and Michael Solomon, each seminar session will unfold in two parts: first, Solomon will offer a general introductory lecture and discussion covering various aspects of Buñuel's filmography including technical and formal analyses that touch on cinematic form, montage, and adaptation, and a contextualization of Buñuel's cinema within the Spanish, Mexican, Latin American, and European (inter) national cinemas and cinematic movements; second, López will offer a close examination of individual films focusing on Buñuel's longstanding ties with (the ideas of) Surrealism from the movement's initial moment of scandal and provocation—understood by its participants as a new philosophy, a new way of seeing in an endless process of discovery—to a second moment in which Surrealism admits its failure to enact its revolutionary goals. Films covered in the seminar include Buñuel's *Un Chien Andalou* (1929), *L'Age d'or* (1930) *Menjant garotes*, *Las Hurdes/Terre sans pain* (1933/36) *Los Olvidados* (1950) *Susana* (1951) *Ensayo de un crimen* (1955), *Death in the Garden* (1956), *Nazarín* (1959), *Viridiana* (1961) *The Exterminating Angel* (1962), *Belle de jour* (1967), *Tristana* (1970), and *Obscure Object of Desire* (1977). Students will start working early on a final project (seminar paper), reworking the draft several times during the semester.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: CIMS 6942, SPAN 6942

1 Course Unit

**COML 6960 Postcolonial Theory Francophone**

Topics vary. For current course description, please see French Department's webpage: <https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc>

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: FREN 6960

1 Course Unit

**COML 7041 Melodramatic Tactics**

This course explores aspects of melodrama as a dramatic genre in the eighteenth-century. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of this topic.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7041

1 Course Unit

**COML 7080 Cultural and Literary Theory of Africa and the African Diaspora**

This course introduces students to the theoretical strategies underlying the construction of coherent communities and systems of representation and how those strategies influence the uses of expressive culture over time. Topics vary. See the Africana Studies Department's website at <https://africana.studies.sas.upenn.edu> for a description of the current offerings.

Fall or Spring

Also Offered As: AFRC 7080, ENGL 7080

1 Course Unit

**COML 7210 Medieval Poetics: Europe and India**

This is a comparative course on medieval stylistic practices, formal innovations, and especially theories of form. Our common ground will be the theories that were generated in learned and pedagogical traditions of medieval literary cultures of Europe and pre-modern India (with their roots in ancient thought about poetic form). See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Also Offered As: CLST 7701, ENGL 7215

1 Course Unit

**COML 7211 Modern Chinese Poetry in a Global Context**

The tumultuous political and economic history of modern China has been mirrored in and shaped by equally fundamental revolutions in language and poetic expression. In this course, we will take Chinese poetry as a crucible in which we can observe the interacting forces of literary history and social change. From diplomats who saw poetry as a medium for cultural translation between China and the world, to revolutionaries who enlisted poetry in the project of social transformation, we will examine the lives and works of some of China's most prominent poets and ask, what can we learn about modern China from reading their poetry? In asking this question, we will also reckon with the strengths and limitations of using poetry as an historical source. In addition to poems, the course will include fiction, essays, photographs, and films by both Chinese and non-Chinese artists that place our poets in a broader context. We will pay close attention to how these poets represent China's place in the world, as well as the role of language in social change. Topics of discussion include: national identity, revolution, translation, gender, the body, ethnicity, and technology. Familiarity with Chinese or related cultural context is beneficial, but not required. This course introduces students to Chinese poetry in English translation. Students will leave the course with an in-depth understanding of the main figures, themes, and techniques of Chinese poetry, and will be introduced to some of the major developments in the history of China. Through a focus on primary texts, students will develop the vocabulary and analytical skills to appreciate and analyze poetry in translation and will gain confidence as writers thinking about literary texts.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: EALC 7211

Mutually Exclusive: EALC 3211

1 Course Unit

**COML 7220 Vernacular Epistemologies**

This seminar considers the ways of knowing, the epistemologies, that were particular to vernacular cultures in medieval Europe, c. 1100-1500. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current's offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 7713, ENGL 7220

1 Course Unit

**COML 7255 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.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: EALC 7255

1 Course Unit

**COML 7350 Premodern Trans Studies**

This seminar revisits the question of gender before modernity in light of new expansions and developments within gender and sexuality studies, particularly trans studies. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of the topic. Please see [English.upenn.edu](http://English.upenn.edu) for a full list of course offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7350, GSWS 7350

1 Course Unit

**COML 7600 Realisms Seminar--19th Century to Contemporary**

An advanced graduate seminar focused on Realism and spanning several centuries. This two-part course will consider the literary history of realism and will take on some fundamental epistemological questions entailed by the novel's attempts to represent the real. We will read major theories of realism alongside canonical and marginal realist fiction. Emily Steinlight will address the variously formal, aesthetic, political, and epistemological status of realism in nineteenth-century novels and in theories old and new; some discussion will focus on the concept of totality and on the uneven histories and revitalized uses of realism across contexts. Heather Love will address the relation between classical realism, hyperrealism, and modernist/avant-garde departures in the 20th and 21st centuries, with special attention paid to the role of observation and description in literature and the social sciences. The range of readings may include novels by Honoré de Balzac, George Eliot, Leo Tolstoy, George Gissing, Mariano Azuela, Virginia Woolf, Patricia Highsmith, Nicholson Baker, Georges Perec, Karl Ove Knausgaard, and Rachel Cusk, as well as critical and theoretical work by Viktor Schklovsky, Georg Lukács, Ian Watt, Roland Barthes, Catherine Gallagher, Fredric Jameson, Elaine Freedgood, Anna Kornbluh, Colleen Lye, the Warwick Research Collective, and others.

Also Offered As: ENGL 7600

1 Course Unit

**COML 7640 Marx and Freud**

This seminar will be a broad survey of Marx and Freud, with attention to each thinker as well as to how their theories supplement one another. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of marxism and psychoanalysis, as well as the historical contexts of the two theorists. See [English.upenn.edu](http://English.upenn.edu) for full course offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7640, FIGS 6640

1 Course Unit

**COML 7670 Modernism**

An interdisciplinary and international examination of modernism, usually treating European as well as British and American modernists.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7730

1 Course Unit

**COML 7705 The Harlem Renaissance: Then and Now**

In 1925, Alain Locke published *The New Negro: an Interpretation*, an anthology of literary and artistic works by leading figures associated with a movement in Black culture that would become known as the Harlem Renaissance. This year's 100-year anniversary of the event has prompted new scholarship and numerous commemorations. This seminar will focus on the Harlem Renaissance and its resonances across time and space by engaging material from the end of the US Reconstruction (1880s) to the present to explore what, when, where, whose, and why the Harlem Renaissance. The syllabus will include poetry, essays, long and short fiction and criticism. Students will work with archival materials, newspapers and periodicals, as well as film, music, artwork, and photography in exhibition catalogues and local collections. Required coursework will include the presentation of a chapter from a scholarly monograph or article associated with the theme of the course for discussion and a seminar paper, along with weekly assignments. For more information, please visit: <https://www.english.upenn.edu/courses/graduate>.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 7705, ENGL 7705, FIGS 7705

1 Course Unit

**COML 7707 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: Students should have a working knowledge of Greek.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GREK 7707

1 Course Unit

**COML 7708 Black Classicisms**

This course will explore heterogeneous responses to ancient Greek and Roman Classics in the literature, art, and political thought of Africa and the Black Diaspora, ranging from the late eighteenth century to the present day and encompassing Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. We will analyze how African and black diasporic writers, artists, and thinkers have engaged with and re-imagined Greco-Roman Classics, both to expose and critique discourses of racism, imperialism, and colonialism, and as a source of radical self-expression. Throughout, we will consider the reciprocal dynamic by which dialogues with ancient Greek and Roman classics contribute to the polyphony of black texts and these same texts write back to and signify on the Greek and Roman Classics, diversifying the horizon of expectation for their future interpretation. Writers and artists whose work we will examine include Romare Bearden; Dionne Brand; Gwendolyn Brooks; Aimé Césaire; Austin Clarke; Anna Julia Cooper; Rita Dove; W.E.B. Du Bois; Ralph Ellison; Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona; C.L.R. James; June Jordan; Toni Morrison; Harryette Mullen; Marlene Nourbese Philip; Ola Rotimi; William Sanders Scarborough; Wole Soyinka; Mary Church Terrell; Derek Walcott; Booker T. Washington; Phillis Wheatley; and Richard Wright. We will study these writers in the context of national and transnational histories and networks and in dialogue with relevant theoretical debates. Work for assessment will include a 15-page research paper and the preparation of a teaching syllabus for a course on an aspect of Black Classical Receptions.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 7708, CLST 7708

1 Course Unit

**COML 7714 Boethius from Late Antiquity to the Early Modern Period**

This seminar will explore the medieval and early modern reception of Boethius' *Consolation of Philosophy*, through literary imitations and translations, commentaries, and literary responses. To study the fortunes of the *Consolation* is to come to terms with one of the greatest informing influences on medieval and early modern European poetic thought. We will spend the first few weeks reading and digesting the *Consolation* itself, working between the Latin text and an English translation (probably using the Loeb edition). Knowledge of Latin is not required for the course, but the readings will provide ample opportunities for you to work on and with Latin as you wish. When we have read the *Consolation* we will explore its reception history. This will include medieval vernacular receptions (moving from early texts such as the Old English Boethius to its many appearances in Old French and Middle French, in Middle English especially in the form of Chaucer's *Boece*, and in any other language traditions that students want to cover); some of the remarkable commentaries on the text, and the later medieval literary apotheosis of the *Consolation* in Chaucer's *Troilus* and the "Boethian lyrics," in Thomas Usk's *Testament of Love*, in Hoccleve's *Regiment of Princes*, and in early modern texts, including—spectacularly—the translation of the *Consolation* by Queen Elizabeth I. I encourage you to bring your own interests in the *Consolation* to the course and suggest some reception directions for the group to take.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CLST 7714, ENGL 7155

1 Course Unit

**COML 7760 Partition in South Asia**

This course examines the ways in which imaginative literature and film have addressed the difficult sociopolitical issues leading up to, and following from, the independence and partition of British India. Looking to theoretical and political debates, novels, short stories, poetry, and some films, this course will acknowledge the continuing role played by the events of Partition in shaping the cultural, social, and political realities of contemporary South Asia.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7760, SAST 7760

1 Course Unit

**COML 7901 Recent Issues in Critical Theory Related to Gender & Sexuality**

This course will provide an overview of critical theory related to the study of gender and/or sexuality. Different instructors will emphasize different topics within these fields. See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ENGL 7901, GSWS 7901

1 Course Unit

**COML 7903 Recent Critical Issues in Archival Theories**

This seminar examines the literary, historical, and visual matter of the archive in order to generate new method of analysis in cultural studies. Different instructors may emphasize different aspects of the field. Please see the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 7903, ENGL 7903

1 Course Unit

**COML 7904 New Directions in Black Thought and Literature**

This course explores contemporary Black thought through a set of literary, visual, and theoretical texts. Our theoretical repertoire will include concepts like love, quiet, fabulation, and gaze to explore Black interiority in relation to political movements, aesthetic experimentation, gender and sexual identity, and African continental and diasporic practices. The course will draw on a range of genres (including films, photo portraits, personal essays, and criticism) and also take a comparative approach (including works from Africa, the Caribbean, and the United States). See the English Department's website at [www.english.upenn.edu](http://www.english.upenn.edu) for a complete description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: AFRC 7904, ENGL 7904, GSWS 7904

1 Course Unit

**COML 7920 Study of a Genre: The Manifesto**

If ubiquity confers significance, the manifesto is a major literary form, and yet it has been relatively marginalized in genre studies, where attention to the manifesto has been largely devoted to anthologies. In this seminar we will focus on the manifesto as a genre by exploring its histories, rhetorics, definitions and reception from a Black Studies framework. Associated with politics, art, literature, pedagogy, film, and new technologies, the manifesto involves the taking of an engaged position that is tied to the moment of its enunciation. The manifesto's individual or collective authors seek to provoke radical change through critique and the modeling of new ways of being through language and images. Included on the syllabus will be anticolonial, anti-racist, feminist, LGBTQ manifestos of the 18th through 21st centuries from throughout the Black world. In addition to leading class discussion, students will be responsible for a seminar paper or a final project to be developed in consultation with the instructor.

Also Offered As: AFRC 7920, ENGL 7920

1 Course Unit

**COML 8999 Comparative Literature Seminars**

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.

1-3 Course Units

**COML 9810 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.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

**COML 9920 Qualifying Examination Preparation**

Qualifying Examination Prep for 2nd year of COML PhD - this is taken in Fall and Spring.

1 Course Unit

**COML 9930 Dissertation Prospectus Research**

Dissertation Prospectus Research for 3rd year of COML PhD

1-2 Course Units

**COML 9940 Dissertation Prospectus Workshop**

Dissertation Prospectus Workshop - taken in Fall and Spring of 3rd year.

1-2 Course Units

**COML 9990 Masters Thesis**

Masters Thesis for COML PhD

Fall or Spring

0 Course Units

**COML 9999 Independent Study and Research**

Designed to allow students to pursue a particular research topic under the close supervision of an instructor.

Fall or Spring

1 Course Unit