

LITERATURE SUBJECTS

COURSE 21L SUPPLEMENT TO THE BULLETIN

IGNORANCE = FEAR



SILENCE = DEATH  FIGHT AIDS
ACT UP

Keith Haring "Ignorance = Fear / Silence = Death" 1989

FALL 2020



LITERATURE SECTION

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Due to COVID19, all MIT Literature subject offerings will be taught virtually. Please contact our Academic Administrator Daria Johnson (litacademics@mit.edu) if you have any questions. Below please find a list of faculty members who are teaching in the Fall 2020 semester:

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<https://lit.mit.edu/academic-advisors/>

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21L Literature Subject Descriptions - Fall 2020

| Subject # | Units | Designation | | Faculty | Day | Time |
|----------------------------------|-------|-------------|---|--|---------------|--------------|
| INTRODUCTORY | | | | | | |
| 21L.000J | 3-0-9 | H | CI-HW - Same subject as 21W.734J | The Art of the Short Story [Writing About Literature] | Lipkowitz, I. | TR 11:30-1p |
| 21L.004 L1 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H | Reading Poetry | Jackson, N. | TR 1-2:30p |
| 21L.004 L2 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H | Reading Poetry | Tapscott, S. | MW 7-8:30p |
| 21L.005 | 3-0-9 | A/H | CI-H | Introduction to Drama | Alexandre, S. | TR 11-12:30p |
| 21L.010 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-HW - Same subject as 21W.042J | Writing with Shakespeare | Henderson, D. | TR 3:30-5p |
| 21L.011 | 3-3-6 | A | CI-H | Introduction to Film Studies (Lecture) | Svensson, A. | T 3:30-5p |
| 21L.011 | 3-3-6 | A | CI-H | Introduction to Film Studies (Screening) | | M 7-10p |
| 21L.011 | 3-3-6 | A | CI-H | Introduction to Film Studies (R1) | | R 3-4p |
| 21L.011 | 3-3-6 | A | CI-H | Introduction to Film Studies (R2) | | R 4-5p |
| 21L.014J | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H - Same subject as 21H.007J | Empire: Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies | Frampton, S. | MW 9:30-11a |
| 21L.015 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H | Children's Literature | Raman, S. | TR 2-3:30p |
| 21L.019 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H | Liars, Cheaters and Thieves [Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction] | Terrones, J. | MW 3:30-5p |
| 21L.020J | 3-0-9 | H | CI-H - Same subject as WGS.145J | The Good, the Bad, & the In-Between [Globalization] | Resnick, M. | TR 3-4:30 |
| SAMPLINGS 6-UNITS | | | | | | |
| 21L.310 | 2-0-4 | | | American Icons [Bestsellers] (Ends Oct. 16) | Tapscott, S. | T 7-10p |
| 21L.315 | 2-0-4 | | | After the Modern [Prizewinners] (Begins Oct. 19) | Tapscott, S. | T 7-10p |
| 21L.325 | 2-0-4 | | | Citizen(s): American poets from the last decade [Small Wonders] | Fuller, M. | M 2-3:30p |
| INTERMEDIATE | | | | | | |
| 21L.434 | 3-0-9 | H | | Science Fiction Before Science Fiction [Science Fiction and Fantasy] | Gubar, M. | MW 11-12:30p |
| 21L.456 | 3-0-9 | H | | The Bible: Old Testament | Lipkowitz, I. | TR 9:30-11a |
| 21L.471 | 3-0-9 | H | | George Eliot & Thomas Hardy [Major Novels] | Buzard, J. | TR 3:30-5p |
| 21L.481J | 3-0-9 | H | Same subjects as WGS.250 | Black Lives and Queer Bodies [HIV/AIDS in American Culture] | Terrones, J. | TR 1-2:30p |
| 21L.489 | 3-0-9 | H | Same subject as 21W.765J/Meets with CMS.845 | Interactive Narrative | Paradis, J. | W 2-5p |
| INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES | | | | | | |
| 21L.607 | 3-0-3 | | | Greek I (Ends Oct. 16) | Forte, A. | MW 7-8:30p |
| 21L.608 | 3-0-3 | | | Greek II (Begins Oct. 19) | Forte, A. | |
| 21L.613/ 21L.614 | 2-0-4 | | | Latin Readings (Ends Oct. 16) | Frampton, S. | MW 1-2:30p |
| 21L.639J | 3-0-9 | H | Same subject as 21G.739 | Consuming Latin America [Globalization and its Discontents: Spanish-speaking Nations] | Terrones, J. | MW 1-2:30p |
| SEMINAR | | | | | | |
| 21L.702 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-M | James Joyce [Studies in Fiction] | Buzard, J. | TR 1-2:30p |
| 21L.703 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-M | How We Got To Hamilton [Studies in Drama] | Gubar, M. | MW 2-3:30p |
| 21L.704 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-M | Poetic Life Writing: Apologia, Confession, Concealment [Studies in Poetry] | Jackson, N. | TR 3:30-5p |
| 21L.705 | 3-0-9 | H | CI-M | Chaucer's Canterbury Tales [Major Authors] | Bahr, A. | TR 9:30-11a |
| 21L.706 | 3-3-6 | H | CI-M /meets with CMS.830 | Lost and Found Footage [Studies in Film] (Lecture) | Svensson, A. | W 7-10p |
| | | | | Lost and Found Footage [Studies in Film] (Screening) | | T 7-10p |

| TIME | Monday/Wednesday | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|----------------|-------------|-----------------|--------------|----------------|------------|
| 9:30 AM | | | 21L.014J SF | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | | | 9:30-11a | | | | |
| 10:30 AM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | 21L.434 MG | | | | | | |
| 11:30 AM | 11-12:30p | | | | | | |
| 12:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 12:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | | 21L.613/614 SF | | 21L.639J JT | | | |
| 1:30 PM | | 1-2:30p | | 1-2:30p | | | |
| 2:00 PM | 21L.489J JP | Ends Oct. 16 | 21L.325 MF | | 21L.703 MG | | |
| 2:30 PM | W 2-5p | | M 2-3:30p | | 2-3:30p | | |
| 3:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 3:30 PM | | | 21L.019 JT | | | | |
| 4:00 PM | | | 3:30-5p | | | | |
| 4:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 5:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 7:00 PM | 21L.607 AF | 21L.608 AF | 21L.011 AS | 21L.004 Lec2 ST | 21L.310 ST | 21L.315 ST | 21L.706 AS |
| 7:30 PM | 7-8:30p | 7-8:30p | M 7-10p | 7-8:30p | 7-10p | 7-10p | W 7-10p |
| 8:00 PM | Ends Oct. 16 | Begins Oct. 19 | Screening | | Ends Oct. 16 | Begins Oct. 19 | Lecture |
| 8:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:30 PM | | | | | | | |

| TIME | Tuesday/Thursday | | | | | | |
|----------|------------------|------------|-------------|-----------------|------------|--------------|------------|
| 9:30 AM | 21L.705 AB | | 21L.456 IL | | | | |
| 10:00 AM | 9:30-11a | | 9:30-11a | | | | |
| 10:30 AM | | | | | | | |
| 11:00 AM | | 21L.005 SA | | 21L.000J IL | | | |
| 11:30 AM | | 11-12:30pm | | 11:30-1pm | | | |
| 12:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 12:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 1:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 1:30 PM | 21L.702 JB | 21L.015 SR | 21L.481J JT | 21L.004 Lec1 NJ | | | |
| 2:00 PM | 1-2:30p | 2-3:30p | 1-2:30p | 1-2:30p | | | |
| 2:30 PM | | | | | | | |
| 3:00 PM | | | | | | 21L.011 AS | |
| 3:30 PM | | | 21L.020J MR | | | R 3-4p | |
| 4:00 PM | 21L.010J DH | 21L.471 JB | 3-4:30p | 21L.704 NJ | 21L.011 AS | Recitation 1 | 21L.011 AS |
| 4:30 PM | 3:30-5p | 3:30-5p | | 3:30-5p | T 3:30-5p | 21L.011 AS | R 4-5p |
| 5:00 PM | | | | | Lecture | Recitation 2 | |
| 7:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 7:30 PM | 21L.706 AS | | | | | | |
| 8:00 PM | T 7-10p | | | | | | |
| 8:30 PM | Screening | | | | | | |
| 9:00 PM | | | | | | | |
| 9:30 PM | | | | | | | |

INTRODUCTORY

Writing about Literature: The Art of the Short Story

21L.000J
(CI-HW)

Same subject
as 21W.734J

TR 11:30-1p

Ina Lipkowitz

Virtual

The short-story writer Alice Munro accepted the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature expressing her “hope [that] this would make people see the short story as an important art, not just something you played around with until you got a novel.” In this class, we’ll take Munro at her word and read a variety of short stories by writers including Amy Tan, Raymond Carver, John Updike, Tim O’Brien, Jamaica Kincaid, Sandra Cisneros, and Alice Munro herself. Of course reading stories for the sheer pleasure of it is one thing; thinking about what they might mean is another; expressing those thoughts in writing is still another.

In this class, we’ll be doing all three. The goal will be to increase enjoyment in reading and in understanding, as well as to feel more confident in the ability to express oneself effectively, efficiently, and gracefully.

Reading Poetry

21L.004
(H, CI-H)

Section 1

TR 1:00-
2:30p

Noel Jackson

Virtual

An introduction to poems and the traditions and forms of poetry in English. We’ll read chiefly British and American poets and will concentrate on Renaissance, eighteenth-century, Romantic, and Modernist poems. Though the organization of the subject is chronological, our focus will be less on names and dates than on cultivating skills in careful reading and effective writing. Poets to be read may include Shakespeare, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Frost, Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, Claudia Rankine. Readings: mostly poems, but also one Shakespeare play, several films, and a novel by Mary Shelley. Several evening events including readings by visiting writers.

Reading Poetry

21L.004
(H, CI-H)
Section 2

MW 7-8:30p

Stephen
Tapscott

Virtual

An introduction to poetry in English. We will explore poems written during several periods and in several genres (nature-poems, narratives, the epic, sonnets, odes, experimental forms). Focus will be less on names and dates than on tactics of analytic reading. Poets whose work we'll read include William Shakespeare, John Keats, Robert Frost, Langston Hughes, Sylvia Plath, Elizabeth Bishop, Seamus Heaney, Derek Walcott, Liyoung Lee, and many others. Special course-related events (readings, lectures, film screenings) will take place on selected evenings throughout the term.

Introduction to Drama

21L.005
(A/H, CI-H)

TR 11-
12:30p

Sandy
Alexandre

Virtual

In her autobiographical play, *To Be Young Gifted and Black* (1969), the playwright Lorraine Hansberry wrote: "I think that virtually every human being is dramatically interesting." In our own lives—through our own verbal and body language—we alternate between deprecating and eagerly embracing what it means to be dramatic: "Oh gosh, he is so dramatic," we accuse! "Yes, honey! I'm absolutely a drama queen," we might hear someone proudly profess. "D-rahmuh!" we drawl to diagnose a scandalous story. Drama is everywhere around us asserting itself: provoking us, amusing us, challenging us, prompting us, inspiring us, catching the conscience of Kings even—effectively acting on us in some way or another. By reading plays and watching video recordings of some of them, we will attempt to understand what drama does best and uniquely as a literary genre. Toward the end of the semester, we will also consider the various forms drama can take. Where, for example, do we situate a historical reenactment, a staged protest, a walk down the runway of an underground ballroom, or a flash mob in an Introduction to Drama course? Our encounters may include, but are not limited to, plays by Tennessee Williams, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, Young Jean Lee, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Tarell Alvin McCraney.

Writing with Shakespeare

21L.010J
(CI-HW)

Same subject
as 21W.042J

TR 3:30-5p

Diana
Henderson

Virtual

William Shakespeare didn't go to college. If he could time-travel like Dr. Who, he would be stunned to find his words on a university syllabus. But he would not be surprised at the way we will be using those words in this class, because the study of rhetoric was essential to all education in his day. We too will focus on communication using words, with Shakespeare as a capacious model and inspiration for dialogue, self-presentation, and writing. By writing 'with' Shakespeare—critically, creatively, in groups, and in a variety of media—you will have ample opportunity to explore the elements and occasions that shape effective, meaningful communication. We will consider how his plays have in turn been reinterpreted across the globe: in addition to reciting famous speeches, we will analyze both text and film versions of the comedy *Much Ado About Nothing* and the tragedy *Othello*, and you will explore an online MITx module as preparation to perform dramatic scenes from what is now a 'problem play', *The Merchant of Venice*. Finally, we will look at how Shakespeare revises his stories and style in the late 'romance' *A Winter's Tale*. In the process, you will get to 'play' a Shakespeare scholar, and debate the reasons for the playwright's enduring power. Nevertheless, our aim is less to appreciate his works as an end in themselves than to draw on his remarkable drama (including its vocabulary, variety, verve, and verbal command) in order to help you improve your own writing, speaking, analytic thinking, use of resources, and understanding of media today.

Introduction to Film Studies

21L.011
(A/H, CI-H)

Lecture
T 3:30-5p
Virtual

Screening
M 7-10p
Virtual

Recitation 1
R 3-4p
Virtual

Recitation 2
R 4-5p
Virtual

Alex Svensson

Concentrates on close analysis and criticism of a wide range of films, including works from the early silent period, documentary and avant-garde films, European art cinema, and contemporary Hollywood fare. Through comparative reading films from different eras and countries, students develop the skills to turn their in-depth analyses into interpretations and explore theoretical issues related to spectatorship. Syllabus varies from term to term, but usually includes such directors as Coppola, Eisentein, Fellini, Godard, Griffith, Hawks, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Tarantino, Welles, Wiseman, and Zhang.

Introduction to Ancient & Medieval Studies

21L.014J (CI-H)

Same
subject as
21H.007J

MW 9:30-
11:00a

Stephanie
Frampton

Virtual

Explores the fascinating history, culture, and society of Europe and the Mediterranean in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Investigates essential themes, structures, and developments in the ancient and medieval worlds and the diverse methodologies scholars use to interpret them. Wrestles with big questions about the diversity of life and thought in pre-modern societies, the best ways to study the distant past, and the nature (and limitations) of knowledge about the long-passed eras. Considers a wide range of scholarly subjects such as the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the triumph of Christianity and Islam, the Vikings and Crusades, courts and castles, philosophy and religion, and the diversity of art, literature, and government. Ponders different types of evidence, reads across a variety of disciplines, and develops skills to identify continuities and changes in ancient and medieval societies. Serves as an excellent introductory subject as well as a springboard for future work in MIT's Ancient and Medieval Studies curriculum.

Children's Literature

21L.015 (H, CI-H)

TR 2-3:30p

Shankar
Raman

Virtual

Through the second half of the nineteenth and the first half of the twentieth century, a canon of "classic" texts for children took shape. This course will invite you to (re)encounter a variety of celebrated children's books drawn from England and Europe. You will absorb yourselves again in such classics as *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, *The Wind in the Willows*, or *Treasure Island*, or *The Little Prince* -- as well as perhaps meet for the first time Tove Jansson's *Moomintroll* family, or see what else Astrid Lidgren has written beyond *Pippi Longstocking*, or where Michael Ende's *The Neverending Story* leads. Many of these books have not only been read by millions of children and adults, they have also been adapted, parodied, and recycled—transformed into movies, musical works, television shows, and so on. Why do we keep telling these particular stories over and over again? What does their popularity tell us about the history of childhood and its representation? As we study these and other influential works of art starring children, we will ask: What images of the child emerge out of these texts? What makes such images culturally appealing?

Introduction to European & Latin American Fiction: Liars, Cheaters and Thieves

21L.019
(H, CI-H)

MW 3:30-5p

Joaquín
Terrones

Virtual

Fiction writers are masters of the art of deception. They lie all the time. It should come as no surprise, then, that some of their most enduring (and sometimes endearing) characters are themselves liars, swindlers, rogues, and criminals. This course will introduce you to European and Latin American fiction through a selection of its most memorable lowlifes. We will examine how novels, short stories, graphic novels, and films use these outsiders and their transgressions to challenge societal norms and structures, particularly economic inequality, patriarchy, colonialism, and racism. Some of the works we will analyze and discuss are the Lazarillo de Tormes, Voltaire's *Candide*, Gustave Flaubert's *Salammbô*, Machado de Assis's *The Posthumous Memoirs of Bras Cubas*, Jorge Luis Borges's *A Universal History of Infamy*, Gabriel García Márquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and Clarice Lispector's *The Hour of the Star*. Class projects will include the opportunity for students to create—using various media—their own lowlife characters.

Globalization: The Good, the Bad, & the In-Between

21L.020J
(H, CI-H)

Same
subject as
WGS.145J

TR 3-4:30p

Margery
Resnick

Virtual

This subject examines the cultural, artistic, social, and political impact of globalization across international borders in an historical context. Novels and short stories as well as case studies on global health, human trafficking, and labor migration illuminate the shaping influence of contemporary globalization on gender, race, ethnicity, and class. Guest lecturers visit class as we examine the impact of globalization on cultural identity, the arts, the politics of language, and the media. How has migration changed notions of cultural and racial hybridity? What can we learn from specific examples of global media and expressive culture including popular music and film? In what ways has globalization affected human rights? Students develop sensitivity to other cultures and the ability to read broadly across national boundaries. Furthermore, the emphasis on the historical context gives students a foundation to continue work in literature, history, and the arts from a global perspective.

SAMPLINGS

Bestsellers: American Icons

21L.310 In this 6-week Samplings subject, we read texts – chiefly poems and photographs -- that have come to seem “iconic” in American culture. We consider what that designation means [what is an icon for? what work does a “canon” do? what does it permit? what does it inhibit or prevent?], and we look at how certain texts become iconic or formative. Often, we recognize historical moments or movements, and a journalist or writer documents the moment; eventually the documentation seems so completely to represent [or to embody] the moment that we interpret the text formally in order to understand the historical or Ideological or psychological nuances of the moment. Some texts directly aspire to that representative status [and sometimes in the moment some technicians manipulate the reality they portray]; some artists create texts that overtly offer themselves as useful models to be made iconic; some deliberately alter or play on the received dominant narrative or on a text/image that is already recognizable. Poems [and some prose] by Walt Whitman, Emma Lazarus, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Robert Frost, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Edgar Allan Poe, Al [Florence Anthony], Marilyn Chin, James Weldon Johnson, others. Pictures and images by Eadward Muybridge, Lewis Hine, Alfred Stieglitz, Diane Arbus, Margaret Bourke-White, Gordon Parks, Joe Rosenthal, Sally Mann, Carrie Mae Weems, Edward S. Curtis, and others. Film by Charlie Chaplin.

ends
Oct 16th

T 7-10p

Stephen Tapscott

Virtual

Prize Winners: After the Modern

21L.315 When we read “modernist” works we tend to focus on Anglo-American models, for various reasons: the English-speaking work was the epicenter--of the experimental poetic work of the early 20th century. For various reasons, other cultures experienced the Modernist dynamic differently. In this subject we read major work by artists in cultures that --because of different linguistic, political, historical, and psychological reasons--processed this expansive, reformative experimental energy in different ways. We read Russian models [Anna Akhmatova], German and Austrian [Bertold Brecht, Georg Trakl], Afro-Caribbean, [Aime Cesaire], Japanese [Yukio Mishima], Spanish and Latin American [Federico Garcia Lorca, Gabriela Mistral, Carlos Drummond de Andrade, J. L. Borges, Pablo Neruda]. We also visit some of the “alternative” modes of Modernism that thrived in the US and Britain in parallel to the “canonical” version propounded by Eliot, Pound, and Williams: works by poets including Langston Hughes, HD, Jean Toomer, and Stevie Smith].

begins
Oct 19th

T 7-10p

Stephen Tapscott

Virtual

Small Wonders; Citizen(s): American poets from the last decade

21L.325

M 2-3:30p

Mary Fuller

Virtual

In this class we'll read work by a series of distinguished African-American poets whose work has won major awards since 2010: authors will include Claudia Rankine, Terrance Hayes, Gregory Pardlo, Tyehimba Jess, and Ross Gay. A major focus of the class will be the uses and effects of poetic form, from the rhythms of natural language to intricate experiments with constrained forms like the sonnet and the double shovel. We'll work at both the scale of single poems and, at times, of the whole book. No significant prior experience with poetry expected or required, but be prepared to read out loud, circulate first thoughts in writing, and take occasional responsibility for leading a class.

INTERMEDIATE

Science Fiction and Fantasy: Science Fiction Before Science Fiction

21L.434
(H)

MW
11-12:30p

Marah Gubar

Virtual

The Hugo Awards are named after Hugo Gernsback, who coined the term "science fiction" in 1926 while publishing *Amazing Stories*, the first magazine devoted solely to science fiction. Yet long before that, nineteenth-century writers such as Mary Shelley, Grant Allen, H. G. Wells, and Edith Nesbit were penning their own *Strange Stories* (Allen, 1884), testing out many of the sci-fi and fantasy tropes that contemporary authors continue to retool to this day. Mad scientists and the monsters they create! "Last man on earth" dystopias! Stories about robots, time machines, and mummies who come back to life and rampage around museums...not to mention a park filled with dinosaurs living next door to modern humans! In all of these cases, the Victorians got there before us, in fictions that were heavily influenced by the earth-shaking hypotheses being advanced by nineteenth-century scientists such as Charles Darwin, Caroline Herschel, and Richard Owen.

In this course, we will explore not only how nineteenth-century science influenced art, but also how art influenced science. We will also investigate the integral (and often forgotten) role that women and people of color played in pioneering and popularizing speculative fiction. By the end of our time together, we will have deepened our collective knowledge of the history of science as well as the genres of science fiction and fantasy.

The Bible: Old Testament

21L.456
(H)

TR 9:30-
11a

Ina
Lipkowitz

Virtual

Whether you regard it as the Hebrew Bible or the Old Testament, there's no denying that it's a complex and fascinating text, written by many people over a vast period of time, yet still displaying an overarching unity. Our purpose in this course is to consider it as both a collection of disparate books and as a unified whole. We will study its three major divisions—the Law, the Prophets, and the Writings—and draw upon a range of methodologies, including source criticism, literary criticism, and the exegetical practices of different religious traditions. We will pay attention to the Bible's historical and cultural settings and consider issues resulting from translation. In the final weeks of the course, we will consider the differences between the "Hebrew Bible" and the "Old Testament." Students will come away from this class with a greater understanding of the many ways these ancient writings have been both understood and misunderstood.

Major Novels: George Eliot and Thomas Hardy

21L.471
(H)

TR 3:30-5p

James
Buzard

Virtual

A handful of major novels by two leading figures in the history of fiction. We'll read the first two novels of George Eliot (pseudonym of Mary Ann Evans): *Adam Bede* (1859) and *The Mill on the Floss* (1860). We'll also read three major works by Thomas Hardy: *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), *Tess of the D'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895). These beautiful works tell moving, often tragic stories of desire and ambition confronting obstacles typical of their age (in particular, the Victorian period's rules on class and gender) but also universal. We'll consider such issues as: what do we owe to other people? How can we balance personal aspiration and duty or responsibility? What makes for a free society, and what hinders it? What causes societies to stagnate or to progress, and at what cost?

Students will be asked to submit weekly short papers responding to and raising questions about the reading; these will be selectively shared with other students to stimulate class discussion. After the second Eliot novel and at the end of the term, additional assignments will provide an opportunity to reflect back over what has been covered.

HIV/AIDS in American Culture: Black Lives and Queer Bodies

21L.481J
(H)

Same
subjects as
WGS.250

TR
1-2:30p

Joaquín
Terrones

Virtual

During the first years of the HIV/AIDS crisis, in the eighties and early nineties, activists protested across major cities demanding government action, some of them still hooked up to IV drips and oxygen tanks; alongside them, writers, visual artists, and filmmakers continued creating, many up until their last breath. This course examines the relationship between different forms of cultural expression—from art to activism—during those first fifteen years of the HIV/AIDS pandemic, prior to the advent of highly active antiretroviral therapy. In particular, we will analyze the way in which mainstream narratives about the disease associated it with Blackness and queerness. With a focus on the work of Black queer and trans creators and activists, we will also study how literature, film, and visual art were mobilized against these mainstream narratives in order to effect changes in public consciousness and even policy. Finally, we will discuss the legacy of these cultural responses, particularly as it pertains to communities of color. We will do so through close readings across a variety of genres and media: fiction, poetry, film, theater, television, journalism, popular music, painting, sculpture, performance, and installation art. Some of the works we will analyze include: Samuel Delany's *The Tale of Plagues and Carnival*; Octavia Butler's *Fledgling*; Jamaica Kincaid's *My Brother*; Sapphire's *Push* and its screen adaptation *Precious*; the films of Marlon Riggs; and the latest season of the television series *Pose*.

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES

Greek I

21L.607
ends
Oct 16th

MW
7-8:30p

Alexander
Forte

Virtual

Introduces rudiments of ancient Greek - the language of Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides, and Euclid, and the basis for that of the New Testament - to students with little or no prior knowledge of the subject. Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval texts. Greek I and Greek II may be combined (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H. Meets with 21L.608.

Greek II

21L.608
begins
Oct 19th

MW
7-8:30p

Alexander
Forte

Virtual

Introductory Greek subject for students with some prior knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary. Intended to refresh and enrich ability to read ancient and/or medieval literary and historical texts. May be taken independently of Greek I with permission of instructor. Greek I and Greek II may be combined (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H. Meets with 21L.607.

Latin Readings & Advanced Latin Readings

**21L.613/
21L.614**
ends
Oct 16th

MW
1-2:30p

Stephanie
Frampton

Virtual

Introduction to reading Latin literature in the original language. Provides a bridge between the study of Latin grammar and the reading of Latin authors. Improves knowledge of the language through careful examination of literary texts, focusing on prose and poetry in alternate years. Builds proficiency in reading Latin and develops appreciation for basic features of style and genre. Texts vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs. 21L.613 and 21L.614, or two terms of 21L.613, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

Meets with 21L.614: Building on 21L.613, develops the ability to read and analyze Latin literary texts, focusing on prose and poetry in alternate years. Increases fluency in reading comprehension and recognition of stylistic, generic, and grammatical features. Texts vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs. 21L.613 and 21L.614, or two terms of 21L.614, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

Globalization and its Discontents; Spanish-speaking Nations: Consuming Latin America

21L.639J
(H)

Same
subject as
21G.739

MW 1-2:30p

Joaquín
Terrones

Virtual

What do we actually mean by “Latin America”? Is it possible to talk meaningfully about a common identity in a region with such enormous racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity? We will tackle these questions by studying contemporary film, literature, popular music, television, and visual art. In particular, we will focus on cultural exchanges between Latin America and the rest of the world. How do Latin Americans consume (or resist) foreign goods, ideas, and influences? How do Latin American writers, directors, and artists create work that speaks to both local and international audiences? Course materials include readings by Roberto Bolaño, Valeria Luiselli, Eduardo Galeano, Rita Indiana, and Yuri Herrera; films such as *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Miss Bala*, *7 Boxes*, and *Wild Tales*; and the work of visual and musical artists including Frida Kahlo, Fernando Botero, Rubén Blades, Celia Cruz, and Calle 13. Taught in Spanish.

SEMINAR

Studies in Fiction: James Joyce

21L.702
(H, CI-M)

TR 1-2:30p

James
Buzard

Virtual

This seminar will examine three major works by the great modernist writer James Joyce (1882-1941): the short-story collection *Dubliners* (1914), the novel *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), and the colossal modern (mock-) epic *Ulysses* (1922). Time permitting, we may also consider a brief sample of *Finnegans Wake* (1939). Through oral reports and other means students will learn about the historical context in which Joyce lived and created his work, though our main focus will be the increasingly complex and marvelous texts themselves. Student work will include oral reports, frequent short informal response papers, a midterm reflection paper, and a final creative or critical project on some aspect of *Ulysses*.

Studies in Drama: How We Got To *Hamilton*

21L.703
(H, CI-M)

MW 2:00-
3:30p

Marah
Gubar

Virtual

Winner of the 2016 Pulitzer Prize for Drama as well as eleven Tony Awards, Lin Manuel-Miranda's *Hamilton: An American Musical* (2015) is a critical and commercial smash hit. Justly praised for its innovative rap battles and nontraditional casting, this musical also builds in brilliant ways on the work of past creators of musical theater whose work has too often been undervalued and overlooked. To enrich our understanding of *Hamilton*, we will begin by studying forms of drama that routinely go untaught, including burlesque, minstrelsy, all-black revues, and the classic American book musical. In the process, we will celebrate the groundbreaking yet often forgotten (or appropriated) achievements of artists of color, including Master Juba, the Black Swan, Buck and Bubbles, Gladys Bentley, and many others. By the time we get to *Hamilton*, our deep understanding of how popular songs and musicals are structured will enable us to tackle critical questions about how artistically innovative and politically progressive *Hamilton* is (or isn't!) from a new perspective.

Studies in Poetry; Poetic Life Writing: Apologia, Confession, Concealment

21L.704
(H, CI-M)

TR 3:30-
5:00p

Noel
Jackson

Virtual

What motivates a poet to set down his or her life story in verse, and how does one do so? To what extent does the aim to tell the authentic truth about an individual life come into conflict with the time-honored aims of poetry, upending traditional expectations of formal regularity and decorum? The poets we will read wrote frankly about a range of personal topics not typically regarded as the stuff of poetry in their time. More broadly, they wrote with a sense that one of poetry's highest attainments is the accurate recording of subjective experience and inward states of mind.

The course subtitle ("Apologia, Confession, Concealment") names three possible, by no means comprehensive or mutually exclusive, modalities of self-representation in poetic life writing. Our reading will be organized around the study of two literary-historical periods each known for their innovative turn to the autobiographical mode and the precise delineation of inner life: British Romanticism (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron) and the second half of the twentieth century, with the American poets typically labeled "confessional" foremost (Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman), as well as others (Elizabeth Bishop, Frank O'Hara, Allen Ginsberg).

Major Authors: Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

21L.705
(H, CI-M)

TR 9:30-
11:00a

Arthur Bahr

Virtual

In this course we will read the entirety of Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, a narrative and poetic collection that is variously bawdy, pious, moving, disturbing, and hilarious. We will read about drunken millers, man-hungry serial monogamists, glad-handing social climbers, bitter provincial bureaucrats, hypocritical members of the ecclesiastical vice squad, and cooks with disturbingly lax standards of personal hygiene (among others). These pilgrims will in turn tell stories of star-crossed love in ancient Athens; why crows are black and can no longer speak; the best way for nerdy students to find love and sex; what one thing all mortal women most desire; and whether you can kill Death without dying yourself (among others). No background in medieval literature or Middle English is expected; enthusiasm for challenging but rewarding material is, and will be repaid with interest.

Studies in Film: Lost and Found Footage

21L.706
(H, CI-M)

Meets with
CMS.830

Lecture
W 7-10p
Virtual

Screening
T 7-10p
Virtual

Alex
Svensson

Currently, the term "found footage" is perhaps most commonly understood as a sub-genre of the horror film - one that relies on supposedly "true" lost-and-found footage of hauntings, possessions, and other monstrosities to structure their nightmarish narratives (*The Blair Witch Project*; *Paranormal Activity*; *Unfriended*). By playing with audience expectations of authenticity and illusion, found footage horror encourages us to believe that the recovered and reassembled documentary, news, and/or home video footage we are seeing is "real" - making it all the more terrifying. While this seminar is indeed interested in examining the found footage horror genre formally and historically, it also uses it as a jumping off point to explore "found footage" for all its other linked and divergent possibilities. Missing, incomplete, damaged, destroyed, salvaged, remixed, recycled, and re-contextualized film and video structure and inform our moving image world; it is in these gaps, bits, pieces, collages, archives, and ephemera that this seminar takes interest. Over the course of the semester, this class will engage with the aesthetic, ideological, political, and historical implications of the following "lost and found footage": documentaries and newsreels; early silent and Hollywood cinema; experimental and avant-garde films that make use of found footage; unreleased films; home movies; industrial and educational films; fictional found footage and "mockumentary;" underground and censored footage; and surveillance, webcam, and body-cam footage. In doing so, this seminar will address issues of film theory; cinematic heritage and preservation; film circulation and curation; physical and digital archives; re-appropriation; ownership and privacy; and of course realism and authenticity.



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(EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)
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CONCENTRATION

Students come to Literature to fulfill their Concentrations for many reasons. Some love to read great books, plays, or poems, or want to explore film and media studies. Some wish to hone their skills in thinking and writing about literary questions. Others enjoy participating in lively discussion in small classes. Many have favorite authors or periods they want to know better.

Concentrations may be organized by genre (poetry, drama, fiction, film), historical period and/or national literature (Renaissance, nineteenth-century British and American literatures, modern American literature), subject of study (popular culture, media studies, literature and aesthetic theory), or theme (race and imperialism, literature and the city, etc.).

MINOR

A Literature Minor lays the foundation for advanced study by enhancing the student's appreciation of major narrative, poetic and dramatic texts in relation to the cultures that produced them. In addition, it allows the student to develop a familiarity with interdisciplinary approaches, and encourages engagement with film and newer media.

The Literature Minor is designed to allow a student to make a smooth transition from a prior Concentration in Literature, as well as to progress smoothly towards a Major in Literature (should the student so desire).

MAJOR

Majoring in Literature at MIT combines a broad coverage of a range of different literary and cultural fields with the in-depth exploration of particular domains. To ensure coverage, students organize their restricted electives in Literature according to one of two rubrics: Historical Periods or Thematic Complexes. More sustained exploration of specific domains is achieved by taking Seminars in areas of interest. In addition, students contemplating graduate work in Literature or a related field are encouraged to consider completing a Literature Thesis.

Students considering majoring in Literature should first see our Undergraduate Academic Administrator to declare interest and to arrange a Major Advisor.

For a list of current term advisors, consult the Literature Section website lit.mit.edu/academic-advisors/
For questions or more information, please contact our Academic Administrator, Daria Johnson (litacademics@mit.edu).