

World Literature

Contact: Jack Iverson, Chair, Foreign Languages and Literatures

Courses in world literature are designed to enable students to pursue their interests in literature beyond linguistic, cultural, or departmental boundaries. Classes and readings are in English, but students with foreign language proficiency are encouraged to read in the original language. The courses are taught by the members of the Foreign Languages and Literatures and Spanish departments. The material may be drawn from various literatures such as Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish.

Distribution: Courses completed in World Literature apply to the humanities and cultural pluralism distribution areas, with the following exception:

No distribution: 391, 392

The World Literature minor: A minimum of 18 credits in World Literature. Besides courses listed here, selected courses in Classics, Environmental Studies, French, German Studies, Spanish, and Theatre will count toward the minor in World Literature, including Classics 130, 140, 217, 226, and 377; Environmental Studies 217 and 226; French, all 400-level courses; German Studies all 400-level courses; Spanish, all 400-level courses; and Theater 235, 372, and 377. For other courses, please consult the World Literature contact person.

201-204 Special Topics in World Literature, Intermediate Level

4 credits

Courses under this category explore selected topics in world literature at the intermediate level. Any current offerings follow.

217 Gender and Sexuality in Pre-modern Chinese Society and Literature

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course will examine changing gender roles in traditional Chinese society through the reading of literature. We will use representations of women, both through their own writing and in the writing of men, to explore the relationship between gender and political power, self and society, individual and tradition, humans and the numinous realm. We will also discuss representations of desire, agency, “inner-outer” division, and yin-yang polarity. Special attention will be given to the way women’s own writings respond to dominant notions of femininity. Tropes about gender and sexuality that persist through different periods will be used to chart changes in social and literary history. Students will gain familiarity with the large-scale social and ideological transformations that affected representations of gender and sexuality between the early Zhou dynasty (10th cent. BCE) to the end of Qing dynasty (20th cent.); with major writers, works and topoi of different periods; and with relevant gender studies methodology. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major, Gender Studies major, or Chinese minor.

222 Introduction to Modern Japanese Literature and Culture

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course introduces students to selected works of Japanese literature from the 20th century. The course will cover a wide range of prose fiction including autobiographical fiction, realist and fantastic novels as well as works in popular literature genres, including detective and satirical fiction. We will explore the ambivalent ways in which Japanese writers incorporated Western literary theories and concepts into the domestic literary tradition in their efforts to create a “modern Japanese literature.” In addition to the impact of industrialization on human perception and writers’ narrative modes, we will consider how modern printing technologies changed reading practices. Taught in English. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

301 Chinese Literature and Film Adaptation

Spring

He

4 credits

Since the 1920s, the rise of cinema has reinvented the Chinese artistic sphere, providing artists and producers alike with a modern medium of expression. While the emergence of a movie-going culture has created new audiences in a shifting society, the stories and their subject matter have been largely carried over from literature. Currently, over 65% of Chinese films are adapted from literary works, a statistic that suggests Chinese literature as an extension as well as reinterpretation of the culture’s literary tradition. This class will discuss literary works and their movie adaptations comparatively. By considering both types of media, it will analyze the emergence of the new cinematic tradition while fostering a debate over

the emergence of the 20th and 21st Century Chinese identity. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Film and Media Studies major or Chinese minor.

309 French National Cinemas

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

What constitutes a “national” cinema? The classification of cinematic production according to national origin continues to function as an underlying organizational principle of film history texts. “National” cinema, however, simultaneously reflects and produces national (cultural) identities. The concept of national cinema thus encompasses both films that attempt to define a singular, unique cultural identity and films that actively resist such definitions. This course will examine the aesthetic, economic, geographic, linguistic and legislative boundaries defining French national cinemas. Topics will include censorship, reception, colonial cinema, cinematic remakes, literary adaptation, and the French response to Hollywood. May be taken for credit toward the French major, but not toward the French minor. May be taken for credit toward the Film and Media Studies major. May be elected as French 409. Not open to first-semester, first-year students when offered in the fall semester.

312 Solitude and Literary Imagination

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

A theme of solitude runs through the veins of much of Japanese literature. Through studies of selected works of some of significant writers from Japan, we will explore various literary renditions of solitude. Our concern in this course extends beyond a sense of alienation from others to a more essential sense of estrangement from self, one’s own language, and conventional temporality. We will also ruminate on solitude as an origin of literary imagination. The list of writers may include Yukio Mishima, Kobo Abe, Kenzaburo Oe, Mieko Kanai, Haruki Murakami and Toh Enjoji. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

315 Between History and Fiction: Classical Chinese Narrative

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course familiarizes participants with the major works of traditional Chinese narrative. In order to broaden general knowledge of this rich literary heritage and to acquaint students with works from historical narratives in the Han dynasty to the great 18th century novel *Dream of the Red Chamber*, the course will combine a close reading of texts with broader questions about literature and culture across different periods of Chinese history. We will explore how these works reflected and influenced the changing ideals of Chinese society—of its readers, writers and critics—paying special attention to issues such as the concept of “fiction” and “fictionality,” the birth of the novel in traditional China, the portrayal of heroic figures, the representation of history, and the treatment of gender relations, among others. Skills emphasized will include close reading, writing analytical papers, and verbal expression. Readings and discussion will be in English; there are no prerequisites for this course. May be elected as Asian and Middle Eastern Studies 315. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Chinese minor.

320 Race, Trauma, Narrative

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course examines the concept of racial trauma in contemporary literature and literary theory. Often described as a hallmark of modern life, trauma has attracted critical attention as a limit case through which to explore the nature of language, memory and the self, and the ethical and political implications of representing violence. Taking postcolonial French texts as a point of departure, this course asks how race and trauma intersect, and how their study illuminates relationships between the personal and the collective; the historical and the transhistorical; narrative genre and transmission; and witnessing, writing and power. May be taken for credit toward the French major or the Race and Ethnic Studies majors.

322 Eccentric Monks and Hermits in Japan

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

This course will survey the stories of eccentric monks and hermits in the Heian, Kamakura, and Muromachi periods of Japan. We will begin with miraculous tales of eminent monks in the ninth century and read stories of recluses who, in the 12th and 13th centuries, expressed a desire to escape from the courtly world of the Heian period. We will read about monks like Gempin and Zōga who became idealized in popular tale collections that appeared in the Kamakura period. We will

also look at the writings of Kamo no Chōmei and Yoshida Kenkō who, from the perspective of courtly nobles, will praise the “mad” acts of these uncompromising recluses, and influence the lives of monks like Ippen, Shinran, Ikkyū, Rennyo, and Ryōkan. Students will be asked to write short papers, give oral presentations, submit a longer term paper, and participate in a final oral examination. All readings will be in English, but a background in Japanese language would be helpful. Not open to first year students. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

325 Imagining Community through Contemporary Japanese Fiction and Film

Spring

Shigeto

4 credits

In this course we will explore selected works of Japanese fiction and film created during the “postmodern” period (from 1980 to the present.) During this period, the sense of belonging to a traditional community such as nation and family is said to have weakened—or perhaps dissipated altogether—in Japan. The overarching question we engage with is what kinds of different communities and subjectivities are imagined in and through literary and filmic texts during this period. Hence, we will not treat these works merely as representations of contemporary Japanese society but also as the sites where creative efforts to imagine different forms of community are unfolding. We will conduct close readings of each literary and filmic text and examine their varying functions within their socio-historical context particularly the economic bubble and subsequent recession. In order to do a contextual reading, along with assigned fiction and filmic texts, we will read works from such fields as cultural studies, anthropology, and critical theory. In so doing, students will be expected to constantly question their assumptions about contemporary Japanese culture and society. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

328 Haiku and Nature in Japan

Fall

Takemoto

4 credits

This course will enter the *haiku/haikai* world by reading poems and essays by two *haiku* poets, Basho (1644-1694) and Issa (1763-1827), and stories by Japan’s first Nobel Prize winning novelist, Kawabata Yasunari (1899-1972). The course will explore the nexus between Haiku and Mahayana Buddhist thought and trace how writers and poets and monks shared a literary and religio-aesthetic vocabulary to express an insight into the human condition, the nature of reality, time and eternity, world and nature. Environmental studies students may use this course to satisfy humanities distribution requirements in the major. Environmental humanities students may use this course as one of the three elective courses required for their major. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

330 Introduction to Chinese Film

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

What is *Chinese* cinema and what is Chinese *cinema*? We will explore this question through an introduction of major authors, genres, and cinematic movements in China, Hong Kong, and Taiwan from the 1930s to the present. Combining textual analysis and readings in socio-cultural background, this course examines what has shaped Chinese film industry and screen imagery. Among other things, it will focus on: the genre structuring of Chinese films in relation to Hollywood and European cinemas and the ways nation, gender, social and private space are imagined and constructed on the silver screen. All films are subtitled in English. No prerequisite in Chinese language is required. This course should be of interest to students in Cinema Studies, Asian Studies, Comparative Literature, Media Studies, and Postcolonial Studies. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, Film and Media Studies major or Chinese minor.

338 Undoing the Japanese National Narrative through Literature and Film

Not offered 2018-19

4 credits

In this course we focus on the literary works and films of Japan’s post-WWII period from the mid-1940s through the 1970s and explore the ways in which writers and filmmakers responded to the social and cultural transformations brought about by war, defeat, occupation, and recovery. The main questions to be addressed include: How did writers and filmmakers engage with the question of war responsibility in and through their works? What does it mean to “take responsibility for war”? How do their works, at both levels of form and content, critique and undo the official national narrative that largely coincided with the modernization theory put forth in the early 1960s? How long does the “postwar” last? Taught in English. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Japanese minor.

343 Women Writers in Imperial China: In Search of the “Real” Female Voice**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Despite the dominance of men as authors, subjects, and readers of literature throughout the two millennia of imperial China (221 BCE-1911 CE), this same period also saw the emergence and development of a rich tradition of women’s literature. In this course, we will discuss what kinds of women wrote literary works, and how the marginal status of women’s literature affected the genres in which women wrote and the subjects with which they could deal. As China’s male literature came to develop its own tradition of writing in the voice of women, we will pay special attention to the questions of how women found their own voice despite this pre-existing feminine tradition. Literary works from different historical periods will serve as a means to learn about the changing historical and social conditions behind women’s writing. We will also put some long-existing assumptions about pre-modern Chinese women and Chinese society into critical scrutiny. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Chinese minor.

349 China through the Cinematic Eye**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course examines contemporary Chinese language cinematic works that are well known to general audiences or critically acclaimed at film festivals. We will discuss popular as well as arthouse films, either by one *auteur* (director) who has taken on multiple roles or by selected directors from China, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas. Thematic and generic aspects of the film will be discussed in relation to evolving images of China discretely constructed for domestic or international audiences. All films are subtitled in English. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Chinese minor.

359 A Brave New World: Contemporary Chinese Literature**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

An introduction to Chinese literature from the early 20th century to the present. In China the written word was traditionally treated as a link between people who were otherwise divided by mutually unintelligible dialects. The institution of a new modern vernacular in the 20th century therefore constituted an inaugural moment in modern Chinese history, opening up literature to a much larger audience for the imagination of a new China. How would Chinese literature shape and be shaped by the imagination of the new China? How would modernity/revolution be naturalized through native traditions (such as martial arts genres and ecological romanticism)? How would women, youth, and established artists find a place in larger dialogues? We will discuss these questions through reading major works and literary movements in China, Taiwan, and Hong Kong. The course is conducted in English. No prerequisite in Chinese language is required. May be taken for credit toward the Asian and Middle Eastern Studies major or Chinese minor.

387-390 Special Studies in World Literature**4 credits**

Selected problems of developments in a non-English literature. Such topics as Medieval Courtly Literature, Scandinavian Drama, European Romanticism, Twentieth Century German Fiction, Existentialism, the Enlightenment, the Picaresque and Symbolism may be studied. All material will be read in English translation. Any current offerings follow.

391, 392 Independent Study**Fall, Spring****Staff****1-3 credits**

Directed reading and preparation of a critical paper or papers on a topic suggested by the student. The project must be approved by the staff. The number of students accepted for this course will depend on the availability of the staff.

Prerequisite: consent of instructor.

395 Contemporary Literary Theory**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

This course will expose students to the major contemporary theoretical approaches to literary studies. We will examine a broad array of critical schools and perspectives, including reader-response theory, feminism, poststructuralism, and postcolonial studies. We will pay special attention to the recent “Ethical Turn” in literary studies influenced by the works of French philosophers Emmanuel Levinas and Jacques Derrida. May be taken for credit toward the French major, Gender Studies major, or Race and Ethnic Studies major.

407 Visual Narrations: The Art and Architecture of the Graphic Novel**Not offered 2018-19****4 credits**

Since the publication of *Maus*, graphic novels and comics have come to be understood as challenging, artistic hybrid texts that employ complex literary and visual strategies to engage diverse themes of historical, social and aesthetic import. In this course we will study the works of prominent creators within the Hispanic graphic novel tradition alongside renowned graphic novelists from around the world. After considering the role of translation with respect to graphic narratives, we will explore the formal qualities and artistic innovations of landmark, transnational works. Theoretical, structural and semiotic analyses (Scott McCloud, Santiago García, Ana Merino, Thierry Groensteen) will be read together with primary texts. Readings may include wordless masterpieces (such as the works of Lynd Ward, Frans Masereel, Shaun Tan, Fábio Moon and Gabriel Bá); experimental texts that overtly deconstruct traditional book formats (such as Guillermo Peña's *Codex Espangliensis*, Joe Sacco's *The Great War*, Pascal Rabaté's *Fenêtres sur rue, matinées, soirées*, Richard McGuire's *Here* and Chris Ware's *Building Stories*), and highly stylized, intertextual or metafictional masterworks (such as Antonio Altarriba and Kim's "La casa del sol naciente" and David Mazzucchelli's *Asterios Polyp*). All works will be read in English translation. Course will be taught in English. May be taken for credit toward the Spanish major or the Film and Media Studies major. Applies to the Narrative/Essay or Visual Cultures requirement for the Spanish Major. *Prerequisite*: Spanish 341 or 342 or 343 or 344.