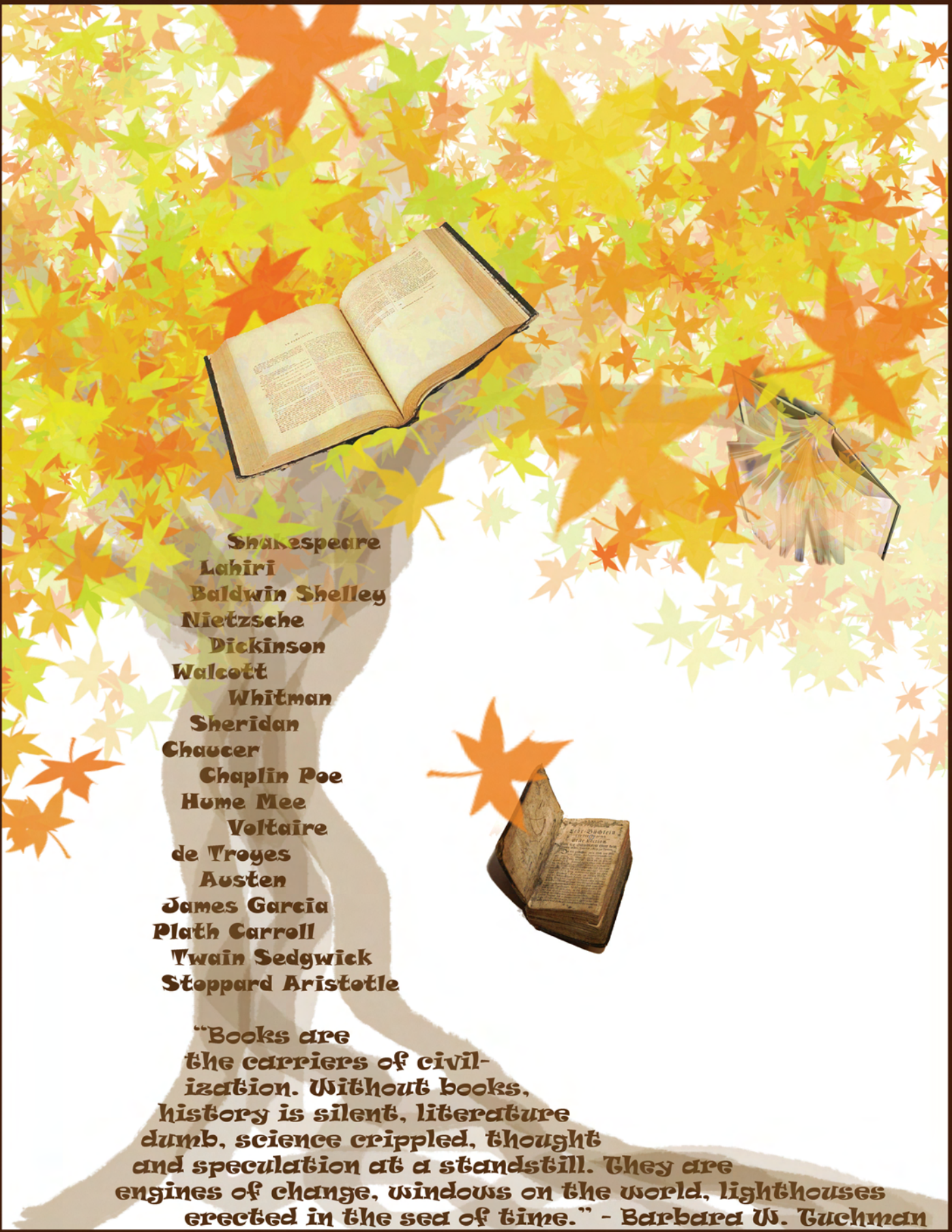




LITERATURE

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
School of Humanities, Arts, and Social Sciences



- Shakespeare
- Lahiri
- Baldwin Shelley
- Nietzsche
- Dickinson
- Walcott
- Whitman
- Sheridan
- Chaucer
- Chaplin Poe
- Hume Mee
- Voltaire
- de Troyes
- Austen
- James Garcia
- Plath Carroll
- Twain Sedgwick
- Stoppard Aristotle

"Books are the carriers of civilization. Without books, history is silent, literature dumb, science crippled, thought and speculation at a standstill. They are engines of change, windows on the world, lighthouses erected in the sea of time." - Barbara W. Tuchman

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INTRODUCTORY

WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE:

CROSSING BORDERS

21L.000/21W.734J CI-HW *Kate Delaney*
MW 8:30-10

This class offers low enrollment with a strong emphasis on class discussion, in-class student reports, frequent writing, and writing workshops. Readings will be drawn from a variety of literary forms and will focus on the theme of crossing borders: travel writing as well as literature of exile, expatriation, and immigration. We will study short and long fiction, nonfiction, drama, poetry, and the graphic novel. We will also consider film treatments of some of these works to investigate the effects of performance of the narrative in another medium. Students will learn to discuss and write about literary techniques as well as the works' cultural and historical context. Readings include: Bruce Chatwin, Susan Orlean, Marjane Satrapi, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ernest Hemingway, Milcha Sanchez-Scott, Redmond O'Hanlon, and David Bezmozgis.

FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CULTURE:

HOMER TO DANTE

21L.001 Hass-D2/CI-H *Arthur Bahr*
MW 1-2:30

As we read broadly from throughout this vast chronological period, we will pair ancient and medieval texts with similar themes as a way of posing questions like: what images, themes, and questions recur through the period; are there distinctly "classical" or "medieval" ways of depicting or addressing them; and what do terms like "Antiquity" or "the Middle Ages" even mean? (What are the Middle Ages in the "middle" of, for example?) Our texts will include adventure tales of travel and self-discovery (Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Commedia*); courtroom dramas of vengeance and reconciliation (Aeschylus's *Oresteia* and the Icelandic *Njáls saga*); short poems of love and transformation (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the Lais of Marie de France); and epics of nation-

construction and empire (Virgil's *Aeneid* and the Anglo-Saxon *Beowulf*).

READING FICTION (SECTION 1)

21L.003 Hass-D1/CI-H *Ina Lipkowitz*
TR 9:30-11

This course introduces students to the historical and cultural dimensions of fiction, as well as teaches them to work with the specific language and texture of literary works. We will consider such questions as: how do we distinguish fiction from other types of prose narrative, such as history, biography, and anthropology? How much did the time and place in which the work was written influence or even determine the work? Why would an author choose to use a specific type of narrator? What are the benefits of and limits to a biographical approach of reading a text? What is genre, and how does it affect the way we read a work of fiction? Readings in the past have included works of fiction by Herman Melville, Edgar Allan Poe, Sir Walter Scott, Jane Austen, Mary Shelley, Gustave Flaubert, Kate Chopin, Virginia Woolf, William Faulkner, and Alistair MacLeod.

READING FICTION (SECTION 2)

21L.003 Hass-D1/CI-H *Kim Vaeth*
TR 2:30-4

This course offers students ways to become more engaged and (hopefully) more curious readers for life. By learning the language and structure of the short stories and novels we read, we learn the language of literary description. There will be a strong emphasis on class discussion and writing. Readings may include works by Chekhov, O'Connor, Woolf, Cheever, Marquez and Munro.

READING POETRY (SECTION 1)

21L.004 Hass-D1/CI-H *Noel Jackson*
MW 1-2:30

An introduction to poetry in English, chiefly by British and American poets. We will explore the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Modernism in particular detail. Though the organization of the subject is chronological, our focus will be less on names and dates than on

tactics of analytic reading. Poets to be read may include Shakespeare, Sidney, Wordsworth, Keats, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, and Elizabeth Bishop.

READING POETRY (SECTION 2)

21L.004 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *Nadia Colburn*
MW 3:30-5

The course is designed to concentrate on the art of close reading. The readings are organized chronologically from the sixteenth through the twentieth century, focusing in most depth on the seventeenth century, the romantic and the modernist periods. We will have an opportunity to witness both the deep cultural changes that have taken place over a period of six hundred years and the continuities of poetic – and human – concerns.

INTRODUCTION TO DRAMA

21L.005 *Hass-D3/CI-H* *Anne Fleche*
TR 3:30-5

Drama might be described as a game played with something sacred. It tells stories that go right to the heart of what people believe about themselves. And it is enacted in the moment, which means it has an added layer of interpretive mystery and playfulness, or “theatricality.” In this course we will explore the mystery and the fun of drama by ranging across periods and cultures—ancient Greece, contemporary America, Renaissance Spain, eighteenth-century Japan, medieval England. In addition to writing essays, you will attend and review a play, and perhaps perform scenes in class.

AMERICAN LITERATURE

21L.006 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *John Hildebidle*
MW 9:30-11

America has long been a place of encounter, self-making, and exploration of the new and unfamiliar. Guided by those thematic threads, we will consider some aspects of the rich body of writing that can fairly be called “American,” dating as far back as Columbus and William Bradford, through the “usual suspects” like Hawthorne, Melville, and Thoreau, and down as close to the present day as the limits of a

single term allow. A high priority will be placed on attendance and participation in discussion. The goal is understanding but also enjoyment.

WORLD LITERATURES: TRAVEL WRITING

21L.007 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *Mary Fuller*
TR 9:30-11

Why do we travel, and why do we read and write about it? This subject will explore the increasingly popular phenomenon of travel writing across both time and space. We will read texts associated with three different itineraries or zones: crossing North America (Cabeza de Vaca, William Least Heat Moon, Lewis and Clark); West Africa and the Atlantic world (Equiano, Stanley, Caryl Phillips); the Polar regions (the Shackleton and Scott expeditions, *Atanarjuat*).

SHAKESPEARE

21L.009 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *Howard Eiland*
MW 1-2:30

The class will study eight plays, including examples of tragedy, comedy, history play, and romance. Emphasis is on close analysis of the text – there is much reading aloud in class – as well as on the historical situation of the plays. We will also be considering theatrical and cinematic realizations, especially as these shed light on Shakespeare’s characters and imagery. The class format is group discussion and group readings of passages from the plays, with informal lectures by the instructor.

THE FILM EXPERIENCE

21L.011 *Hass-D3/CI-H* *David Thorburn*
T 4-5, 7-10; Recitations R 3-5 or R 4-5

This subject will examine a series of classic films by American and European directors, with emphasis on the historical evolution of the film medium and on the cultural and artistic importance of individual films. The course will be organized in three segments: 1) The Silent Era (films by Griffith, Chaplin, Keaton, Murnau); 2) Hollywood Genres (Hitchcock, Ford, Kelly, Fosse, Altman); and 3) International Masters (Renoir, De Sica or Fellini, others). All films will be shown on Tuesday evenings and will be available on

videocassette or DVD to assist students in the writing of essays and in preparation for exams.

FORMS OF WESTERN NARRATIVE

21L.012 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *James Buzard*
TR 3:30-5

This class examines some leading examples of major genres of storytelling in the Western tradition. We will be asking why people tell (and have always told) stories, how they tell them, why they might tell them the way they do, and what difference it makes how they tell them. We'll combine an investigation of the changing formal properties of narratives with consideration of the historical, cultural, and technological factors that have influenced how tales got told. In Fall 2008, the class will be organized around the theme of journeys, and readings will most likely include Homer's *Odyssey*, a medieval quest romance, selections from Cervantes's *Don Quixote*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, plus one 20th-century novel, some short stories, and perhaps some samples of early narrative film.

SAMPLINGS

SMALL WONDERS:

"IS THERE A DOCTOR IN THE HOUSE?"

21L.325 *John Hildebidle*
MW 2:30-4

We will consider some contemporary portrayals of the medical profession. Our materials will consist of small pieces and excerpts: from works by Tracy Kidder and Anne Fadiman; TV episodes of "House," "ER," "Scrubs," and "Gray's Anatomy"); and essays by Atul Gawande, Pauline Chen, Richard Selzer, and Jerome Groopman. Through frequent short writing assignments, we will construct our own personal "character kit" for doctors we'd prefer to invite into our own lives.

LATIN I

21L.330 *Yumna Khan*
TR 11-12:30 (ends 10/24/08)

This course serves as an intensive introduction to the Latin language and Roman culture for those with little or no previous knowledge of Latin. The class has two aims: to equip students with knowledge of Latin vocabulary and key grammatical concepts and structures; and to provide students with a solid basis for further study and for the reading of Latin texts in the original.

LATIN II

21L.335 *Yumna Khan*
TR 11-12:30 (starts 10/27/08)

This course is intended for students with some previous knowledge of the Latin language, and aims to extend that knowledge through the study of grammar and the reading of texts, to the point where students are capable of reading Roman authors in the original.

INTERMEDIATE

COMEDY

21L.421 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *Howard Eiland*
MW 2:30-4

The class begins with the ancient Greeks. Aristophanes' comic revel, *Lysistrata*, allows for consideration of some basic tendencies of the genre: its utopian moment (progression through blockage and discord to resolution and the vision of a more harmonious society), its nihilistic moment (the dispelling of illusion and the experience of chaos), its eye for the domestic and everyday, and for the bodily life, its festive character, etc. We then move to various types of comedy – including satire, farce, comedy of manners, screwball comedy, tragicomedy – as exemplified in works by modern authors and film directors like Shakespeare, Cervantes, Molière, Austen, Wilde, Beckett, Chaplin, and Cukor. The class format is group discussion and group readings from the texts, with informal lectures by the instructor.

LITERATURE AND FILM

21L.435 Pete Donaldson

T 7-10

Study of literary and dramatic adaptation on film, the role of script, screenplay, literary improvisation in film, theories of textuality, form, genre and narrative in film and literature. Special attention to groups of films and texts (Jane Austen films and novels, works in the *noir* and related modes, American theater of the 1940s to 60s) in which text-film relations are especially rich. Reading/watching list will include (most of) the following: *Blade Runner* and *Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep?*, *Clueless* and Austen's *Emma*; Pasolini's film of *Medea*, Euripides' play and Ovid's version in *Metamorphoses*; *The Misfits*, *Death of a Salesman* (play); *A Streetcar Named Desire* (film and play); *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*; *MASH* (film), *Adaptation*, *Vanya on 42nd Street* and Chekhov's *Uncle Vanya*, *Malcolm X* (Spike Lee film, literary source, James Baldwin parallels); *The Hours* (film) and Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (novel); *The Big Lebowski*, *Double Indemnity*, *Pulp Fiction*, and examples of "noir" and pulp fiction and at least one Hitchcock film.

DARWIN AND DESIGN (SECTION 1)

21L.448/21W.739J Hass-D2/CI-H

James Paradis

MW 8:30-10

We will explore some of the many origins of evolutionary thought in classic works of literature and intellectual history, with special attention to the themes of *agency*. Design, the adaptation of means to ends, will be a central concern, as we examine narratives of autonomous agency, atavism, and feedback in works like Hume's *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Smith's *Wealth of Nations*, Voltaire's *Candide*, Malthus's *Essay on Population*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, Samuel Butler's *Erewhon*, Stevenson's *Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland*, Wells' *The Time Machine*, Wiener's *God and Golem*, and William Gibson's *Neuromancer*. We will discover the evolutionary thread that leads

from Aristotle through speculative fiction and nonfiction to modern feedback theory.

DARWIN AND DESIGN (SECTION 2)

21L.448/21W.739J Hass-D2/CI-H

Alvin Kibel

TR 9:30-11

This subject offers a broad survey of texts (both literary and philosophical) selected to trace the immediate intellectual antecedents and the implications of the ideas animating Darwin's revolutionary *On the Origin of Species*. Darwin's text is about the mechanism that drives the evolution of life on this planet, but the fundamental ideas of the text have implications that range well beyond the scope of natural history. These ideas are of decisive importance when we think about ourselves, the nature of the material universe, the planet that we live upon, and our place in its scheme of life.

In establishing his theory of natural selection, Darwin knew that he was implicitly challenging a whole way of thinking about these things. Our main focus will be Darwin's contribution to the so-called "argument from design," nowadays called "intelligent design": the notion that an intelligent, conscious agency must have been responsible for the organization and creation of the world and everything in it. Before Darwin, it had been argued that such features must have come either from chance or from a mindful agency. Darwin proposed and elaborated a third source, which he called Natural Selection, a mindless agency capable of outdoing the most complex feats of human intelligence.

We will not only examine the immediate inspiration for this idea in the work of Adam Smith and Thomas Malthus, but also touch upon the long history of the idea of intelligent design. Further, we will examine some related questions: (a) is natural selection *via* our genetic endowment the source of our ethical biases? (b) if mindless nature can select, can mindless machinery, like computers, think? (c) does mankind's intelligence set it apart from nature by virtue of its capacity to adapt the natural environment to its needs or is

intelligence just one way – and not an especially privileged way – to compete in the struggle for existence? In the course of discussing such issues we shall also be reading literary texts by authors such as Lewis Carroll, Voltaire, E. M. Forster, H. G. Wells, Samuel Butler, and Robert Louis Stevenson.

THE BIBLE

21L.458

Ina Lipkowitz

TR 11:30-1

The Bible – both Hebrew Bible and New Testament – is a complex and fascinating text, written by many people, in different languages, over a vast period of time, yet still displaying an overarching unity. Our purpose in this course is to consider the Bible as both a collection of disparate books and as a unified whole. Of course it is impossible to discuss the Bible without reference to religion, but religious interpretation – whether Jewish or Christian – is not our primary concern. Rather, we will explore the Bible's literary techniques and its enormous variety of genres – everything from myth to history, from genealogy to poetry – as well as the historical periods that produced and are reflected in it. We will also consider issues arising from the history of the translation of the Bible from its original Hebrew and Greek. We will read Genesis, Exodus, selections from Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, 1 and 2 Samuel, Isaiah, Job, Daniel, the Gospels, Acts, Pauline Epistles, and Revelation.

MEDIEVAL LITERATURE:

LEGENDS OF ARTHUR

21L.460

Arthur Bahr

MW 3:30-5

As a quasi-historical, quasi-legendary figure of consistently great popularity, King Arthur (with or without his Knights of the Round Table) has been subject to an extraordinary amount of reinvention and rewriting: as a Christian hero and war-leader; as an ineffective king and pathetic cuckold; and as a tragic figure of noble but doomed intentions. As we trace Arthur's evolution, and that of his wife and principal knights, we will ask what underlies the appeal of this figure whose

consistent reappearance in western culture has performed the medieval prophecy that he would be *rex quondam et futurus*: the once and future king. Readings will include Geoffrey of Monmouth's *History of the Kings of Britain*; the *Lais* of Marie de France; several poems of Chrétien de Troyes; substantial portions of the very substantial *Le Morte D'Arthur* of Malory; and the anonymous *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight*.

RENAISSANCE LITERATURE:

VOYAGES

21L.463

Mary Fuller

TR 2:30-4

The Renaissance has justly become both famous and notorious as an age of discovery, and its voyages took place in many realms. This semester, we will read several history-making narratives of early modern travel: first-hand accounts of discovery, captivity, conquest, or cultural encounter. As Europeans came to acquire experience of unfamiliar places, literary texts of the period began to assimilate this experience by describing *imagined* voyages across real or fantastic landscapes. Finally, voyages of exploration served Renaissance writers as a metaphor: for intellectual inquiry, for spiritual development, or for the pursuit of love. Among the literary genres sampled this semester will be sonnets, plays, prose narratives, utopias, and chivalric romance. Authors will include Francis Petrarca, Amerigo Vespucci, Thomas More, Christopher Marlowe, Edmund Spenser, Hernán Cortés, John Donne, Francis Drake, Mary Rowlandson, Francis Bacon.

EIGHTEENTH-CENTURY LITERATURE:

MAKING THE MODERN SELF

21L.470

Noel Jackson

MW 3:30-5

This subject will explore the revolution in the understanding of selfhood that takes place over the course of England's "long eighteenth century" (for our purposes, roughly 1690-1820). Primary readings will range widely across genre, from lyric poetry and the novel to diaries, philosophical prose, and political

essays; authors may include Alexander Pope, Jonathan Swift, David Hume, Laurence Sterne, Olaudah Equiano, William Godwin, and Mary Wollstonecraft. We will in addition read some influential accounts of selfhood and subjectivity by twentieth-century philosophers, literary theorists, and cultural historians (Foucault, Habermas, Judith Butler, Charles Taylor and others), which will help us put into focus the continuities and points of difference between the “modern” individual of the eighteenth century and the salient categories of identity in use today.

MAJOR EUROPEAN NOVELS

21L.472 *Alvin Kibel*

TR 1-2:30

This subject traces the history of the European novel by studying texts that have been influential in the development of the novel as a literary form. It concerns itself, as well, with two related ideas. (1) In dealing with matters of great consequence, serious fiction does not deal with persons of consequence; rather, it deals with the lives of apparently ordinary people and the everyday details of their social ambitions and desires. This idea goes with another: (2) that the most significant representations of the human condition are those dealing with persons who try to compel society, against its resistance, to accept them as its agents.

We begin with Cervantes's masterpiece, *Don Quixote*, which pokes fun at the idea that one can elect oneself as a person of destiny and which also introduces into narrative fiction a quality with which later novels are much occupied: a kind of teasing inquiry into the various devices by which narratives tend to endow characters with importance. We then turn to serious representations of this idea in nineteenth-century fiction: Balzac's *Old Goriot*, Stendhal's *The Red and the Black*, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*, and Tolstoy's *Anna Karenina*. Endowing characters with extraordinary intensity, these books constitute the main tradition of modern realistic fiction. In reading them, we will also consider the distinctions to

be drawn between the realistic tradition and the tradition of naturalism, which deals with characters more subdued in their relation to the social forces that constrain their lives. Our readings will end with one work of twentieth-century fiction, either Joseph Roth's *The Radetsky March* or Albert Camus's *The Plague*.

NON-LINEAR AND INTERACTIVE NARRATIVE: THEORY AND PRACTICE

21L.489J/21W.765J/CMS.845 *Nick Montfort*

TR 1-2:30

To understand the computer's potential for developing interactive narrative systems, we will study narrative theory (narratology) and explore unconventional narratives, some of them in print. Digital media works we will consider include hypertext novels, interactive fiction, and certain examples of computer games, digital poetry, and digital art that have particularly interesting narrative qualities. Students will write critically and will present their readings of different pieces. They will also pursue a substantial creative project over the course of the semester, which will be workshopped and finally presented in class.

THE AMERICAN NOVEL:

A REGIONAL MOSAIC

21L.501 *Kate Delaney*

MW 1-2:30

This class will examine a number of novels by American authors from the nineteenth, twentieth, and twenty-first centuries, encountering some memorable families and individuals. A pervasive theme will be the diverse American landscape: from the urban Northeast to the deep South, Midwest, Southwest, California, and the rural Northwest. Readings will include works by Willa Cather, Henry James, William Faulkner, Saul Bellow, Nathanael West, Marilynne Robinson, Toni Morrison, and Cormac McCarthy.

SEMINARS

STUDIES IN DRAMA:

TOO HOT TO HANDLE: FORBIDDEN PLAYS IN MODERN AMERICA

21L. 703 *CI-M* *Anne Fleche*
TR 11:30-1

Unlike film, theater in America does not have a ratings board that censors content. So plays have had more freedom to explore and to transgress normative culture. But plays are still banned, even today—taken off the stage and out of the classroom. How and why does this happen, and who decides whether a play is too dangerous to see or to teach? ARE plays dangerous? Are they, as has been alleged, sinful, even demonic? These are questions we will investigate in this seminar, where we will study plays that have been banned, either legally or extra-legally (i.e. refused production, closed down during production, denied funding, or taken off school reading lists.) We'll look at laws relating to the "obscene" as well as unofficial censorship practices, and think about the way censorship operates in American life now. And of course, we will rediscover the plays, themselves, in their dangerous power to provoke.

A list of possible texts includes George Bernard Shaw, *Mrs. Warren's Profession*; Henrik Ibsen, *Ghosts*; Lillian Hellman, *The Children's Hour*; Tennessee Williams, *A Streetcar Named Desire*; Suzan-Lori Parks, *Topdog/Underdog*; Rachel Corrie, Alan Rickman and Katharine Viner, *My Name is Rachel Corrie*, and works by the "NEA Four."

STUDIES IN POETRY:

SONGS, SONNETS, AND THE STORY OF ENGLISH

21L.704/SP.511 *CI-M* *Diana Henderson*
TR 3:30-5

Sex, death, God, and rock 'n' roll: from the first century of Modern English until today, the sonnet and other seemingly simple lyric forms have told of enduring obsessions and social change, of politics, gender, and religion. We will explore a range of these poems, as well as theoretical and critical analyses, in order to

understand and test the limits of poetic form, genre, and tradition.

Our attention will move between past and present, sound and sight, creativity and communication. Readings will include some of the great Elizabethan sonnet sequences, the heart-rending meditations of Milton, Keats, and Lady Mary Wroth, nineteenth-century exposés of moral and political corruption from Wordsworth to George Meredith, and twentieth-century women's and men's expansions of poetic authority and form across class, race, and nations. Song will vie with written verse, but the surprising range of sonnets in English will provide our anchor as we consider why lyrics, the metaphor of poetic voice, and the legacy of the past remain so compelling – and important – in the modern world of innovation where talk is cheap.

MAJOR AUTHORS:

MODERN SHAKESPEARE/GLOBAL SHAKESPEARE. HAMLET, LEAR, AND THE TEMPEST, 1908-2008

21L. 705 *CI-M* *Pete Donaldson*
TR 1:30-3

An in-depth study of three plays and their life in theater, interpretation and adaptation in world cultures over the last hundred years. We will study the textual variation and compositional "openness" that has fostered the wide range of interpretations these plays have provoked: the work of modernist, feminist, postmodern and psychoanalytic critics; performance history, and a variety of international productions, films and adaptations in print and other media. These include (as whole works or in selections) Aimé Césaire's *Une Tempête*, *The Wide Sargasso Sea*, *Hamlet Machine*, Wu Hsing-Kuo's *Lear is Here* and *The Tempest* (Taiwan), Su Leci's *Revenge of the Prince* (China), Yukio Ninagawa's *Hamlet* (Japan), Ragnar Lyth's *Hamlet* (Sweden), Ong Keng Sen's *Hamlet* and *King Lear* (Singapore), *Shakespeare Behind Bars* (documentary of prison production of *The Tempest*), Jean-Luc Godard's *King Lear* (France/U.S.), Kozintsev's *King Lear* (USSR), and Peter Greenaway's *Prospero's Books*.

STUDIES IN FILM: FILM ANALYSIS

21L.706/CMS.830 *CI-M* *Martin Marks*
TR 3:30-5, Lab TR 7-9. (Labs = screenings of assigned films. Tuesday lab required; Thursday lab optional.)

We look closely at a diverse assortment of worthy and challenging films in both classical and post-classical styles. The goal is to help students develop their skills in the formal analysis of filmic “texts.” Reading assignments are drawn mainly from the 8th edition of *Film Art: An Introduction*, by David Bordwell and Kristin Thompson (2008), which is required for purchase; other readings will be made available through the class’s Stellar website.

Each film will be considered in relation to a specific set of stylistic concepts and methods, organized under four topics: narrative form and characterization, *mise-en-scène*, cinematography and editing, and sound. For example, three films to be discussed under form and characterization are *Contempt*, *Psycho*, and *The Departed*; and three films under *mise-en-scène* are *Jezebel*, *A Streetcar Named Desire* and *Return to Oz*. Under cinematography/editing, we examine *The Philadelphia Story*, *The Killer*, and *The Fog of War*; and under sound, *North by Northwest*, *The Conversation*, and *The Matrix*. As we progress through these topics we will also consider five or six films in one genre—this term, the Western. Our examples will include a silent Western, sound films directed by John Ford, Howard Hawks, and Sergio Leone, and a recent example.

NEW MEDIA LITERACIES AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

21L.715/CMS.871 *Henry Jenkins*
M 11-2, Lab W 3:30-5

What does it mean to be “literate” and how has this changed as a consequence of the introduction of new communication technologies? What social skills and cultural competencies do young people need to acquire if they are going to be able to fully participate in the digital future? What are the ethical choices young people face as participants in online communities and as producers of media?

What can Wikipedia and Facebook teach us about the future of democratic citizenship? How effective is YouTube at promoting cultural diversity? What relationship exists between participatory culture and participatory democracy? How is learning from a video game different from learning from a book? What do we know about the work habits and learning skills of the generation that has grown up playing video games? What impact are young voters having on the 2008 elections and why? What lessons can we take from the study of virtual communities that might help us enhance civic engagement at the local level? Who is being left behind in the digital era and what can we do about it? This class is designed to introduce students to a new wave of research which is bringing together scholars from many different disciplines to ask new questions, pose new models, and try new experiments to better imagine the future of American education and of democracy itself.

While our readings will include some foundational texts on the nature of literacy and even some science fiction narratives which imagine alternative futures for education, much of the reading in the course will be drawn from a series of books recently produced by the MIT Press and the MacArthur Foundation. These books reflect a national push by the MacArthur Foundation to explore how young people are learning informally through the affordances of new media and what implications this has for the future of schools, libraries, public institutions, the workplace, and the American family. Researchers and guests from The MIT Center for Future Civic Media and Project New Media Literacies will play an active role in the course, sharing projects and curricular materials under development and grounding our more theoretical considerations with real world perspectives. Students will have an opportunity to explore these ideas through research papers but they will also be asked to get involved in the development of projects which are designed to have an impact on real world communities.

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Because beavers
don't just

EAT



Leaves of Grass



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