COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COML)

COML 0004 India's Literature: Love, War, Wisdom and Humor
This course introduces students to the extraordinary quality of literary production during the past four millennia of South Asian civilization. We will read texts in translation from all parts of South Asia up to the sixteenth century. We will read selections from hymns, lyric poems, epics, wisdom literature, plays, political works, and religious texts.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: SAST 0004
1 Course Unit

COML 0006 Hindu Mythology
Premodern India produced some of the world's greatest myths and stories: tales of gods, goddesses, heroes, princesses, kings and lovers that continue to capture the imaginations of millions of readers and hearers. In this course, we will look closely at some of these stories especially as found in Purana-s, great compendia composed in Sanskrit, including the chief stories of the central gods of Hinduism: Visnu, Siva, and the Goddess. We will also consider the relationship between these texts and the earlier myths of the Vedas and the Indian Epics, the diversity of the narrative and mythic materials within and across different texts, and the re-imagining of these stories in the modern world.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: RELS 0006, SAST 0006
1 Course Unit

COML 0007 Introduction to Modern South Asian Literatures
This course will provide a wide-ranging introduction to the literatures of South Asia from roughly 1500 to the present, as well as an exploration of their histories and impact on South Asian society today. How are literary movements and individual works - along with the attitudes towards religion, society, and culture associated with them - still influential in literature, film, and popular culture? How have writers across time and language engaged with questions of caste, gender, and identity? We will read from the rich archive of South Asian writing in translation - from languages that include Braj, Urdu, Bangla, and Tamil - to consider how these literatures depict their own society while continuing to resonate across time and space. Topics of discussion will include the Bhakti poetries of personal devotion, the literature of Dalits - formerly referred to as the Untouchables - and the ways in which literature addresses contemporary political and social problems. Students will leave this course with a sense of the contours of the literatures of South Asia as well as ways of exploring the role of these literatures in the larger world. No prior knowledge of South Asia is required; this course fulfills the cross-cultural analysis requirement, and the Arts and Letters sector requirement.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: SAST 0007
1 Course Unit

COML 0011 In Praise of the Small in Literature and the Arts
We can memorize aphorisms and jokes, carry miniature portraits with us, and feel playful in handling small objects. This seminar will ask us to pay attention to smaller texts, art works, and objects that may easily be overlooked. In addition to reading brief texts and looking at images and objects, we will also read texts on the history and theory of short genres and the small.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 0011
1 Course Unit

COML 0015 Writing the Self: Life-Writing, Fiction, Representation
This course investigates how people try to understand who they are by writing about their lives. It will cover a broad range of forms, including memoirs, novels, essay films, and even celebrity autobiographies. The course will be international and in focus and will ask how the notion of self may shift, not only according to the demands of different genres, but in different literary, linguistic, and social contexts. Questions probed will include the following: How does a writer's language—or languages—shape how they think of themselves? To what extent is a sense of self and identity shaped by exclusion and othering? Is self-writing a form of translation and performance, especially in multilingual contexts? What can memoir teach us about the ways writers navigate global literary institutions that shape our knowledge of World Literature? How do various forms of life-writing enable people on the margins, whether sexual, gendered, or racial, to craft narratives that encapsulate their experience? Can telling one's own story bring joy, affirmation, and greater transcultural or even global understanding? In sum, this course proposes to illuminate the many ways in which writing becomes meaningful for those who take it up. The format of the seminar will require students to offer oral presentations on the readings and invite them to craft their own experiences and memories in inventive narrative forms.
Spring, even numbered years only
Also Offered As: ENGL 1745, GSWS 0051
1 Course Unit

COML 0021 Study of a Theme in Cinema
This introduction to literary study examines a compelling theme central to a set of cinematic texts. The theme’s function within specific historical contexts, within varying media technologies, and within contemporary culture, will all be emphasized. In presenting a range of materials and perspectives, this course is an ideal introduction to literary study. See the English Department’s website at www/english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 0021, ENGL 0021
1 Course Unit

COML 0022 Study of a Theme in Global Literature
This introduction to literary study examines a compelling literary theme by attending to texts from around the globe. The theme’s function within multiple historical and regional contexts, within literary history generally, and within contemporary culture, will all be emphasized. In presenting a range of materials and perspectives, this course is an ideal introduction to literary study. See the English Department’s website at www/english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 0022
1 Course Unit
COML 0030 Introduction to Sexuality Studies and Queer Theory
This course will introduce students to the historical and intellectual forces that led to the emergence of queer theory as a distinct field, as well as recent and ongoing debates about gender, sexuality, embodiment, race, privacy, global power, and social norms. We will begin by tracing queer theory’s conceptual heritage and prehistory in psychoanalysis, deconstruction and poststructuralism, the history of sexuality, gay and lesbian studies, woman-of-color feminism, the feminist sex wars, and the AIDS crisis. We will then study the key terms and concepts of the foundational queer work of the 1990s and early 2000s. Finally, we will turn to the new questions and issues that queer theory has addressed in roughly the past decade. Students will write several short papers.
Fall
Also Offered As: ENGL 2303, GSWS 0003
1 Course Unit

COML 0038 Study of a Genre: World Autobiography
An introduction to literary study through world literature. The course will introduce you to the manifold connections between theories of world literature and fields such as globalization studies, translation studies, comparative literature, and postcolonial studies. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Also Offered As: ENGL 0038
1 Course Unit

COML 0041 Study of a Period in Cinematic History
This is an introduction to the study of cinema and culture through a survey of works from a specific historical period. This course is ideal for students wishing to explore a significant era, and it presents a range of films and contexts for understanding the cultural products of a period. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 0041, ENGL 0041
1 Course Unit

COML 0052 Literature and Society: Introduction to Psychoanalysis
The course will introduce students to the broad and ever-expanding spectrum of psychoanalytic ideas and techniques, through reading and discussion of major works by some of its most influential figures. We will also read some literary, historical, philosophical, and anthropological works that have special relevance to the psychoanalytic exploration of the human condition. In addition to the other requirements it satisfies, this course may also be counted toward completion of the Psychoanalytic Studies minor (http://web.sas.upenn.edu/psys/). See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Also Offered As: ENGL 0052
1 Course Unit

COML 0082 Caribbean Literature
This course will introduce students to Caribbean literature. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: AFRC 0082, ENGL 1220
1 Course Unit

COML 0095 Universal Language: From the Tower of Babel to Artificial Intelligence
This is a course in European intellectual history, it explores the historical trajectory, from antiquity to the present day, of the idea that there once was, and again could be, a universal and perfect language among the human race. If recovered, it can explain the origins and meaning of human experience, and can enable universal understanding and world peace. The tantalizing question of the possibility of a universal language have been vital and thought-provoking throughout the history of humanity. The idea that the language spoken by Adam and Eve was a language which perfectly expressed the nature of all earthly objects and concepts has occupied the minds of intellectuals for almost two millennia. In defiance of the Christian biblical myth of the confusion of languages and nations at the Tower of Babel, they have over and over tried to overcome divine punishment and discover the path back to harmonious existence. By recovering or recreating a universal language, theologians hoped to be able to experience the divine; philosophers believed that it would enable apprehension of the laws of nature, while mystic cabalists saw in it direct access to hidden knowledge. In reconstructing a proto-language, 19th-century Indo-European philologists saw the means to study the early stages of human development. Even in the 20th century, romantic idealists, such as the inventor of Esperanto Ludwik Zamenhof, strived to construct languages to enable understanding among estranged nations. For writers and poets of all times, from Cyrano de Bergerac to Velimir Khlebnikov, the idea of a universal and perfect language has been an inexhaustible source of inspiration. Today, this idea echoes in theories of universal and generative grammars, in approaching English as a global tongue, and in various attempts to create artificial languages, even a language for cosmic communication. Each week we address a particular period and set of theories to learn about universal language projects, but above all, the course examines fundamental questions of what language is and how it functions in human society.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1445, HIST 0822, REES 1177
1 Course Unit

COML 0030 First Year Seminar: National Epics
In this course we will consider texts that become “national epics,” texts that in some sense come to “represent” a nation. How and when might such imaginative texts emerge? Nations change, and old poems may no longer serve. Can the Song of Roland, once compulsory study for all schoolchildren in France, still be required reading today—especially if I am French Muslim? What about El Cid in Spain? How do some texts—such as the Mahabharata in India, or Journey to the West in China—seem more adaptable than others? The course begins in western Europe, but then pivots across Eurasian space to become gradually more global. Most all of us have complex family histories: Chinese-American, French Canadian, Latino/a/x, Jewish American, Pennsylvania Dutch, Lenni Lenape. Some students may choose to investigate, for their final project, family histories (and hence their own, personal connection to “national epics”).
Also Offered As: ENGL 0303
1 Course Unit
COML 0315 Jewish Literature in the Middle Ages in Translation
Course explores the cultural history of Jews in the lands of Islam from the time of Mohammed through the late 17th century (end of Ottoman expansion into Europe) – in Iraq, the Middle East, al-Andalus and the Ottoman Empire. Primary source documents (in English translation) illuminate minority-majority relations, internal Jewish tensions (e.g., Qaraism), and developments in scriptural exegesis, rabbinic law, philosophy, poetry, polemics, mysticism and liturgy.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: JWST 0315, NELC 0315, RELS 0315
1 Course Unit

COML 0320 Modern Hebrew Literature and Film in Translation
This course is designed to introduce students to the rich art of Modern Hebrew and Israeli literature and film. Poetry, short stories, and novel excerpts are taught in translation. The course studies Israeli cinema alongside literature, examining the various facets of this culture that is made of national aspirations and individual passions. The class is meant for all: no previous knowledge of history or the language is required. The topic changes each time the course is offered. Topics include: giants of Israeli literature; the image of the city; childhood, the marginalized voices of Israel; the Holocaust from an Israeli perspective; and fantasy, dreams & madness.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 0320, JWST 0320, NELC 0320
1 Course Unit

COML 0335 Jewish Humor
In modern American popular culture Jewish humor is considered by Jews and non-Jews as a recognizable and distinct form of humor. Focusing upon folk-humor, in this course we will examine the history of this perception, and study different manifestation of Jewish humor as a particular case study of ethnic in general. Specific topics for analysis will be: humor in the Hebrew Bible, Jewish humor in Europe and in America, JAP and JAM jokes, Jewish tricksters and pranksters, Jewish humor in the Holocaust and Jewish humor in Israel. The term paper will be collecting project of Jewish jokes.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: JWST 0335, NELC 0335
1 Course Unit

COML 0502 BFS--Med/Red Dante in English: Creative Responses to the Divine Comedy
Dante's Divine Comedy has long been acclaimed as the greatest poem ever written, in any language. It is certainly among the most inclusive, covering every conceivable realm of human experience—past, present, and future. In his Vita nuova ('New Life'), Dante tells of his growing love for a woman who first induces in him paralysis of feeling, then later free-flowing poetic creativity— but then, suddenly, she dies. The Commedia, as it is known in Italian, proposes that death may not be the end; that lovers may meet again, and that their love forms part of the greater energy of the universe. This journey towards understanding comes in stages, or steps. First, led by the great Roman poet Vergil, Dante travels downwards through a lightless realm (Inferno) where people remain fixed in a single, inflexible attitude: Hell for Dante is another word for inability to change. Next, Dante and Vergil emerge into the light and climb the mountain of Purgatory. With first-hand knowledge of the worst of human nature behind them, they travel hopefully upwards and finally recover the first site of simple human happiness: the Earthly Paradise. Here, through much effort and much help from artists and poets, human beings can change, leaving destructive impulses behind. Finally, freed from worldly anxieties, Dante travels further beyond time to experience ultimate truths with his first beloved, Beatrice: Paradiso. The first English poet to be seriously inspired by Dante was Geoffrey Chaucer (died 1400). Chaucer's encounter with Dante's text and Dante's disciples (he travelled to Italy twice) led first to artistic crisis and then to his revolutionizing of English poetry. Many poets and writers since have seen revolutionary potential (Irish Dante, black Dante), across Europe and beyond. Students in this class will sample a wide range of this creativity while formulating their own, unique research project (plus one shorter, tune-up essay). This can take the form of a traditionally-footnoted final long essay, or be given a more creative spin. We will read substantial sections of the Commedia, using parallel Italian-English texts, but never more than five cantos (about 600 lines) per class. No prior knowledge of Italian needed. We'll read more of Inferno than Paradiso, but not neglect Purgatorio or the Vita nuova. It's not crucial that we all employ the same edition, since the Commedia's text is designedly stable (tamperproof). There are many excellent recent translations to choose from (plus some duds and eccentricities). For a first pass through the poem I recommend the translation of Allan Mandelbaum, that I'll likely use myself, because i) he stages a real poet's struggle with the Italian; ii) his notes are helpful, but not overpowering; iii) very cheap (Bantam classics). Anglophone writers who have been inspired by Dante, and who we might read in class, include: Geoffrey Chaucer; John Milton; Percy Bysshe Shelley; John Keats; William Blake; Alfred Lord Tennyson; Dante Gabriel Rossetti and other pre-Raphaelites; Henry Wadsworth Longfellow; Fanny Appleton; H. Cordelia Ray; Ezra Pound; T.S. Eliot; James Joyce; Samuel Beckett; Seamus Heaney; Osip Mandelstam; Amiri Baraka; Derek Walcott; Eternal Kool Project; film and video makers (since 1907); Caroline Bergvall.
Also Offered As: ENGL 0502, ITAL 3335
1 Course Unit

COML 0507 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: 20th-Century Literature
The course explores an aspect of 20th-Century literature intensively. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 0507
1 Course Unit
COML 0510 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: National Epics (Med/Ren)
A course that traces how particular literary texts, very often medieval, are adopted to become foundational for national literatures. Key moments of emphasis will be the early nineteenth century, the 1930s, and (to some extent) the unfolding present. Some texts immediately suggest themselves for analysis. The Song of Roland, for example, has long been fought over between France and Germany; each new war inspires new editions on both sides. The French colonial education system, highly centralized, long made the Chanson de Roland a key text, with the theme of Islamic attack on the European mainland especially timely, it was thought, during the Algerian war of independence. Germany also sees the Niebelungenlied as a key text, aligning it with the Rhine as an impeccably Germanic: but the Danube, especially as envisioned by Stefan Zweig, offers an alternative, hybridized, highly hyphenated cultural vision in running its Germanic-Judaic-Slavic-Roman course to the Black Sea. The course will not be devoted exclusively to western Europe. Delicate issues arise as nations determine what their national epic needs to be. Russia, for example, needs the text known as The Song of Igor to be genuine, since it is the only Russian epic to predate the Mongol invasion. The text was discovered in 1797 and then promptly lost in Moscow’s great fire of 1812; suggestions that it might have been a fake have to be handled with care in Putin’s Russia. Similarly, discussing putative Mughal (Islamic) elements in so-called “Hindi epics” can also be a delicate matter. Some “uses of the medieval” have been exercised for reactionary and revisionist causes in the USA, but such use is much more extravagant east of Prague. And what, exactly, is the national epic of the USA?
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 0510
1 Course Unit

COML 0520 Capitalism, (Neo)Colonialism, Racism, and Resistance
This interdisciplinary seminar examines theory and artistic productions, including literature, films, and performance art, that analyze and critique capitalism, imperialism and (neo)colonialism, racism, and patriarchy. It examines history and culture from an international perspective, giving particular attention to works from the Global South (and from Latin America, especially) as well as works addressing the history of racialized groups within the Global North. The course will focus on the 20th and 21st centuries, although it will also address earlier histories of capitalism and colonialism in order to trace their co-constitution and the emergence of modern racism. We will consider questions such as the following: What is the role of culture and literature in (neo)colonial domination and anticolonial resistance? What is globalization, how does it perpetuate global inequality, and how has art contributed to the international anti-globalization movement? How have people sought liberation from oppression and exploitation, and how have they mobilized cultural productions to this end? Why are immigrants targeted for repression and what can stories about immigrants’ lives teach us about contemporary capitalism, including U.S. imperialism? What forces have given rise to 21st century fascism and how are intellectuals, activists and artists contesting it? The course will address key theories and concepts from anticolonial and postcolonial thought, Marxist social and literary theory, critical development studies, world systems analysis, and transnational Latin American & Latinx studies.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 0520, LALS 0520
1 Course Unit

COML 0540 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: History of Literary Criticism
This is a course on the history of literary theory, a survey of major debates about literature, poetics, and ideas about what literary texts should do, from ancient Greece to examples of modern European thought. The first half of the course will focus on early periods: Greek and Roman antiquity, especially Plato and Aristotle; the medieval period (including St. Augustine, Dante, and Boccaccio), and the early modern period (such as Philip Sidney and Giambattista Vico). In the second half of the course we will turn to modern concerns by looking at the literary (or "art") theories of some major philosophers and theorists: Kant, Hegel, Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, and Walter Benjamin. We end the course in the mid-twentieth century. The purpose driving this course is to consider closely how this tradition generated questions that are still with us, such as: what is the act of interpretation; what is the "aesthetic"; what is "imitation" or mimesis; and how are we to know an author’s intention.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CLST 3508, ENGL 0540
1 Course Unit

COML 0590 Benjamin Franklin Seminar: Film Studies
This course explores an aspect of film studies intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3890, CIMS 0590, ENGL 0590
1 Course Unit

COML 0615 Modern Arabic Literature
This course is a study of modern Arabic literary forms in the context of the major political and social changes which shaped Arab history in the first half of the twentieth century. The aim of the course is to introduce students to key samples of modern Arabic literature which trace major social and political developments in Arab society. Each time the class will be offered with a focus on one of the literary genres which emerged or flourished in the twentieth century: the free verse poem, the prose-poem, drama, the novel, and the short story. We will study each of these emergent genres against the socio-political backdrop which informed it. All readings will be in English translations. The class will also draw attention to the politics of translation as a reading and representational lens.
Spring
Also Offered As: NELC 0615
1 Course Unit

COML 0700 Iranian Cinema: Gender, Politics and Religion
This seminar explores Iranian culture, society, history and politics through the medium of film. We will examine a variety of cinematic works that represent the social, political, economic and cultural circumstances of contemporary Iran, as well as the diaspora. Along the way, we will discuss issues pertaining to gender, religion, nationalism, ethnicity, and the role of cinema in Iranian society and beyond. Discussions topics will also include the place of the Iranian diaspora in cinema, as well as the transnational production, distribution, and consumption of Iranian cinema. Films will include those by internationally acclaimed filmmakers, such as Rakhshan Bani-Etemad, Asghar Farhadi, Bahman Ghobadi, Abbas Kiarostami, Mohsen Makhmalbaf, Dariush Mehrjui, Tahmineh Milani, Jafar Panahi, Marjane Satrapi and others. All films will be subtitled in English. No prior knowledge is required.
Fall
Also Offered As: CIMS 0700, GSWS 0700, NELC 0700
1 Course Unit
COML 1000 Introduction to Literary Study
This course has three broad aims: first, it will introduce students to a selection of compelling contemporary narratives; second, it will provide prospective students of literature and film, as well as interested students headed for other majors, with fundamental skills in literary, visual, and cultural analysis; and, third, it will encourage a meditation on the function of literature and culture in our world, where commodities, people, and ideas have been constantly in motion. Questions for discussion will therefore include: the meaning of terms like "globalization," "translation," and "world literature"; the transnational reach and circulation of texts; migration and engagement with "others"; violence, trauma, and memory; terrorism and the state; and the ethic of cosmopolitanism. Our collective endeavor will be to think about narrative forms as modes of mediating and engaging with the vast and complex world we inhabit today. See COML website for current semester's description at https://complit.sas.upenn.edu/course-list/2019A
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1409
1 Course Unit

COML 1003 Cinema and Revolution
Can cinema be revolutionary? From Sergei Eisenstein's Battleship Potemkin to Boots Riley's Sorry to Bother You, filmmakers have long grappled with political revolution. In this course we'll study films that take moments of revolutionary upheaval as their subject, and cinema made during times of revolution. Can cinematic techniques challenge the status quo? How have filmmakers navigated the complex politics of cinematic production and distribution in moments of censorship and repression? Are art and propaganda always different? Students will give two oral presentations: one will be a detailed analysis of a single scene, and another will consider the politics of a film of their choosing. Open to all, including those with no prior background in cinema studies.
Fall
Also Offered As: CIMS 1003
1 Course Unit

COML 1010 Freud: The Invention of Psychoanalysis
No other person of the twentieth century has probably influenced scientific thought, humanistic scholarship, medical therapy, and popular culture as much as Sigmund Freud. This course will study his work, its cultural background, and its impact on us today. In the first part of the course, we will learn about Freud's life and the Viennese culture of his time. We will then move to a discussion of seminal texts, such as excerpts from his Interpretation of Dreams, case studies, as well as essays on psychoanalytic practice, human development, definitions of gender and sex, neuroses, and culture in general. In the final part of the course, we will discuss the impact of Freud's work. Guest lecturers from the medical field, history of science, psychology, and the humanities will offer insights into the reception of Freud's work, and its consequences for various fields of study and therapy.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1010, GSWS 1010, HIST 0820
1 Course Unit

COML 1011 World Film History to 1945
This course surveys the history of world film from cinema's precursors to 1945. We will develop methods for analyzing film while examining the growth of film as an art, an industry, a technology, and a political instrument. Topics include the emergence of film technology and early film audiences, the rise of narrative film and birth of Hollywood, national film industries and movements, African-American independent film, the emergence of the genre film (the western, film noir, and romantic comedies), ethnographic and documentary film, animated films, censorship, the MPPDA and Hays Code, and the introduction of sound. We will conclude with the transformation of several film industries into propaganda tools during World War II (including the Nazi, Soviet, and US film industries). In addition to contemporary theories that investigate the development of cinema and visual culture during the first half of the 20th century, we will read key texts that contributed to the emergence of film theory. There are no prerequisites. Students are required to attend screenings or watch films on their own.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ARTH 1080, CIMS 1010, ENGL 1900
1 Course Unit

COML 1013 Chaucer: Poetry, Voice, and Interpretation
Watching Chaucer at work, modern poet Lavinia Greenlaw says, is like meeting English "before the paint has dried." Before rules (even of spelling) have hardened. Before live oral performance is subordinated to written record.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1013
1 Course Unit

COML 1015 Sagas and Skalds: Old Norse Literature in Translation
This course introduces students to the powerful and influential corpus of Old Norse literature and to the cultural and historical landscape of Viking and medieval Scandinavia. Students will explore mythological and heroic verse, court poetry, law codes, runic inscriptions, and the famed Icelandic sagas to develop a deeper understanding of one of the most significant literary traditions in high medieval Europe, and to myth-bust popular misconceptions about who 'the Vikings' were and how they lived.
See the English Department's website at www/english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1015
1 Course Unit

COML 1018 Poetics of Screenplay: The Art of Plotting
This course studies screenwriting in a historical, theoretical and artistic perspective. We discuss the rules of drama and dialogue, character development, stage vs. screen-writing, adaptation of nondramatic works, remaking of plots, auteur vs. genre theory of cinema, storytelling in silent and sound films, the evolvement of a script in the production process, script doctoring, as well as screenwriting techniques and tools.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1110, REES 0470
1 Course Unit
COML 1020 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.

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1020, PHIL 1439
1 Course Unit

COML 1021 Introduction to Renaissance Literature and Culture

This course will survey the cultural history of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century England. Interdisciplinary in nature and drawing on the latest methodologies and insights of English studies, we will explore how aesthetics, politics, and social traditions shaped literature at this vital and turbulent time of English history. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1021
1 Course Unit

COML 1022 World Film History 1945-Present

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

Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ARTH 1090, CIMS 1020, ENGL 1901
1 Course Unit

COML 1025 Narrative Across Cultures

The purpose of this course is to present a variety of narrative genres and to discuss and illustrate the modes whereby they can be analyzed. We will be looking at shorter types of narrative: short stories, novellas, and fables, and also some extracts from longer works such as autobiographies. While some works will come from the Anglo-American tradition, a larger number will be selected from European and non-Western cultural traditions and from earlier time-periods. The course will thus offer ample opportunity for the exploration of the translation of cultural values in a comparative perspective.

Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 0039, NELC 1960, SAST 1124, THAR 1025
1 Course Unit

COML 1027 Sex and Representation

This course explores literature that resists normative categories of gender and sexuality. By focusing on figures writing from the margins, we will explore how radical approaches to narrative form and subject-matter invite us to think in new ways about desire and identity. We will read texts that blur the boundaries between fact and fiction, hybridizing the genres of poetry, drama, and autobiography to produce new forms of expression, such as the graphic novel, auto-fiction, and prose poetry. From Virginia Woolf's gender-bending epic, Orlando, to Tony Kushner's Angels in America, this course traces how non-normative desire is produced and policed by social and literary contexts - and how those contexts can be re-imagined and transformed.

Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 1027, GSWS 1027, REES 1481
1 Course Unit

COML 1030 Nietzsche's Modernity and the Death of God

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

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1030
1 Course Unit
COML 1031 Television and New Media
How and when do media become digital? What does digitization afford and what is lost as television and cinema become digitized? As lots of things around us turn digital, have we started telling stories, sharing experiences, and replaying memories differently? What has happened to television and life after New Media? How have television audiences been transformed by algorithmic cultures of Netflix and Hulu? How have (social) media transformed socialities as ephemeral snaps and swiped intimacies become part of the "new" digital/phone cultures? This is an introductory survey course and we discuss a wide variety of media technologies and phenomena that include: cloud computing, Internet of Things, trolls, distribution platforms, optical fiber cables, surveillance tactics, social media, and race in cyberspace. We also examine emerging mobile phone cultures in the Global South and the environmental impact of digitization. Course activities include Tumblr blog posts and Instagram curations. The final project could take the form of either a critical essay (of 2000 words) or a media project.
Spring
Also Offered As: ARTH 1070, CIMS 1030, ENGL 1950
1 Course Unit

COML 1040 Berlin: History, Politics, Culture
What do you know about Berlin’s history, architecture, culture, and political life? The present course will offer a survey of the history of Prussia, beginning with the seventeenth century, and the unification of the small towns of Berlin and Koelln to establish a new capital for this country. It will tell the story of Berlin’s rising political prominence in the eighteenth century, and its position as a center of the German and Jewish Enlightenment. It will follow Berlin’s transformation into an industrial city in the nineteenth century, its rise to metropolis in the early twentieth century, its history during the Third Reich, and the post-war cold war period. The course will conclude its historical survey with a consideration of Berlin’s position as a capital in reunified Germany. The historical survey will be supplemented by a study of Berlin’s urban structure, its significant architecture from the eighteenth century (i.e. Schinkel) to the nineteenth (new worker’s housing, garden suburbs) and twentieth centuries (Bauhaus, Speer designs, postwar rebuilding, GDR housing projects, post-unification building boom). In addition, we will read literary texts about the city, and consider the visual art and music created in and about Berlin, and focus on Berlin’s Jewish history. The course will be interdisciplinary with the fields of German Studies, history, history of art, urban studies, and German-Jewish studies. It is also designed as a preparation for undergraduate students who are considering spending a junior semester with the Penn Abroad Program in Berlin.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 2370, GRMN 1040, HIST 0821, URBS 1070
1 Course Unit

COML 1050 War and Representation
This class will explore complications of representing war in the 20th and 21st centuries. War poses problems of perception, knowledge, and language. The notion of "fog of war" describes a disturbing discrepancy between agents and actions of war; the extreme nature of the violence of warfare tests the limits of cognition, emotion, and memory; war's traditional dependence on declaration is often warped by language games—"police action," "military intervention," "nation-building," or palpably unnamed and unacknowledged state violence. Faced with the radical uncertainty that forms of war bring, modern and contemporary authors have experimented in historically, geographically, experientially and artistically particular ways, forcing us to reconsider even seemingly basic definitions of what a war story can be. Where does a war narrative happen? On the battlefield, in the internment camp, in the suburbs, in the ocean, in the ruins of cities, in the bloodstream? Who narrates war? Soldiers, refugees, gossips, economists, witnesses, bureaucrats, survivors, children, journalists, descendants and inheritors of trauma, historians, those who were never there? How does literature respond to the rise of terrorist or ideology war, the philosophical and material consequences of biological and cyber wars, the role of the nuclear state? How does the problem of war and representation disturb the difference between fiction and non-fiction? How do utilitarian practices of representation—propaganda, nationalist messaging, memorialization, xenophobic depiction—affect the approaches we use to study art? Finally, is it possible to read a narrative barely touched or merely contextualized by war and attend to the question of war’s shaping influence? The class will concentrate on literary objects—short stories, and graphic novels—as well as film and television. Students of every level and major are welcome in and encouraged to join this class, regardless of literary experience.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1449, REES 1179
1 Course Unit

COML 1054 Forest Worlds: Mapping the Arboreal Imaginary in Literature and Film
The destruction of the world’s forests through wild fires, deforestation, and global heating threatens planetary bio-diversity and may even, as a 2020 shows, trigger civilizational collapse. Can the humanities help us think differently about the forest? At the same time that forests of the world are in crisis, the "rights of nature" movement is making progress in forcing courts to acknowledge the legal "personhood" of forests and other ecosystems. The stories that humans have told and continue to tell about forests are a source for the imaginative and cultural content of that claim. At a time when humans seem unable to curb the destructive practices that place themselves, biodiversity, and forests at risk, the humanities give us access to a record of the complex inter-relationship between forests and humanity. Forest Worlds serves as an introduction to the environmental humanities. The environmental humanities offer a perspective on the climate emergency and the human dimension of climate change that are typically not part of the study of climate science or climate policy. Students receive instruction in the methods of the humanities - cultural analysis and interpretation of literature and film - in relation to texts that illuminate patterns of human behavior, thought, and affect with regard to living in and with nature.
Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 1520, ENVS 1550, GRMN 1132
1 Course Unit
COML 1060 The Fantastic and Uncanny in Literature: Ghosts, Spirits & Machines
Do we still believe in spirits and ghosts? Do they have any place in an age of science of technology? Can they perhaps help us to define what a human being is and what it can do? We will venture on a journey through literary texts from the late eighteenth century to the present to explore the uncanny and fantastic in literature and life. Our discussions will be based on a reading of Sigmund Freud’s essay on the uncanny, and extraordinary Romantic narratives by Ludwig Tieck, E.T.A. Hoffmann, Edgar Allan Poe, Nathaniel 12Swthorne, Prosper Merimee, Villiers de Isle-Adam, and others. Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1060, GSWS 1060
1 Course Unit

COML 1070 Modernisms and Modernities
This class explores the international emergence of modernism, typically from the middle of the 19th century to the middle of the 20th century. We will examine the links between modernity, the avant-garde, and various national modernisms that emerged alongside them. Resolutely transatlantic and open to French, Spanish, Italian, German, or Russian influences, this course assumes the very concept of Modernism to necessitate an international perspective focusing on the new in literature and the arts -- including film, the theatre, music, and the visual arts. The philosophies of modernism will also be surveyed and concise introductions provided to important thinkers like Marx, Nietzsche, Sorel, Bergson, Freud, and Benjamin. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings. Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1070
1 Course Unit

COML 1071 Fascist Cinemas
Cinema played a crucial role in the cultural life of Nazi Germany and other fascist states. As cinema enthusiasts, Goebbels and Hitler were among the first to realize the important ideological potential of film as a mass medium and saw to it that Germany remained a cinema powerhouse producing more than 1000 films during the Nazi era. In Italy, Mussolini, too, declared cinema “the strongest weapon.” This course explores the world of “fascist” cinemas ranging from infamous propaganda pieces such as The Triumph of the Will to popular entertainments such as musicals and melodramas. It examines the strange and mutually defining kinship between fascism more broadly and film. We will consider what elements mobilize and connect the film industries of the Axis Powers: style, genre, the aestheticization of politics, the creation of racialized others. More than seventy years later, fascist cinemas challenge us to grapple with issues of more subtle ideological insinuation than we might think. Weekly screenings with subtitles.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1070, GRMN 1070, ITAL 1930
1 Course Unit

COML 1080 German Cinema
An introduction to the momentous history of German film, from its beginnings before World War One to developments following the fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 and German reunification in 1990. With an eye to film’s place in its historical and political context, the course will explore the “Golden Age” of German cinema in the Weimar Republic, when Berlin vied with Hollywood; the complex relationship between Nazi ideology and entertainment during the Third Reich; the fate of German film-makers in exile during the Hitler years; post-war film production in both West and East Germany; the call for an alternative to “Papa’s Kino” and the rise of New German Cinema in the 1960s.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1080, GRMN 1080
1 Course Unit

COML 1081 20th-Century British Literature
This course introduces major works in twentieth-century British literature. We will read across a range of fiction, poetry, plays, and essays, and will consider aesthetic movements such as modernism as well as historical contexts including the two World Wars, the decline of empire, and racial and sexual conflict. Authors treated might include: Conrad, Yeats, Joyce, Eliot, Lawrence, Forster, Shaw, Woolf, Auden, Orwell, Beckett, Achebe, Rhys, Synge, Naipaul, Rushdie, Heaney, and Walcott. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings. Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1081
1 Course Unit

COML 1090 Jewish Films and Literature
From the 1922 silent film “Hungry Hearts” through the first “talkie,” “The Jazz Singer,” produced in 1927, and beyond “Schindler’s List,” Jewish characters have confronted the problems of their Jewishness on the silver screen for a general American audience. Alongside this Hollywood tradition of Jewish film, Yiddish film blossomed from independent producers between 1911 and 1939, and interpreted literary masterpieces, from Shakespeare’s “King Lear” to Sholom Aleichem’s “Tvey the Dairyman,” primarily for an immigrant, urban Jewish audience. In this course, we will study a number of films and their literary sources (in fiction and drama), focusing on English language and Yiddish films within the framework of three dilemmas of interpretation: a) the different ways we “read” literature and film, b) the various ways that the media of fiction, drama, and film “translate” Jewish culture, and c) how these translations of Jewish culture affect and are affected by their implied audience. Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1289, GRMN 1090, JWST 1090
1 Course Unit
COML 1095 Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture
In Fate and Chance in Literature and Culture, we will explore these two interrelated concepts in comparative perspective over a broad historical range. As a result, the students will learn how the philosophy of fate and chance has been reflected in works of different Russian authors and in different cultural and political environments. In Russian as well as western systems of belief fate and chance represent two extreme visions of the universal order, or, perhaps, two diametrically opposed cosmic forces: complete determinism, on the one hand, and complete chaos or unpredictability, on the other. These visions have been greatly reflected by various mythopoetic systems. In this course, we will investigate religious and folkloric sources from a series of Russian traditions compared to other Indo-European traditions (Greek, East-European). Readings will include The Song of Prince Igor's Campaign, The Gambler by Dostoevsky, The Queen of Spades by Pushkin, Vij by Gogol, The Black Monk by Chekhov, The Fatal Eggs by Bulgakov, and more.
Also Offered As: REES 1471
1 Course Unit

COML 1097 Madness and Madmen in Russian Culture
Is "insanity" today the same thing as "madness" of old? Who gets to define what it means to be "sane," and why? Are the causes of madness biological or social? In this course, we will grapple with these and similar questions while exploring Russia's fascinating history of madness as a means to maintain, critique, or subvert the status quo. We will consider the concept of madness in Russian culture beginning with its earliest folkloric roots and trace its depiction and function in the figure of the Russian "holy fool," in classical literature, and in contemporary film. Readings will include works by many Russian greats, such as Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Chekhov, Bulgakov and Nabokov.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: REES 0172
1 Course Unit

COML 1110 Jewish American Literature
What makes Jewish American literature Jewish? What makes it American? This course will address these questions about ethnic literature through fiction, poetry, drama, and other writings by Jews in America, from their arrival in 1654 to the present. We will discuss how Jewish identity and ethnicity shape literature and will consider how form and language develop as Jewish writers "immigrate" from Yiddish, Hebrew, and other languages to American English. Our readings, from Jewish American Literature: A Norton Anthology, will include a variety of stellar authors, both famous and less-known, including Isaac Mayer Wise, Emma Lazarus, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Celia Dropkin, Abraham Cahan, Anzia Yezierska, Saul Bellow, Philip Roth, Cynthia Ozick, and Allegra Goodman. Students will come away from this course having explored the ways that Jewish culture intertwines with American culture in literature.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1110, JWST 1110
1 Course Unit

COML 1120 Translating Cultures: Literature on and in Translation
"Languages are not strangers to one another," writes the great critic and translator Walter Benjamin. Yet two people who speak different languages have a difficult time talking to one another, unless they both know a third, common language or can find someone who knows both their languages to translate what they want to say. Without translation, most of us would not be able to read the Bible or Homer, the foundations of Western culture. Americans wouldn't know much about the cultures of Europe, China, Africa, South America, and the Middle East. And people who live in or come from these places would not know much about American culture. Without translation, Americans would not know much about the diversity of cultures within America. The very fabric of our world depend upon translation between people, between cultures, between texts. With a diverse group of readings—autobiography, fiction, poetry, anthropology, and literary theory—this course will address some fundamental questions about translating language and culture. What does it mean to translate? How do we read a text in translation? What does it mean to live between two languages? Who is a translator? What are different kinds of literary and cultural translation? What are their principles and theories? Their assumptions and practices? Their effects on and implications for the individual and the society?
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 1120, JWST 1120
1 Course Unit

COML 1121 Community, Freedom, Violence: Writing the South Asian City
The South Asian city—as space, symbol, and memory—is the subject of this course. Through a range of readings in English and in translation, we will gain a sense for the history of the city and the ways in which it is a setting for protest and nostalgia, social transformation and solitary wandering. We will see reflections of the city in the detective novels sold in its train stations, the stories scribbled in its cafes, and films produced in its backlots. Readings will attempt to address urban spaces across South Asia through a range of works, which we will examine in the context of secondary readings, including histories and ethnological works that take up life in the modern city. Students will finish this course prepared to pursue projects dealing with the urban from multiple disciplinary perspectives. This course is suitable for anyone interested in the culture, society, or literature of South Asia, and assumes no background in South Asian languages.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1191, SAST 1120, URBS 1120
1 Course Unit
COML 1130 Water Worlds: Cultural Responses to Sea Level Rise & Catastrophic Flooding
As a result of climate change, the world that will take shape in the course of this century will be decidedly more inundated with water than we're accustomed to. The polar ice caps are melting, glaciers are retreating, ocean levels are rising, polar bear habitat is disappearing, countries are jockeying for control over a new Arctic passage, while low-lying cities and small island nations are confronting the possibility of their own demise. Catastrophic flooding events are increasing in frequency, as are extreme droughts. Hurricane-related storm surges, tsunamis, and raging rivers have devastated regions on a local and global scale. In this seminar we will turn to the narratives and images that the human imagination has produced in response to the experience of overwhelming watery invasion, from Noah to New Orleans. Objects of analysis will include mythology, ancient and early modern diluvialism, literature, art, film, and commemorative practice. The basic question we'll be asking is: What can we learn from the humanities that will be helpful for confronting the problems and challenges caused by climate change and sea level rise?
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1130, ENVS 1040, GRMN 1130
1 Course Unit

COML 1131 Crime and Criminality in Early America
With approximately 2.3 million people in federal, state, and local prisons, jails, and migrant detention centers, and an unknown number of people in its detention centers abroad, the United States leads the world in producing prisoners. What is more, imprisonment disproportionately impacts racial minorities and the poor. This statistical situation has a complex cultural history our seminar will examine. We will primarily read 17th, 18th, and 19th-century fictional and political texts from North America written about crime and by people who were criminalized: texts about crime on seas, frontiers, and in cities; texts about public execution; texts about how race, sexuality, gender, and class inflect criminality; and texts about slavery and the rise of the prison system. Our tasks will be to understand how the very ideas of crime and the criminal were formulated between the 17th and 19th centuries, how that formulation was a conflictual and contested process, and how that process echoes in our contemporary, shared world. This will be an interdisciplinary course combining fiction, history, and political theory.
Also Offered As: ENGL 1131, GSWS 1131
1 Course Unit

COML 1140 Liquid Histories and Floating Archives
Climate change transforms the natural and built environments, and it is re-shaping how we understand, make sense, and care for our past. Climate changes history. This course explores the Anthropocene, the age when humans are remaking earth's systems, from an on-water perspective. In on-line dialogue and video conferences with research teams in port cities on four continents, this undergraduate course focuses on Philadelphia as one case study of how rising waters are transfiguring urban history, as well as its present and future. Students projects take them into the archives at the Independence Seaport Museum and at Bartram's Garden. Field trips by boat on the Schuylkill and Delaware Rivers and on land to the Port of Philadelphia and to the John Heinz National Wildlife Refuge invite transhistorical dialogues about how colonial and then industrial-era energy and port infrastructure transformed the region's vast tidal marshlands wetlands. Excursions also help document how extreme rain events, storms, and rising waters are re-making the built environment, redrawing lines that had demarcated land from water. In dialogue with one another and invited guest artists, writers, and landscape architects, students final projects consider how our waters might themselves be read and investigated as archives. What do rising seas subsume and hold? Whose stories do they tell? What floats to the surface?
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ANTH 1440, ENGL 1589, ENVS 1440, GRMN 1140, HIST 0872
1 Course Unit

COML 1160 Sustainability & Utopianism
This seminar explores how the humanities can contribute to discussions of sustainability. We begin by investigating the contested term itself, paying close attention to critics and activists who deplore the very idea that we should try to sustain our, in their eyes, dystopian present, one marked by environmental catastrophe as well as by an assault on the educational ideals long embodied in the humanities. We then turn to classic humanist texts on utopia, beginning with More's fictive island of 1517. The "origins of environmentalism" lie in such depictions of island edens (Richard Grove), and our course proceeds to analyze classic utopian tests from American, English, and German literatures. Readings extend to utopian visions from Europe and America of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, as well as literary and visual texts that deal with contemporary nuclear and flood catastrophes. Authors include: Bill McKibben, Jill Kerr Conway, Christopher Newfield, Thomas More, Francis Bacon, Karl Marx, Henry David Thoreau, Robert Owens, William Morris, Charlotte Perkins Gilman, Ayn Rand, Christa Wolf, and others.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1579, ENVS 1050, GRMN 1160, STSC 1160
1 Course Unit
COML 1170 Global Sustainabilities
This research-oriented seminar focuses on the ways in which "sustainability" and "sustainable development" are linguistically and culturally translated into the world's languages. We may take the terms for granted, but they have only really been on the global stage since they were widely introduced in the 1987 United Nations report, Our Common Future. Seminar participants will first become acquainted with the cultural and conceptual history of the terms and the UN framework within which sustainability efforts directly or indirectly operate. Having established the significance of cultural and linguistic difference in conceiving and implementing sustainability, participants will collaboratively develop a research methodology in order to begin collecting and analyzing data. We will draw heavily on Penn's diverse language communities and international units. Seminar members will work together and individually to build an increasingly comprehensive website that provides information about the world's languages of sustainability.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENVS 1450, GRMN 1170
1 Course Unit

COML 1190 Introduction to Postcolonial Literature
English is a global language with a distinctly imperial history, and this course serves as an essential introduction to literary works produced in or about the former European colonies. The focus will be poetry, film, fiction and non fiction and at least two geographic areas spanning the Americas, South Asia, the Caribbean and Africa as they reflect the impact of colonial rule on the cultural representations of identity, nationalism, race, class and gender. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1190, ENGL 1190
1 Course Unit

COML 1191 World Literature
How do we think 'the world' as such? Globalizing economic paradigms encourage one model that, while it connects distant regions with the ease of a finger-tap, also homogenizes the world, manufacturing patterns of sameness behind simulations of diversity. Our current world-political situation encourages another model, in which fundamental differences are held to warrant the consolidation of borders between Us and Them, "our world" and "theirs." This course begins with the proposal that there are other ways to encounter the world, that are politically compelling, ethically important, and personally enriching--and that the study of literature can help tease out these new paths. Through the idea of World Literature, this course introduces students to the appreciation and critical analysis of literary texts, with the aim of navigating calls for universality or particularity (and perhaps both) in fiction and film. "World literature" here refers not merely to the usual definition of "books written in places other than the US and Europe," but any form of cultural production that explores and pushes at the limits of a particular world, that steps between and beyond worlds, or that heralds the coming of new worlds still within us, waiting to be born. And though, as we read and discuss our texts, we will glide about in space and time from the inner landscape of a private mind to the reaches of the farthest galaxies, knowledge of languages other than English will not be required, and neither will any prior familiarity with the literary humanities. In the company of drunken kings, botanical witches, ambisexual alien lifeforms, and storytellers who've lost their voice, we will reflect on, and collectively navigate, our encounters with the faraway and the familiar--and thus train to think through the challenges of concepts such as translation, narrative, and ideology. Texts include Kazuo Ishiguro, Ursula K. LeGuin, Salman Rushdie, Werner Herzog, Jamaica Kincaid, Russell Hoban, Hiroshi Teshigahara, Arundhati Roy, and Abbas Kiarostami.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CLST 1602, ENGL 1179
1 Course Unit

COML 1192 Classics of the World II
This class provides a survey of works drawn from the Western literary canon from the Renaissance to the 20th century. Work may be drawn in part from the following authors: Montaigne, Shakespeare, Webster, Moliere, Milton, Behn, Laclos, Rousseau, Sterne, the Romantic poets, Austen, Dickens, Bronte, Wilde, Woolf and Joyce.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit
COML 1200 Sex and Gender in Ancient Greece and Rome
What is being a man, being a woman, being masculine, being feminine, being neither, being both? Is sex about pleasure, domination, identity, reproduction, or something else? Are sexual orientation and gender identity innate? How can words, myths and stories inform cultural assumptions about sex and gender? Did people in ancient times have a concept of sexuality? How do gendered English terms (like “girly”, “effeminate”, or “feisty”) compare to gendered ancient Greek and Latin terms, like virtus, which connotes both “virtue” and “masculinity”? Why did the Roman and English speaking worlds have to borrow the word “clitoris” from the ancient Greeks? How did people in antiquity understand consent? Can we ever get access to the perspectives of ancient women? In this introductory undergraduate course, we will learn about sex and gender in ancient Greece and Rome. We will discuss similarities and differences between ancient and modern attitudes, and we will consider how ancient texts, ancient art, ancient ideas and ancient history have informed modern western discussions, assumptions and legislation. Our main readings will be of ancient texts, all in English translation; authors studied will include Ovid, Aristophanes, Plato, Euripides, and Sappho. 
Class requirements will include participation in discussion as well as quizzes, reading responses, and a final exam. 
Also Offered As: HIST 1200
1 Course Unit

COML 1201 Foundations of European Thought: from Rome to the Renaissance
This course offers an introduction to the world of thought and learning at the heart of European culture, from the Romans through the Renaissance. We begin with the ancient Mediterranean and the formation of Christianity and trace its transformation into European society. Along the way we will examine the rise of universities and institutions for learning, and follow the humanist movement in rediscovering and redefining the ancients in the modern world. 
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 1200
1 Course Unit

COML 1215 LOVE, LUST AND VIOLENCE IN THE MIDDLE AGES
Medieval Europe was undoubtedly gruff and violent but it also gave birth to courtly culture - raw worries transformed into knights who performed heroic deeds, troubadours wrote epics in their honor and love songs about their ladies, women of the elite carved out a place in public discourse as patrons of the arts, and princely courts were increasingly defined by pageantry from jousting tournaments to royal coronations. This course will trace the development of this courtly culture from the eleventh to the sixteenth century, from its roots in Southern France to its spread to Northern France and then to various kingdoms in Europe. Central themes will include the transformation of the warrior into the knight, the relationship between violence and courtliness, courtly love, cultural production and the patronage, and the development of court pageantry and ceremonial. This is a class cultural history and, as such, will rely on the interpretation of objects of art and material culture, literature as well as historical accounts. 
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: GSWS 1215, HIST 1215
1 Course Unit

COML 1231 Perspectives in French Literature: Love and Passion
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. Students are expected to take an active part in class discussion in French. French 1231 has as its theme the presentation of love and passion in French literature. This course was previously offered as French 221. 
Fall
Also Offered As: FREN 1231
1 Course Unit

COML 1232 Perspectives in French Literature: The Individual and Society
This basic course in literature provides an overview of French literature and acquaints students with major literary trends through the study of representative works from each period. Special emphasis is placed on close reading of texts in order to familiarize students with major authors and their characteristics and with methods of interpretation. Students are expected to take an active part in class discussion in French. French 1232 has as its theme the Individual and Society. 
Spring
Also Offered As: FREN 1232
1 Course Unit

COML 1250 Foundations of Modern Thought
"God is dead," declared Friedrich Nietzsche, "and we have killed him." Nietzsche’s words came as a climax of a longer history of criticism of, and dissent toward, the religious foundations of European society and politics. The critique of religion had vast implications for the meaning of human life, the nature of the person, and the conception of political and social existence. The course will explore the intensifying debate over religion in the intellectual history of Europe, reaching from the Renaissance, through the Scientific Revolution and the Enlightenment, to the twentieth century. Rousseau, Voltaire, Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. These thinkers allow us to trace the varieties of irreligious experience that have emerged in modern European thought and their implications for both historical and philosophical understanding. Rather than drawing a straight line from belief to non-belief, however, we will also consider whether religion lingers even in secular thought and culture. 
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: HIST 1250
1 Course Unit

COML 1260 Latinx Literature and Culture
This course offers a broad introduction to the study of Latinx culture. We will examine literature, theater, visual art, and popular cultural forms, including murals, poster art, graffiti, guerrilla urban interventions, novels, poetry, short stories, and film. In each instance, we will study this work within its historical context and with close attention to the ways it illuminates class formation, racialization, and ideologies of gender and sexuality as they shape Latinx experience in the U.S. Topics addressed in the course will include immigration and border policy, revolutionary nationalism and its critique, anti-imperialist thought, Latinx feminisms, queer latinidades, ideology, identity formation, and social movements. While we will address key texts, historical events, and intellectual currents from the late 19th century and early 20th century, the course will focus primarily on literature and art from the 1960s to the present. All texts will be in English. 
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 2679, ENGL 1260, GSWS 1260, LALS 1260
1 Course Unit
COML 1262 Napoleonic Era & Tolstoy
In this course we will read what many consider to be the greatest book in world literature. This work, Tolstoy’s War and Peace, is devoted to one of the most momentous periods in world history, the Napoleonic Era (1789-1815). We will study both the book and the era of the Napoleonic Wars: the military campaigns of Napoleon and his opponents, the grand strategies of the age, political intrigues and diplomatic betrayals, the ideologies and human dramas, the relationship between art and history. How does literature help us to understand this era? How does history help us to understand this great book? Because we will read War and Peace over the course of the entire semester, readings will be manageable and very enjoyable.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 1260, REES 1380
1 Course Unit

COML 1300 Topics German Cinema
This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1301, GRMN 1300
1 Course Unit

COML 1301 Jewish Folklore
The Jews are among the few nations and ethnic groups whose oral tradition occurs in literary and religious texts dating back more than two thousand years. This tradition changed and diversified over the years in terms of the migrations of Jews into different countries and the historical, social, and cultural changes that these countries underwent. The course attempts to capture the historical and ethnic diversity of Jewish Folklore in a variety of oral literary forms.
Fall
Also Offered As: JWST 1300, NELC 1300
1 Course Unit

COML 1310 Gender, Sexuality, and Literature
This course will focus on questions of gender difference and of sexual desire in a range of literary works, paying special attention to works by women and treatments of same-sex desire. More fundamentally, the course will introduce students to questions about the relation between identity and representation. We will attend in particular to intersections between gender, sexuality, race, class, and nation, and will choose from a rich vein of authors. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1310, GSWS 1310
1 Course Unit

COML 1311 Introduction to Modern Hebrew Literature
The objective of this course is to develop an artistic appreciation for literature through in-depth class discussions and text analysis. Readings are comprised of Israeli poetry and short stories. Students examine how literary language expresses psychological and cultural realms. The course covers topics such as: the short story reinvented, literature and identity, and others. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students’ literary understanding.
Fall
Also Offered As: JWST 1310, NELC 1310
Prerequisite: HEBR 0400
1 Course Unit

COML 1351 Contemporary Fiction & Film in Japan
This course will explore fiction and film in contemporary Japan, from 1945 to the present. Topics will include literary and cinematic representation of Japan’s war experience and post-war reconstruction, negotiation with Japanese classics, confrontation with the state, and changing ideas of gender and sexuality. We will explore these and other questions by analyzing texts of various genres, including film and film scripts, novels, short stories, manga, and academic essays. Class sessions will combine lectures, discussion, audio-visual materials, and creative as well as analytical writing exercises. The course is taught in English, although Japanese materials will be made available upon request. No prior coursework in Japanese literature, culture, or film is required or expected; additional secondary materials will be available for students taking the course at the 600 level. Writers and film directors examined may include: Kawabata Yasunari, Hayashi Fumiko, Abe Kobo, Mishima Yukio, Oe Kenzaburo, Yoshimoto Banana, Ozu Yasujirō, Naruse Mikio, Kurosawa Akira, Imamura Shohei, Koreeda Hirokazu, and Beat Takeshi.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 1351, EALC 1351, GSWS 1351
1 Course Unit

COML 1400 Introduction to Literary Theory
This course introduces students to major issues in the history of literary theory, and provides an excellent foundation for the English major or minor. Treating the work of Plato and Aristotle as well as contemporary criticism, we will consider the fundamental issues that arise from representation, making meaning, appropriation and adaptation, categorization and genre, historicity and genealogy, and historicity and temporality. We will consider major movements in the history of theory including the "New" Criticism of the 1920's and 30's, structuralism and post-structuralism, Marxism and psychoanalysis, feminism, cultural studies, critical race theory, and queer theory. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1400, GRMN 1303
1 Course Unit

COML 1500 Greek & Roman Mythology
Myths are traditional stories that have endured many years. Some of them have to do with events of great importance, such as the founding of a nation. Others tell the stories of great heroes and heroines and their exploits and courage in the face of adversity. Still others are simple tales about otherwise unremarkable people who get into trouble or do some great deed. What are we to make of all these tales, and why do people seem to like to hear them? This course will focus on the myths of ancient Greece and Rome, as well as a few contemporary American ones, as a way of exploring the nature of myth and the function it plays for individuals, societies, and nations. We will also pay some attention to the way the Greeks and Romans themselves understood their own myths. Are myths subtextual codes that contain some universal truth? Are they a window on the deep recesses of a particular culture? Are they entertaining stories that people like to tell over and over? Are they a set of blinders that all of us wear, though we do not realize it? We investigate these questions through a variety of topics creation of the universe between gods and mortals, religion and family, sex, love, madness, and death.
Spring
Also Offered As: CLST 1500
1 Course Unit
COML 1650 Introduction to Digital Humanities
This course provides an introduction to foundational skills common in digital humanities (DH). It covers a range of new technologies and methods and will empower scholars in literary studies and across humanities disciplines to take advantage of established and emerging digital research tools. Students will learn basic coding techniques that will enable them to work with a range data including literary texts and utilize techniques such as text mining, network analysis, and other computational approaches. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1650, HIST 0870
1 Course Unit

COML 1701 Scandalous Arts in Ancient and Modern Communities
What do the ancient Greek comedian Aristophanes, the Roman satirist Juvenal, have in common with rappers Snoop Dogg and Eminem? Many things, in fact, but perhaps most fundamental is their delight in shocking audiences and upending social norms. This course will examine the various arts (including literary, visual and musical media) that transgress the boundaries of taste and convention in ancient Greco-Roman culture and our own era. We will consider, among other topics, why communities feel compelled to repudiate some forms of scandalous art, while turning others - especially those that have come down to us from remote historical periods - into so-called classics.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CLST 1701
1 Course Unit

COML 1740 20th-Century British Novel
This course traces the development of the novel across the twentieth-century. The course will consider the formal innovations of the modern novel (challenges to realism, stream of consciousness, fragmentation, etc.) in relation to major historical shifts in the period. Authors treated might include: Conrad, Lawrence, Joyce, Forster, Woolf, Cather, Faulkner, Hemingway, Achebe, Greene, Rhys, Baldwin, Naipaul, Pynchon, Rushdie, and Morrison. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1740
1 Course Unit

COML 1840 20th-Century Poetry
From abstraction to beat, from socialism to negritude, from expressionism to ecopoetry, from surrealism to visual poetry, from collage to digital poetry, the poetry of the twentieth century has been characterized by both the varieties of its forms and the range of its practitioners. This course will offer a broad overview of many of the major trends and a few minor eddies in the immensely rich, wonderfully varied, ideologically and aesthetically charged field. The course will cover many of the radical poetry movements and individual innovations, along with the more conventional and idiosyncratic work, and will provide examples of political, social, ethnic, and national poetries, both in the Americas and Europe, and beyond to the rest of the world. While most of the poetry covered will be in English, works in translation, and indeed the art of translation, will be an essential component the course. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1840
1 Course Unit

COML 1849 The Play: Structure, Style, Meaning
How does one read a play? Theatre, as a discipline, focuses on the traditions of live performance. In those traditions, a play text must be read not only as a piece of literature, but as a kind of “blueprint” from which productions are built. This course will introduce students to a variety of approaches to reading plays and performance pieces. Drawing on a wide range of dramatic texts from different periods and places, we will examine how plays are made, considering issues such as structure, genre, style, character, and language, as well as the use of time, space, and theatrical effects. Although the course is devoted to the reading and analysis of plays, we will also view selected live and/or filmed versions of several of the scripts we study, assessing their translation from page to stage.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 1849, THAR 0103
1 Course Unit

COML 1890 Masterpieces-Italian Literature
This course surveys the history of Italian literature through its major masterpieces. Beginning with Dante’s Divine Comedy, Petrarcha’s love poems, and Boccaccio’s Decameron, we will follow the development of Italian literary tradition through the Renaissance (Machiaveli’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 1890 is mandatory for Majors in Italian Literature and Minors in Italian Literature. If necessary, ITAL 1000 can be taken at the same time as ITAL 1890. Prerequisite: Open to students who have completed ITAL 1000 or equivalent.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ITAL 1890
Prerequisite: ITAL 1000
1 Course Unit
COML 1915 Myth in Society
In this course we will explore the mythologies of selected peoples in the Ancient Near East, Africa, Asia, and Native North and South America and examine how the gods function in the life and belief of each society. The study of mythological texts will be accompanied, as much as possible, by illustrative slides that will show the images of these deities in art and ritual.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: NELC 1915
1 Course Unit

COML 1982 Study Abroad
Study abroad for undergraduates.
1 Course Unit

COML 2000 Topics In Classicism and Literature: Epic Tradition
This advanced seminar will examine the classical backgrounds of western medieval literature, in particular the reception of classical myth and epic in the literature of the Middle Ages. Different versions of the course will have different emphases on Greek or Latin backgrounds and on medieval literary genres. Major authors to be covered include Virgil, Ovid, Chaucer, and the Gawain-poet.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CLST 3708, ENGL 2000, GSWS 2000
1 Course Unit

COML 2004 Tolstoy
Leo Tolstoy is a figure who arguably needs little introduction, if only as an effigy for the kind of author who writes books like "War and Peace"—prime examples of what Henry James called the "large, loose, baggy monsters" of nineteenth-century Russian literature, the sprawling novels with several parallel plot lines and hundreds of characters who inhabit page numbers in the quadruple digits. In this seminar, we will grapple together with the intricacies of "War and Peace," learn about the social, cultural, and historical contexts not only of its depiction and genesis, but also of its wide-ranging reception, and consider the big questions that preoccupied Tolstoy throughout his lifetime. Working with a range of his texts including a wide spread of his shorter fiction and also a number of Tolstoy's non-literary writings on topics such as aesthetics, religion, education, and social and political problems, we will work toward understanding Tolstoy's work, how he became who he was, and the reverberations of his thought throughout the rest of the world.
Also Offered As: REES 0481
1 Course Unit

COML 2007 Dostoevsky and His Legacy
This course explores the ways Fyodor Dostoevsky (1821-1881) portrays the "inner world(s)" of his characters. Dostoevsky's psychological method will be considered against the historical, ideological, and literary contexts of middle to late nineteenth-century Russia. The course consists of three parts External World (the contexts of Dostoevsky), "Inside" Dostoevsky's World (the author's technique and ideas) and The World of Text (close reading of Crime and Punishment and The Brothers Karamazov). Students will write three essays on various aspects of Dostoevsky's "spiritual realism."
Also Offered As: REES 0480
1 Course Unit

COML 2007 Transnational Cinema
This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3912, CIMS 2012, ENGL 2930
1 Course Unit

COML 2011 Literature of Dissent: Art as Protest in 20th-Century Poland and Czechoslovakia
Eastern and Central Europe was the site of monumental political changes in the twentieth century, including the disillusionment of monarchical empires in the First World War and the expansion of Soviet-style communism. At every point, artists have taken part in political debates, sometimes advancing radical agendas, sometimes galvanizing movements, sometimes simply shouting into the void to register their own dissatisfaction. In this course, we will consider texts including literature, political philosophy and film that pushed back against the dominant political norms. In so doing, we will investigate Aesopian language, the mechanics of censorship, the repercussions of dissent, performativity, samizdat and the rise of an alternative culture. We will contextualize our readings of literature with the sociological and historical work of Benedict Anderson, Tony Judt, Jonathan Bolton, Shana Penn, Alexei Yurchak and the series Discourses of Collective Identity in Central and Southeast Europe. As well as becoming familiar with major thinkers and movements in Eastern and Central Europe, students will develop a sense of art as a tool of political protest.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: REES 0479
1 Course Unit

COML 2013 Saints and Devils in Russian Literature and Traditions
This course is about Russian cultural imagination, which is populated with "saints" and "devils": believers and outcasts, the righteous and the sinners, virtuous women and fallen angels, holy men and their most bitter adversary - the devil. In Russia, where people's frame of mind has been formed by a mix of Eastern Orthodox Christianity and earlier pagan beliefs, the quest for faith, spirituality, and the meaning of life has invariably been connected with religious matters. How can one find the right path in life? Can a sinner be redeemed? Should one live for God or for the people? Does God even exist? In "Saints and Devils," we read works of the great masters of Russian literature and learn about the historic trends that have filled Russia's literature and art with religious and mystical spirit. Among our readings are old cautionary tales of crafty demons and all-forbearing saints, about virtuous harlots and holy fools, as well as fantastic stories by Nikolai Gogol about pacts with the devil, and a romantic vision of a fallen angel by Yury Lermontov. We will be in awe of the righteous portrayed by Nikolai Leskov and follow the characters of Fedor Dostoevsky, Leo Tolstoy and Anton Chekhov, as they ponder life and death and search for truth, faith, and love. In sum, over the course of this semester we will talk about ancient cultural traditions, remarkable works of art, and the great artists who created them. In addition to providing a basic introduction to Russian literature, religion, and culture, the course introduces students to literary works of various genres and teaches basic techniques of literary analysis. (No previous knowledge of Russian literature necessary. All readings are in English.)
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: REES 0180, RELS 0180
1 Course Unit
COML 2020 Russia and the West
This course will explore the representations of the West in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Russian literature and philosophy. We will consider the Russian visions of various events and aspects of Western political and social life: Revolutions, educational system, public executions, resorts, etc. within the context of Russian intellectual history. We will examine how images of the West reflect Russia's own cultural concerns, anticipations, and biases, as well as aesthetic preoccupations and interests of Russian writers. The discussion will include literary works by Karamzin, Pushkin, Gogol, Dostoevsky, Leskov, and Tolstoy, as well as non-fictional documents, such as travelers' letters, diaries, and historiosophical treatises of Russian Freemasons, Romantic and Positivist thinkers, and Russian social philosophers of the late Nineteenth century. A basic knowledge of nineteenth-century European history is desirable. The class will consist of lectures, discussion, short writing assignments, and two in-class tests.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: HIST 0824, REES 0190
1 Course Unit

COML 2031 18th-Century Seminar: China in the English Imagination
This course explores the material culture of China-mania that spread across England and Europe in the eighteenth century, from chinoiserie vogues in fashion, tea, porcelain, and luxury goods, to the idealization of Confucius by Enlightenment philosophers. How was Asia was imagined and understood by Europeans during a period of increased trade between East and West? The course texts include travel writing, poetry, essays, and plays. Students will work closely with rare books and with art objects at the Penn Museum and the Philadelphia Museum of Art. The course is designed to provide historical background to contemporary problems of Orientalism, Sinophilia, and Sinophobia.
Also Offered As: ASAM 2310, EALC 1321, ENGL 2031
1 Course Unit

COML 2052 Freud's Objects
How do we look at objects? And which stories can objects tell? These are questions that have been asked quite regularly by Art Historians or Museum Curators, but they take a central place within the context of psychoanalytic studies as well. The seminar "Freud's Objects" will offer an introduction to Sigmund Freud’s life and times, as well as to psychoanalytic studies. We will focus on objects owned by Freud that he imbued with special significance, and on of Freud’s writings that focus on specific objects. Finally, we will deal with a re-interpretation of the “object” in psychoanalytic theory, via a discussion of texts by British psychoanalysts such as Melanie Klein and Donald Winnicott.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3560, CLST 3509, ENGL 1425, GRMN 1015
1 Course Unit

COML 2071 Modernism Seminar
This course explores literary modernism as a global and cross-cultural phenomenon. See the English Department's website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3850, ENGL 2071, GRMN 1304
1 Course Unit

COML 2073 Modernist Animals: How to Rethink the Human-Animal Divide
The last century has witnessed a radical transformation in the way we perceive animals as opposed to humans, a change that was announced and represented by novels, poems, films and philosophical discussions. We will begin by surveying theoretical controversies about animals, one opposing Jacques Derrida, Emmanuel Levinas and Giorgio Agamben (The Animal that therefore I am, « The Name of a dog », and The Open) on the one hand, the other J. M. Coetzee and Thomas Nagel (« What is is like to be a bat ? » and Elizabeth Costello). These philosophical discussions will serve as an introduction to the rich field of contemporary animal studies. We will limit our examples to works from the 20th and 21st centuries, a corpus that is nevertheless extremely varied, ranging from the Japanese classic I Am a Cat by Natsume Sōseki to animal poems by Marianne Moore, Elizabeth Bishop and Ted Hughes, and stories by Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf and George Langelaan. Films will be discussed, including Alfred Hitchcock’s The Birds, Werner Herzog’s Grizzly Man, David Cronenberg’s The Fly, and Yorgos Lanthimos’s The Lobster, along with Mick Jackson’s biopic on Temple Grandin and the animated feature My Dog Tulip. We will conclude with imaginary animals sketched by Jorge Luis Borges in his book of fantastic zoology.
Also Offered As: CIMS 2073, ENGL 2073
1 Course Unit

COML 2082 20th-Century American Literature Seminar
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century American literature intensively, specific course topics will vary from year to year. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2082
1 Course Unit
COML 2084 Black Italy: Transnational Identities and Narratives in Afro-Italian Literature
This course focuses on how the migration movements to Italy, mainly from the Maghreb and the Horn of Africa in the '80s and '90s contributed to change Italy's status and image. From a country of emigration to other parts of the world, Italy became - as many historians, geographers, and scholars have observed - an immigration site, playing a pivotal role in the African diaspora. In the shadow of Italy's colonialist heritage (a past that Italy still has not fully confronted), these phenomena of mass migration challenge, complicate, and develop the notion of Italian-ness and undermine the fixity of an Italian identity in favor of multicultural and transnational identities. This course focuses on several Black Italian artists, writers, filmmakers, and activists of Somali, Eritrean, Tunisian, Ethiopian, and Egyptian origins (e.g. migrants or children of immigrants who were born or raised in Italy and children of mixed-race unions) who contribute to broaden the definition of Italian-ness and to challenge its racial, social, and cultural boundaries. Students will analyze short stories, novels, documentaries, songs, blogs, journal articles by Igiaba Scego, Cristina Ali Farah, Gabriella Ghermandi, Medhin Paolos, Fred Kudjo Kuwornu, Amir Issaa, Amara Lakhover, Pap Khouma, and Kaha Mohamed Aden, among others. They describe their multicultural identities, their senses of belonging, their feelings for the place that is depriving them of foundational rights (such as citizenship or a legal status), their nostalgia for their homeland or the countries where their parents were born, their fights to find or create a social and literal space where being recognized not as foreigners or worse as “clandestini.” Their works offer an original, complex, and multilayered depiction of contemporary Italy and its social and cultural changes, where the African community is becoming larger and better represented. Some questions this course will ask include: what are the historical and geographical components of blackness in Italy? How, if at all, have these phenomena of migration changed Italian identity? How do black Italians live within the context of anti-blackness? How do these Italian writers and artists relate to African American histories and experiences of diaspora? How can African Italian literature contribute to a deeper understanding of the Black diaspora in Europe and elsewhere? The course will pursue answers to these questions by exploring issues of race, color, gender, class, nationality, identity, citizenship, social justice in post-colonial Italy while drawing on related disciplines such as Geography, Mediterranean Studies, Diaspora Studies, Post-Colonialism, and Media and Cultural Studies. Course taught in English. Course Material in English.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 1296, ITAL 2510
1 Course Unit

COML 2086 Latin American and Latinx Theatre and Performance
This course will examine contemporary Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance from a hemispheric perspective. In particular, we will study how Latin American and Latinx artists engage with notions of identity, nation, and geo-political and geo-cultural borders, asking how we might study "national" theatres in an age of transnational globalization. Our consideration of plays, performances, and theoretical texts will situate Latin American and Latinx theatre and performance within the context of its politics, culture, and history.
Also Offered As: ENGL 0490, LALS 2860, THAR 2860
1 Course Unit

COML 2180 Literature of Africa and the African Diaspora
This course explores an aspect of the literature of Africa and the African Diaspora intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2180
1 Course Unit

COML 2189 Postcolonial Literature Seminar
This course explores an aspect of Postcolonial literature intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2190
1 Course Unit

COML 2191 The Dictator Novel as Global Form
In this seminar, we will explore the ways in which twentieth- and twenty-first-century writers across the globe have responded to tyrants and tyrannical regimes. Our focus will be a set of outstanding contemporary novels from Latin America, Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, and Asia. We will begin with the Latin American boom writers of the 1960s and 1970s (represented on the syllabus by Manuel Puig and Gabriel Garcia-Márquez) before moving on to two recent Nobel prize winners, Herta Müller (2009) and Mario Vargas Llosa (2010). In addition to these four writers, we will also consider the works of Graham Greene, V.S. Naipaul, Chinua Achebe, Jessica Hagedorn, Nuruddin Farah, Julia Alvarez, Junot Díaz, and Mohammed Hanif. Primary texts include both Anglophone and translated novels as well as poems, plays, scripted films, and documentaries that represent or describe totalitarian regimes. Two central questions will guide our readings: 1) What are the connections between oppressive regimes and literary expression -- between violence and aesthetics? 2) What formal strategies do writers in these situations use to manage the complex and sometimes dangerous political content of their works? Graded requirements include several short response papers, a bibliographic project, and a long-form research paper (3000 words).
Also Offered As: ENGL 2191
1 Course Unit

COML 2200 Creating New Worlds: The Modern Indian Novel
Lonely bureaucrats and love-struck students, Bollywood stars and wayward revolutionaries: this course introduces students to the worlds of the Indian novel. From the moment of its emergence in the 19th century, the novel in India grappled with issues of class and caste, colonialism and its aftermath, gender, and the family. Although the novel has a historical origin in early modern Europe, it developed as a unique form in colonial and post-colonial India, influenced by local literary and folk genres. How did the novel in India--and in its successor states after 1947--transform and shift in order to depict its world? How are novels shaped by the many languages in which they are written, including English? And how do we, as readers, engage with the Indian novel in its diversity? This course surveys works major and minor from the past 200 years of novel-writing in India--with surveys both into predecessors of the Indian novel and parallel forms such as the short story. Readings will include works in translation from languages such as Hindi, Bangla, Urdu, Telugu, and Malayalam, as well as works written originally in English. Students will leave this course with an understanding of the Indian novel, along with the social conditions underlaying it, especially those relating to caste and gender.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SAST 2200
1 Course Unit
COML 2217 CU in India - Topics Course
C.U. in India is a hybrid, domestic/overseas course series which provides students with the opportunity to have an applied learning and cultural experience in India or South East Asia where students participate in 1) 28 classroom hours in the Fall term 2) a 12-day trip to India or South East Asia with the instructor during the winter break visiting key sites and conducting original research (sites vary) 3) 28 classroom hours at Penn in the Spring term and 4) a research paper, due at the end of the Spring term. Course enrollment is limited to students admitted to the program. For more information and the program application go to http://sites.sas.upenn.edu/cuinindia This is a 2-CU yearlong course DEADLINE TO REGISTER IS MARCH 31st
Two Term Class, Student must enter first term; credit given after both terms are complete
Also Offered As: ARTH 3170, GSWS 2217, SAST 2217
1 Course Unit

COML 2231 The Sanskrit Epics
Ancient India’s two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, and emotional worlds of millions of people around the world. The epic Mahabharatā, which roughly translates to The Great Story of the Descendants of the Legendary King Bharata, is the longest single poem in the world (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) and tells the mythic history of dynastic power struggles in ancient India. An apocalyptic meditation on time, death, and the utter devastation brought upon the individual and the family unit through social disintegration, the epic also serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gītā (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama’s Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Viṣṇu, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rāmāyaṇa also provides a model of human social order that contrasts with dystopic polities governed by animals and demons. Our course will engage in close reading of selections from both of these epic poems (in English translation) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. We will also look at the reception of these ancient works in modern forms of media, such as the novel, television, theater, cinema and the comic book/anime.
Also Offered As: SAST 2231
Mutually Exclusive: COML 6631, SAST 6631
1 Course Unit

COML 2251 Machiavelli and Modern Political Thought
Niccolò Machiavelli, the Renaissance author best known for The Prince, is frequently regarded as a consummate cynic. Yet he has been not only a provocation but an inspiration throughout the subsequent history of political thought. This was true for the entire twentieth century, which witnessed an ever-growing interest in the Florentine thinker among historians and philosophers alike. One of the most surprising dimensions of this modern engagement with Machiavelli is surely his recurring presence as figure and motif within left-wing philosophical discourse. In light of the failure of the twentieth-century’s revolutionary experiments, as well as its own entanglements with those experiments, how could radical theory understand its past and imagine its future? What vision could supplant the dimming of utopia? Such questions have frequently led recent theorists into melancholic resignation, but they have also provoked innovative and rigorous attempts to rethink the project of radical politics as radical democracy. How is it that Machiavelli, a thinker indelibly associated with the cynical and amoral manipulation of politics, could become an inspiration for theorists of a robust democratic life? This course will examine this curious history of influence and transformation. Starting with an examination of key texts by Machiavelli himself, we will then trace his reception in European intellectual history, focusing upon the twentieth century. Among authors we will consider will be Jean-Jacques Rousseau, Hannah Arendt, Leo Strauss, John Pocock, Quentin Skinner, Antonio Gramsci, Louis Althusser, John McCormick, and Antonio Negri.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 2251
1 Course Unit

COML 2252 European Intellectual History since 1945
This course concentrates on French intellectual history after 1945, with some excursions into Germany. We will explore changing conceptions of the intellectual, from Sartre’s concept of the ‘engagement’ to Foucault’s idea of the ‘specific intellectual’; the rise and fall of existentialism; structuralism and poststructuralism; and the debate over ‘postmodernity.’
Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 2252
1 Course Unit

COML 2310 Gender, Sexuality, and Literature Seminar
This advanced seminar focuses on literary, cultural, and political expressions of gender and sexuality. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: AFRC 2310, ENGL 2310, GSWS 2310
1 Course Unit

COML 2324 Sanskrit Literature in Translation
This course will focus solely on the specific genres, themes, and aesthetics of Sanskrit literature (the hymn, the epic, the lyric, prose, drama, story literature, the sutra, etc.) and a study of the history and specific topics of Sanskrit poetics and dramaturgy. All readings will be in translation.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SAST 2324
1 Course Unit
COML 2334 A Survey of Sanskrit, Pakrit, and Classical Tamil Literature in Translation
This course will cover most of the genres of literature in South Asia’s classical languages through close readings of selections of primary texts in English translation. Special focus will be given to epics, drama, lyric poetry, satirical works, and religious literature.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SAST 2334
1 Course Unit

COML 2400 Faces of Love: Gender, Sexuality and the Erotic in Persian Literature
Beloved, Lover and Love are three concepts that dominate the semantic field of eroticism in Persian literature and mysticism. The interrelation among these concepts makes it almost impossible to treat any one of the concepts separately. Moreover, there exists various shades of love in the works of classical and modern Persian literature that challenges the conventional heteronormative assumptions about the sexual and romantic relationships between the lover and the beloved. A sharp contrast exists between the treatment of homosexuality and ‘queerness’ in Islamic law, on the one hand and its reflection in Persian literature, particularly poetry (the chief vehicle of Persian literary expression), on the other. This course introduces and explores different faces of love, eroticism and homosexuality in the Persian literary tradition from the dawn of dawn of the Persian poetry in the ninth century all through to the twenty-first century. It offers a comprehensive study of representations and productions of heteronormativity, sexual orientation and gender roles with particular reference to the notion of love, lover and beloved in Persian literature.
Fall
Also Offered As: GSWS 2402, NELC 2400
1 Course Unit

COML 2401 Literature and Theory Seminar: Theories of World Literature
This course is an introduction to efforts—beginning in the nineteenth century, but with special attention to the late-twentieth and twenty-first centuries—to develop theoretical models and corresponding critical practices for the comprehensive study of world literature. Particular attention will be devoted to theories that treat individual works as being in some sort of conversation with broad circuits of canonicity, translation, nationalism, cosmopolitanism, monolingualism, and interpretation. The course will also introduce you to the manifold connections between theories of world literature and fields such as globalization studies, translation studies, comparative literature, and postcolonial studies. Because the course will be taught in English, we'll pay especially close attention to the meanings and consequences of “global English,” as well as to other conceptual and practical limitations on developing persuasive and useful models of counter-hegemonic, counter-neoliberal literary studies. Indeed, questions of limit, scale, and boundary will guide our evaluation of all models and practices. Among the critics and theorists we’ll study are: Emily Apter, David Damrosch, Jacques Derrida, Theo D’haen, David Gramling, Franco Moretti, Aamir Mufti, Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and Yasmin Yildiz. Requirements will include several short essays and an in-class presentation.
Also Offered As: ENGL 2401
1 Course Unit

COML 2402 What is Capitalism? Theories of Marx and Marxism
At their root, Marx and Marxisms try to examine the problems with both capitalism and the political and economic discourses that justify or ignore those problems. Today, many around the globe are also reflecting on capitalism’s problems, in the hope of imagining and realizing a better future. This course will trace some of the origins of that renewed inquiry, and examine its limits and possibilities in today’s world. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Also Offered As: ENGL 2402, GSWS 2410
1 Course Unit

COML 2410 Literary Theory Seminar
This course explores an aspect of literary theory intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2400, GSWS 2960
1 Course Unit

COML 2420 Cultural Studies Seminar
This course explores an aspect of cultural studies intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 2930, CIMS 2420, ENGL 2420
1 Course Unit

COML 2500 The Novel and Marriage
The content of the course will vary from semester to semester. All works read in English. Please check the department’s website for a description. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2799, FREN 2500, HIST 0722
1 Course Unit

COML 2520 Contemporary Italy: Pop Culture, Politics, and Peninsular Identity
Is the land of good food, beautiful landscapes, and la bella vita really how it looks in the movies? Where do our ideas about Italy come from and how do they compare to the realities of its cultural production and its contemporary day-to-day life? This cultural survey course on contemporary Italy will investigate the similarities and divergences of these perceptions by researching current social, political, and media trends and putting them face to face with our preconceived notions. The course will cover major cultural trends from fashion and food trends, to eco-Italy, criminality and the Anthropocene, to immigration, to Black and LGBTQ Italia, to contemporary transfeminism, to Berlusconismo and Populism, to Netflix Italia and Social media culture. Through written assignments both in and outside the classroom, oral presentations, and multimedia projects we will critically reflect on these contemporary issues and gain a stronger understanding of the socio-cultural specificity of the Italian cultural landscape and its relationship to contemporary global socio-political trends and identities.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ITAL 2520
1 Course Unit
COML 2595 Imagining Environmental Justice
What does it mean to imagine environmental justice? Our course explores a range of narrative forms from distinct global contexts, to ask what environmental justice looks like in a world where the effects of colonialism and climate change are unevenly distributed across populations. Sustained engagement with Indigenous North American, African American, Palestinian, and South African imaginary traditions will highlight diverse ways of relating to land, water and nonhuman animals that challenge capitalist and colonial logics of extraction. This course asks students to comparatively and critically reflect on literary, filmic, and nonfictional narratives that engage in different ways with the question of justice. Course materials highlight not only instances of spectacular environmental catastrophe but also more subtle effects on bodies and landscapes, attending to the complex ways that environmental crisis intersects with race, gender and sexuality. The class will enable participants to translate these ideas into practice by producing public-facing content through creative modes of enquiry. Ultimately, we will strive to understand how various forms of artistic and creative expression might enable us to imagine more equitable futures.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ANTH 3390, ENGL 2595
1 Course Unit

COML 2800 Poetry and Poetics Seminar
This course explores an aspect of poetry and poetics intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2800
1 Course Unit

COML 2810 Poetry and Sound Seminar: Music and Literature
The seminar explores the relationship of poetry and music intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2810
1 Course Unit

COML 2840 20th-Century Poetry Seminar
The course explores an aspect of 20th-century poetry intensively. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 2840
1 Course Unit

COML 2920 Contemporary European Cinema
This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3915, CIMS 2015, ENGL 2920
1 Course Unit

COML 2931 World Cinema
This topic course explores aspects of Film Practice intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3902, CIMS 2022, ENGL 2931
1 Course Unit

COML 2932 Bollywood and Beyond
This topic course explores aspects of Film History intensively. Specific course topics vary from year to year. See the Cinema Studies website at <http://cinemastudies.sas.upenn.edu/> for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 3916, CIMS 2016, ENGL 2932
1 Course Unit

COML 2950 Global Film Theory
This course will provide an introduction to some of the most important film theory debates and allow us to explore how writers and filmmakers from different countries and historical periods have attempted to make sense of the changing phenomenon known as “cinema,” to think cinematically. Topics under consideration may include: spectatorship, authorship, the apparatus, sound, editing, realism, race, gender and sexuality, stardom, the culture industry, the nation and decolonization, what counts as film theory and what counts as cinema, and the challenges of considering film theory in a global context, including the challenge of working across languages. There will be an asynchronous weekly film screening for this course. No knowledge of film theory is presumed.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 2950, CIMS 2950, ENGL 2900, GSWS 2950
Mutually Exclusive: ARTH 6950
1 Course Unit

COML 2960 Digital and New Media Seminar
This course explores a particular topic in the study of digital and new media in an intensive and in-depth manner. See the English Department’s website at: www.english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 2920, CIMS 2951, ENGL 2950
1 Course Unit

COML 3097 Psychoanalysis and Autobiography
Both psychoanalysis and autobiography are ways of re-telling a life. Psychoanalysis is often called “the talking cure” because, as patients tell the analyst more and more about their lives (their thoughts, dreams, memories, hopes, fears, relationships, jobs, and fantasies), they start to recognize themselves in new ways, and this can help them overcome conflicts, impasses, bad feelings, and even psychiatric illnesses that have kept them from flourishing. Autobiographers do something similar as they remember, re-examine, and re-tell their lives - though one very important difference is that they do so, not privately in a psychoanalyst’s office, but publicly in books that anyone may read. This seminar is a comparative exploration of these different ways of a re-telling a life. This seminar is usually team-taught by a humanities scholar and a practicing psychoanalyst.
Fall
Also Offered As: ENGL 0541, GSWS 3890
1 Course Unit
COML 3110 French Thought After 1968
In American academia, French thought after May '68 is often referred to as "French Theory," a heterogeneous corpus of philosophical and critical texts compacted into a set of poststructuralist premises, first introduced by and grew within humanities departments, then identified as a luxury by-product of the "literary" people. This course proposes to unpack the notion of "French Theory" and re-anchor it into its original social/historical background. We will read some of the most influential texts of its key figures, study how a post May 68 revolutionary energy is transformed into various innovative and also destabilizing ways of rethinking power relations, gender, language and subjectivity, and finally, consider in what capacities and limits these diverse critical approaches go beyond the simple label of "post-structuralism" and relate to our own epoch and personal experiences. The readings and discussions will be divided into four axes: 1. Philosophy of Desire (Lacan, Deleuze/Guattari); 2. Sexual Revolt and Body Politics (Foucault, Hocquenghem, Barthes); 3. Deconstruction and Its Impact on Feminism (Derrida, Cixous, Irigaray); 4. Consumer Society and Society of the Spectacle (Lipovetsky, Baudrillard, Debord). Several documentaries and feature films will be shown outside class time. Taught in English. Reading knowledge of French is welcome but not required.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: FREN 3110
1 Course Unit

COML 3120 The Translation of Poetry/The Poetry of Translation
"No problem is as consubstantial with literature and its modest mystery as the one posed by translation."—Jorge Luis Borges In this class we will study and translate some of the major figures in 19th- and 20th-century poetry, including Gabriela Mistral, Wisława Szymborska, Mahmoud Darwish, Anna Akhmatova, Rainer Maria Rilke, Giuseppe Ungaretti, Arthur Rimbaud, and Shu Ting. While the curriculum will be tailored to the interests and linguistic backgrounds of the students who enroll, all those curious about world poetry and the formidable, irresistible act of translation are welcome. Those wishing to take the translation course should have, at least, an intermediate knowledge of another language. We will study multiple translations of major poems and render our own versions in response. Students with knowledge of other languages will have the additional opportunity to work directly from the original. 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 poetry written in Urdu, Italian, Arabic, French, Bulgarian, and Polish, they might ultimately reveal how notions of national literature have radically shifted in recent years to more polyglottic and globally textured forms. Through famous poems, 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.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 3120
1 Course Unit

COML 3220 Advanced Topics in Global Gender and Sexuality Studies
This is an advanced topics course, and the course description will vary from semester to semester.
Fall
Also Offered As: GSWS 3220
1 Course Unit

COML 3252 Marx, Nietzsche, Freud: Masters of Suspicion
In his influential book Freud & Philosophy, the French philosopher Paul Ricoeur identified three master thinkers whose influence on the twentieth century was inestimable. What these figures shared was what Ricoeur called a "hermeneutics of suspicion"; that is, in their different ways, each developed a style of interpretation aimed at unmasking, demystifying, and exposing the real from the apparent. "Three masters, seemingly mutually exclusive, dominate the school of suspicion: Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud." Taking its inspiration from Ricoeur, this seminar will explore some of the key writings of Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud. We will encounter the hermeneutics of suspicion above all in these authors' attempts to unmask religion and reveal its true origin and function. And we shall also pursue the hermeneutics of suspicion in the specific concerns that form the core of each thinker's work: Marx's critique of capitalism, Nietzsche's genealogy of Judaeo-Christian morality, skepticism about 'truth', and proto-deconstruction of the human self, and Freud's theory of the unconscious. The final weeks of the course will be devoted to independent research and writing of an original essay in intellectual history.
Also Offered As: HIST 3252
1 Course Unit

COML 3330 Dante's Divine Comedy
In this course we will read the Inferno, the Purgatorio and the Paradiso, focusing on a series of interrelated problems raised by the poem: authority, fiction, history, politics and language. Particular attention will be given to how the Commedia presents itself as Dante's autobiography, and to how the autobiographical narrative serves as a unifying thread for this supremely rich literary text. Supplementary readings will include Virgil's Aeneid and selections from Ovid's Metamorphoses. All readings and written work will be in English. Italian or Italian Studies credit will require reading Italian texts in their original language and writing about their themes in Italian. This course may be taken for graduate credit, but additional work and meetings with the instructor will be required.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 0509, ITAL 3330
1 Course Unit
COML 3501 Writing and Witnessing
This course will explore one of the fundamental questions we face as humans: how do we bear witness to ourselves and to the world? How do we live and write with a sense of response-ability to one another? How does our writing grapple with traumatic histories that continue to shape our world and who we are in it? The very word “witnessing” contains a conundrum within it: it means both to give testimony, such as in a court of law, and to bear witness to something beyond understanding. In this class, we will explore both senses of the term “witness” as we study work by writers such as Harriet Jacobs, Paul Celan, M. NourbeSe Philip, Bhanu Kapil, Layli Long Soldier, Claudia Rankine, Juliana Spahr, and others that wrestles with how to be a witness to oneself and others during a time of ongoing war, colonialism, racism, climate change, and other disasters. Students are welcome in this class no matter what stage you are at with writing, and whether you write poetry or prose or plays or make other kinds of art. Regardless of your experience, in this class you’ll be considered an “author”, which in its definition also means a “witness.” We will examine and question what authorship can do in the world, and we will analyze and explore the fine lines among being a witness, a bystander, a participant, a spectator, and an ally. In this class you will critically analyze and write responses to class readings; you’ll do writing exercises related to the work we read; and you’ll complete (and be workshopped on) a portfolio of creative writing (and/or art) that bears witness to events that matter to you.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 3501, GSWS 3501
1 Course Unit

COML 3508 Queer Forms
Queer and trans writers have always queered form, constantly inventing new ways to express new forms of becoming. And yet, much of the attention paid to LGBTQ+ writing has focused on identity and content rather than looking at the many innovations in form that queer and trans writers are always producing. This multi-genre creative/critical workshop will examine some of the methods contemporary LGBTQ+ writers have used to queer genre and form in their writing, whether they are working through fiction, poetry, essay, play, performance, or some combination thereof. Queer theorist José Esteban Muñoz’s notions of disidentification and queer futurity will help guide our thinking in this course. Students will read and write creative/critical responses each week to a wide range of writing that queers form. The class will include weekly workshopping and students will work towards a final project that incorporates all they have learned over the term, generating ever new queer forms of making.
Also Offered As: ENGL 3508, GSWS 3508
1 Course Unit

COML 3555 Japanese Theater
Japan has one of the richest and most varied theatrical traditions in the world. In this course, we will examine Japanese theater in historical and comparative contexts. The readings and discussions will cover all areas of the theatrical experience (script, acting, stage design, costumes, music, and audience). Audio-visual material will be used whenever appropriate and possible. The class will be conducted in English, with all English materials.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: EALC 3355, THAR 3355
1 Course Unit

COML 3704 The Iliad and its Afterlife
As the earliest work in the western tradition, the Iliad has been a constant point of reference for later considerations of heroism, friendship, the search for meaning in the face of mortality, and the effects of war on individuals and societies. We will begin with a close reading of the Iliad in translation, with attention both to the story of its hero Achilles as he experiences disillusionment, frustration, anger, triumph, revenge, and reconciliation and to the poems broader portrait of a society at war, which incorporates the diverse perspectives of invaders and defenders, men and women, old and young, gods and mortals, along with tantalizing glimpses of peacetime life. We will then consider how later writers and artists have drawn on the Iliad to present a range of perspectives of their own – whether patriotic, mock heroic, romantic, or pacifist – with particular attention to 20th and 21st century responses by such figures as W.H. Auden, Simone Weil, Cy Twombly, David Malouf, Alice Oswald, and Adrienne Rich. There are no specific prerequisites, but the course can serve as a complement to CLST 302, The Odyssey and its Afterlife or CLST 331 Reading the Iliad in a Time of War.
Also Offered As: CLST 3704
1 Course Unit

COML 3712 From Tablets to Tablets: A Long History of Technology and Communication
The invention of new communications technologies is often accompanied by a swell of hope. Enthusiasts expect people to become more connected, new ideas to become more accessible, and information to be shared more rapidly and in more fixed forms than ever before. While there are always nay-sayers, who warn against the effects of such inventions, the narrative linking new communications technologies and progress is so strong that these detractors are most commonly painted as luddites, and the narrative itself is used to justify and promote yet newer media as well as new configurations of state and media relations. In this class, we will examine some of the most significant transformations in the history of communications technology—from orality to writing, from tablet to scroll to codex, manuscript to print, hand-press to steam-press, print to radio, radio to tv, and tv to streaming and other forms of new media. We will ask some basic questions: How were these technologies made? How and by whom were these technologies used? How did contemporaries perceive them and the transformations they did or did not work? We will also ask some bigger questions: why do certain communications technologies emerge and get adopted when and where they do? Conversely, why are some communications technologies resisted at some times and in some places? What impacts do communications technologies have on the societies in which the appear? Do they alter the course of events? Do they change the way in which we think? If so, then how? Is the history of communication substitutive or additive? How is the digital age in which we live similar to or different from those that came before? History Majors may use this course to fulfill the pre-1800 requirement depending on the topic of their research paper.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: HIST 3712
1 Course Unit
COML 3802 Literary Translation
This course is for graduate students and undergraduates with permission of the instructor. All students enrolled must have knowledge of at least one language other than English. We will study the history, theory, and practice of literary translation, and participate in it. Readings will include theoretical works in translation studies, and selected readings from Lawrence Venuti’s Translation Studies Reader and Schulte/Biguenet’s Translation Theory Reader, with some supplemental readings; we will also look at comparative cases of multiple translations of the same original, and analyze how different translators make different interpretative/formal/aesthetic choices. Course assignments will include both a research paper, on the history and/or theory of translation, and an extended practical translation exercise, to be workshopped over the course of the semester, consisting of a literary translation of a text of the student’s choice.
Also Offered As: CLST 3802
1 Course Unit

COML 3830 French & Italian Modern Horror
This course will consider the horror genre within the specific context of two national cinemas: France and Italy. For France, the focus will be exclusively on the contemporary period which has been witnessing an unprecedented revival in horror. For Italy, there will be a marked emphasis on the 1960s-1970s, i.e. the Golden Age of Gothic horror and the giallo craze initiated by the likes of Mario Bava and Dario Argento. Various subgenres will be examined: supernatural horror, ghost story, slasher, zombie film, body horror, cannibalism, etc. Issues of ethics, gender, sexuality, violence, spectatorship will be examined through a variety of critical lenses (psychoanalysis, socio-historical and cultural context, aesthetics, politics, gender, etc.).
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 3830, FREN 3830, ITAL 3830
1 Course Unit

COML 3922 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.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 3922
1 Course Unit

COML 3923 Twentieth Century European Intellectual History
European intellectual and cultural history from 1870 to 1950. Themes to be considered include aesthetic modernism and the avant-garde, the rebellion against rationalism and positivism, Social Darwinism, Second International Socialism, the impact of World War One on European intellectuals, psychoanalysis, existentialism, and the ideological origins of fascism. Figures to be studied include Nietzsche, Freud, Woolf, Sartre, Camus, and Heidegger.
Spring
Also Offered As: HIST 3923
1 Course Unit

COML 3931 Participatory Community Media, 1970-Present
What would it mean to understand the history of American cinema through the lens of participatory community media, collectively-made films made by and for specific communities to address personal, social and political needs using a range of affordable technologies and platforms, including 16mm film, Portapak, video, cable access television, satellite, digital video, mobile phones, social media, and drones? What methodologies do participatory community media makers employ, and how might those methods challenge and transform the methods used for cinema and media scholarship? How would such an approach to filmmaking challenge our understanding of terms like “authorship,” “amateur,” “exhibition,” “distribution,” “venue,” “completion,” “criticism,” “documentary,” “performance,” “narrative,” “community,” and “success”? How might we understand these U.S.-based works within a more expansive set of transnational conversations about the transformational capacities of collective media practices? This course will address these and other questions through a deep engagement with the films that make up the national traveling exhibition curated by Louis Massiah and Patricia R. Zimmerman, We Tell: Fifty Years of Participatory Community Media, which foregrounds six major themes: Body Publics (public health and sexualities); Collaborative Knowledges (intergenerational dialogue); Environments of Race and Place (immigration, migration, and racial identities unique to specific environments); States of Violence (war and the American criminal justice system); Turf (gentrification, homelessness, housing, and urban space); and Wages of Work (job opportunities, occupations, wages, unemployment, and underemployment). As part of that engagement, we will study the history of a series of Community Media Centers from around the U.S., including Philadelphia’s own Scribe Video Center, founded in 1982 by Louis Massiah, this course’s co-instructor. This is an undergraduate seminar, but it also available to graduate students in the form of group-guided independent studies. The course requirements include: weekly screenings, readings, and seminar discussions with class members and visiting practitioners, and completing both short assignments and a longer research paper.
Also Offered As: AFRC 3932, ARTH 3931, CIMS 3931, ENGL 2970, GWS 3931
Mutually Exclusive: ARTH 6931
1 Course Unit

COML 3999 Independent Study
Supervised study for Juniors.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

COML 4300 Seminar in Modern Hebrew Literature
This course introduces students to selections from the best literary works written in Hebrew over the last hundred years in a relaxed seminar environment. The goal of the course is to develop skills in critical reading of literature in general, and to examine how Hebrew authors grapple with crucial questions of human existence and national identity. Topics include: Hebrew classics and their modern "descendants," autobiography in poetry and fiction, the conflict between literary generations, and others. Because the content of this course changes from year to year, students may take it for credit more than once. This course is conducted in Hebrew and all readings are in Hebrew. Grading is based primarily on participation and students’ literary understanding.
Spring
Also Offered As: JWST 4300, NELC 4300
Prerequisite: HEBR 1000
1 Course Unit
**COML 4500 Arabic Literature and Literary Theory**
This course will explore different critical approaches to the interpretation and analysis of Arabic literature from pre-Islamic poetry to the modern novel and prose-poem. The course will draw on western and Arabic literary criticism to explore the role of critical theory not only in understanding and contextualizing literature but also in forming literary genres and attitudes. Among these approaches are: Meta-poetry and inter-Arts theory, Genre theory, Myth and Archetype, Poetics and Rhetoric, and Performance theory. This course is taught in translation.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: NELC 4500
1 Course Unit

**COML 4998 Honors Thesis**
Supervised honors thesis for seniors.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

**COML 4999 Independent Study**
Supervised study for Seniors.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

**COML 5010 Comparative Literature Proseminar**
This course will survey what has come to be known in literary and cultural studies as "theory" by tracking the genealogies of a select range of contemporary practices of interpretation. We will address the following questions: What are some of the historical and rhetorical conditions of emergence for contemporary critical theories of interpretation? What does it mean to interpret literature and culture in the wake of the grand theoretical enterprises of the modern period? How do conceptions of power and authority in literature and culture change as symbolic accounts of language give way to allegorical and performative accounts? How might we bring frameworks of globality and translation to bear on literary and cultural criticism? Half of the course sessions will involve the instructor and the students reading texts that represent a range of hermeneutic approaches, in classical and contemporary forms. For the other half of the class, we will welcome one visiting instructor per week from the Comparative Literature faculty, who will assign readings and lead discussion on their own area(s) of specialization. The central, practical goals of the class will be to help first year PhD candidates in Comparative Literature prepare for their MA exam, to introduce students to a range of faculty in the Program, and to forge an intellectual community among the first year cohort.
Fall
Also Offered As: GRMN 5340
1 Course Unit

**COML 5041 18th-century Visual Cultures of Race & Empire**
This course approaches the Western history of race and racial classification (1600-1800) with a focus on visual and material culture, natural history, and science that connected Atlantic and Pacific worlds. Across the long eighteenth century, new knowledges about human diversity and species distinctions emerged alongside intensifications of global trade with Asia. The course will include case studies of chinoiserie textiles, portraits of consuming individuals, natural history prints and maps, Chinese export porcelain and furnishings, and "blackamoor" sculpture. Objects of visual and material culture will be studied alongside readings on regional and world histories that asserted universal freedoms as well as hierarchies of human, animal, and plant-kind. Keeping in mind that the idea of race continues to be a distributed phenomenon - across color, gender, class, religion, speech, culture - we will explore changing vocabularies of difference, particularly concerning skin color, across a range of texts and images. Knowledge often does not take written or literary form, and for this reason, we will study examples of visual and material culture as well as forms of technology that were critical to defining human varieties, to use the eighteenth-century term. Although we will be reading texts in English, some in translation, we will also account for European and non-European knowledge traditions - vernacular, indigenous - that informed scientific and imaginative writings about the globe. Topics may include cultural and species distinction, global circulations of commodities between the East and West Indies, the transatlantic slave trade, the casta system of racial classification in the Americas, religious and scientific explanations of blackness and whiteness, and visual representations of non-European people.
Spring
Also Offered As: ARTH 5680, ENGL 5440
1 Course Unit

**COML 5050 Digital Humanities Studies**
This course is designed to introduce advanced undergraduate and graduate students to the range of new opportunities for literary research afforded by Digital Humanities and recent technological innovation. Digital Humanities: you've heard of it. Maybe you're excited about it, maybe you're skeptical. Regardless of your primary area of study, this course will give you the critical vocabularies and hands-on experience necessary to understand the changing landscape of the humanities today. Topics will include quantitative analysis, digital editing and bibliography, network visualization, public humanities, and the future of scholarly publishing. Although we will spend a good portion of our time together working directly with new tools and methods, our goal will not be technological proficiency so much as critical competence and facility with digital theories and concepts. We will engage deeply with media archaeology, feminist technology studies, critical algorithm studies, and the history of material texts; and we will attend carefully to the politics of race, gender, and sexuality in the field. Students will have the opportunity to pursue their own scalable digital project. See the English Department's website at www/english.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 5051, ENGL 5050
1 Course Unit
COML 5090 Topics in Yiddish Literature: Modernist Jewish Poetry
One version of this seminar considers works by Jewish women who wrote in Yiddish, Hebrew, English, and other languages in the late 19th through the 20th century. The texts, poetry and prose, will include both belles lettres and popular writings, such as journalism, as well as private works (letters and diaries) and devotional works. The course will attempt to define “Jewish writing,” in terms of language and gender, and will consider each writer in the context of the aesthetic, religious, and national ideologies that prevailed in this period. Because students will come with proficiency in various languages, all primary texts and critical and theoretical materials will be taught in English translation. However, those students who can, will work on the original texts and share with the class their expertise to foster a comparative perspective. Because we will be discussing translated works, a secondary focus of the course will, in fact, be on literary translation’s process and products. Another version of this seminar presents Jewish modernism as an international phenomenon of the early 20th century. The course will attempt to define “Jewish modernism” through the prism of poetry, which inevitably, given the historical events in Europe and America during this time, grapples with aesthetic, religious, and national ideologies and methods. The syllabus will focus mainly on poetry written in Yiddish and English, and will also include German, Russian, and Hebrew verse. All poetry, critical, and theoretical materials will be taught in English translation, although students who know the languages will work on the original texts and will bring to the table a comparative perspective. Because we will be discussing translated poems, a secondary focus of the course will, in fact, be on literary translation’s process and products.

Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5090, GSWS 5090, JWST 5090, YDSH 5090
1 Course Unit

COML 5110 Life Writing: Autobiography, Memoir, and the Diary
This course introduces three genres of life writing: Autobiography, Memoir and the Diary. While the Memoir and the diary are older forms of first persons writing the Autobiography developed later. We will first study the literary-historical shifts that occurred in Autobiographies from religious confession through the secular Eurocentric Enlightenment men, expanded to women writers and to members of marginal oppressed groups as well as to non-European autobiographies in the twentieth century. Subsequently we shall study the rise of the modern memoir, asking how it is different from this form of writing that existed already in the middle ages. In the memoirs we see a shift from a self and identity centered on a private individual autobiography to ones that comes from connections to a community, a country or a nation; a self of a memoirist that represents selves of others. Students will attain theoretical background related to the basic issues and concepts in life writing: genre, truth claims and what they mean, the limits of memory, autobiographical subject, agency or self, the autonomous vs. the relational self. The concepts will be discussed as they apply to several texts. Some examples are: parts of Jan Jacques Rousseau’s Confessions; the autobiography of Benjamin Franklin; selected East European autobiographies between the two world wars; the memoirs of Lady Ann Clifford, Sally Morgan, Mary Jamison and Saul Friedlander. The third genre, the diary, is a person account, organized around the passage of time, and its subject is in the present. We will study diary theories, diary’s generic conventions and the canonical text, trauma diaries and the testimonial aspect, the diary’s time, decoding emotions, the relation of the diary to an audience and the process of transition from archival manuscript to a published book. The reading will include travel diaries (for relocation and pleasure), personal diaries in different historical periods and countries, diaries in political conflict (as American Civil War women’s diaries, Holocaust diaries, Middle East political conflicts diaries). We will conclude with diaries online, and students will have a chance to experience and report about differences between writing a personal diary on paper and diaries and blogs on line. Each new subject in this online course will be preceded by an introduction. Specific reading and written assignments, some via links to texts will be posted weekly ahead of time. We will have weekly videos and discussions of texts and assigned material and students will post responses during these sessions and class presentations in the forums.
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

COML 5111 Introduction to Paleography & Book History
Writing and reading are common actions we do every day. Nonetheless they have changed over the centuries, and a fourteenth century manuscript appears to us very different from a Penguin book. The impact of cultural movements such as Humanism, and of historical events, such as the Reformation, reshaped the making of books, and therefore the way of reading them. The course will provide students with an introduction to the history of the book, including elements of paleography, and through direct contact with the subjects of the class: manuscripts and books. Furthermore, a section of the course will focus on digital resources, in order to make students familiar with ongoing projects related to the history of book collections (including the “Philosophical Libraries” and the “Provenance” projects, based at the Scuola Normale Superiore in Pisa and at Penn). The course will be conducted in English; a basic knowledge of Latin is desirable but not required.
Spring
Also Offered As: CLST 7709, ITAL 5110
1 Course Unit
COML 5120 Film Noir
Topics vary. Please see the department's website for the current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 5120, FREN 5120
1 Course Unit

COML 5180 Old Church Slavonic: History, Language, Manuscripts
The language that we know today as Old Church Slavonic was invented, along with the Slavic alphabet(s), in the 9th century by two Greek scholars, Sts. Cyril and Methodius. They had been tasked by the Byzantine Emperor with bringing the Christian faith to the Slavic-speaking people of Great Moravia, a powerful medieval state in central Europe. From there, literacy, along with the Christian faith, spread to other Slavs, and even non-Slavic speakers, such as Lithuanians and Romanians. Church Slavonic and its regional variants were used to compose the oldest texts of the Slavic-speaking world, which today is comprised of Belarus, Bosnia, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czechia, Macedonia, Montenegro, Russia, Poland, Slovakia, Serbia, Slovenia, and Ukraine. Knowledge of this language and tradition aids in understanding the cultural, literary, and linguistic history of any modern Slavic language. For learners of Russian and other Slavic languages, Church Slavonic provides a layer of elevated stylistic vocabulary and conceptual terminology, similar to, and even greater than, the role of Latin and Greek roots in the English language. For historical linguists, Church Slavonic provides unique material for comparison with other ancient Indo-European languages, such as Latin, Greek, and Sanskrit. For medievalists and cultural historians, it opens the door into the Slavic Orthodox tradition that developed in the orbit of the Byzantine Commonwealth.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: REES 5100
1 Course Unit

COML 5245 Topics in Medieval Studies: Premodern Animals (c.500-c.1500)
From St. Cuthbert, whose freezing feet were warmed by otters, to St. Guinefort, a miracle-performing greyhound in 13th-century France, to Melusine, the half-fish, half-woman ancestress of the house of Luxembourg (now the Starbucks logo), medieval narratives are deeply inventive in their portrayal of human-animal interactions. This course introduces students to critical animals studies via medieval literature and culture. We will read a range of genres, from philosophical commentaries on Aristotle and theological commentaries on Noah’s ark to werewolf poems, beast fables, political satires, saints’ lives, chivalric romances, bestiaries, natural encyclopaedias, dietary treatises and travel narratives. Among the many topics we will explore are the following: animals in premodern law; comfort and companion animals; vegetarianism across religious cultures; animal symbolism and human virtue; taxonomies of species in relation to race, gender, and class; literary animals and political subversion; menageries and collecting across medieval Europe, the Near East, and Asia; medieval notions of hybridity, compositeness, trans-species identity, and interspecies relationships; art and the global traffic in animals (e.g., ivory, parchment); European encounters with New World animals; and the legacy of medieval animals in contemporary philosophy and media. No prior knowledge of medieval literature is required. Students from all disciplines are welcome.
Also Offered As: CLST 7710, ENGL 5245, RELS 6101
1 Course Unit

Although the starting point for the Anthropocene is still under discussion, there is broad agreement that the industrial revolution and the turn to fossil fuels mark an intensification of humanity’s impact on the Earth. It may not be a coincidence that Kant’s proclamation of the Copernican revolution in philosophy, according to which human reason replaces the natural light of traditional metaphysics, falls roughly in the same period. Human finite cognition became the measure for God and his creation. The dawn of the era of human freedom and the ramped up exploitation of resources coincide. It is against this background that the Naturphilosophie of F. W. J. Schelling can become particularly interesting. The genesis of German idealism is closely related with the opposition between freedom and necessity that lies at the heart of Kant’s critical project. Kant associated the former with man and the latter with nature. In trying to bridge the gap between them, Schelling reinstates nature as an autonomous actor in its own right. Schelling’s thinking about nature chimed with the literary and empirical-scientific work of his contemporary Johann Wolfgang von Goethe. In the productive interplay of poetry, science, religion, and philosophical thought, Goethe and Schelling offer a critical alternative to philosophy in the aftermath of the Copernican revolution that may be viable or useful today as humanity tries to come to terms with anthropogenically induced climate change. This co-taught interdisciplinary seminar will focus on works by Schelling (Ideas for a Philosophy of Nature, First Outline of a System of the Philosophy of Nature, On the World Soul) and Goethe (scientific writings, Faust I & II), in addition to engaging recent scholarship of Schelling and Goethe in relation to environmental humanities.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5250
1 Course Unit

COML 5260 The Trouble with Freud: Psychoanalysis, Literature, Culture
For professionals in the field of mental care, Freud’s work is often regarded as outdated, if not problematic psychologists view his work as non-scientific, dependent on theses that cannot be confirmed by experiments. In the realm of literary and cultural theory, however, Freud’s work seems to have relevance still, and is cited often. How do we understand the gap between a medical/scientific reading of Freud’s work, and a humanist one? Where do we locate Freud’s relevance today? The graduate course will concentrate on Freud’s descriptions of psychoanalytic theory and practice, as well as his writings on literature and culture.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5260, GSWS 5260
1 Course Unit
COML 5310 Dante's Commedia I
Please check the department's website for the course description at: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses Dante Visualizing: Dante Visualizing and Dante Visualized. Dante's Commedia has inspired art, but at the same time art is present within the Comedy itself, through images, metaphors, descriptions and even more concrete examples. This course aims at discussing these aspects, taking into consideration also the philosophical, political and religious background of these motifs. While analyzing images in and from the Commedia, we will look at illustrations and artistic interpretations, spanning from medieval illuminations and Renaissance printed books (mainly from Van Pelt Library) to contemporary examples, and focusing on artists such as Giotto, Botticelli, Michelangelo, Blake, Dore, and Dali. The course will be taught in English.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ITAL 5310
1 Course Unit

COML 5350 The Elemental Turn
The unfolding effects of climate change—rising sea level, melting ice sheets, subsiding land masses, drought stricken regions, wild fires, air laden with greenhouse gases, and inundated cities—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).
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5350
1 Course Unit

COML 5351 Petrarch
Petrarch’s life and work in the context of Italian and European culture and society.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ITAL 5350
1 Course Unit

COML 5370 Translating Literature: Theory and Practice
The greats all have something to say about translation. The Hebrew poet H. N. Bialik is attributed with saying that “he who reads the Bible in translation is like a man who kisses his bride through a veil.” That, however, is a mistranslation: What Bialik really wrote was, “Whoever knows Judaism through translation is like a person who kisses his mother through a handkerchief.” (http://benyehuda.org/bialik/dvarim02.html), saying that he probably translated and adapted from Russian or German. (https://networks.h-net.org/node/28655/discussions/116448/query-bialik-kissing-bride) Robert Frost wrote, “I could define poetry this way: it is that which is lost out of both prose and verse in translation.” Walter Benjamin defines it: “Translation is a form. To comprehend it as a form, one must go back to the original, for the laws governing the translation lie within the original, contained in the issue of its translatability.” Lawrence Venuti rails against translation that domesticates, rather than foreignizes, thus betraying the foreign text through a contrived familiarity that makes the translator invisible. Emily Wilson wants her translation “to bring out the way I think the original text handles it. [The original text] allows you to see the perspective of the people who are being killed.” https://bookriot.com/2017/12/04/emily-wilson-translation-the-odyssey/ Is translation erotic? A form of filial love? Incestuous? A mode of communion, or idol worship? Is translation a magician’s vanishing trick? Is translation traitorous, transcendent? Maybe translation is impossible. But let’s try it anyways! In this graduate seminar, we will read key texts on the history and theory of translating literature, and we sample translations from across the centuries of the “classics,” such as the Bible and Homer. We will consider competing translations into English of significant modern literary works from a variety of languages, possibly including, but not limited to German, Yiddish, French, Hebrew, and Russian. These readings will serve to frame each student’s own semester-long translation of a literary work from a language of her or his choice. The seminar offers graduate students with their skills in various language an opportunity to take on a significant translation project within a circle of peers.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5370, JWST 5370
1 Course Unit

COML 5380 Materialism
How do we recognize materialism? This seminar poses this question by acknowledging "materialism" as a contested category with disparate and contradictory historical meanings: as a synonym for dogmatism, as the arch-enemy of reason and morality, as the scientific philosophy of the revolutionary workers' movement, as an alternative to (idealist) metaphysics, as a poetic practice, or as a central concern for material nature and environment, among others. Less concerned with enumerating philosophical systems, we will search out "family resemblances" and materialist tendencies among a wide range of texts. To this end, we will not only read the major historical texts of the so-called materialists (from Lucretius to Spinoza, from La Mettrie to Lenin), but also engage with materialism's supposed critics and antagonists (from Plato to Kant and Hegel). A special emphasis will be placed on the attempts to recuperate materialism as a positive category in recent critical theory and continental philosophy, for example, in the reinventions of Marxist and Spinozist traditions. We will also survey the attempts that found new traditions, such as aleatory materialism or various new materialisms. By reading exemplary literary texts that engage with the problem of materialism the seminar will also ask: can one speak of materialist poetics?
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5720
1 Course Unit
COML 5400 Franz Kafka and J. M. Coetzee
This seminar will listen attentively to the echoes of Franz Kafka in the novels of J.M. Coetzee. Building on Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's concept of a minor literature, elaborated on the example of Kafka's oeuvre, we will situate Kafka against the backdrop of the German-speaking Jewish community of Habsburg-era Prague and read Coetzee within the context of apartheid and his native South Africa. Beyond an investigation of empire and its aftermath, this course will consider the arguably posthuman ethics of these authors, examining them through the lens of animal studies and the environmental humanities in order to reveal how they anticipate and participate in current thinking on the Anthropocene. Reading Kafka's fables beside Coetzee's allegorical narratives, the seminar will follow the twisted course taken by literary justice from the Josef K. of Kafka's Trial to Coetzee's Life and Times of Michael K. Alongside these two towering figures, the influence of and affinities with other German-language authors (Heinrich von Kleist, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Robert Walser) and Anglophone contemporaries (Samuel Beckett, Nadine Gordimer, Cormac McCarthy) will also be considered. Other works to be read will include Kafka's Castle, In the Penal Colony, Metamorphosis and late animal stories as well as Coetzee's In the Heart of the Country, Waiting for the Barbarians and Elizabeth Costello. Advanced undergraduates may enroll with the permission of the instructor. Readings and discussions in English.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 6400, GRMN 5400
1 Course Unit

COML 5410 Topics in Cultural History
Topic for Fall 2021: Making and Marking Time.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 5870, ENGL 5410, GRMN 5410
1 Course Unit

COML 5411 Transalpine Tensions: Franco-Italian Rivalries in the Renaissance
In the Middle Ages and Early Modern period, France and the Italian States were bound together by linguistic, economic, political, and religious ties, and intellectual developments never flowed unilaterally from one country to the other. On the contrary, they were transnational phenomena, and French and Italian thinkers and writers conceived of themselves and their work both in relation to and in opposition to one another. This course will consider the most fundamental aspects of Franco-Italian cultural exchange in the medieval and early modern period, with an emphasis on humanism, philosophical and religious debates, political struggles, and the rise of vernacular languages in literary and learned discourse. Authors to be studied include Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Ficino, Pico della Mirandola, Castiglione, Rabelais, Marguerite de Navarre, Du Bellay, Machiavelli, and Montaigne. In addition to learning the material covered in the course, students will gain expertise in producing professional presentations and research papers, and will also have the opportunity to consult original material from the Kislak Center. This course is open to undergraduates with permission of the instructors. It counts toward the undergraduate minor in Global Medieval Studies and the graduate certificate in Global and Medieval Renaissance Studies.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 5410, ITAL 5410
1 Course Unit

COML 5420 Topics in Culture.
Topics vary annually.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5420
1 Course Unit

COML 5430 Environmental Humanities: Theory, Method, Practice
Environmental Humanities: Theory, Methods, Practice is a seminar-style course designed to introduce students to the trans- and interdisciplinary field of environmental humanities. Weekly readings and discussions will be complemented by guest speakers from a range of disciplines including ecology, atmospheric science, computing, history of science, medicine, anthropology, literature, and the visual arts. Participants will develop their own research questions and a final project, with special consideration given to building the multi-disciplinary collaborative teams research in the environmental humanities often requires.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 5430, ENV5 5410, GRMN 5430, SPAN 5430
1 Course Unit

COML 5440 Public Environmental Humanities
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. In spring 2018, participants have the opportunity to participate in PPEH's public engagement projects on urban waters and environmental data. These ongoing projects document the variety of uses that Philadelphians make of federal climate and environmental data, in and beyond city government; they also shine light on climate and environmental challenges our city faces and the kinds of data we need to address them. Working with five community partners across Philadelphia, including the City's Office of Sustainability, students in this course will develop data use stories and surface the specific environmental questions neighborhoods have and the kinds of data they find useful. The course hosts guest speakers and research partners from related public engagement projects across the planet; community, neighborhood, open data, and open science advocates; and project partners in government in the City of Philadelphia and Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. Course assignments include: * 2 short-form essays (course blog posts); * a 12-hour research stay (conducted over multiple visits) with a community course partner to canvas data uses and desires; * authorship of 3 multimedia data stories; * co-organization and participation in a city-wide data storytelling event on May 2, 2018.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ANTH 5440, ENV5 5440, GRMN 5440, URBS 5440
1 Course Unit

COML 5450 Topics: Renaissance Culture
Please see department website for a current course description at: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CLST 7704, ITAL 5400, PHIL 5150
1 Course Unit
COML 5500 Etudes sur le XVIIe siècle
The specific topics of the seminar vary from semester to semester, depending on the instructor and their choice. Among the topics previously covered, and likely to be offered again, are the following: The Theatre of Jean Racine, Fiction of Mme de Lafayette, The Moralists (La Bruyere, La Rochefoucauld, Perrault ), Realistic Novels (Sorel’s Francion, Scarron’s Le Roman Comique, Furetiere’s Le Roman Bourgeois). Students give oral and written reports, and write a term paper.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 5500, GSWS 5500
1 Course Unit

COML 5550 Topics in Dutch Studies
Topics vary.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: DTCH 5300, GRMN 5550
1 Course Unit

COML 5590 Myth Through Time and In Time
The textual and physical remains of Greek and Roman culture and belief as 'myth' entranced the post-antique European world and its neighbors. Makers, patrons and viewers manipulated those survivals to challenge and speak to a contemporary world. This course focuses on how and why artists and their patrons engaged the mythic and examines the various areas of political and religious life that sought animation through an evocation of narratives from the past. Readings and case studies will engage with very late antique, medieval, and early modern art, turning to the modern and contemporary as well. Moving to the modern lets us examine, among other things, how artists address the exclusionary histories of the past, to enable critiques of myths of supremacy by one gender, race, or culture over others.
Also Offered As: AAMW 5590, ARTH 5590, CLST 7400, GRMN 5590
1 Course Unit

COML 5600 Eighteenth-Century Novel
Please check the department’s website for the course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: FREN 5600
1 Course Unit

COML 5650 Reading Benjamin Reading Kafka
Readings and discussions in English. Walter Benjamin’s study of the works of Franz Kafka is as enlightening as it can be bewildering. Moving from philology to Marxism, metaphysics to messianism, Daoism to Talmud, this densely argued piece elliptically touches on almost all of Kafka’s published works in just four short sections. This seminar proposes a line-by-line reading Benjamin’s 1934 “Franz Kafka on the Tenth Anniversary of His Death” with an eye to its literary, philosophical and religious contexts as well as to the rich history of its intellectual reception. Reading Kafka’s works as the essay evokes them, we will situate this piece with regard to Benjamin’s other writings, the essay’s interlocutors (Brod, Scholem, Lukacs, Brecht) and its most illustrious interpreters (Adorno, Arendt, Celan, Hamacher).
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5450, JWST 5650
1 Course Unit

COML 5660 The Long Nineteenth Century: Literature, Philosophy, Culture
The present course will discuss German literature and thought from the period of the French Revolution to the turn of the twentieth century, and put it into a European context. In regard to German literature, this is the period that leads from the Storm and Stress and Romanticism to the political period of the Vormärz, Realism, and finally Expressionism; in philosophy, it moves from German Idealism to the philosophy of Schopenhauer, Nietzsche, and neo-Kantian thought. It is also the period that saw the rise of the novel, and new forms of dramatic works. Painting moved out of the studio into plein air; the invention of photography made an imprint on all arts, and the rise of the newspaper led to new literary genres such as the feuilleton. Economically, Germany experienced the industrial revolution; politically, it was striving for a unification that was finally achieved in 1871. The nineteenth century saw the establishment of the bourgeoisie, the emergence of the German working class, and the idea of the nation state; it also saw Jewish emancipation, and the call for women’s rights. Readings will focus on a variety of literary, political, and philosophical texts; and consider a selection of art works.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 7770, GRMN 5580
1 Course Unit

COML 5730 Topics in Criticism & Theory: Object Theory
Topics vary annually
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 5730, CIMS 5730, ENGL 5730, GRMN 5730, REES 6683
1 Course Unit

COML 5735 Topics in Criticism: What is Poetics?
What is poetics? How does it differ from other forms of criticism in terms of both attitude or posture and method? In terms of practices of art and politics, What is its relationship to poieis and ethics – what is poetics? – as articulated by such varied thinkers as Joan Retallack, Denise Ferreira Da Silva and R.A Judy? What’s to be observed about the current turn of black studies toward poetics? For the seminar, let’s think about the above as matters of a) critical inquiry b) art practice and c) professional discipline. It may be possible to triangulate by way of “critique” and “aesthetics.” Proposing the inseparability of critical inquiry and writing practice, the final assignment will be deemed experimental since the monograph-ish essay won’t be presumed. Consequently, we will discuss the institutional state/status of what participants will have made. Possible readings include Michel Foucault, What is Critique?, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, What is Philosophy?, Hortense Spillers, Black, White & in Color (selections); Joan Retallack, The Poetical Wager; Denise Ferreira Da Silva, Unpayable Debt; Boris Groys, Going Public; Rachel Zolf, No One’s Witness; Leslie Scalapino, Objects in the Terrifying Tense/Longing from Taking Place.
Also Offered As: ENGL 5735
1 Course Unit
COML 5790 Spinoza After Marx
This seminar will focus on the thought of Baruch Spinoza and Karl Marx, tracing the effects of their encounter, not only in philosophy and critical theory, but in fields ranging from literary studies to environmental humanities. The second half of the twentieth century saw a revival of interest in Spinoza across the humanities and social sciences as a means of rethinking the very terms of philosophical and political debates of modernity. Mobilized for political purposes and contemporary demands, especially among Marxist theoreticians, Spinoza’s philosophy became virtually unrecognizable from its earlier forms of reception. This seminar departs from the following observation: on the one hand, this revival of Spinoza proved especially fruitful among Marxist theoreticians; on the other hand, the modes of interpretation of Spinoza and the adaptations of Spinoza and Marxism are highly heterogeneous and often conflictual. The seminar will ask: what is it about Spinoza’s thought that lends itself to a revival of Marxism? To what extent is Marx’s thought necessary for a reevaluation of Spinoza? Why Spinoza today? To address these questions, we will trace the multiple traditions that think Marx and Spinoza together: the deployment of Spinoza against Hegel to rejuvenate Marxism in France (Louis Althusser, Etienne Balibar, Gilles Deleuze, Chantal Jaquet); the development of theories of the multitude in the tradition of Autonomism in Italy (Antonio Negri, Paolo Virno); the vicissitudes of Spinozism among the Soviet Marxists (Lyubov Axelrod, Abram Deborin, Evald Ilyenkov). Likewise, we will investigate the most recent turn to the Marx-Spinoza tradition in psychoanalysis (A. Kaarina Kordela), rethinking finance capitalism (Frederic Lordon), feminist theory (Moira Gatens), literary studies (Pierre Macherey, Anthony Uhlmann), and environmental humanities (Hasana Sharp, Beth Lord).
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 5790
1 Course Unit

COML 5800 Topics In Aesthetics
Topic title for Spring 2018: Walter Benjamin. Walter Benjamin (1892-1940) is a philosopher whose writings on art, literature, and politics have had tremendous influence on many disciplines in the Humanities and Social Studies. He has been variously described as one of the leading German-Jewish thinkers, and a secular Marxist theorist. With the publication of a four-volume collection of this works in English, many more of his writings have been made accessible to a wider public. Our seminar will undertake a survey of his work that begins with his studies on language and allegory, and continues with his autobiographical work, his writings on art and literature, and on the imaginary urban spaces of the nineteenth-century.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 5871, GRMN 5800, JWST 5800, PHIL 5389
1 Course Unit

COML 5811 Modern/Contemporary Italian Culture
Please see department website for current description at: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ITAL 5810, JWST 5810
1 Course Unit

COML 5821 Topics: Literature and Film
Please see department website for a current course description at: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 5820, ITAL 5820
1 Course Unit

COML 5840 Fantastic Literature 19th/20th Centuries
This course will explore fantasy and the fantastic in short tales of 19th- and 20th-century French literature. A variety of approaches – thematic, psychoanalytic, cultural, narratological – will be used in an attempt to test their viability and define the subversive force of a literary mode that contributes to shedding light on the dark side of the human psyche by interrogating the “real,” making visible the unseen and articulating the unsaid. Such broad categories as distortions of space and time, reason and madness, order and disorder, sexual transgressions, self and other will be considered. Readings will include “recits fantastiques” by Merimee, Gautier, Nerval, Maupassant, Breton, Pieyre de Mandiargues, Jean Ray and others.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CIMS 5821, FREN 5820
1 Course Unit

COML 5850 Italian Thought
This graduate seminar will explore how Italian writers, philosophers and film-makers responded to the impact of European modernity, touching upon difficult episodes such as the formation of race and nationalisms in the nineteenth century, the rise of fascism in the 1920s, the Second World War and the legacy of the Holocaust in contemporary liberal democracies. A late-comer in the league of modern European nations and “backward” from many economic and cultural standards, Italy became, within a few short decades, a political laboratory of some of the most defining ideological forces of the 20th-century, including the rise of racial science and criminal anthropology, which paved the way to Nazi eugenics, Mussolini’s fascism, Gramsci’s original contribution of an “Italian-way” to Communism, and the birth of so-called Italian theory in contemporary philosophy. How did writers, authors and film-makers react to these ideological formations and political events? What forms and genres emerged in response to these dramatic historical forces? In tackling these questions, this course will put novels and films in conversation with theoretical texts at the intersection of postcolonial studies, queer studies, feminist studies, critical theory, and cultural anthropology, focusing on a number of overlapping areas. We will address, for example, the long-lasting impact that the Holocaust had in European culture in Primo Levi’s The Drowned and the Saved through Giorgio Agamben’s analysis of the relationship between biopolitics and fascism in Homo Sacer. We will read Elsa Morante’s novel History in conversation with Carlo Ginzburg’s notion of micro-history. And we will analyze Pasolini’s cinema in connection to scholarship in postcolonial studies, reading his representation of the Roman periphery as a synecdoche of the Global South. Critical readings may include texts by Ernesto De Martino, Antonio Gramsci, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Giorgio Agamben, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Walter Benjamin, Sigmund Freud, Fredric Jameson, Gilles Deleuze, Heather Love, Carla Freccero, Lee Edelman among others.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: CIMS 5850, ITAL 5850
1 Course Unit

COML 5900 Introduction to Francophone Studies
An introduction to major literary movements and authors from five areas of Francophonie: the Maghreb, West Africa, Central Africa, the Caribbean and Quebec.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: AFRC 5900, FREN 5900
1 Course Unit
COML 5904 Theories of Nationalism
You cannot build a wall to stop the free flow of literary and creative ideas. But in constructing narratives of national identity, states have long adopted particular texts as “foundational.” Very often these texts have been epics or romances designated “medieval,” that is, associated with the period in which specific vernaculars or “mother tongues” first emerged. France and Germany, for example, have long fought over who “owns” the Strasbourg oaths, or the Chanson de Roland; new editions of this epic poem, written in French but telling of Frankish (Germanic) warriors, have been produced (on both sides) every time these two countries go to war. In this course we will thus study both a range of “medieval” texts and the ways in which they have been claimed, edited, and disseminated to serve particular nationalist agendas. Particular attention will be paid to the early nineteenth century, and to the 1930s. Delicate issues arise as nations determine what their national epic needs to be. Russia, for example, needs the text known as The Song of Igor to be genuine, since it is the only Russian epic to predate the Mongol invasion. The text was discovered in 1797 and then promptly lost in Moscow’s great fire of 1812; suggestions that it might have been a fake have to be handled with care in Putin’s Russia. Similarly, discussing putative Mughal (Islamic) elements in so-called “Hindu epics” can also be a delicate matter. Some “uses of the medieval” have been exercised for reactionary and revisionist causes in the USA, but such use is much more extravagant east of Prague. And what, exactly, is the national epic of the USA? What, for that matter, of England? Beowulf has long been celebrated as an English Ur-text, but is set in Denmark, is full of Danes (and has been claimed for Ulster by Seamus Heaney). Malory’s Morte Darthur was chosen to provide scenes for the queen’s new robing room (following the fire that largely destroyed the Palace of Westminster in 1834), but Queen Victoria found the designs unacceptable: too much popery and adultery. Foundations of literary history still in force today are rooted in nineteenth-century historiography: thus we have The Cambridge History of Italian Literature and The Cambridge History of German Literature, each covering a millennium, even though political entities by the name of Italy and Germany did not exist until the later nineteenth century. What alternative ways of narrating literary history might be found? Itinerary models, which do not observe national boundaries, might be explored, and also the cultural history of watercourses, such as the Rhine, Danube, or Nile. The exact choice of texts to be studied will depend in part on the interests of those who choose to enroll. Faculty with particular regional expertise will be invited to visit specific classes.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 5940, ITAL 5940
1 Course Unit

COML 5930 Classical Film Theory
At a moment when contemporary film and media theory has become increasingly interested in how earlier film theories can help us understand our moment of transition, this course will give students the opportunity to read closely some of those key early texts that are preoccupied with questions and problems that include: the ontology of film, the psychology of perception, the transition to sound, the politics of mass culture, realism, and ethnography. Course requirements: ; completion of all readings and screenings; participation in class discussion; weekly online responses; 20-25 page paper.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ARTH 5930, CIMS 5930, ENGL 5930, GSWS 5930
1 Course Unit

COML 5940 Cinema and Media Studies Methods
This proseminar will introduce a range of methodological approaches (and some debates about them) informing the somewhat sprawling interdisciplinary field of Cinema and Media Studies. It aims to equip students with a diverse—though not comprehensive—toolbox with which to begin conducting research in this field; an historical framework for understanding current methods in context; and a space for reflecting on both how to develop rigorous methodologies for emerging questions and how methods interact with disciplines, ideologies, and theories. The course’s assignments will provide students with opportunities to explore a particular methodology in some depth through the lenses of pedagogy, the conference presentation, the written essay, or an essay in another medium of your choice, such as the graphic or video essay. Throughout, we will be trying to develop practical skills for the academic profession. Although our readings engage a variety of particular cinema and media objects, this course will be textually based. The methods studied will be organized around the following concepts and challenges: History/Time; Archive/Gaps/Limits; Ethics and Access; Space/Location/Position/Perspective; Sharing Media: Technology/Exhibition/Experience; National/Transnational/Global/Glocal Frameworks; Voice/Listening/Volume; Against/Beyond Representation; Infrastructures & Environments; and Elements. No prior experience needed. The course is also open to upper-level undergraduates with relevant coursework in the field by permission of instructor. Course Requirements: Complete assigned readings and screenings and actively participate in class discussion; 20% Canvas postings; 10% Annotated bibliography or course syllabus on a particular methodology; 20% SCMS methodology-focused conference paper proposal according to SCMS format; 10% Research paper (5,000 words) or essay in other format (such as graphic or video essay) using the methodology explored in the syllabus or bibliography; 40% Fall
Also Offered As: ARTH 5933, CIMS 5933, ENGL 5933, GSWS 5933
1 Course Unit

COML 5910 Francophone Postcolonial Studies
Please see the department’s website for current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: AFRC 5910, FREN 5910
1 Course Unit
COML 5950 Travel Literature
Within the context of the ill-defined, heterogeneous genre of the travelogue and of today’s age of globalization, CNN and the Internet, this seminar will examine the poetics of travel writing based largely albeit not exclusively on travel notebooks, or journaux/carnets de voyage, spanning the 20th century from beginning to end. One of the principal specificities of the texts studied is that they all evince to a lesser or greater degree a paradoxical resistance both to the very idea of travel(ing) as such and to the mimetic rhetoric of traditional travel narratives. We will therefore look at how modern or postmodern texts question, revisit, subvert or reject such key notions of travel literature as exoticism, nostalgia, exile, nomadism, otherness or foreignness vs. selfhood, ethnology and autobiography, etc. Authors considered will include Segalen, Morand, Michaux, Leiris, Levi-Strauss, Butor, Le Clezio, Baudrillard, Bouvier, Jouanard, Leuwers.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 5950
1 Course Unit

COML 5980 Theories of Gender & Sexuality
This course addresses the history and theory of gender and sexuality. Different instructors will emphasize different aspects of the topic. See the English Department’s website at www.english.upenn.edu for a complete description of the current offerings.
Also Offered As: ENGL 5980, GSWS 5980
1 Course Unit

COML 6010 Italian Literary Theory
Please see department website for current description at: http://www.sas.upenn.edu/italians/graduate/courses
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ITAL 6010
1 Course Unit

COML 6030 Poetics of Narrative
Please see the department’s website for current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6030
1 Course Unit

COML 6050 Modern Literary Theory and Criticism
This course will provide an overview of major European thinkers in critical theory of the 20th and 21st centuries. We will pay particular attention to critical currents that originated in Eastern European avant-garde and early socialist contexts and their legacies and successors. Topics covered will include: Russian Formalism and its successors in Structuralism and Deconstruction (Shklovsky, Levi-Strauss, Jakobson, Derrida); Bakhtin and his circle, dialogism and its later western reception; debates over aesthetics and politics of the 1930s (Lukacs, Brecht, Adorno, Benjamin, Radek, Clement Greenberg); the October group; Marxism, new Left criticism, and later lefts (Althusser, Williams, Eagleton, Jameson, Zizek). Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: ENGL 6050, ENGL 7905, FREN 6050, GRMN 6050, ITAL 6050, REES 6435
1 Course Unit

COML 6090 Global France
The purpose of this course is to examine the various modalities of interaction between anthropology and literature in modern French culture. Our guiding thesis is that the turn toward other cultures has functioned as a revitalizing element in the production of cultural artifacts while providing an alternative vantage point from which to examine the development of French culture and society in the contemporary period. The extraordinary innovations of “ethnosurrealism” in the twenties and thirties by such key figures of the avant-garde as Breton, Artaud, Bataille, Caillois, and Leiris, have become acknowledged models for the postwar critical thought of Barthes, Derrida, and Foucault, as well as inspiring a renewal of “anthropology as cultural critique in the United States.” Besides the authors just indicated, key texts by Durkheim, Mauss and Levi-Strauss will be considered both on their own terms and in relation to their obvious influence. The institutional fate of these intellectual crossovers and their correlative disciplinary conflicts will provide the overarching historical frame for the course, from the turn of the century to the most recent debates.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6090
1 Course Unit

COML 6100 Ancient and Medieval Theories and Therapies of the Soul
This seminar focuses on premodern conceptions of the ‘soul’, the force felt to animate and energize a human body for as long as it was considered alive, and to activate virtually all aspects of its behavior through time. Premodern concepts of the soul attempted to account for a person’s emotions and desires, perceptions, thoughts, memory, intellect, moral behavior, and sometimes physical condition. The course will trace the various ancient theories of the soul from the Presocratics, Plato, Aristotle, Stoic thought in Greek and Latin, medical writers (Hippocratics, Hellenistic doctors, Galen), and Neoplatonists, to the medieval receptions and transformations of ancient thought, including Augustine and Boethius, Avicenna’s interpretation of Aristotle and its medieval influence, and Aquinas and other later medieval ethicists. These premodern conceptions of the soul have a surprisingly long afterlife, reaching into the literary cultures and psychological movements of early modernity and beyond. Knowledge of Greek or Latin not required, but see the following: The seminar will meet for one two-hour session per week, and a separate one-hour ‘breakout’ session during which students who have registered for GREK 608 will meet to study a selection texts in Greek, and students who have registered for COML/ENGL will meet to discuss medieval or early modern texts relevant to their fields of study.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 7060, GREK 7203
1 Course Unit

COML 6120 Hannah Arendt: Literature, Philosophy, Politics
The seminar will focus on Arendt’s major work, The Origins of Totalitarianism (and its three parts, Anti-Semitism, Imperialism, Totalitarianism). We will also discuss the reception of this work and consider its relevance today.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 6120, GRMN 6120, JWST 6120, PHIL 5439
1 Course Unit
COML 6149 Socialist and Post-Socialist Worlds
In 1989-1991, a whole world, perhaps many worlds, vanished: the worlds of socialism. In this graduate seminar we will investigate key cultural works, theoretical constructs and contexts spanning the socialist world(s), focused around the USSR, which was for many the (not uncontested) center of the socialist cosmos. Further, we will study the cultural and political interrelationships between the socialist world(s) and anticolonial and left movements in the developing and the capitalist developed nations alike. Finally, we will investigate the aftermaths left behind as these world(s) crumbled or were transformed beyond recognition at the end of the twentieth century. Our work will be ramified by consideration of a number of critical and methodological tools for the study of these many histories and geographies. The purview of the course is dauntingly large - global in scale - and therefore "coverage" will of necessity be incomplete. In addition to the lead instructor, a number of guest instructors from Penn and from other institutions will join us to lead our investigations into specific geographies, moments and areas. Additionally, four weeks have been left without content, to be filled in via consensus decision by the members of the seminar.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 6490, REES 6149
1 Course Unit

COML 6160 Approaches to Literary Texts
Most seminars focus on literary texts composed during a single historical period; this course is unusual in inviting students to consider the challenges of approaching texts from a range of different historical eras. Taught by a team of literary specialists representing diverse periods and linguistic traditions and conducted as a hands-on workshop, this seminar is designed to help students of literature and related disciplines gain expertise in analysis and interpretation of literary works across the boundaries of time, geography, and language, from classic to modern. Students will approach literature as a historical discipline and learn about key methodological issues and questions that specialists in each period and field ask about texts that their disciplines study. The diachronic and cross-cultural perspectives inform discussions of language and style, text types and genres, notions of alterity, fictionality, literariness, symbolism, intertextuality, materiality, and interfaces with other disciplines. This is a unique opportunity to learn in one course about diverse literary approaches from specialists in different fields.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: CLST 7601, EALC 8290, ENGL 6160, REES 6450, ROML 6160
1 Course Unit

COML 6170 Cultural History of Medieval Rus (800-1700)
This course offers an overview of the literary, cultural, and political history of Medieval Rus from its origins in the 9th century up to the reign of Peter the Great (early 18th century), the period that laid the foundation for the Russian Empire. The focus of the course is on the Kievan and Muscovite traditions but we also look at the cultural space of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Poland (i.e., the territory of today's Belarus and Ukraine). The course takes a comparative and interdisciplinary approach to the evolution of the main cultural paradigms of Russian Orthodoxy viewed in a broader European context (vis-à-vis Byzantium and the Latin West). We learn about the worldview of Orthodox Slavs by examining their religion, ritual, spirituality, art, music, literature, education, and popular culture. Classes are conducted in English. Readings are in Russian and English. English translations of some primary sources are available for those with limited Russian competence.
Fall
Also Offered As: REES 6400
1 Course Unit

COML 6200 Paris and Philadelphia: Landscapes and Literature of the 19th Century
This course explores the literal and literary landscapes of 19th-century Paris and Philadelphia, paying particular attention to the ways in which the built environment is shaped by and shapes shifting ideologies in the modern age. Although today the luxury and excesses of the "City of Light" may seem worlds apart from the Quaker simplicity of the "City of Brotherly Love," Paris and Philadelphia saw themselves as partners and mutual referents during the 1800s in many areas, from urban planning to politics, prisons to paleontology. This interdisciplinary seminar will include readings from the realms of literature, historical geography, architectural history, and cultural studies as well as site visits to Philadelphia landmarks, with a view to uncovering overlaps and resonances among different ways of reading the City. We will facilitate in-depth research by students on topics relating to both French and American architectural history, literature, and cultural thought.
Fall
Also Offered As: FREN 6200
1 Course Unit

COML 6300 Introduction to Medieval French Literature
Topics vary. Previous topics include The Grail and the Rose, Literary Genres and Transformations, and Readings in Old French Texts. Please see the department's website for current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6300
1 Course Unit

COML 6301 Studies in the Spanish Middle Ages
Topics vary. Please see the Spanish Department's website for the current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/hispanic-portuguese-studies/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SPAN 6300
1 Course Unit

COML 6400 Studies in the Renaissance
Topics vary. Previous topics have included Rabelais and M. de Navarre, Montaigne, and Renaissance and Counter-Renaissance. Please see the department's website for the current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6400, GSWS 6400
1 Course Unit

COML 6530 Russian and Soviet Cultural Institutions
In this seminar, we will study Russian and Soviet culture through the history of its institutions, in the broader social-institutional context of land-based European empire and state socialism. The course will include material from the eighteenth to the twenty-first centuries, but attention will be focused disproportionately on the twentieth century. Each unit will focus on a specific social institution of culture, yet will also require the reading/viewing of canonical texts and films. Topics will include: reading publics and education; authorship and professionalization; cultural management of social, ethnic, gender and national diversity (including via institutions of translation); journals and publishing houses; genres; the Union of Soviet Writers; censorship and unofficial dissemination; the film industry; cultural history and memory (jubilee celebrations); the culture industry.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 5910, REES 6150
1 Course Unit
COML 6570 Becoming Modern: The German-Jewish Experience
Yuri Slezkine described the twentieth century as a "Jewish Age"—to be modern would essentially mean to be a Jew. In German historical and cultural studies, this linkage has long been made—only in reference to the last years of the German monarchy and the time of the Weimar Republic. Indeed, what has become known as "modern" German culture—reflected in literature, music, and the visual arts and in a multitude of public media—has been more often than not assigned to Jewish authorship or Jewish subjects. But what do authorship and subject mean in this case? Do we locate the German-Jewish experience as the driving force of this new "modernity," or is our understanding of this experience the result of this new "modern" world?
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 6570, JWST 6570
1 Course Unit

COML 6600 Studies in the Eighteenth Century
Topics of discussion will vary from semester to semester. One possible topic is "Masterpieces of the Enlightenment." We will read the most influential texts of the Enlightenment, texts that shaped the social and political consciousness characteristic of the Enlightenment—for example, the meditations on freedom of religious expression that Voltaire contributed to "affaires" such as the "affaire Calas." We will also discuss different monuments of the spirit of the age—its corruption (Les Liaisons dangereuses), its libertine excesses and philosophy (La Philosophie dans le boudoir). We will define the specificity of 18th-century prose (fiction), guided by a central question: What was the Enlightenment?
Please see department’s website for current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6600
1 Course Unit

COML 6623 Literary History and Aesthetics in South Asia
This seminar surveys the multiple components of literary culture in South Asia. Students will engage critically with selected studies of literary history and aesthetics from the past two millennia. In order to introduce students to specific literary cultures (classical, regional, contemporary) and to the scholarly practices that situate literature in broader contexts of culture and society, the course will focus both on the literary theories—especially from the nineteenth and twentieth centuries—that position South Asia’s literary cultures within broader disciplinary frameworks that use literary documents to inform social, historical and cultural research projects. The aim is to open up contexts whereby students can develop their own research projects using literary sources.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SAST 6623
1 Course Unit

COML 6627 South Asia Literature as Comparative Literature
This course takes up the question of reading South Asian Literature both as a collection of diverse literary cultures, as well as the basis for a methodology of reading that takes language, region, and history into account. It takes as a starting point recent work that foregrounds the importance of South Asian language literatures, and their complex interactions, to an understanding of South Asian literary history, as well as critiques of the concept of world literature that question its underlying assumptions and frequent reliance on cosmopolitan languages such as English. In what ways can we describe the many complex interactions between literary cultures in South Asia, rooted in specific historical contexts, reading practices, and cultural expectations, while maintaining attention to language and literary form? How, in turn, can we begin to think of these literatures in interaction with larger conversations in the world? With these considerations in mind, we will examine works of criticism dealing with both modern and pre-modern literatures, primarily but not exclusively focused on South Asia. Topics will include the concept of the cosmopolis in literary and cultural history, the role of translation, the transformations of literature under colonialism, and twentieth century literary movements such as realism and Dalit literature. Readings may include works by Erich Auerbach, Frederic Jameson, Aijaz Ahmad, Gayatri Spivak, Aamir Mufti, Sheldon Pollack, David Shulman, Yigal Bronner, Shamshur Rahman Faruqi, Francesca Orosini, Subramanian Shankar, Sharankumar Kimbale, and Torlai Jatin Gajarawala. We will also examine selected works, in English and in translation, as case studies for discussion. This course is intended both for students who intend to specialize in the study of South Asia, as well as for those who focus on questions of comparative literature more broadly.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: SAST 6627
1 Course Unit
COML 6631 The Sanskrit Epics
Ancient India’s two epic poems, originally composed in Sanskrit and received in dozens of languages over the span of two thousand years, continue to shape the psychic, social, religious, and emotional worlds of millions of people around the world. The epic Mahabharata, which roughly translates to The Great Story of the Descendants of the Legendary King Bharata, is the longest single poem in the world (approximately 200,000 lines of Sanskrit verse in the 1966 Critical Edition) and tells the mythic history of dynastic power struggles in ancient India. An apocalyptic meditation on time, death, and the utter devastation brought upon the individual and the family unit through social disintegration, the epic also serves as sourcebook for social and political mores and contains one of the great religious works of the world, The Bhagavad Gita (translation: The Song of God), in the middle of its sprawling narrative. The other great epic, The Ramayana (Rama’s Journey), though essentially tragic and about the struggles for power in ancient India, offers a relatively brighter narrative in foregrounding King Rāma, an avatar of the supreme divinity Vi##u, who serves as an ideal for how human beings might successfully negotiate the challenges of worldly life. Perhaps the most important work of ancient Asia, the Rā#āya#a also provides a model of human social order that contrasts with dystopic polities governed by animals and demons. Our course will engage in close reading of selections from both of these epic poems (in English translation) and scholarship on the epic from the past century. We will explore the Sanskrit epic genre, its oral and textual forms in South Asia, and the numerous modes for interpreting it over the centuries. We will also look at the reception of these ancient works in modern forms of media, such as the novel, television, theater, cinema and the comic book/ anime.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: SAST 6631
Mutually Exclusive: COML 2231, SAST 2231
1 Course Unit

COML 6750 Topics in 19th Century Literature
Topics will vary. Please see department’s website for current course description: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: FREN 6750
1 Course Unit

COML 6770 The Life of Forms: Ontogenesis, Morphology, Literature
In recent years, the notions of form, formalism, and morphology have reentered contemporary debates across the humanities. This seminar considers the current resurgence of interest in form by tracing form’s evolving concepts throughout modernity. It departs from the observation that experimentation with and debates on form in art and literature are inextricably linked to various notions of life and the living. These debates—this is the provisional thesis of the seminar—are the battlefield where literary and art criticism undermine the major presuppositions of the western metaphysical tradition (e.g., determinations of inside-outside, form-content, living-inorganic). On the one hand, the seminar will explore a selective genealogy of various attempts to dynamize the concept of form through theories of 1) ontogenesis (e.g., Spinoza, Simondon, Malabou), 2) morphology (e.g., Goethe, Propp, Goldstein), and 3) aesthetics (e.g., Baumgarten, Schlegel brothers, Adorno). On the other hand, in order to investigate the political, ideological, and methodological implications of differing concepts of form, the seminar will bring together texts from different disciplines, including literary studies (literary morphology, Russian Formalism), art history (Focillon, Kubler), philosophy (Wittgenstein, Macherey), On the other hand, in order to investigate the political, ideological, and methodological implications of differing concepts of form, the seminar will bring together texts from different disciplines ranging from literary studies (e.g., Jolles, Russian Formalism, Jauss), art history (e.g., Panofsky, Focillon, Kubler), philosophy (e.g., Wittgenstein, Blumenberg, Macherey), history of science (e.g., Vygotsky, Varela), and sociology (e.g., Tarde, DeLanda). Finally, the seminar will engage in close reading of exemplary literary and art works, and situate the findings on the conjunction of form and life in current debates on New Formalisms (e.g., Levine, Levinson, Kornbluh) and New Materialisms (e.g., Bennett, Grosz).
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 6770
1 Course Unit

COML 6820 Seminar on Literary Theory
Topics vary. See the Spanish Department’s website for the current offerings. https://www.sas.upenn.edu/hispanic-portuguese-studies/pc
Fall
Also Offered As: SPAN 6820
1 Course Unit

COML 6830 Collective Violence, Trauma, and Representation
This seminar is organized as a laboratory space for graduate students and faculty working in a number of adjacent fields and problems. Seminar discussions will be led not only by the primary instructors, but also by a number of guest lecturers drawn from the Penn faculty. For the first weeks of the course, we will focus on seminal works in the interlinked areas of history and memory studies, cultural representations of collective violence, trauma studies, and other related topics. Beginning with the Xth week of the course, we will turn to case studies in a variety of geographic, cultural and historical contexts. Additionally, some later sessions of the seminar will be devoted to a presentation and discussion of a work in progress of a Penn graduate student, faculty member or a guest lecturer.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: LALS 6830
1 Course Unit
COML 6840 Topics in Philosophy.
This seminar explores political thought in Germany from the Imperial state of the early 20th century through its fragmentation and division and into the reunification of east and west Germany in 1992. Much of this period was "after idealism" philosophically and politically, the preface to pessimism and "the passing of political philosophy" as articulated in the Enlightenment (Shklar), but fascinating period of thought and argument. Among our texts are Habermas (philosophy), Weber (sociology), Schmitt (law), Juenger (literature) & their contemporaries. Students are not expected to read texts in the original, although having German will greatly expand your range and the depth of your reading.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GRMN 6840
1 Course Unit

COML 6860 Form, Figure, Metaphor
This course will explore the tensions and overlaps between three concepts in literary studies: form, figure, and metaphor. Through readings of works in literary theory, literature, and literary criticism, we will ask what it means to pay attention to the form of a literary text, whether at the micro scale of its literary figures or the macro scale of its overarching structure. We will historicize the shifting relations between our three key terms by exploring their role in ancient rhetoric, Victorian aesthetic theory, Russian formalism, the New Criticism, and deconstruction, among other literary-critical schools. Special attention will be paid to the notion of metaphor as it operates across genres and disciplines. While our focus will be on modern European and American literary theory, students will come away with interpretive tools beneficial to the study of literature of any period or genre.
Also Offered As: ENGL 7052
1 Course Unit

COML 6960 Postcolonial Theory Francophone
Topics vary. For current course description, please see French Department’s webpage: https://www.sas.upenn.edu/french/pc
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: FREN 6960
1 Course Unit

COML 7080 Cultural and Literary Theory of Africa and the African Diaspora
This course introduces students to the theoretical strategies underlying the construction of coherent communities and systems of representation and how those strategies influence the uses of expressive culture over time. Topics vary. See the Africana Studies Department’s website at https://africana.Studies.sas.upenn.edu for a description of the current offerings.
Fall or Spring
Also Offered As: AFRC 7080, ENGL 7080
1 Course Unit

COML 7255 Literary Criticism and Theory in Japanese Literature
While the focus of this seminar will shift from year to year, the aim is to enable students to gain 1) a basic understanding of various theoretical approaches to literature, 2) familiarity with the histories and conventions of criticism, literary and otherwise, in Japan; 3) a few theoretical tools to think in complex ways about some of the most interesting and controversial issues of today, such as nationalism, imperialism, colonialism, postmodernism, and feminism, with particular focus on Japan’s position in the world. The course is primarily intended for graduate students but is also open to advanced undergraduates with permission of the instructor. The course is taught in English, and all of the readings will be available in English translation. An optional discussion section may be arranged for those students who are able and willing to read and discuss materials in Japanese.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: EALC 7255
1 Course Unit

COML 7600 Realisms Seminar--19th Century to Contemporary
An advanced graduate seminar focused on Realism and spanning several centuries. This two-part course will consider the literary history of realism and will take on some fundamental epistemological questions entailed by the novel’s attempts to represent the real. We will read major theories of realism alongside canonical and marginal realist fiction. Emily Steinlight will address the variously formal, aesthetic, political, and epistemological status of realism in nineteenth-century novels and in theories old and new; some discussion will focus on the concept of totality and on the uneven histories and revitalized uses of realism across contexts. Heather Love will address the relation between classical realism, hyperrealism, and modernist/avant-garde departures in the 20th and 21st centuries, with special attention paid to the role of observation and description in literature and the social sciences. The range of readings may include novels by Honoré de Balzac, George Eliot, Leo Tolstoy, George Gissing, Mariano Azuela, Virginia Woolf, Patricia Highsmith, Nicholson Baker, Georges Perec, Karl Ove Knausgaard, and Rachel Cusk, as well as critical and theoretical work by Viktor Schklovsky, Georg Lukács, Ian Watt, Roland Barthes, Catherine Gallagher, Fredric Jameson, Elaine Freedgood, Anna Kornbluh, Colleen Lye, the Warwick Research Collective, and others.
Also Offered As: ENGL 7600
1 Course Unit

COML 7670 Modernism
An interdisciplinary and international examination of modernism, usually treating European as well as British and American modernists.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: ENGL 7730
1 Course Unit
COML 7707 The Iliad and its Receptions
We will read selections from the Greek poem together, alongside some modern scholarship on it. We will also read Plato's Ion and the Battle of the Mice and Frogs, as evidence for Homer's ancient philosophical, rhetorical and poetic receptions. We will discuss the history of the poem's translation into English, focusing on earlier translations (Chapman, Hobbes, Pope) and discussing the instructor's goals and challenges in producing a new re-translation. We will also talk about two recent novelizations of the poem, Pat Barker's Silence of the Girls and Madeline Miller's Song of Achilles. The course is primarily intended for graduate students in Classical Studies and Ancient History, but it is also open to students in other programs, including those whose Greek might be less advanced. Prerequisite: Students should have a working knowledge of Greek.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: GREK 7707
1 Course Unit

COML 7708 Black Classicisms
This course will explore heterogeneous responses to ancient Greek and Roman Classics in the literature, art, and political thought of Africa and the Black Diaspora, ranging from the late eighteenth century to the present day and encompassing Africa, the Caribbean, and North America. We will analyze how African and black diasporic writers, artists, and thinkers have engaged with and re-imagined Greco-Roman Classics, both to expose and critique discourses of racism, imperialism, and colonialism, and as a source of radical self-expression. Throughout, we will consider the reciprocal dynamic by which dialogues with ancient Greek and Roman classics contribute to the polyphony of black texts and these same texts write back to and signify on the Greek and Roman Classics, diversifying the horizon of expectation for their future interpretation. Writers and artists whose work we will examine include Romare Bearden; Dionne Brand; Gwendolyn Brooks; Aimé Césaire; Austin Clarke; Anna Julia Cooper; Rita Dove; W.E.B. Du Bois; Ralph Ellison; Athol Fugard, John Kani, and Winston Ntshona; C.L.R. James; June Jordan; Toni Morrison; Harryette Mullen; Marlene Nourbese Philip; Ola Rotimi; William Sanders Scarborough; Wole Soyinka; Mary Church Terrell; Derek Walcott; Booker T. Washington; Phillis Wheatley; and Richard Wright. We will study these writers in the context of national and transnational histories and networks and in dialogue with relevant theoretical debates. Work for assessment will include a 15-page research paper and the preparation of a teaching syllabus for a course on an aspect of Black Classical Receptions.
Not Offered Every Year
Also Offered As: AFRC 7708, CLST 7708
1 Course Unit

COML 7920 Study of a Genre: The Manifesto
If ubiquity confers significance, the manifesto is a major literary form, and yet it has been relatively marginalized in genre studies, where attention to the manifesto has been largely devoted to anthologies. In this seminar we will focus on the manifesto as a genre by exploring its histories, rhetorics, definitions and reception from a Black Studies framework. Associated with politics, art, literature, pedagogy, film, and new technologies, the manifesto involves the taking of an engaged position that is tied to the moment of its enunciation. The manifesto's individual or collective authors seek to provoke radical change through critique and the modeling of new ways of being through language and images. Included on the syllabus will be anticolonial, anti-racist, feminist, LGBTQ manifestos of the 18th through 21st centuries from throughout the Black world. In addition to leading class discussion, students will be responsible for a seminar paper or a final project to be developed in consultation with the instructor.
Also Offered As: AFRC 7920, ENGL 7920
1 Course Unit

COML 9810 M.A. Exam Prep
Course open to first-year Comparative Literature graduate students in preparation for required M.A. exam taken in spring of first year.
Not Offered Every Year
1 Course Unit

COML 9990 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.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit

COML 9999 Independent Study and Research
Designed to allow students to pursue a particular research topic under the close supervision of an instructor.
Fall or Spring
1 Course Unit