COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COML)

COML 001 Approaches to Genre
This is a topics course. Please see COML website for current semester’s description: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/ Some dare to build the struts and rafters of a Jerusalem to come, some turn their heads away from the writing on the wall, and some dance as the palaces burn. We mean to investigate each, and to articulate our own responses to the end that comes again and again. Although no artist, author, or prophet that we study was able to shake their sense of the final, the course itself will not have one. But it will address those figures in depth. They include: Margaret Atwood, Stanley Kubrick, Sigmund Freud, John of Patmos, William Blake, Ovid, Lars Von Trier, Octavia Butler, William Shakespeare, Samuel Beckett, Boccaccio, Mary Shelley, Karl Marx, Mohammed, Donna Haraway, Frank Kermode, Cormac McCarthy, and Norman O.Brown.

One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Communication within the Curriculum. This is a topics course. This seminar engages questions of literary genre, including its function as a mediating presence for thinking about audience, literary history, and the marketplace. The theme of the seminar will change with the instructor. Customarily this course will be affiliated with Communication within the Curriculum (CWIC), and so will have a speaking and presentation component to it.

COML 002 Approaches to Literary Studies
This is a topics course. Please see the Comp Lit website for current semester’s description: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/ Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Communication within the Curriculum. This is a topics course. This seminar engages questions of literary genre, including its function as a mediating presence for thinking about audience, literary history, and the marketplace. The theme of the seminar will change with the instructor. Customarily this course will be affiliated with Communication within the Curriculum (CWIC), and so will have a speaking and presentation component to it.

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

COML 013 Introduction to Modern South Asian Literatures
This course provides an introduction to the literatures of South Asia - chiefly India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh- between 1500 and the present. We will read translated excerpts from literary texts in several languages - Braj, Persian, Hindi, Urdu, Bengali, Marathi, Malayalam, and Tamil - and explore the relationship between these literary texts and their historical contexts. No prior knowledge of South Asia is required.
Taught by: Sreenivasan, R.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 014 Critical Speaking Seminar
Topics vary from semester to semester.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 015 Freshman Seminar
The primary goal of the freshman seminar program is to provide every freshman the opportunity for a direct personal encounter with a faculty member in a small setting devoted to a significant intellectual endeavor. Specific topics will be posted at the beginning of each academic year. Please see the College Freshman seminar website for information on current course offerings http://www .college.upenn.edu/courses/ seminars/freshman.php. Fulfills Arts and Letters sector requirement.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 023 In Praise of the Small
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.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Freshman seminar. All readings and lectures in English. No knowledge of German is required.

COML 51 Translating Literature
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 053 Music of Africa
African Contemporary Music: North, South, East, and West. Come to know contemporary Africa through the sounds of its music: from South African kwela, jazz, marabi, and kwaiito to Zimbabwean chimurenga; Central African soukous and pygmy pop; West African fuji, and North African rai and hop hop. Through reading and listening to live performance, audio and video recordings, we will examine the music of Africa and its intersections with politics, history, gender, and religion in the colonial and post-colonial era.
Taught by: Muller
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 056 Seeing/Hearing South Africa: Politics and History through Contemporary Performance
This course begins in the regular semester--students are provided a general introduction to South African history, politics, environment, and performance through a range of resources: scholarly literature, film, music, and online resources; with particular focus on sites, communities, and events included in the two week intensive travel to South Africa (either Fall semester Intro with winter break travel; or spring semester Intro with late spring intensive travel). Students are given guidelines for writing about and representing live performances and experiences of exhibits and heritage sites. For fall/winter travel: focus is on Cape Town's New Year's Festival performed by those historically called "Cape Coloured" a Festival that makes complicated understandings of race, slavery, and transatlantic translation of borrowed culture. For the Spring/late spring travel, the destination is music festivals in mid-May. Both classes include visits to Robben island, Kirstenbosch gardens; 'Cape Malay' heritage sites; travel to KwaZulu Natal, and to Johannesburg's apartheid museum, Soweto's anti apartheid destinations, the Cradle of Humankind works heritage site, a game park, and the Union Buildings in Pretoria. En route we will stop over to view Khoisan rock art.
Taught by: Muller
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Application required through Penn Global: https://global.upenn.edu/pennabroad/pgs

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

COML 061 20th-Century British Literature
This course introduces major works in twentieth-century British literature. We will read across a range of fiction, poetry, plays, and essays, and will consider aesthetic movements such as modernism as well as historical contexts including the two World Wars, the decline of empire, and racial and sexual conflict. Authors treated might include: Conrad, Yeats, Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Forster, Shaw, Woolf, Auden, Orwell, Beckett, Achebe, Rhys, Synge, Naipaul, Rushdie, Heaney, and Walcott.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: See Comparative Literature website for current offerings at: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/

COML 062 20th-Century Poetry
From abstraction to beat, from socialism to negritude, from expressionism to eco-poetry, 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.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

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

COML 074 Science and Literature
This course will explore the emergence of modern science fiction as a genre, the ways it has reflected our evolving conceptions of ourselves and the universe, and its role as the mythology of modern technological civilization. We will discuss such characteristic themes as utopias, the exploration of space and time, biological engineering, superman, robots, aliens, and other worlds—and the differences between European and American treatment of these themes.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 090 Women and Literature
This course will focus on questions of gender difference and of sexual desire in a range of literary works, paying special attention to works by women and treatments of same-sex desire. More fundamentally, the course will introduce students to questions about the relationship between identity and representation. We will attend in particular to intersections between gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation, and will choose from a rich vein of authors: Mary Wollstonecraft, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Lord Byron, the Brontes, Christina Rossetti, George Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Henry James, Gertrude Stein, Zora Neale Hurston, E. M. Forster, Virginia Woolf, Nella Larsen, Radclyffe Hall, Willa Cather, Elizabeth Bishop, Jean Rhys, Jean James Baldwin, Sylvia Plath, Bessie Head, Audre Lorde, Adrienne Rich, Cherr?e Moraga, Toni Morrison, Michael Cunningham, Dorothy Allison, Jeanette Winterson, and Leslie Feinberg.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. If the topic is "Gender, Sexuality, and Literature," the following description applies.

COML 093 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature
English is a global language with a distinctly imperial history, and this 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.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 094 Introduction to Literary Theory
This course introduces students to major issues in the history of literary theory, 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 Comparative Literature website at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/complit/ for a description of the current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 095 Universal Language: From the Tower of Babel to Artificial Intelligence
"Universal Language" is a course in intellectual history. It explores the historical trajectory, from antiquity to the present day, of the idea that there once was, and again could be, a universal and perfect language among the human race. If recovered, this language can explain the origins and meaning of human experience, and can enable universal understanding and world peace.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 100 Introduction to Literary Study
Literature does not exist for your protection. So dangerous is it, that Socrates argued poets ought to be banned from his ideal Republic. And Socrates himself—one of the most subversive of all poetic thinkers—was condemned to death for corrupting the young with his speeches. All great literature is unsettling and alarming. Along with its beauty and delicacy and rhetorical power and ethical force, it can be terrifyingly sublime and even downright ugly: full of contempt and horror and grandiosity and malice. From Socrates' day to our own, countless writers have been jailed, exiled, and murdered, their works censored, banned, burned, for daring to say what others wish would remain unsaid—about religion and the State; sexuality, gender, and the body; art, science, and commerce; freedom and order; love and hate—and for saying it in ways that are aesthetically innovative, surprising, seductive, ravishingly unanticipated.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 101 Introduction to Folklore
The purpose of the course is to introduce you to the subjects of the discipline of folklore, their occurrence in social life and the scholarly analysis of their use in culture. As a discipline folklore explores the manifestations of expressive forms in both traditional and modern societies, in small-scale groups where people interact with each face-to-face, and in large-scale, often industrial societies, in which the themes, symbols, and forms that permeate traditional life, occupy new positions, or occur in different occasions in everyday life. For some of you the distinction between low and high culture, or artistic and popular art will be helpful in placing folklore forms in modern societies. For others, these distinctions will not be helpful. In traditional societies, and within social groups that define themselves ethnically, professionally, or culturally, within modern heterogeneous societies, and traditional societies in the Americas, Africa, Asia, Europe and Australia, folklore plays a more prominent role in society, than it appears to plan in literatie cultures on the same continents. Consequently the study of folklore and the analysis of its forms are appropriate in traditional as well as modern societies and any society that is in a transitional phase.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science Sector
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 104 Study of a Period
This is an introduction to literary study through a survey of works from a specific historical period—often the 20th century, but some versions of this course will focus on other times. We will explore the period's important artistic movements, ideas, and authors, focusing on interconnectedness of the arts to other aspects of culture.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 107 Topics: Freshman Seminar
Topics vary. See the Department's website at https://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/complit/ for a description of current offerings.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 108 Greek & Roman Mythology
Myths are traditional stories that have endured many years. Some of them have to do with events of great importance, such as the founding of a nation. Others tell the stories of great heroes and heroines and their exploits and courage in the face of adversity. Still others are simple tales about otherwise unremarkable people who get into trouble or do some great deed. What are we to make of all these tales, and why do people seem to like to hear them? This course will focus on the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as a few contemporary American ones, as a way of exploring the nature of myth and the function it plays for individuals, societies, and nations. We will also pay some attention to the way the Greeks and Romans themselves understood their own myths. Are myths subtle codes that contain some universal truth? Are they a window on the deep recesses of a particular culture? Are they entertaining stories that people like to tell over and over? Are they a set of blinders that all of us wear, though we do not realize it? Investigate these questions through a variety of topics creation of the universe between gods and mortals, religion and family, sex, love, madness, and death.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Struck
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 114 Literature of the South Asian City: Space, Culture, Politics
The South Asian city as a way of organizing space and social relations, as a symbol, as a memory of the subject of this course. Through primarily, though by no means exclusively, readings of literature in translation, we will gain a sense for the history of the city and the ways in which it is a setting for protest and nostalgia, social transformation and solitary fl?neurie. We will see reflections of the city in poetry recited in its homes, detective novels sold in its train stations, stories scribbled in its cafes, plays staged in its theaters, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia, and will include works by writers such as Mirza Ghalib, Rabindranath Tagore, Saadat Hasan Manto, and Vijay Tendulkar. We will examine these works in the context of secondary readings, including histories and ethnological works that take up life in the modern city. Students will finish this course prepared to pursue projects dealing with the urban from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This course is suitable for anyone interested in the culture, society, or literature of South Asia, and assumes no background in South Asian languages.

Taught by: Goulding
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 115 Experimental Writing Seminar
It’s clear that long-cherished notions of creativity are under attack, eroded by file-sharing, media culture, widespread sampling, and digital replication. How does writing respond to this environment? This workshop will rise to that challenge by employing strategies of appropriation, replication, plagiarism, sampling, plundering, as compositional methods. Along the way, we’ll trace the rich history of forgery, hoaxes, avatars, and impersonations spanning the arts, with a particular emphasis on how they employ language. We’ll see how the modernist notions of change, procedure, repetition, adn the aesthetics of boredom dovetail with popular culture to usurp conventional notions of time, place, and identity, all as expressed linguistically.

Taught by: Bernstein
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Students wishing to take this course must submit a writing sample as part of the selection process. May be repeated for credit with a different instructor.

COML 116 Introduction to Film Theory
This course offers students an introduction to the major texts in film theory across the 20th and 21st centuries. The course gives students an opportunity to read these central texts closely, to understand the range of historical contexts in which film theories are developed, to explore the relationship between film theory and the major film movements, to grapple with the points of contention that have emerged among theorists, and finally to consider: what is the status of film theory today? This course is required for all Cinema Studies majors, but is open to all students, and no prior knowledge of film theory is assumed.

Requirements: Close reading of all assigned texts; attendance and participation in section discussions; 1 midterm exam; 1 take-home final exam.

Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 118 Poetics of Screenwriting
This course studies scriptwriting in a historical, theoretical and artistic perspective. We discuss the rules of drama and dialogue, character development, stage vs. screenwriting, adaptation of nondramatic works, remaking of plots, author 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. Coursework involves both analytical and creative tasks.

Taught by: Todorov
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 119 The Novel
An introduction to literary study through a genre, either the short story or poetry. Versions of this course will vary widely in the selection of texts assigned. Some versions will begin with traditional stories or poems, including a sampling of works in translation. Others will focus exclusively on modern and contemporary American short fiction or poetry. This course is designed for the General Requirement, and is ideal for the students wishing to take an English course but not necessarily intending to major.

For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 120 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion
This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Gobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.
Taught by: Entezari
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 121 Working with Translations
In this class we will study and translate some of the major figures in 20th century poetry, including Rainer Maria Rilke, Claire Malroux, Pablo Neruda, Cesare Pavese, Anna Akhmatova, and Bei Dao. While the curriculum will be tailored to the interests and linguistic backgrounds of the students who enroll, all those knowledgeable about world poetry and the formidable, irresistible act of translation are welcome. Students should have at least an intermediate knowledge of a language other than English. We will study multiple translations of seminal poems, render our own versions in response, and have the additional opportunity to work directly from the original. Students may also work in pairs, or groups. A portion of the course will be set up as a creative writing workshop in which to examine the overall effect of each others' translations so that first drafts can become successful revisions. While class discussions will explore the contexts and particularity of (among others) Urdu, Italian, French, and Polish poetry, they might ultimately reveal how notions of national literature have radically shifted in recent years to more polyglottic and globally textured forms. Through guest speakers, essays on translation theory, and our own ongoing experiments, this course will celebrate the ways in which great poetry underscores the fact that language itself is a translation. In addition to the creative work, assignments will include an oral presentation, informal response papers, and a short final essay.
Taught by: Silverman, Taije
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 126 The Fantastic and Uncanny in Literature: Ghosts, Spirits & Machines
Do we still believe in spirits and ghosts? Do they have any place in an age of science of technology? Can they perhaps help us to define what a human being is and what it can do? We will venture on a journey through literary texts from the late eighteenth century to the present to explore the uncanny and fantastic in literature and 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
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Weissberg
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 127 The Adultery Novel
The object of this course is to analyze narratives of adultery from Shakespeare to the present and to develop a vocabulary for thinking critically about the literary conventions and social values that inform them. Many of the themes (of desire, transgression, suspicion, discovery) at the heart of these stories also lie at the core of many modern narratives. Is there anything special, we will ask, about the case of adultery—once called "a crime which contains within itself all others"? What might these stories teach us about the way we read in general? By supplementing classic literary accounts by Shakespeare, Pushkin, Flaubert, Chekhov, and Proust with films and with critical analyses, we will analyze the possibilities and limitations of the different genres and forms under discussion, including novels, films, short stories, and theatre. What can these forms show us (or not show us) about desire, gender, family and social obligation? Through supplementary readings and class discussions, we will apply a range of critical approaches to place these narratives of adultery in a social and literary context, including formal analyses of narrative and style, feminist criticism, Marxist and sociological analyses of the family, and psychoanalytic understandings of desire and family life.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Fischler
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and discussions in English.

COML 128 The Diary
Diary writing is an intimate mode of expression in which individuals seek to find meaning in their personal lives and relations, responding to the external realities in which they live. Their coping is subjected to their historical, educational and social contexts, and to the generic conventions of diary writing. This course examines the diary as a genre, exploring its functions, meanings, forms and conventions, comparing it with fictive and non-fictive autobiographical writings such as the diary novel, autobiography and the memoir, as well as comparative gender diary-writing.
Taught by: Ben-Amos, B
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 133 Creative Writing and the World
A creative writing workshop devoted to writing in and across various social, political, geographical, and historical contexts. Offerings may include Writing for a Diasporic World, Writing the City, the Environment, or other topics and themes. See the Comparative Literature Program’s website at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/ for current offerings.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 140 Topics In Modernism
This course explores an aspect of literary modernism intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. Past offerings have included seminars on the avant-garde, on the politics of modernism, and on its role in shaping poetry, music, and the visual arts.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Critical Speaking

COML 141 Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Communities
What do the ancient Greek comedian Aristophanes, the Roman satirist Juvenal, have in common with Snoop Dogg and Eminem? Many things, in fact, but perhaps the most fundamental is that they are all united by a stance that constantly threatens to offend prevailing social norms, whether through obscenity, violence or misogyny. This course will examine our conceptions of art (including literary, visual and musical media) that are deemed by certain communities to transgress the boundaries of taste and convention. It juxtaposes modern notions of artistic transgression, and the criteria used to evaluate such material, with the production of and discourse about transgressive art in classical antiquity. Students will consider, among other things, why communities feel compelled to repudiate some forms of art, while others into classics.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Rosen
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

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

COML 144 Critical Speaking
This class will explore complications of representing war in the 20th and 21st centuries. War poses problems of perception, knowledge, and language. The notional "fog of war" describes a disturbing discrepancy between agents and actions of war; the extreme nature of the violence of warfare tests the limits of cognition, emotion, and memory; war's traditional dependence on declaration is often warped by language games—"police action," "military intervention," "nation-building," or palpably unnamed and unacknowledged state violence. Faced with the radical uncertainty that forms of war bring, modern and contemporary authors have experimented in historically, geographically, experientially and artistically particular ways, forcing us to reconsider even seemingly basic definitions of what a war story can be. Where does a war narrative happen? On the battlefield, in the internment camp, in the suburbs, in the ocean, in the ruins of cities, in the bloodstream? Who narrates war? Soldiers, refugees, gossips, economists, witnesses, bureaucrats, survivors, children, journalists, descendants and inheritors of trauma, historians, those who were never there? How does literature respond to the rise of terrorist or ideology war, the philosophical and material consequences of biological and cyber wars, the role of the nuclear state? How does the problem of war and representation disturb the difference between fiction and non-fiction? How do utilitarian practices of representation—propaganda, nationalist messaging, memorialization, xenophobic depiction—affect the approaches we use to study art? Finally, is it possible to read a narrative barely touched or merely contextualized by war and attend to the question of war’s shaping influence? The class will concentrate on literary objects—short stories, and graphic novels—as well as film and television. Students of every level and major are welcome in and encouraged to join this class, regardless of literary experience.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Wilson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 148 Slavery and Serfdom
During the Cold War, the United States and Russia were locked in an ideological battle, as capitalist and communist superpowers, over the question of private property. So how did these two countries approach the most important question regarding property that ever faced human civilization: how could governments justify the treatment of its subjects, people, as property? In 1862, Russia abolished serfdom, a form of human bondage that had existed in its territories since the 11th century. Just a year later, in 1863, Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation, declaring America’s slaves then, thenceforward, and forever free. What forces, both domestic and international, both political and cultural, influenced this near simultaneous awakening in which huge swaths of the Russian and U.S. populations were liberated? While scholars have often sought to compare slavery and serfdom as institutions, this course does not attempt to draw connections between the two. Rather, we will focus on how the slavery/anti-slavery and serfdom/anti-serfdom debates were framed in each respective country as well as how Russia used American slavery and the U.S. used Russian serfdom to shape their own domestic debates.
Taught by: Wilson
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 152 Central & Eastern Europe
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

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

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

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

COML 197 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture
This course will explore the theme of madness in Russian literature and arts from the medieval period through the October Revolution of 1917. The discussion will include formative masterpieces by Russian writers (Pushkin, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, and Bulgakov), painters (Repin, Vrubel, Filonov), composers (Mussorgsky, Tchaikovsky, and Stravinsky), and film-directors (Protazanov, Eisenstein), as well as non-fictional documents such as Russian medical, judicial, political, and philosophical treatises and essays on madness.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 199 Study Abroad
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

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

COML 204 Tolstoy
This course consists of three parts. The first, How to read Tolstoy? deals with Tolstoy’s artistic stimuli, favorite devices, and narrative strategies. The second, Tolstoy at War, explores the authors provocative visions of war, gender, sex, art, social institutions, death, and religion. The emphasis is placed here on the role of a written word in Tolstoy’s search for truth and power. The third and the largest section is a close reading of Tolstoy’s masterwork The War and Peace (1863-68) a quintessence of both his artistic method and philosophical insights.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Ben Franklin Seminar

COML 205 The Religious Other
Course explores attitudes toward monotheists of other faiths, and claims made about these “religious Others” in real and imagined encounters between Jews, Christians and Muslims from antiquity to the present. Strategies of “othering” will be analyzed through an exploration of claims about the Other’s body, habits and beliefs, as found in works of scripture, law, theology, polemics, art, literature and reportage. Attention will be paid to myths about the other, inter-group violence, converts, cases of cross-cultural influence, notions of toleration, and perceptions of Others in contemporary life. Primary sources will be provided in English.
Taught by: Fishman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 209 Sustainability & Utopianism
This seminar explores how the humanities can contribute to discussions of sustainability. We begin by investigating the contested term itself, paying close attention to critics and activists who deplore the very idea that we should try to sustain our, in their eyes, dystopian present, one marked by environmental catastrophe as well as by an assault on the educational ideals long embodied in the humanities. We then turn to classic humanist texts on utopia, beginning with More’s fictive island of 1517. The “origins of environmentalism” lie in such depictions of island edens (Richard Grove), and our course proceeds to analyze classic utopian texts from American, English, and German literatures. Readings extend to utopian visions from Europe and America of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as literary and visual texts that deal with contemporary nuclear and flood catastrophes. Authors include: Bill McKibben, 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.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 213 Saints and Devils in Russian Literature
This course is about Russian literary imagination, which is populated with saints and devils, believers and religious rebels, holy men and sinners. In Russia, where people’s frame of mind had 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? Is humility the way to salvation? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist?
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 216 CU in India: Topics Course
This course will trace the formation and contestation of a Hindi national public during the colonial and post-colonial periods, utilizing the post-colonial critical thought of writers in English like Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and Aijaz Ahmed, but also of critics writing in Hindi like Namvar Singh, Ashok Vajpevi, Rajendra Yadav, etc. Attention will be given to this manner in which the contours and character of this imagined community have been debated in the context of different literary, social, and political movements, with particular emphases given to aspects of gender, caste, and regional identity. Central to class discussions will be the question of what constitutes a language literature, and consequently what relation those concepts can have to nation in a multilingual state such as India. Readings will be in translation.
Taught by: Williams
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 218 Perspectives in French Literature
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. 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 232 has as its theme the presentation of love and passion in French literature.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 219 Perspectives in French Literature: The Individual and Society
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. Special emphasis is placed on close reading of texts in order to familiarize students with major authors and their characteristics and with methods of interpretation. Students are expected to take an active part in class discussion in French. French 232 has as its theme the presentation of love and passion in French literature.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 220 Russia and the West
This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life - Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. - within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia's own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers' letters, diaries, and historiosophical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussions, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 226 Hindi Nation and its Fragments
This course will trace the formation and contestation of a Hindi national public during the colonial and post-colonial periods, utilizing the post-colonial critical thought of writers in English like Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and Aijaz Ahmed, but also of critics writing in Hindi like Namvar Singh, Ashok Vajpevi, Rajendra Yadav, etc. Attention will be given to this manner in which the contours and character of this imagined community have been debated in the context of different literary, social, and political movements, with particular emphases given to aspects of gender, caste, and regional identity. Central to class discussions will be the question of what constitutes a language literature, and consequently what relation those concepts can have to nation in a multilingual state such as India. Readings will be in translation.
Taught by: Williams
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 235 Medieval Russia: Origins of Russian Cultural Identity
This course offers an overview of the cultural history of Rus from its origins to the eighteenth century, a period which laid the foundation for the Russian Empire. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of the main cultural paradigms of Russian Orthodoxy viewed in a broader European context. Although this course is historical in content, it is also about modern Russia. The legacy of Medieval Rus is still referenced, often allegorically, in contemporary social and cultural discourse as the Russian, Ukrainian and Belarusian societies attempt to reconstruct and reinterpret their histories. In this course, students learn that the study of the medieval cultural and political history explains many aspects of modern Russian society, its culture and mentality. Understanding of the region and its people.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 236 Napoleonic Era and Tolstoy
In this course we will read what many consider to be the greatest book in world literature. This work, Tolstoy's War and Peace, is devoted to one of the most momentous periods in world history, the Napoleonic Wars (1789-1815). We will study both the novel and the era of the Napoleonic Wars: the military campaigns of Napoleon and his opponents, the grand strategies of the age, political intrigues and diplomatic betrayals, the ideologies and human dramas, the relationship between art and history. How does literature help us to understand this era? How does history help us to understand this great novel?
Taught by: Holquist
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 239 Topics in 18th Century Literature
This course explores an aspect of 18th-century literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

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

COML 248 Topics in European History
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for the each semester's topic: http://ccat/sas.upenn.edu/Complit/.

COML 253 Freud: The Invention of Psychoanalysis
No other person of the twentieth century has probably influenced scientific thought, humanistic scholarship, medical therapy, and popular culture as much as Sigmund Freud. This seminar will study his work, its cultural background, and its impact on us today. In the first part of the course, we will learn about Freud's life and the Viennese culture of his time. We will then move to a discussion of seminal texts, such as excerpts from his Interpretation of Dreams, case studies, as well as essays on psychoanalytic practice, human development, definitions of gender and sex, neuroses, and culture in general. In the final part of the course, we will discuss the impact of Freud's work. Guest lecturers from the medical field, history of science, psychology, and the humanities will offer insights into the reception of Freud's work, and its consequences for various fields of study and therapy.
For BA Students: Humanities and Social Science S
Taught by: Weissberg
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.
COML 254 Metropolis: Culture of the City
An exploration of modern discourses on and of the city. Topics include: the city as site of avant-garde experimentation; technology and culture; the city as embodiment of social order and disorder; traffic and speed; ways of seeing the city; the crowd; city figures such as the detective, the criminal, the flaneur, the dandy; film as the new medium of the city. Special emphasis on Berlin. Readings by, among others, Dickens, Poe, Baudelaire, Rilke, Doebelin, Marx, Engels, Benjamin, Kracauer. Films include Fritz Lang's Metropolis and Tom Tykwer's Run Lola Run.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: MacLeod
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: All readings and lectures in English.

COML 255 Russian Thinkers
This class focuses on the complex relations between philosophy, history, and art in Russia and offers discussions of works of major Russian authors (such as Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Khlebnikov), religious and political thinkers (Chadaev, Herzen, Berdiaev, Lenin, Bogdanov), avant-garde artists (Filonov, Malevich) and composers (Skriabin) who created and tested in their lives their own, sometimes very peculiar and radical, worldviews. We will consider these worldviews against a broad cultural background and will reenact them in class in the form of philosophical mini-dramas. The only prerequisite for this course is intellectual curiosity and willingness to embrace diverse, brave and often weird ideas.
Taught by: Vinitsky
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 257 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. Graduate students have additional readings and meetings.
Taught by: Fishman
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 259 Jewish Humor
In modern American popular culture Jewish humor is considered by Jews and non-Jews as a recognizable and distinct form of humor. Focusing upon folk-humor, in this course we will examine the history of this perception, and study different 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.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Ben-Amos
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 260 Topics in 20th-Century American Literature
This is a topics course. Specific topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 261 Topics in German Cinema
This is a topics course. Specific topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 262 Topics in 20th-Century American Literature
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century American literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year. See the Comp Lit website for current course description at http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 265 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 "Tevye 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.
Taught by: Hellerstein
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 266 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 realities. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students’ literary understanding.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course not offered every year
Prerequisites: Hebrew 054 or the equivalent, per instructor’s evaluation
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

COML 271 Topics in 20th Century Literature
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century literature intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 272 Topics in the Literature of Africa and the African Diaspora
This course explores an aspect of the literature of Africa and the African Diaspora intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Course usually offered summer term only
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 273 Topics Poetry and Poetics
This course explores an aspect of poetry and poetics intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 274 Topics: Twentieth Century Poetry
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century poetry intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 277 Jewish American Literature
What makes Jewish American literature Jewish? What makes it American? This course will address these questions about ethnic literature through fiction, poetry, drama, and other writings by Jews in America, from their arrival in 1654 to the present. We will discuss how Jewish identity and ethnicity shape literature and will consider how form and language develop as Jewish writers "immigrate" from Yiddish, Hebrew, and other languages to American English. Our readings, from Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology, will include a variety of stellar authors, both famous and less-known, including Isaac Mayer Wise, Emma Lazarus, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Celia Dropkin, Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, and Allegra Goodman. Students will come away from this course having explored the ways that Jewish culture intertwines with American culture in literature.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Hellerstein
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 278 Italian Cinema
The course will consist of a broad and varied sampling of classic Italian films from WWII to the present. The curriculum will be divided into four units: (1) The Neorealist Revolution, (2) Metacinema, (3) Fascism and War Revisited, and (4) Postmodernism or the Death of the Cinema. One of the aims of the course will be to develop a sense of "cinematic literacy"--to develop critical techniques that will make us active interpreters of the cinematic image by challenging the expectations that Hollywood has implanted in us: that films be action-packed wish-fulfillment fantasies. Italian cinema will invite us to re-examine and revise the very narrow conception that we Americans have of the medium. We will also use the films as a means to explore the postwar Italian culture so powerfully reflected, and in turn, shaped, by its national cinema. Classes will include close visual analysis of films using video clips and slides. The films will be in Italian with English subtitles and will include works of Fellini, Antonioni, De Sica, Visconti, Pasolini, Wertuller, Rossellini, Rossellini, Bertolucci and Moretti.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 281 Topics Poetry and Poetics
This course explores an aspect of poetry and poetics intensively; specific course topics will vary from year to year.
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 282 Modern Hebrew Literature and Culture in Translation
This course follows and analyzes the transformations in Israeli literature cinema. The focus and the specific topic of the study changes from semester to semester. Topics include: The Holocaust; The Image of Childhood; Dream, Fantasy and Madness; Love and War; The Many Voices of Israel; The Image of City; and other topics. While Israeli works constitute much of the course' material, European and American film and fiction play comparative roles. 5 film screenings per semester; The content of this course changes from semesters to semester, and therefore, students may take it for credit more than once. This topic course explores aspects of Hebrew Literature, Film, and Culture. Specific course topics vary from semester to semester. See the Cinema and Media Studies (NELC, JWST, ENGL, COML) website for a description of the current offerings.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 283 Jewish Folklore in Literature
The Jews are among the few nations and ethnic groups whose oral tradition occurs in literary and religious texts dating back more than two thousand years. This tradition changed and diversified over the years in terms of the migration of Jews into different countries and historical, social, and cultural changes that these countries underwent. The course attempts to capture the historical and ethnic diversity of Jewish folklore in a variety of oral literary forms.
Taught by: Ben-Amos
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

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

COML 288 Topics in American Poetry
Sometimes limiting itself to the works of one or two authors, sometimes focusing on a particular theme such as "American Poetry and Democratic Culture," this course devotes itself to the study of twentieth-century America poetry.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 290 Topics In Gender, Sexuality, and Literature
The advanced women's studies course in the department, focusing on a particular aspect of literature by and about women. Topics might include: "Victorian Literary Women"; "Women, Politics, and Literature"; "Feminist Literary Theory"; and similar foci.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 291 Topics In Literary Theory
This course explores an aspect of literary theory intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 292 Topics Film Studies
Specific course topics vary from year to year.
Taught by: Beckman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 295 Topics in Cultural Studies
This course explores an aspect of cultural studies intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 301 Handschrift-Hypertext: Deutsche Medien
This course will provide an introduction to German-language literary studies through exemplary readings of short forms: fables, fairy tales, aphorisms, stories, novellas, feuilletons, poems, songs, radio plays, film clips, web projects and others. Paying particular attention to how emergent technology influences genre, we will trace an evolution from Minnesang to rock songs, from early print culture to the internet age and from Handschrift to hypertext. Students will have ample opportunity to improve their spoken and written German through class discussion and a series of internet-based assignments. Readings and discussions in German.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Course usually offered summer term only
Prerequisites: GRMN 203 is a prerequisite.
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
Notes: This course will be offered every spring semester. Taught in German.
COML 302 Odyssey & Its Afterlife
As an epic account of wandering, survival, and homecoming, Homer's Odyssey has been a constant source of themes and images with which to define and redefine the nature of heroism, the sources of identity, and the challenge of finding a place in the world.
Taught by: Murnaghan
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 304 Topics in Literary Theory
This is a topics course. The topic could be "Freud" or "1913."
Taught by: Rabate
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

COML 332 Dante's Divine Comedy
In this course we will read the Inferno, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso, focusing on a series of interrelated problems raised by the poem: authority, fiction, history, politics and language. Particular attention will be given to how the Commedia presents itself as Dante's autobiography, and to how the autobiographical narrative serves as a unifying thread for this supremely rich literary text. Supplementary readings will include Virgil's Aeneid and selections from Ovid's Metamorphoses. All readings and written work will be in English. Italian or Italian Studies credit will require reading Italian texts in the original language and writing about their themes in Italian. This course may be taken for graduate credit, but additional work and meetings with the instructor will be required.
Taught by: Brownlee
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 334 A Survey of Sanskrit, Pakrit, and Classical Tamil Literature in Translation
This course will cover most of the genres of literature in South Asia's classical languages through close readings of selections of primary texts in English translation. Special focus will be given to epics, drama, lyric poetry, satirical works, and religious literature.
Taught by: Patel
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 340 Descent to the Underworld in Ancient Near-Eastern and Western Literature
From antiquity to the present the hero's journey to the underworld, or the land of the dead, has offered poets and philosophers a metaphor to express our search for life's meaning. In antiquity that meaning was to be found by an extraordinary individual in a heroic quest beyond the grave. In this course we will consider various interpretations of what this katabasis means within the context of our everyday struggle to find meaning.
Taught by: Foley
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 341 Masculinity in French Literature
Why was a portrait depicting the Renaissance king Francois I as half-man, half-woman made with royal approval, and moreover intended to represent the king as the perfect embodiment of the ideal qualities of a male sovereign? And why, in what is now regarded as the official portrait of Louis XIV, does the king prominently display his silk stockings and high heels with diamond-encrusted buckles? These are just two examples of the questions that lead us to the point of departure for this course: the idea that masculinity is not a fixed essence that has existed since time immemorial, but rather a flexible concept that changes across and even within historical periods.
Taught by: Francis
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 343 Nineteenth Century European Intellectual History
Starting with the dual challenges of Enlightenment and Revolution at the close of the eighteenth century, this course examines the emergence of modern European thought and culture in the century from Kant to Nietzsche. Themes to be considered include Romanticism, Utopian Socialism, early Feminism, Marxism, Liberalism, and Aestheticism. Readings include Kant, Hegel, Burke, Marx, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Darwin, Schopenhauer, and Nietzsche.
Taught by: Breckman
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 344 20th Century European Intellectual History
European intellectual and cultural history from 1870 to 1950. Themes to be considered include aesthetic modernism and the avant-garde, the rebellion against rationalism and positivism, Social Darwinism, Second International Socialism, the impact of World War One on European intellectuals, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and the ideological origins of fascism. Figures to be studied include Nietzsche, Freud, Woolf, Sartre, Camus, and Heidegger.
Taught by: Breckman
Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit
COML 353 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory
This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.
Taught by: Fakhreddine
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 359 Seminar 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 “descendents,” autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students’ literary understanding.
For BA Students: Arts and Letters Sector
Taught by: Gold
Course usually offered in spring term
Prerequisites: Hebrew 059 or the equivalent, per instructor’s evaluation
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 362 Modern and Contemporary Arabic Literature
This course explores an aspect of Arabic literature intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 372 Horror Cinema
The purpose of this course is to provide an introduction to the history and main themes of the supernatural/horror film from a comparative perspective. Films considered will include: the German expressionists masterworks of the silent era, the Universal classics of the 30’s and the low-budget horror films produced by Val Lewton in the 40’s for RKO in the US, the 1950’s color films of sex and violence by Hammer studios in England, Italian Gothic horror or giallo (Mario Brava) and French lyrical macabre (Georges Franju) in the 60’s, and on to contemporary gore. In an effort to better understand how the horror film makes us confront out worst fears and our most secret desires alike, we will look at the genre’s main iconic figures (Frankenstein, Dracula, Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde, etc.) as well as issues of ethics, gender, sexuality, violence, spectatorship through a variety of critical lenses (psychoanalysis, socio-historial and cultural context, aesthetics,...).
Taught by: Met
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 377 Topics in Literature and Society
This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 380 The Bible in Translation
This course introduces undergraduates and graduate students to one specific Book of the Hebrew Bible. “The Bible in Translation” involves an in-depth reading of a biblical source against the background of contemporary scholarship. Depending on the book under discussion, this may also involve a contextual reading with other biblical books and the textual sources of the ancient Near East. No prerequisites are required.
Taught by: Cranz
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 383 Topics in Literary Theory
This is a course on the history of literary theory, a survey of major debates about literature, poetics, and ideas about what literary texts should do, from ancient Greece to examples of modern European thought. The first half of the course will focus on early periods: Greek and Roman antiquity, especially Plato and Aristotle; the medieval period (including St. Augustine, Dante, and Boccaccio), and the early modern period (such as Philip Sidney and Giambattista Vico). We’ll move into the 20th and 20th century by looking at the literary (or “art”) theories of some major philosophers, artists, and poets: Kant, Hegel, Shelley, Marx, the painter William Morris, Freud, and the critic Walter Benjamin. We’ll end with a look at Foucault’s work. The point of this course is to consider closely the Western European tradition which generated questions that are still with us, such as: what is the “aesthetic” or mimetic; how are we to know an author’s intention; and under what circumstances should literary texts ever be censored.
Taught by: Copeland
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Benjamin Franklin Seminar
COML 384 Holocaust in Italian Literature and Film  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  
Notes: Holocaust in Italian Literature and Film  

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

COML 390 Introduction to Spanish American Literature  
Topics vary.  
Course usually offered in fall term  
Prerequisite: SPAN 219  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 391 Topics Film Studies  
This topic course explores aspects of Cinema Studies intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the COML website at <http://complit.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 392 Topics in Postcolonial Lit  
This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively; specific course topics vary from year to year.  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  
Notes: Benjamin Franklin Seminar  

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

COML 411 Introduction to Written Culture, 14th - 16th Centuries  
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for each semester's topic: http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/.  
Taught by: Chartier/Stallybrass  
One-term course offered either term  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 415 Medieval Islamic Art and Architecture  
An introduction to the major architectural monuments and trends, as well as to the best-known objects of the medieval (seventh-to fourteenth-century) Islamic world. Attention will be paid to such themes as the continuity of late antique themes, architecture as symbol of community and power, the importance of textiles and primacy of writing. Suitable for students of literature, history, anthropology as well as art history.  
Taught by: Holod  
One-term course offered either term  
Activity: Lecture  
1 Course Unit  

COML 416 European Intellectual History in the 18th Century  
A survey based solely on primary sources of the main currents of eighteenth-century European thought: the "Enlightenment," deism; natural religion; skepticism; evangelical revival; political reform; utilitarianism; naturalism; and materialism. The course will focus on works widely-read in the eighteenth century and of enduring historical significance. There are no prerequisites, and one of the goals of the course is to make eighteenth-century thought accessible in its context to the twenty-first century.  
Taught by: Kors  
Course usually offered in spring term  
Activity: Lecture  
1 Course Unit  

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

COML 419 European Intellectual History of the Seventeenth Century  
A survey based solely on primary sources of the main currents of seventeenth-century European thought: the criticism of inherited systems and of the authority of the past; skepticism, rationalism; empiricism; and the rise of the new natural philosophy. We will study deep conceptual change as an historical phenomenon, examining works that were both profoundly influential in the seventeenth-century and that are of enduring historical significance. There are no prerequisites, and one of the goals of the course is to make seventeenth-century thought accessible in its context to the twenty-first century student.  
Taught by: Kors  
Activity: Lecture  
1 Course Unit  

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

COML 499 Independent Study  
Supervised study for Seniors.  
One-term course offered either term  
Activity: Independent Study  
1 Course Unit
COML 501 History of Literary Theory
Over the last three decades, the fields of literary and cultural studies have been reconfigured by a variety of theoretical and methodological developments. Bracing and often confrontational dialogues between theoretical and political positions as varied as Deconstruction, New Historicism, Cultural Materialism, Feminism, Queer Theory, Minority Discourse Theory, Colonial and Post-colonial Studies and Cultural Studies have, in particular, altered disciplinary agendas and intellectual priorities for students embarking on the professional study of literature. In this course, we will study key texts, statements and debates that define these issues, and will work towards a broad knowledge of the complex rewriting of the project of literary studies in process today. The reading list will keep in mind the Examination List in Comparative Literature. We will not work towards complete coverage but will ask how crucial contemporary theorists engage with the longer history and institutional practices of literary criticism.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 504 Electronic Literary Studies Proseminar
This course is designed to introduce advanced undergraduate and graduate students to the range of new opportunities for literary research afforded by recent technological innovation.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 506 Topics in Twentieth-Century Literature
This course treats some aspect of literary and cultural politics in the 20th-Century with emphasis varying by instructor.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 510 Medieval Education: History, Practices, Texts
This course will cover various important aspects of education and intellectual culture from late antiquity (c. 400 A.D.) to the later Middle Ages (c. 1400 A.D.) across Europe. We will look especially at how the arts of language (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic) were formalized and “packaged” in late antique/early medieval encyclopedias (e.g., Martianus Capella’s “Marriage of Mercury and Philology,” Cassiodorus’ “Institutes of Divine and Secular Learning,” Boethius and Augustine on rhetoric, Donatus and Priscian on grammar, Boethius on dialectic, Isidore of Seville on all the sciences), and at how later theorists and systematizers recombined and reconfigured knowledge systems for new uses (especially monastic education, including notably Hugh of St. Victor’s “Didascalicon”). We will also look at how the earlier and later Middle Ages differentiated between “primary” and “advanced” education, how children and childhood are represented in educational discourse, how women participate in (or are figured in) intellectual discourse (Eloise, Hildegard of Bingen, Christine de Pizan), how universities changed ideas of intellectual formation, and how vernacular learning in the later Middle Ages added yet another dimension to the representation of learning.
Taught by: Copeland
Course not offered every year
Activity: Lecture
1 Course Unit

COML 518 Old Church Slavonic: History, Language, Manuscripts
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 519 Translating Literature: Theory and Practice
Taught by: Hellerstein
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 522 Chaucer
An advanced introduction to Chaucer’s poetry and Chaucer criticism. Reading and discussion of the dream visions, Troilus and Criseyde, and selections from Canterbury Tales, from the viewpoint of Chaucer’s development as a narrative artist.
Taught by: Wallace
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 523 The Trouble with Freud
For professionals in the field of mental care, Freud's work is often regarded as outmoded, if not problematic psychologists vie 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.
Taught by: Weissberg
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: Reading and discussions in English.

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

COML 525 Theories: Gender, and Sexuality Studies
Theories in Gender and Sexuality. Objects, Ideas, Institutions foregrounds new works in feminist thinking which circumvent and resist stale modes of teaching, in learning and knowing difference and "the woman question." Our aim is to interrogate the normative directionality of feminist "waves" and additive and intersectional models of suturing gender and sexuality to minoritarian politics. We will conceptualize feminism as relational to studies of affect, object oriented ontology animality, feminist science, and aesthetics.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 529 Black Cinema
This course treats some important aspect of African-American 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.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

COML 535 The Hindi Nation and its Fragments
This course will trace the formation and contestation of a Hindi national public during the colonial and post-colonial periods, utilizing the post-colonial critical thought of writers in English like Partha Chatterjee, Gayatri Spivak, and Aijaz Ahmed, but also of critics writing in Hindi like Namvar Singh, Ashok Vajpevi, Rajendra Yadav, etc. Attention will be given to this manner in which the contours and character of this imagined community have been debated in the context of different literary, social, and political movements, with particular emphases given to aspects of gender, caste, and regional identity. Central to class discussions will be the question of what constitutes a language literature, and consequently what relation those concepts can have to nation in a multilingual state such as India. Readings will be in translation.
Taught by: Williams
Course offered spring; odd-numbered years
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 537 Topics in Cultural History
An introduction to the practice and theory of epic in the early modern period. Specific texts vary with instructor.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 543 The Elemental Turn
The unfolding effects of climate change—rising sea level, melting ice sheets, subsiding land masses, drought stricken regions, wild fires, air laden with greenhouse gases, and inundated cities—heighen our awareness of the elements: air, earth, fire and water. Within the context of the new materialism, philosophers, eco-critics, and writers are re-turning to the elements and encountering, at the same time, predecessor texts that assume new relevance. This seminar will place current thinking and writing about the elements into dialogue with older traditions ranging from the classical (Empedocles, Plato, Lucretius) to writers and thinkers of the eighteenth, nineteenth and twentieth centuries (e.g., Goethe, Novalis, Tieck, Stifter, Bachelard, Heidegger, Boehme).
Taught by: Richter
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
**COML 546 The Novel and Marriage**

Historians have argued that early novels helped shape public opinion on many controversial issues. And no subject was more often featured in novels than marriage. In the course of the 18th and the 19th centuries, at a time when marriage as an institution was being radically redefined, almost all the best known novels explored happy as well as unhappy unions, individuals who decided not to marry as well as those whose lives were destroyed by the institution. They showcased marriage in other words in ways certain to provoke debate. We will both survey the development of the modern novel from the late 17th to the early 20th century and study the treatment of marriage in some of the greatest novels of all time. We will begin with novels from the French and English traditions, the national literatures in which the genre first took shape, in particular Laclos’ DANGEROUS LIAISONS, Austen’s PRIDE AND PREJUDICE, Bronte’s JANE EYRE, Flaubert’s MADAME BOVERY. We will then turn to works from the other European traditions such as Goethe’s ELECTIVE AFFINITIES and Tolstoy’s ANNA KARENINA. We will begin the course by discussing the novel often referred to as the first modern novel, THE PRINCESS DE CLEVES. This was also the first novel centered on an exploration of questions central to the debate about marriage for over two centuries.

Taught by: DeJean
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 550 Stalinist Culture**

This course will explore the cultural context in which the so-called Romantic Movement prospered, and will pay special attention to the relationship between the most notorious popular genres of the period (Gothic fiction and drama) and the poetic production of both canonical and emerging poets.

Taught by: Platt
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 554 British Women Writers**

A study of British women writers, often focusing on the women authors who came into prominence between 1775 and 1825.

Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 558 Major Renaissance Writers**

This course will look at Renaissance images of the Author, both in the visual arts (portraits in manuscripts, cycles of famous men, statuary, medals) and in the literary tradition, especially lives of the poets and defenses of poetry. Focusing on Homer, Virgil, and Ovid; Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio and Renaissance women poets, it will reconstruct the author as an ideal figure, the inspired sage and prophet. We shall discuss legend and literary canon formation, considering how poets are analogous to saints in their cults and the folkloristic anecdotes that grow up around them. The figure of the poet as constructed by different historical eras will be studied with reference to theories of literature as they developed from the Middle Ages to the early modern period.

Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 559 Topics in Philosophy and Literature**

This a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for the topic: [http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/](http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/).

Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 561 Studies in the 18th Century**

Please check the Comp Lit website for the course descriptions.

Taught by: DeJean
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

Notes: This is a topics course.

**COML 562 Public Environmental Humanities**

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

Taught by: Wiggin
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 564 Modern British Literature**

An introduction to British Literary Modernism. Specific emphasis will depend on instructor.

Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 570 Topics in Criticism and Theory**

Taught by: MacLeod

Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

Notes: This course covers topics in literary criticism and theory. It’s specific emphasis varying with instructor.

**COML 572 Art, Artists and Society**

Course usually offered in spring term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

**COML 575 Topics in African Literature**

This course is based on a selection of representative texts written in English, as well as a few texts in English translation. It involves, a study of themes relating to social change and the persistence of cultural traditions, followed by an attempt at sketching the emergence of literary tradition by identifying some of the formal conventions established writers in their use of old forms and experiments with new.

Taught by: Barnard
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 577 20th Century Poetry
Taught by: Bernstein
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 579 Slavic Literary Theory in Western Context
This course will compare selected theoretical concepts advanced by Russian Formalists, Prague Structuralists, and the Bakhtin group (e.g., defamiliarization, aesthetic sign, dialogue) with similar or analogous notions drawn from Western intellectual tradition.
Taught by: Steiner, P.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 580 Introduction to Bibliography
This course offers an introduction to the principles of descriptive and analytic bibliography and textual editing. The history of authorship, manuscript production, printing, publishing, and reading will be addressed as they inform an understanding of how a particular text came to be the way it is. Diverse theories of editing will be studied and put into practice with short passages. The course is generally suitable for students working in any historical period, but particular emphases specified in the current offerings on the English website. www.english.upenn.edu
Course offered fall; even-numbered years
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 582 Topics in Aesthetics
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for descriptions.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 584 Topics in Jewish-German Culture
Reading and discussion course on selected topics in Jewish history. The instructors are visiting scholars at the Center for Advanced Judaic Studies.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 586 Topics in Twentieth Century Art
This seminar will examine the ideas of a number of influential theorists in a variety of disciplines who have contributed to the ways in which we understand and evaluate art. A tentative and flexible list includes: Kant, Denis, Fry, Greenberg, Schapiro, de Bord, Derrida, Lacan, Kristeva, Baudrillard.
Taught by: Poggi
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

COML 592 Topics in Contemporary Theory
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 593 Modern and Contemporary Italian Culture
This is a topics course. One topic may be "Futurism, Classicism, Fascism" or "Philology and History." Please see the Comparative Literature website for the description.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 601 Topics Medieval Studies
An interdisciplinary course, it will utilize literary practices to "read" the ways specific texts produce sexuality at the same time as it will examine the relation between discourses and the material and political worlds in which those discourses are spoken. We will examine the role sexuality plays in the languages of Imperialism and in the sexualization of political rhetoric. The course will explore theoretical approaches to sexuality (and its discursive construction) proposed by Freud, Foucault, Sander Gilman, Gayle Rubin, Teresa de Lauretis, Mary Douglas, and examine a broad range of "primary materials" from eighteenth-century novels and pornography to nineteenth-century sexology to current feminist and political debates.
Taught by: Copeland
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 602 Historiography and Methodologies
Theories and models of historical investigation. Analysis of historiographic writings and musicological works exemplifying particular approaches, such as transnational, environmental/landscape, gender/sexuality, critical race studies, performance studies, archives, and the digital humanities.
Taught by: Calcagno, Caldwell, Goodman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 606 Ancient Literary Theory
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 608 Global France
Please see the Comparative Literature website for description.
Taught by: Richman
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 609 Italian Literary Theory
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 620 Semester in 18th Century Literature
This course varies in its emphases, but in recent years has explored the theory of narrative both from the point of view of eighteenth-century novelists and thinkers as well as from the perspective of contemporary theory. Specific attention is paid to issues of class, gender, and ideology.
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 621 Topics in European History
Reading and Discussion course on selected topics in European History.
Taught by: Verkholantsev
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 622 Postmodernism
An advanced seminar on postmodernist culture. Recently offered as a study of relationship between poetry and theory in contemporary culture, with readings in poststructuralist, feminist, marxist, and postcolonial theory and in poets of the Black Mountain and Language groups.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 625 Global Perspectives in French Studies
This course explores the literal and literary landscapes of 19th-century Paris and Philadelphia, paying particular attention to the ways in which the built environment is shaped by and shapes shifting ideologies in the modern age. Although today the luxury and excesses of the "City of Light" may seem worlds apart from the Quaker simplicity of the "City of Brotherly Love," Paris and Philadelphia saw themselves as partners and mutual referents during the 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.
Taught by: Goulet/Wunsch
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 630 Introduction to Medieval Literature
Topics vary. Previous topics include The Grail and the Rose, Literary Genres and Transformations, and Readings in Old French Texts. Please see the department's website for current course description:
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 643 Studies in the Renaissance
Topics vary. Previous topics have included Rabelais and M. de Navarre, Montaigne, and Renaissance and Counter-Renaissance. Please see department's website for current course description:
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit
COML 653 Topics in Russian and Soviet Cultural History  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  
Notes: This is a topics course. Please see COML website for current description. http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/Complit/  

COML 675 Topics in Prague Structuralism  
A systematic exploration of the holistic, functional, and semiotic approach to literature and art practiced by the members of the Prague School.  
Taught by: Steiner  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 680 Topics: Literature and Film  
This is a topics course. Please see the Comparative Literature website for description.  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 682 Seminar on Literary Theory  
Topics vary from year to year.  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 683 Topics in Comparative Literature and Theory  
This course has valuable content, addressing specific topics of broad, interdisciplinary concern in an innovative, multi-instructor format. The goal is to bring Penn students and faculty from a wide range of topics together around the study of theories, methods, periods and other common areas of interest in a shared intellectual space. Past topics have been "Modernism Across Borders," "Collective Violence, Trauma and Representation," and "Global Cultural Formations." The experimental seminar format devotes the first two hours of each three-hour class to discussion of readings selected in consultation with guest instructors from a range of Penn departments and programs, as well as nearby campuses. The third hour is devoted to a presentation and discussion of a work in progress, a project either of a member of the course, or of a guest. Guest instructors may appear for one or a few meetings. The course is coordinated by the convener(s) who are present for all the class meetings along with the guests. Students are encouraged to bring work in progress, either on the basis of past seminars or independent projects, to form the basis for their projects in the seminar.  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

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

COML 694 Spanish and Latin American Cinema  
Topics vary from year to year.  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 696 Postcolonial Theory in Francophone Contexts  
This seminar will introduce students to key texts and influential figures coming from, focusing on, or relevant to Francophone postcolonial contexts. Following a brief review of Anglophone postcolonial criticism, readings for the course will fall under three categories: Authors from the 1940s to present who have focused exclusively on (post)colonial issues pertaining to Africa, the Caribbean and/or postcolonial France; contemporary European, African and North American literary critics; humanities scholars whose work would not necessarily be labeled "postcolonial" but is nevertheless relevant to postcolonial criticism.  
Taught by: Moudileno  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

COML 700 African Literature and Society  
An advanced seminar in anglophone African literature, possibly including a few works in translation.  
One-term course offered either term  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit  

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

COML 714 Medieval Literature  
This is a topics course. The topic may be "Women and Writing,1220-1689," "Denationalizing the English Middle Ages," or "Anglo-French Literatures." or "Gloss and Commentary."  
Course not offered every year  
Activity: Seminar  
1 Course Unit
COML 715 Seminar in Ethnomusicology
Topics in Ethnomusicology.
Taught by: Muller
Course usually offered in fall term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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

COML 736 Renaissance Studies
This is an advanced topics course treating some important issues in contemporary Renaissance studies.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

Notes: This is a topics course.

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

COML 769 Feminist Theory
Specific topic varies. The seminar will bring together the study of early modern English literature and culture with histories and theories of gender, sexuality and race. Contact with 'the East' (Turkey, the Moluccas, North Africa and India) and the West (the Americas and the Caribbean) reshaped attitudes to identity and desire. How does this history allow us to understand, and often interrogate, modern theories of desire and difference? Conversely, how do postcolonial and other contemporary perspectives allow us to re-read this past?
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 780 Seminar in Theory
Seminar on selected topics in music theory and analysis.
Course offered spring; odd-numbered years
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

COML 786 Topics in 20th Century Art
Topics vary from year to year.
Taught by: Poggi
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 787 Topics in Contemporary Art
Topics vary each semester. Fall 2018: Since it was not translated into English until the mid 1960s, Walter Benjamin's Work of Art essay was slow to arrive in the English-speaking world, and when it did, it seemed part of the same zeitgeist as Guy Debord's The Society of the Spectacle, Roland Barthes The Rhetoric of the Image, and Louis Althusser's Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses. This zeitgeist was deeply suspicious of popular images, and this suspicion was soon fortified from a feminist direction by Laura Mulvey's Visual pleasure and Narrative Cinema, and a postcolonial one by Frantz Fanon's Black Skin, White Masks. Benjamin's essay extended it to the kinds of images we generally find in museums, i.e., to what I will be calling pictures. This made the museum the primary target of institutional critique, and gave rise to what Hal Foster called the anti-aesthetic. It was against this backdrop that the so-called Pictures Generation emerged. This category was helpful at first, since it allowed us to look at things that would otherwise have been forbidden. It was based, however, on a misapprehension: the misapprehension that a picture means the same thing for Jeff Wall as it does for Cindy Sherman.
Taught by: Silverman
One-term course offered either term
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 790 Recent Issues in Critical Theory
Course varies with instructor.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

Notes: This is a topics course.

COML 795 Poetics
Topics in poetics will vary in its emphasis depending on the instructor.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

COML 981 M.A. Exam Prep
Course open to first-year Comparative Literature graduate students in preparation for required M.A. exam taken in spring of first year.
Course not offered every year
Activity: Seminar
1 Course Unit

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

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