



# Spring 2009 Courses

## Supplement to the Bulletin

LITERATURE

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



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21L LITERATURE  
Class Schedule  
Spring 2009

12/11/2008  
Subject to Change

21L	Gets Credit For	Course Title	Spring 2009 Instructor	Day	Time	Room
<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>						
21L.000J	21W.734J/CI-HW	Writing About Literature	Lipkowitz, Ina	TR	11:30-1	2-147
21L.002	Hass-D2 / CI-H	Foundations of Western Culture: Making of the Modern World	Eiland, Howard	MW	3:30-5	66-156
21L.003	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Reading Fiction	Colburn, Nadia	MW	3:30-5	1-375
21L.003	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Reading Fiction	Perry, Ruth	TR	11-12:30	56-162
21L.004	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Reading Poetry	Vaeth, Kim	TR	11-12:30	13-3101
21L.004	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Reading Poetry	Fuller, Mary	TR	3:30-5	1-277
21L.006	Hass-D1 / CI-H	American Literature	Delaney, Kate	MW	9:30-11	1-246
21L.008	21M.630 HASS-D/CI-H	Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies	DeGraff; James; Lee	MW	11-12:30	32-124
21L.009	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Shakespeare	Donaldson, Pete	TR	3:30-5	1-134
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins / Lab	T	7-10:00	3-270
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins, Henry	T	1-2:30	3-270
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins / Recitation	R	1-2:00	2-132
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins / Recitation	R	1-2:00	2-146
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins / Recitation	R	2-3:00	2-132
21L.011	Hass-D3 / CI-H	The Film Experience	Jenkins / Recitation	R	2-3:00	2-146
21L.016	Hass-D3 / CI-H	Learning from the Past: Drama, Science, Performance	Henderson, Diana/ Sonenberg, Janet	TR	3-4:30	W16-RRA
21L.017	Hass-D2 / CI-H	The Art of the Probable: Literature and Probability	Jackson/Kibel	M	3-4:00	56-114
21L.017	Hass-D2 / CI-H	The Art of the Probable: Literature and Probability	Jackson, Noel	WF	3-4:00	56-191
21L.017	Hass-D2 / CI-H	The Art of the Probable: Literature and Probability	Kibel, Alvin	WF	3-4:00	56-180
<b>SAMPLINGS (6 UNIT SUBJECTS)</b>						
21L.310		Bestsellers	Roholl, Marja	R	7-10:00	14N-112
21L.320		Big Books: Chaucer's <u>Canterbury Tales</u>	Bahr, Arthur	T	7-8:30	14N-112
<b>INTERMEDIATE</b>						
21L.421	Hass-D1 / CI-H	Comedy	Eiland, Howard	MW	1-2:30	1-135
21L.423J	21M.616 /Hass-D3 /CI-H	Folk Music of The British Isles & N. America	Perry, Ruth / Ruckert, George	TR	2-3:30	4-364
21L.433	HASS	Film Styles and Genres: Strangeness, Horror, Fear	Fleche, Anne	MW	1-2:30	4-251
21L.434	HASS	Science Fiction and Fantasy: Cyberpunk	Delaney, Kate	MW	3:30-5	1-273
21L.450	HASS	Ethics and Literature: Questions of Leadership	Kibel, Alvin	MW	9:30-11	56-169
21L.455	HASS	Classical Literature: Monsters, Barbarian Queens, and Nymphs: Women and Power in Classical Literature	Parks, Eric	TR	1-2:30	4-251
21L.471	HASS	Major English Novels	Lipkowitz, Ina	TR	9:30-11	14N-112
21L.481	HASS	Victorian Literature and Culture	Buzard, James	TR	3:30-5	14N-112
21L.485	HASS	Modern Fiction	Thorburn, David	TR	1-2:30	56-162
21L.488	HASS	Contemporary Literature: Literature and Development	Brouillette, Sarah	TR	11-12:30	56-167
21L.490	21F.050J/ HASS	French Literature: French Literature in Translation: From Molière to Le Clézio	Turk, Ed	MW	2:30-4	14N-313
21L.512	SP.517	American Authors: Local Poets	Hildebidle, John	MW	3:30-5	56-167
<b>SEMINAR</b>						
21L.701	SP.510 HASS / CI-M	Literary Interpretation: Lit and the Urban Experience	Brouillette, Sarah	TR	2:30-4	56-169
21L.702	CI-M	Studies in Fiction	Thorburn, David	TR	3-4:30	4-251
21L.705	SP.512 HASS / CI-M	Major Authors: Rewriting Genesis: Paradise Lost and Twentieth-Century Fantasy	Fuller, Mary	TR	11-12:30	56-169
21L.706	CMS.830 HASS / CI-M	Studies in Film	Donaldson, Pete	T	7-10:00	16-644
21L.709	HASS / CI-M	Studies in Literary History: Make It New: Manifestos and the Invention of the Modern	Jackson, Noel	W	7-10:00	14N-112
21L.715	CMS.871/ SP.493/ CI-M	Media in Cultural Context	Green, Joshua	MW	3:30-5	1-134
21L.993	CI-M	Special Topics: Studies in Poetry - Latin	Colaizzi, Randall	MW	1-2:30	14N-112

Time	MONDAY / WEDNESDAY						
8:30							
9:00							
9:30	006	450					
10:00	American Literature	Ethics and Lit					
10:30							
11:00	008						
11:30	Black Matters						
12:00							
12:30							
1:00	421	433	993				
1:30	Comedy	Strangeness, Horror, Fear	Latin Poetry				
2:00							
2:30				490			
3:00			017	French Lit			
3:30	002	003	Art (M), (WF)		434	512	715
4:00	Foundations of W. Culture	Read Fiction Sec 1			Sci Fi: Cyberpunk	American Authors	Media in Context
4:30							
7:00	709						
7:30	Studies in Literary History (W)						
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							
Time	TUESDAY / THURSDAY						
9:00							
9:30	471						
10:00	Major English Novels						
10:30							
11:00		003	004	488	705		
11:30	000J	Read Fiction Sec 2	Read Poetry Sec 1	Contemp. Lit	Major Authors		
12:00	Writing About Lit						
12:30							
1:00	011 - Lec	011 - Rec 1/2	455		485		
1:30	Film Exp (T)	Film Exp - (R)	Classic Lit		Modern Fiction		
2:00		011 - Rec 3/4		423J			
2:30		Film Exp - (R)		Brit + N. Am Folk Music	701		
3:00			016		Literary Interpretation	702	
3:30	004	009	Learning from Past	481		Studies in Fiction	
4:00	Read Poetry Sec 2	Shakespeare		Victorian Lit and Culture			
4:30							
5:00							
7:00	011 - Screen	310	320	706			
7:30	The Film Experience (T)	Bestsellers (R)	Big Books: Chaucer (T)	Studies in Film (T)			
8:00							
8:30							
9:00							
9:30							

## INTRODUCTORY

### WRITING ABOUT LITERATURE

21L.000/21W.734J CI-HW Ina Lipkowitz  
TR 11:30-1 2-147

Why do we write about literature? To help us clarify our own understanding of the story or poem or play, as well as to communicate that understanding to another person who might see the work very differently. Because literary works invite such different interpretations, writing about them is less a matter of proving a universal truth than of suggesting a well-informed and meaningful possibility. In this class, we'll read and talk about a variety of stories, poems, short novels, and/or plays, all of which can be understood in many ways. We'll also read and talk about students' essays in order to see how other people express and develop their ideas. The goal is to learn to not only put up with, but to actually enjoy the many possible meanings of literary works and to experiment with types of essays that reflect rather than limit the work's richness.

Readings vary, but may include stories by William Faulkner, Kate Chopin, Zora Neale Hurston, Anzia Yezierska, James Joyce, Penelope Fitzgerald, Jhumpa Lahiri; plays by Shakespeare, Oscar Wilde, or Samuel Becket; and poems by John Donne, John Keats, and Emily Dickinson.

### FOUNDATIONS OF WESTERN CULTURE:

#### The Making of the Modern World

21L.002 Hass-D2/CI-H Howard Eiland  
MW 3:30-5 66-156

This course comprises a broad survey of texts, literary and philosophical, which trace the development of the modern world from the seventeenth through the twentieth century. Intrinsic to this development is the growth of individualism in a world no longer understood to be at the center of the universe. The texts chosen for study exemplify the emergence of a new humanism, at once troubled and dynamic in comparison to the old. The leading theme of this course is thus the question of the difference between the ancient and the modern world. Classroom discussion approaches this question mainly through consider-

ation of action and characters, voice and form, in a variety of works, including Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, Descartes' *Meditations on First Philosophy*, Cervantes' *Don Quixote*, Rousseau's *Reveries of the Solitary Walker*, Dostoyevsky's *Notes from Underground*, Nietzsche's *Beyond Good and Evil*, Kafka's *The Trial*, and Sebald's *Austerlitz*.

### READING FICTION

21L.003 Hass-D1/CI-H Nadia Colburn  
MW 3:30-5 1-375

In this course, we will look closely at seven works of fiction. The course will concentrate on close reading of the texts—careful attention to the pleasures of prose and of reading. The course will also examine the theme of growing up: how does the self come into its own, and how do external restraints, family, gender, war, culture and the economy impinge upon and affect the development of the literature's central characters? How is the individual conceived, alone and in society? And how does the presentation of a fictional character in a work of literature complicate our ideas about selfhood?

By looking closely at the ways the texts themselves are constructed, we will explore basic concepts about narratives, histories, subject, object and language. Authors will include Austen, C. Bronte, Tolstoy, Kafka, Hemingway, Gordimer and Sebald.

### READING FICTION

21L.003 Hass-D1/CI-H Ruth Perry  
TR 11-12:30 56-162

This course is designed to teach you how to read better and enjoy it more: i.e. to identify the literary qualities and interpret the meanings of classic novels and short stories. Among the authors we will study are: Jane Austen, Gustave Flaubert, Henry James, Charles Dickens, Herman Melville, Leo Tolstoy, Kate Chopin, Paule Marshall, Alistair MacLeod, and James Baldwin.

We will explore such questions as: what authorial purposes the characters serve, the consequences (or the causes) of action, the relative importance of plot to character, the narrative stance, what the framing and pacing of the story have to say, what the language of the narrator and characters reveal about them, and how puns, significant names,

repetitions, or special tones (irony, hyperbole, understatement, ambiguity) work, and more!

#### READING POETRY

21L.004      *Hass-D/CI-H*      *Kim Vaeth*  
TR 11-12:30      13-3101

An introduction to poetry in English for the imaginative, linguistic, intellectual and moral pleasure it gives to our private and public lives as readers and writers. We will consider words as interrelated particles moving in time from Metaphysical to Modern to contemporary. Expect to hear and read poems aloud and to do some memorization; class format will be group discussion.

#### READING POETRY

21L.004      *Hass-D1/CI-H*      *Mary Fuller*  
TR 3:30-5      1-277

A chronological survey of lyric poetry in the English language by major writers, running from *Beowulf* to the end of the twentieth century. Readings might include Shakespeare, Donne, Wroth, Herbert, Milton, Marvell, Pope, Wordsworth, Keats, Whitman, Dickinson, Yeats, Frost, Bishop, Stevens, Eliot, Auden, as well as others more recent (Walcott, Glück, Heaney). There will be some attention to longer poems but mostly we will be reading (and hearing) short works. Roughly the last two weeks of the semester will be devoted to works selected and presented by members of the class. Be ready for frequent reading aloud and two extensive group presentations.

#### AMERICAN LITERATURE

21L.006      *Hass-D1/CI-H*      *Kate Delaney*  
MW 9:30-11      1-246

We will focus on 19<sup>th</sup>- and 20<sup>th</sup>-century American Literature, exploring various genres and movements. We will read short stories, novels, drama, poetry, autobiography and other non-fiction and look at film treatments of some classic works. Hawthorne, Thoreau, Whitman, Dickinson, Jacobs, Douglass, Melville, Gilman, Twain, James, Wharton, Williams, Miller, Bishop, Lowell, and DeLillo are among the authors we will study.

#### BLACK MATTERS:

##### Introduction to Black Studies

21L.008      *Hass-D/CI-H*  
*M. DeGraff, E. James & H. Lee*  
MW 11-12:30      32-124

Interdisciplinary survey that explores the experiences of people of African descent through the overlapping approaches of history, literature, anthropology, legal studies, media studies, performance, linguistics, and creative writing. Connects the experiences of African-Americans and of other American minorities, focusing on social, political, and cultural histories, and on linguistic patterns.

Includes lectures, discussions, workshops, and required field trips that involve minimal cost to students.

#### SHAKESPEARE

21L.009      *Hass-D1/CI-H*      *Pete Donaldson*  
TR 3:30-5      1-134

This section will focus on close reading of the Shakespeare text and its adaptation and performance on film. Roughly the first half of the term will be devoted to close analysis of specific scenes and passages in the text, while the second half will be spent in equally close analysis of film in relation to text. Plays will include *Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *Henry IV*, pt. 1, *Macbeth*, *King Lear* and *The Tempest*.

#### THE FILM EXPERIENCE

21L.011      *Hass-D3/CI-H*      *Henry Jenkins*  
Lec T 1-2:30      3-270  
Lab T 7-10      3-270  
Rec R 1-2 or R 2-3

The Film Experience is structured as a conversation between American and Global cinema, between classical and contemporary films. We will be exploring the film medium from historical, aesthetic, economic, and political perspective. Adopting a broadly comparative perspective, we will be paying close attention to the relationship of cinema to a range of other forms of media -- from literature, theater and painting to comics, television, video games, and the web.

Format: one 90-minute lecture, one evening screening period and one discussion hour per week.

Films will be shown on Tuesday evenings; copies will be available after the screening to assist students in the writing of essays and in preparation for exams.

#### **LEARNING FROM THE PAST:**

##### **Drama, Science, Performance**

21L.016 Hass-D3/CI-H

*Diana Henderson and Janet Sonenberg*

TR 3-4:30 W16-RRA

Explores the creation (and creativity) of the modern scientific and cultural world through study of western Europe in the 17<sup>th</sup> century, the age of Descartes and Newton, Shakespeare, Milton and Ford. Compares period thinking to present-day debates about the scientific method, art, religion, and society. This team-taught, interdisciplinary subject draws on a wide range of literary, dramatic, historical, and scientific texts and images, and involves theatrical experimentation as well as reading, writing, researching and conversing. Meets with 21M.616.

#### **THE ART OF THE PROBABLE:**

##### **Literature and Probability**

21L.017 Hass-D2/CI-H

*Lec M 3-4 56-114*

*Rec WF 3-4 56-191 Jackson*

*Rec WF 3-4 56-180 Kibel*

“The Art of the Probable” addresses the history of scientific ideas -- in particular, the emergence and development of mathematical probability. But it is neither meant to be a history of the exact sciences nor an annex to, say, the Course 6 curriculum in probability and statistics. Rather, our objective is to focus on the formal, thematic, and rhetorical features that imaginative literature shares with texts in the history of probability. These shared issues include (but are not limited to): the attempt to quantify or otherwise explain the presence of chance, risk, and contingency in everyday life; the deduction of causes for phenomena that are knowable only in their effects; and, above all, the question of what it means to think and act rationally in an uncertain world. Our reading will range from literary classics (e.g., Shakespeare’s

*Hamlet* and Alexander Pope’s *Essay on Man*) to more popular literature (e.g., H.G. Wells, Thomas Pynchon), and will also include philosophical and scientific texts that were crucial for the emergence of probabilistic reasoning (e.g., Pascal, Hume, Darwin).

## **SAMPLINGS**

#### **BESTSELLERS**

21L.310 *Marja Roholl*

R 7pm-10pm 14N-112

This subject investigates famous popular representations of broad social, cultural and political events in the period between the two world wars. The focus will be on mixed-media American texts, which together work to document ‘America’, while at the same time establishing a national vernacular culture. We’ll examine John Steinbeck’s *Grapes of Wrath* (and John Ford’s film version) and *Let Us Now Praise Famous Men* by the photographer Walker Evans and journalist/writer James Agee; the photography collection *Documenting America* (including Dorothea Lang’s iconic photograph *Migrant Mother* and Gordon Parks’ famous *American Gothic*) and murals commissioned by the Roosevelt administration; *Fireside Chats* by president Roosevelt; and the popular magazines *Life* and *Look*.

May be repeated once for credit so long as the content differs. Enrollment limited.

#### **BIG BOOKS:**

##### **Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales**

21L.320 *Arthur Bahr*

T 7pm-8:30pm 14N-112

In this course, we will romp through a goodly bit of Chaucer’s *Canterbury Tales*, a narrative and poetic collection that is variously stately, bawdy, moving, disturbing, and hilarious, and almost always thought-provoking and beautiful. We will read about (among others) drunken millers, man-hungry serial monogamists, alchemists who enjoy blowing things up, glad-handing social climbers, bitter provincial bureaucrats, and cooks with frighteningly lax standards of personal hygiene. These characters will in turn tell stories of (among

others) how nerdy scholars can get the girl while simultaneously humiliating thuggish rivals; why crows are black and can no longer speak; what one thing all mortal women most desire; and whether you can seek out Death without dying yourself. As a samplings course, the focus will be on close reading and intense discussion; very little formal writing will be assigned. Instead, students will blog informally and take responsibility for helping to lead discussion at least once over the course of the semester. No background in medieval literature or Middle English is expected.

## INTERMEDIATE

### COMEDY

21L.421 *Hass-D1/CI-H* *Howard Eiland*  
MW 1-2:30 1-135

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, tragic-comedy – 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.

### FOLK MUSIC OF THE BRITISH ISLES & NORTH AMERICA

21L.423J *Hass-D3/CI-H*  
*Ruth Perry & George Ruckert*  
TR 2-3:30 4-364

This subject will introduce students to scholarship and thought about folk music of the British Isles and North America. We will examine the qualities of "folk music" and of "folk poetry" (narrative ballads), and will try to understand the historical context in which such music was an essential part of everyday life. We will survey the history of collecting folk music, beginning with broadsides,

Percy's *Reliques*, and Sir Walter Scott's collections—a movement that changed the course of English literary history. We will trace the migrations of fiddle styles and sung ballads to North America—with their attendant changes and continuities—and examine the influences of the African-American musics (including their texts) of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. We will conclude with the broad outlines of the "folk revivals" in the USA and Britain in the 1960s.

### FILM STYLES AND GENRES:

#### Strangeness, Horror, Fear

21L.433 *Anne Fleche*  
MW 1-2:30 4-251

What frightens us fascinates us, and movies have always been a part of that. The first Frankenstein movie was made in 1910. You could even say that film itself belongs to the uncanny: in a dark room, specters perform for us just as if they were real, present creatures. In this version of Film Styles and Genres, we explore the meaning of what is perhaps the most venerable kind of film—the one that makes us feel creeped out. We'll consider films about the unseen, women, animals, disease and the environment; and we'll read texts that attempt to explain fear, horror and strangeness and their relation to film. Films will include: *The Haunting*, *Cat People*, *Phantom of the Opera*, *Poison*, *The Fly*, *Invasion of the Body Snatchers*, *Psycho*, *An Inconvenient Truth*.

Assignments: paper in two drafts; presentation on a film that reflects your own idea of what's creepy.

NOTE: This course does not have a scheduled film screening. All films will be on reserve at the Film Office, and students will be assigned to watch a film on their own each week.

### SCIENCE FICTION AND FANTASY:

#### Cyberpunk

21L.434 *Kate Delaney*  
MW 3:30-5 1-273

We will examine the emergence of cyberpunk in the 1980s, with special attention to its links to postmodern fiction, detective fiction, and *film noir*. We will also look at some characteristic works of the 1990s, and wide-ranging student projects will bring the focus into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. In addition to

short and long fiction we will consider developments in film (*The Matrix*, *Blade Runner*, *Johnny Mnemonic*, *Max Headroom*) and music (Laurie Anderson). Authors to be studied include William Gibson, Neal Stephenson, Philip K. Dick, and Richard Powers.

#### **ETHICS AND LITERATURE:**

##### **Questions of Leadership**

21L.450 *Alvin Kibel*

MW 9:30-11 56-169

The purpose of this subject is (a) to develop awareness of our common ethical notions in order to understand how and to what extent they represent allegiances to different and possibly conflicting ideals, and (b) to focus this awareness on questions regarding leadership.

Leadership ethics is ethics applied to agency at extensive reaches of authority. All ethics deals with due regard for the interest of others; the ethics of leadership deals as well with responsibilities incurred by using others for purposes not within the scope of their self-regarding intentions. There is good reason to suppose that a focus on such agency throws the potential confusions and difficulties of ethical choice into sharper relief. The character-trait of "leadership" is usually taken to connote, among other things, an ability to think outside the box, and since ethical deliberation always requires thinking outside the box, it would be odd to suppose that the subject of ethics and the conditions of leadership are not joined at the hip.

The subject is divided into modules covering topics such as: the Ethical Character of Money, Divided Loyalties, Delegating Authority, Seizing Control, Responsibilities of Office, Doing Harm for the sake of Good, Living with Truth and Deception, The Uses of Power and the Uses of Authority. Each module will include (a) brief excerpts from works of philosophers such as Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, Kant and Nietzsche and (b) a case-study or two drawn from areas of professional experience, but both will be subordinate to (c) the reading of a work of literature illustrative of the ethics of leadership situations. Authors will include Sophocles, Shakespeare, Dostoyevsky, Melville, Conrad, Ibsen, Shaw, and Isaak Dinesen. The importance of literary works to ethical inquiry

derives from the fact that they are well-suited to dramatize opposing responses to the need for ethical choice in a given set of circumstances, forcing the reader to confront the possibility that there are compelling justifications for each.

#### **CLASSICAL LITERATURE:**

##### **Monsters, Barbarian Queens, and Nymphos:**

##### **Women and Power in Classical Literature**

21L.455 *Eric Parks*

TR 1-2:30 4-251

Women in classical Athens and Rome were largely excluded from public life and expected to be models of quiet domestic virtue. The pages of ancient literature, however, are full of powerful women that challenge society, change laws, commit family murders, rule kingdoms and empires openly or from behind the scenes, or lead armies. Even those who did not aspire so high could still enslave a lovestruck poet with her feminine wiles.

Aided by recent scholarship in ancient social history, students will explore to what extent such literary depictions might accurately portray women's means of exercising power in societies that did not give them a legitimate share in political life, and to what extent they betray the fantasies and fears of elite male writers. Readings in English translation from a variety of genres will include works by Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, Catullus, Cicero, Tacitus, and Virgil.

#### **MAJOR ENGLISH NOVELS**

21L.471 *Ina Lipkowitz*

TR 9:30-11 14N-112

In this course we will read and discuss important examples of what has become one of, if not *the* most widely read literary genres today: the novel. We will begin in the early eighteenth century and make our way up to the twentieth, considering such questions as: Why are they called "novels"? Who wrote them? Who read them? Who narrates them? What are they likely to be about? Do they have distinctive characteristics? What is their relationship to the time and place in which they appeared? And, most of all, why do we like them so much? Authors might include: Daniel Defoe, Frances Burney, Jane Austen, Walter Scott, Emily Brontë, Charlotte Brontë, Charles Dickens,



Elizabeth Gaskell, Wilkie Collins, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, George Eliot, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Beckett, and Penelope Fitzgerald.

#### **VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND CULTURE**

*21L.481 James Buzard*

*TR 3:30-5 14N-112*

This course covers British literature and culture during Queen Victoria's long reign, 1837-1901. In literature, this was the brilliant age of Charles Dickens, the Brontës, Lewis Carroll, George Eliot, William Makepeace Thackeray, Anthony Trollope, Robert Browning, Matthew Arnold, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Conan Doyle, Rudyard Kipling, Alfred, Lord Tennyson – and many others. It was also the age of urbanization, steam power, class conflict, Darwin, religious crisis, imperial expansion, information explosion, bureaucratization – and much more. Readings will include a substantial serialized novel from the period (usually by Dickens) and a variety of fictional and non-fictional texts ranging from the novel to social criticism, from the short story to poetry, from housewives' manuals to the incomparable *Alice in Wonderland* books. There will be one or two oral reports plus two to three essays, one of which may be a creative exercise.

#### **MODERN FICTION**

*21L.485 David Thorburn*

*TR 1-2:30 56-162*

Tradition and innovation in representative fiction of the early modernist period. Recurring themes include the role of the artist in the modern period; the representation of psychological and sexual experience; and the virtues (and defects) of the aggressively experimental character of so many modern books. Works by Conrad, Kipling, Isaac Babel, Kafka, James, Lawrence, Mann, Ford Madox Ford, Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, and Nabokov.

#### **Requirements:**

Two in-class exams; nine "responses" -- 1-2 double-spaced typed pages long -- on any aspect of our reading, due in the first class of each week; two essays, 5-7 pages long. Essays may be revised within seven days of the date on which they are

returned to students. Only revised grades will count toward the final grade in the course.

NOTE: This course may be taken for either 9 or 12 units. Essays are not required of students taking the course for 9 units.

#### **CONTEMPORARY LITERATURE:**

##### **Literature and Development**

*21L.488 Sarah Brouillette*

*TR 11-12:30 56-167*

Central to our era is the story of the gradual movement of the world's regions toward a uniform standard of economic and political development. In this class we will read a variety of recent narratives that partake of, dissent from, or contribute to this story, ranging from novels and poems to World Bank and IMF statements and *National Geographic* articles. Our focus will be accounts by or about people living in the developing world: their hardships, laughter, and courage, and how they help themselves and are helped by outsiders who may or may not have philanthropic motives. Readings will include literature by Derek Walcott, Tsitsi Dangarembga, Jamaica Kincaid, Tayeb Salih, and Nurruddin Farah, as well as policy documents, newspaper and magazine articles, and the websites of a variety of trade and development organizations.

#### **FRENCH LITERATURE**

##### **French Literature in Translation:**

##### **From Molière to Le Clézio**

*21L.490/21F.050J Ed Turk*

*MW 2:30-4 14N-313*

We will sample great French writers in English translation, moving from the comic playwright Molière in the seventeenth century to the 2008 Nobel Prize-winning novelist Le Clézio. Along the way, we will explore eighteenth-century storytelling, the nineteenth century realist aesthetic, post-World War II Existentialist and Absurdist theater, and contemporary writings by women and new immigrants to France. Authors include Molière, Racine, Diderot, Rousseau, Balzac, Baudelaire, Ionesco, Sije Dai, Marguerite Duras, and Jean-Marie Gustave Le Clézio.

Students will write weekly journal entries and two formal essays; they will also make oral

presentations; there will be a one-hour, in-class end-of-term quiz. The class will be conducted as a seminar, with lots of group discussion.

**AMERICAN AUTHORS:**

**Local Poets**

21L.512/SP.517 *John Hildebidle*

MW 3:30-5 56-167

The subject will explore varieties of contemporary American poetry, most commonly through the works of poets who can actually visit the class to discuss what they write and how they approach the art of poetic composition.

## SEMINARS

**LITERARY INTERPRETATION:**

**Literature and the Urban Experience**

21L.701/SP.510 *CI-M Sarah Brouillette*

TR 2:30-4 56-169

Alienation, overcrowding, sensory overload, homelessness, criminality, violence, loneliness, sprawl, blight...How have the realities of modern city living influenced literature's formal and thematic techniques? How useful is it to think of literature as its own kind of "map" of urban space? Are cities too grand, heterogeneous and shifting to be captured by writers? In this seminar we will seek answers to these questions in key city writing (by Joyce, Eliot, Woolf, Martin Amis, Sam Selvon, Rohinton Mistry, Monica Ali), and in foundational theoretical works that endeavor to understand the culture of cities (by Friedrich Engels, Georg Lukács, Fredric Jameson, David Harvey, Saskia Sassen.)

**STUDIES IN FICTION**

21L.702 *CI-M David Thorburn*

TR 3-4:40 4-251

The first half of this course will center on two classics of high modernism, Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. In the second half of the course, we'll read some major recent novels (and one short story) that draw on the experimental legacy of modernist literature. We will spend about a month on *Ulysses*; each member of the class will be

responsible for a single chapter, on which she or he will report to the class. Later texts will include: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*; Garcia Gabriel Marquez, *The Last Voyage of the Ghost Ship*; Russell Hoban, Riddley Walker; and Michael Cunningham, *The Hours*.

**Requirements:**

Ten short "responses" (1-2 double-spaced pages long) on any aspect of our reading or class discussions, due in the first class of each week; two essays (5-8 pages), one on *Ulysses*, on one any other of our required texts; at least two oral reports; two in-class exams.

Essays may be revised within seven days of the date on which they are returned to students. Only revised grades will count toward the final grade in the course.

**MAJOR AUTHORS:**

**Rewriting Genesis:**

***Paradise Lost* and 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Fantasy**

21L.705/SP.512 *CI-M Mary Fuller*

TR 11-12:30 56-169

In 1667, John Milton published what he intended both as the crowning achievement of a poetic career and a justification of God's ways to man: an epic poem that retold and re-imagined the Biblical story of creation, temptation, and original sin. Even in a hostile political climate, *Paradise Lost* was almost immediately recognized as a classic, and one fate of a classic is to be rewritten, both by admirers and by antagonists. In this seminar, we will read *Paradise Lost* alongside works of 20<sup>th</sup>-century fantasy and science fiction that rethink both Milton's text and its source. Students should come to the seminar having read *Paradise Lost* straight through at least once; this can be accomplished by taking the IAP subject, "Reading *Paradise Lost*" (21L.999), or independently. Twentieth century authors will include C.S. Lewis (*Perelandra*, *The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe*) and Philip Pullman (*His Dark Materials*), as well as assorted criticism. Each week, one class meeting will focus on Milton, and the other on one of the modern novels.

## STUDIES IN FILM

21L.706/CMS.830 CI-M Pete Donaldson

T 7pm-10pm 16-644

The seminar will focus on intensive work on film adaptations and spin-offs of Shakespeare plays. Tentative film list: *Henry V* (Laurence Olivier, 1944); *Henry V* (Kenneth Branagh, 1989); *Romeo and Juliet* (Baz Luhrmann, 1996); *Shakespeare in Love* (1998); *Stage Beauty* (John Madden, 2004); *Hamlet* (Michael Almereyda, 2000); *Richard III* (Richard Loncraine, 1996); *Looking for Richard* (Al Pacino, 1996); *Titus* (Julie Taymor, 1999); *King Lear* (Jean-Luc Godard, 1985); *Prospero's Books* (Peter Greenaway, 1992); *Ten Things I Hate About You* (Jill Junger, 1999). This will be a discussion class. Students will also present on-line multimedia essays using MIT XMAS (Cross Media Annotation Software). Previous Shakespeare course or equivalent expected. No technical experience required.

## STUDIES IN LITERARY HISTORY:

### Make It New:

#### Manifestos and the Invention of the Modern

21L.709 CI-M Noel Jackson

W 7pm-10pm 14N-112

"Make it New" was Ezra Pound's famous directive to modernist artists, poets, and critics -- and was as well a phrase that Pound claimed to have recovered from writings of the ancient philosopher Confucius. Such ironies are central to much of the art and literature that we call "modern," which in breaking dramatically with the past often draws explicitly on the past for its inspiration. Our course will consider the genre of the manifesto in politics, art, literature, and criticism, reading texts that represent both irruptions and articulations of "the modern." We will investigate the nature of intellectual and artistic experimentation in relation to the legacies of the past; will consider the formal and political rhetorics at work in this genre; and will explore the modern advocacy of a so-called "committed" artistic practice, which foregrounds and insists on the necessity of the artist's ethical and political engagement. Probable authors will include P.B. Shelley, Marx, Pound, Woolf, Benjamin, Brecht, Stevens, and the filmmakers (Lars von Trier and Thomas Vinterberg) associated with the "Dogme 95" movement. In addition to one longer essay (ca.

15 pp.), students will have the option to write a manifesto of their own.

## MEDIA IN CULTURAL CONTEXT

21L.715/CMS.871/SP.493 CI-M Joshua Green

MW 3:30-5 1-134

What is "the audience"? How good are the Nielsen TV ratings for accounting for TV viewers? How do we count the audience for YouTube? Who is watching and reading is a fundamental question media creators, companies and researchers have long asked. This class will consider the variety of ways these questions can be answered, looking at how audiences are understood from quantitative and qualitative perspectives, how they're studied, and the role they play in media business. It will examine the way new modes for engaging with media content change what is thought of as audience behavior, and explore the implications these changes have for industry and academic research methods.

## SPECIAL TOPICS:

### Studies in Poetry – Latin:

#### The Roman Love Poets

21L.993 CI-M Randall Colaizzi

MW 1-2:30 14N-112

During the last half of the 1<sup>st</sup> century BC, a small handful of Roman poets wrote poems which were, perhaps, the most influential for the entire western tradition. From them come the material, attitudes, language, and clichés about love found in English and all the languages of Europe. They gave us love sonnets and pop songs, operas and Valentine's Day. Sex. Guilt. Pain. Lies. Sleeplessness. Cheating. Drinking. Jealousy. Partying late. Slipping in through the bedroom window. Whining about the rich boy whom the girlfriend keeps calling.

The Romans used many Greek literary forms as their models, but regarded Elegy (along with Satire) as their very own invention. This is as Roman as Roman poetry gets, and our selections will come from 5 poets: Catullus, Gallus, Propertius, Tibullus, and Ovid. These elegies will give us an introduction to Latin verse and a glimpse into ancient Roman society. One year of college-level Latin, or the equivalent, is required.

# **21 Literature Section**

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Because beavers  
don't just

EAT



Leaves of Grass



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