

FRANCOPHONE, ITALIAN, AND GERMANIC STUDIES (FIGS)

FIGS 0019 Using Media & the Arts to Survive Climate Change in Small Island States

Low-lying islands are highly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change, especially sea level rise. Even if worst-case scenarios don't play out, several island nations could be partially or completely uninhabitable by the end of the century. No wonder that small island developing states (SIDS) have played an outsize role in advancing climate policy at the UN climate summits. In this course, students will learn how climate change affects small low-lying islands and how islanders have responded creatively to these threats, through advocacy, policy innovation, media, and the arts. Students will explore alternative futures for islands and their inhabitants such as floating cities and other forms of climate adaptation. Students will become familiar with the most threatened islands systems (Kiribati, Tuvalu, the Maldives, and the Marshall Islands), as well as the Dutch islands of the Caribbean (Aruba, Bonaire, Curacao, Eustatius, Saba, and Sint Maarten), where the instructor's research is focused. This includes their cultural history and their iconic interventions in the climate discussion. Throughout the semester, experts at Penn and elsewhere will be consulted.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: GRMN 0019

1 Course Unit

FIGS 1000 Seeing Differently: Transcultural Approaches to Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies

Studying Francophone, Italian, and Germanic cultures is an exercise in seeing differently. It means stepping outside the norms and preconceived notions of our own culture and approaching the unfamiliar on its own terms. It means learning how the Francophone, Italian, and Germanic linguistic and cultural spheres each have their own histories marked by unique forms of cultural production such as literature, artworks, and films that shape how their speakers perceive and talk about everyday life. It means understanding why French advertising slogans often have 8 or 12 syllables, why Italians might say that something mediocre is "senza infamia e senza lode," and why German satirical cartoons might depict lying politicians as Baron Munchausen hurtling through outer space atop a cannonball. At the same time, these three spheres are continually shaped by exchange and by shared literary, philosophical, and theoretical traditions. To understand Francophone, Italian, and Germanic cultures, we need to understand how all three cultural-linguistic spheres influence each other, borrow from each other, and define themselves in relation to each other, how they see and are seen by each other. We also need to understand these linguistic spheres and their cultures as products of global exchange from the Middle Ages to the colonial and postcolonial eras. By fostering this understanding of foreign language learning as a transcultural enterprise, the FIGS Core Seminar trains students to see differently. Although it is open to all Penn undergraduate students, it is primarily intended to prepare FIGS majors for coursework at the advanced level and independent research. The seminar centers on the study of literary works, films, fine art, and places marked by transcultural exchange between the Francophone, Italian, and Germanic spheres while training students to develop key competencies for foreign language-based study in the humanities. These include close reading, philology, familiarity with relevant philosophical and theoretical frameworks, work with primary or archival sources at the Kislak Center for Special Collections, Rare Books, and Manuscripts, training with Penn Library staff in locating and evaluating secondary sources, and training in digital approaches and competencies with the help of Penn Libraries and the Price Lab for Digital Humanities. FIGS Core Seminars are taught in English, and, while FIGS majors will be given priority, enrollment will also be open to other Penn Students. In particular, prospective FIGS majors and French and Francophone Studies, Italian Studies, and German minors will be encouraged to enroll. While FIGS majors may complete the Core Seminar at any time prior to graduation, they will be advised to take it as early as possible, ideally in the spring semester of the first or second year.

Spring

1 Course Unit

FIGS 4000 Honors Thesis

Course code for Honors Thesis in the FIGS major.

Not Offered Every Year

1 Course Unit

FIGS 5000 M.A. Exam Preparation

This course will provide a forum for collective preparation for the Master's exam across the three section in FIGS. Faculty will guide students in their work with their M.A. reading list(s)

Spring

1 Course Unit

FIGS 5250 Literary Translation: Theory and Practice

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

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 5251, FREN 5250

Mutually Exclusive: FREN 3020

1 Course Unit

FIGS 5550 Queer European Cinema

This graduate seminar will explore the intertwined histories of queer European cinemas, focusing on French, German, and Italian films. From the inherent queerness of early cinema's attractions (e.g., Méliès, the Lumière brothers, the Skladanowsky brothers) to the gender-bending comedies of the Weimar Republic; from the queer auteurism of new wave cinema (Visconti, Fassbinder, Pasolini, Demy) to the fluid, boundary-pushing sensibilities of more recent works by filmmakers like Akerman, Ozon, Guadagnino and Rohrwacher, this course will examine how representations of gender and sexuality emerge and evolve across different national contexts. In doing so, we will also take a transnational perspective, tracing connections and influences those cross borders and complicate traditional cinematic narratives. The seminar provides an introduction to both film history and queer studies, open to graduate students and qualified undergraduates by permission of the instructors. No prior knowledge of film or queer theory is required.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 5555, GSWS 5555

1 Course Unit

FIGS 6060 Theory Proseminar: A Critique of Violence

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

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: CIMS 6060, COML 6060

1 Course Unit

FIGS 6301 Historical and Historiographic Approaches: Performance Studies

This course focuses on theories and models of historical investigation. It explores the historiographies and methodologies of performance studies, opera/dance studies, and theater/drama studies, in their collisions, collusions, and resonances. The term performance signals "a 'broad spectrum' or 'continuum' of human actions ranging from ritual, play, life performances . . . to the enactment of social, professional, gender, race, and class roles, and on to healing . . . the media, and the internet" (R. Schechner). We will discuss work by (among others) B. Brecht, R. Wagner, A. Artaud, V. Turner, M. Carlson, W.B. Worthen, J. Rancière, J.L. Austin, J. Butler, R. Schneider, E. Fischer-Lichte, H.-T. Lehmann, G. Didi-Huberman, N. André, A. Cavarero, K. Thurman, N. Cook, C. Abbate, D. Levin, and S. McClary, dealing with topics such as agency, performativity, time, materiality, technology and mediation, multimodality, spectatorship, voice, embodiment, dance/movement, the "Baroque," reconstruction and re-enactment, theatricality, intercultural and postdramatic approaches. Students are expected to elaborate their own critical categories to research performance objects selected not exclusively within the province of opera/dance/theater but also within the range of possibilities investigated by performance studies broadly intended.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: ITAL 6301, MUSC 6301

1 Course Unit

FIGS 6640 Marx and Freud

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

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: COML 7640, ENGL 7640

1 Course Unit

FIGS 7361 Topics in Musicology

This seminar investigates topics unfolding across different historical periods. This iteration covers the period from 1500 to today. The specific topics can be found on the course-related webpages of the Department of Music and that of Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies, in addition to the Graduate Catalogue. The seminar is open to all graduate students, including those in Music Studies and Composition; Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies; Comparative Literature & Literary Theory; Global Medieval and Renaissance Studies; Africana Studies; History of Art; Spanish and Portuguese; English; Russian and East European Studies; Jewish Studies; Cinema & Media Studies; Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies; Anthropology; Philosophy; Classical Studies; History; and Digital Humanities.

Not Offered Every Year

Also Offered As: MUSC 7361

1 Course Unit

FIGS 7705 The Harlem Renaissance: Then and Now

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

Not Offered Every Year

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

1 Course Unit

FIGS 7770 Francophone, Italian and Germanic Proseminar

This proseminar will introduce first-year FIGS graduate students to doctoral studies in the humanities. It is organized into four parts. Part I, "Scholarly Habits and Resources," introduces students to a variety of resources at Penn, discusses the scholarly habits that graduate students should develop, and covers strategies for promoting mental and physical well-being as a graduate student. Part II, "Intervening in the Field," introduces students to the processes of conference participation and article publication. Part III, "The Dissertation," covers the ins-and-outs of writing the dissertation. Part IV, "Awards, Networking, and Jobs," addresses the importance of awards and networking as well as the academic and non-academic job markets. While DEI issues are constantly addressed throughout the course, also in the form of assignments, there are also bridge sessions to other courses, especially on pedagogy and recent research trends. In addition to weekly discussions and activities, this course will include a number of guest speakers who will share their expertise and give guidance on the how-tos of the field. Students will be given pre- as well as post-class activities to reflect on each week's topic and begin to prepare a dossier for later use in their graduate studies. Much of the information in this proseminar becomes particularly relevant during the final years of coursework and your dissertation writing years, but it is important to be introduced to these topics and to begin to think about them now. This course is designed for PhD students in Francophone, Italian, and Germanic Studies. Many of the topics apply to all three fields; however, students will also have the opportunity to work on areas that are specific to their language for certain topics. They will also be able to add to the course materials for future graduate students in FIGS.

Fall

1 Course Unit

FIGS 9999 Independent Study

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

1 Course Unit