

LITERATURE SUBJECTS

COURSE 21L SUPPLEMENT TO THE BULLETIN



FALL 2022

“Literature is indispensable to the world. The world changes according to the way people see it, and if you alter, even by a millimeter, the way a person looks at reality, then you can change it.” — James Baldwin

Chungking Express (Wong Kar-Wai, 1994)



LITERATURE SECTION

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21L Literature Subject Descriptions - Fall 2022

21L	Units	Gen Credit For	SUBJECT TITLE	INSTRUCTOR	DAY	TIME	ROOM
INTRODUCTORY							
21L.000J	3-0-9	H <small>CHH - Same Subject as 21L.044J</small>	Making Monsters [Writing About Literature]	Lutz, M.	MW	3-4:30p	14N-325
21L.001	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante	Buzard, J.	TR	3:30-5p	14N-112
21L.002	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Foundations of Western Literature: Shakespeare to Now	Doyle, C.	MW	9:30-11a	4-253
21L.003	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Computers and the Novels that Read Them [Reading Fiction]	Mangrum, B.	TR	2-3:30p	14E-310
21L.004 L1	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Reading Poetry	Fuller, M.	MW	1-2:30p	56-167
21L.004 L2	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Reading Poetry	Tapscott, S.	MW	7-8:30p	2-103
21L.005J	3-0-9	A <small>CHH, Same Subject as 21L.003</small>	Introduction to Drama	Alexandre, S.	TR	11-12:30p	2-103
21L.006	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Thinking with Plants and Animals [American Literature]	Finch, L.	TR	1-2:30p	56-167
21L.010	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Writing About Shakespeare	Henderson, D.	TR	3:30-5p	14E-310
21L.011	3-3-6	A <small>CHH</small>	Introduction to Film Studies (Lecture)	Svensson, A.	T	3:30-5p	3-270
			Introduction to Film Studies (Screening)	/	M	7-10p	3-270
			Introduction to Film Studies (Recitation 1)	/	R	3-4p	1-277
			Introduction to Film Studies (Recitation 2)	/	R	4-5p	1-277
21L.019	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Liars, Cheaters, and Thieves [Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction]	Terrones, J.	MW	3:30-5p	2-103
21L.040J	3-0-9	H <small>CHH, Same Subject as 21L.041</small>	Foundations of East Asian Literature and Culture: From Confucius to the Beats	Deneke, W.	MW	9:30-11a	1-277
21L.044J	3-0-9	H <small>Same Subject as 21L.040J, 195, WGS.202</small>	Classics of Chinese Literature in Translation	Deneke, W.	MW	11-12:30p	5-234
SAMPLINGS (6-UNITS)							
21L.310	2-0-4		American Icons [Bestsellers] (Ends Oct. 21)	Tapscott, S.	T	7-10p	2-103
21L.320	2-0-4		DFW@MIT: Infinite Jest [Big Books] (Begins Oct. 24)	Jackson, N.	TR	1-2:30p	4-251
21L.325	2-0-4		The Romantic Lyric [Small Wonders] (Ends Oct. 21)	Jackson, N.	TR	1-2:30p	4-251
INTERMEDIATE							
21L.432J	3-0-9	H <small>meets with CHS.95</small>	Understanding Television	Hendershot, H.	W	7-10p	14N-325
21L.433	3-0-9	H	Hollywood Renaissance — American Film in the 1970s [Film Styles and Genres]	Thorburn, D.	MW	1-2:30p	4-144
21L.434	3-0-9	H	21st Century Speculative Fiction [Science Fiction and Fantasy]	Finch, L.	TR	11-12:30p	56-167
21L.481J	3-0-9	H <small>Same Subject as WGS.202</small>	Black Lives and Queer Bodies [HIV/AIDS in American Culture]	Terrones, J.	MW	9:30-11a	2-147
21L.489J	3-0-9	H <small>Same Subject as 21L.705 and CHS.618</small>	Interactive Narrative	Paradis, J.	W	2-5p	66-156
21L.500J	3-0-9	A <small>Same Subject as 21L.720</small>	How We Got To Hamilton	Gubar, M.	MW	1-2:30p	56-169
21L.512	3-0-9	H	Race, Environment, and Modern American Fiction [American Authors]	Mangrum, B.	TR	9:30-11a	56-167
21L.580	3-0-9	H	Lost in Translation: From Luther to Google Translate [Translations]	Urlaub, P.	MW	11-12:30p	56-167
INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES							
21L.607	3-0-3		Greek 1 (Ends Oct. 21)	Forte, A.	TR	11:30-1p	1-134
21L.608	3-0-3		Greek 2 (Begins Oct. 24)				
21L.613	2-0-4		Latin Readings (Ends Oct. 21)	Colaizzi, R.	TR	2-3p	14N-112
21L.614	2-0-4						
21L.621J	3-0-9	H <small>Same Subject as 21L.304 WGS.101</small>	French Feminist Literature: Yesterday and Today	Perreau, B.	T	7-10p	14N-313
21L.637J	3-0-9	H <small>Same subject as 21L.707</small>	Power and Culture: Utopias and Dystopias in Spain and Latin America	Resnick, M.	T	7-10p	14N-325
21L.638J	3-0-9		Literature and Social Conflict: Perspectives on the Hispanic World	Terrones, J.	MW	1-2:30p	66-148
SEMINAR							
21L.704	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Poetic Life Writing: Apologia, Confession, Concealment [Studies in Poetry]	Jackson, N.	TR	3:30-5p	4-144
21L.705	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Charles Dickens: Early, Middle, and Late [Major Authors]	Buzard, J.	TR	1-2:30p	2-103
21L.706J	3-3-6	H <small>CHH - meets with CHS.600</small>	Global Indigenous Cinemas [Studies in Film]	Doyle, C.	MW	11:30-1p	56-169
21L.720	3-0-9	H <small>CHH</small>	Chaucer's Canterbury Tales	Bahr, A.	MW	9:30-11a	56-167

Note: Rooms and times subject to change

TIME	Monday/Wednesday				
9:30 AM	21L.040J WD 9:30-11a	21L.512 BM 9:30-11a	21L.720 AB 9:30-11a	21L.002 CD 9:30-11a	
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM	21L.044J WD 11-12:30p	21L.580 PU 11-12:30p	21L.706J CD 11:30-1p		
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM	21L.004 L1 MF 1-2:30p	21L.433 DT 1-2:30p	21L.500J MG 1-2:30p	21L.638J JT 1-2:30p	
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM					21L.489J JP W 2-5p
3:00 PM	21L.000 ML 3-4:30p				
3:30 PM		21L.019 JT 3:30-5p			
4:00 PM					
4:30 PM					
7:00 PM	21L.004 L2 ST 7-8:30p	21L.011 AS M 7-10p Screening		21L.432 HH W 7-10p	
7:30 PM					
8:00 PM					
8:30 PM					
9:00 PM					
9:30 PM					

TIME	Tuesday/Thursday				
9:30 AM		21L.481J JT 9:30-11a			
10:00 AM					
10:30 AM					
11:00 AM	21L.005J SA 11-12:30p	21L.434 LF 11-12:30p		21L.607 AF 11-12:30p Ends Oct. 21	21L.608 AF 11-12:30p Begins Oct. 24
11:30 AM					
12:00 PM					
12:30 PM					
1:00 PM	21L.705 JB 1-2:30p	21L.006 LF 1-2:30p		21L.325 NJ 1-2:30p Ends Oct. 21	21L.320 NJ 1-2:30p Begins Oct. 24
1:30 PM					
2:00 PM					
2:30 PM			21L.613/614 SF 2-3:30p Ends Oct. 21		21L.003 BM 2-3:30p
3:00 PM					21L.011 AS R 3-4p
3:30 PM					Recitation 1
4:00 PM	21L.001 JB 3:30-5p	21L.010J DH 3:30-5p	21L.011 AS T 3:30-5p Lecture	21L.704 NJ 3:30-5p	21L.011 AS R 4-5p Recitation 2
4:30 PM					
7:00 PM					
7:30 PM					
8:00 PM	21L.621J BP T 7-10p	21L.637J MR T 7-10p	21L.310 ST T 7-10p Ends Oct. 21		
8:30 PM					
9:00 PM					
9:30 PM					

INTRODUCTORY

21L.00J (H, CI-HW) Writing About Literature: Making Monsters

Same as
21W.041J

MW 3-4:30p

Michael
Lutz

14N-325

This course will look at literature centered on monstrous figures to think about two things. The first: how do monsters (like devilish magicians, mad scientists, and any number of nameless creatures) show or demonstrate the fears, anxieties, and problems of specific cultural moments throughout history? What are the techniques authors use to fashion their monstrous characters, and what are their implications? The second: what are we to make of the fact that, while monsters are often objects of terror, they are also frequently sympathetic figures, vibrant fictional characters whose complexities seem to protest the fear they are (supposedly) meant to inspire?

Indeed, many of the monsters we will cover are, to some readers, the heroes of their stories.

By reading literature in genres ranging from 16th century English drama to the 19th century Gothic novel to contemporary American horror fiction, this course will teach you to understand and write about—through close reading, historical and contextual research, and comparative analysis of texts—literature’s rich, ongoing, and ambivalent tradition of making monsters.

21L.001 (CI-H) Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante

TR 3:30-5p

James
Buzard

14N-112

This course examines foundational literary works from the Ancient Greeks and Romans to Medieval Europe. We’ll consider these works as sources of some very long-lasting traditions in the representation of love, desire, conflict, justice, the quest for knowledge, the scope or limits of human action, and human relations with the divine and animal realms. Works to be considered will most likely include: Homer’s *Iliad* and *Odyssey*; Aeschylus’s *Oresteia*; Sophocles’s *Oedipus the King*, *Oedipus at Colonus*, and *Antigone*; Euripides’s *The Bacchae*; Virgil’s *Aeneid*; and Dante’s *Inferno*.

21L.002 (CI-H) Foundations of Western Literature: Shakespeare to Now

MW 9:30-11a

Caitlyn Doyle

Complementary to 21L.001. This course offers a broad survey of foundational literary and philosophical texts that have come to represent the cultural heritage of the modern Western world. The focus will be on examining how works of art have reflected, shaped, and challenged their social and historical contexts. We will consider art's role in transformative shifts such as the loss of a supernatural perspective on human events and the decentering of "Western Man" as the locus of human possibility. The readings will introduce students to key thinkers including Cervantes, Goethe, Wilde, Woolf, and Fanon. Students will become familiar with various critical perspectives, considering approaches based on class, race, gender and sexuality. The course will also prepare students for undergraduate work in literary and cultural studies with a focus on textual analysis and composition.

21L.003 (CI-H) Reading Fiction: Computers and the Novels that Read Them

TR 2-3:30p

Benjamin
Mangrum

14E-310

This course examines how writers have represented the computer as a cultural artifact. The course will briefly survey the history of the computer, but we will take literary representations of the computer as an opportunity for learning how to read and write about fiction. Thus, the novels and short stories examined in this course will invite us to ask two seemingly unrelated questions: "What is fiction?" and "What is the computer?" These questions seem to have straightforward answers, but students will come to think in new and critical ways about both fiction and the computer as social technologies.

21L.004 (CI-H) Reading Poetry (L1)

MW 1-2:30p

Mary Fuller

56-167

How do you read a poem? Many people find poetry “difficult” – sometimes pleurably and sometimes less so. But within that category of the difficult resides much that is of use and of value to us as readers and human beings. Among the goals of the class, we will be developing and practicing some of the skills, habits, and knowledge to approach poetic texts – difficult or otherwise – so that you can judge for yourselves what they mean for you. We’ll take a close look at the nature of evidence that can be used for thinking and talking about poetry: the formal properties of poetic language as well the use of context. We’ll read a wide variety of poetry from 1900 through the present, with some glances further back, and we will explore a variety of tools and approaches, from the old (memorization, listening, and reading out loud) to the new (digitally enabled visualization and annotation). Most of our reading will be in modern English, so that we can focus on how poets work with its particular properties and affordances, but any knowledge of other languages can be a valuable resource to contribute to our discussion. The last two weeks of the semester will focus on readings chosen and presented by the class.

21L.004 (CI-H) Reading Poetry (L2)

MW 7-8:30p

Stephen
Tapscott

2-103

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, Langston Hughes, 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. Regular classroom hours will be reduced in the weeks for which a special event is scheduled.

21L.005J (A, CI-H) Introduction to Drama

Same Subject as 21M.609	In her autobiographical play, <i>To Be Young Gifted and Black</i> (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. “Dee-rahmuh!” we drawl to diagnose a scandalous story.
TR 11-12:30p	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 TikTok video, 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 Samuel Beckett, Quiara Alegria Hudes, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, David Henry Hwang, Suzan-Lori Parks, and Shakespeare.
Sandy Alexandre	
2-103	

21L.006 (H, CI-H) American Literature: Thinking with Plants and Animals

TR 1-2:30p	Climate crisis and COVID-19 are forceful reminders of the entangled lives of everyone and everything on the planet. This class turns to contemporary literature to consider ways of living together that are often ignored in contemporary American society. How do plant, animal, mineral, fungal, microbial, or bacterial networks think and live together? We will read novels, short stories, and poetry that place non-human characters at their centre: what does a story look like from the point of view of mushrooms, moss, trees, or a piece of plastic waste at sea? Can we learn to be kinder, more open, and more oriented to a world where we value the lives of the most vulnerable rather than the creation of wealth? We will think about these ideas through the lens of social justice, such as the profit-driven response to the current pandemic, environmental racism, and the use of Indigenous lands for nuclear mining.
Laura Finch	This class is a CI-H subject, which means that it will provide you with a foundation in written and oral communication. Over the course of the class you will write and revise a series of short essays and share your ideas with the class through presentations. Assessment is based on consistent participation and engagement throughout the semester, rather than being heavily weighted towards a final paper.
56-167	

21L.010 (H, CI-H) Writing About Shakespeare

TR 3-4:30p

Diana
Henderson

14E-310

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.

21L.011 (A, CI-H) Introduction to Film Studies

Lecture
T 3:30-5p
3-270

Screening
M 7-10p
3-270

Recitation 1
R 3-4p
1-277

Recitation 2
R 4-5p
1-277

Alexander
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, Eisenstein, Fellini, Godard, Griffith, Hawks, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Tarantino, Welles, Wiseman, and Zhang

21L.019 (H, CI-H) Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction: Liars, Cheaters, and Thieves

MW 3:30-5p

Joaquín Terrones

2-103

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, adulterers, 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 comment on societal norms and problems. Some of the works we will analyze and discuss are the Lazarillo de Tormes, Voltaire's *Candide*, Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*, Machado de Assis's *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, 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.

21L.040J (H, CI-H) Foundations of East Asian Literature and Culture: From Confucius to the Beats

Same as
21G.044/195

MW 9:30-11a

Wiebke Denecke

1-277

Today we have the luxury of reading more literatures in more languages than ever before, giving us the opportunity to explore the great diversity of what is called “literature” across the time and space of world history. This course introduces you to some of the most seminal and thought-provoking texts from East Asia (China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam), and is conceived as complementary to the Foundations of Western Literature course in the Literature curriculum. We persistently ask how “literature” looks different when viewed through the literary heritage of East Asia: what does poetry written in Chinese characters accomplish that alphabetic poetry cannot? How does Buddhist reincarnation change the way you tell stories and devise novels? Why is Japan the world's only major literature where female authors dominated certain literary genres as early as the 11th century? How did the complex interplay in Japan, Korea, and Vietnam between high-brow literature in the cosmopolitan language of Literary Chinese, and vernacular or popular literatures expand the possibilities of literary expressivity, gender figuration, and identity play? What was it that made American avantgarde writers of the Beat generation so ecstatic about classical Chinese and Japanese poetry?

Our strategic journey through East Asian literatures and cultures will take us through philosophical master texts such as Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi; Tang poetry; China's classical novels such as *Journey to the West*; Japan's female-authored tales and diaries, such as *The Tale of Genji* and *The Pillow Book*; Korea's classical novel *The Nine Cloud Dream*, and the heart-wrenching pansori play *Song of Ch'unhyang*. All readings are in English, no language skills are required.

21L.044J (H) Classics of Chinese Literature in Translation

Same as
WGS.235/
21G.044. Meets
with 21G.195

MW 11-12:30p

Wiebke Denecke

5-234

This course offers a panoramic overview of classical Chinese literature—the world’s oldest continuous literary tradition still alive. As we read texts from a breath-taking span of three thousand years (some originally inscribed on turtle shells and bamboo strips!) we will learn how to appreciate the interventions writers made in their own time and cultural context, while also grasping their significance, comparatively, in the broader context of literary traditions from around the world.

While focusing on first-hand encounters with original works in English translation (we will examine poetry, philosophy, history, rhapsodies, drama, short stories and several great classical novels), we will ask questions such as: what distinctive role did writing and literature come to play in Chinese society over the course of China’s many dynasties? How did the genres Chinese authors developed shape the content of their works and help articulate their desires, fears, hopes, creative fancies, and their ideas about life and death, virtue and violence, love, belief and knowledge, and the human condition? What does classical Chinese literature have to offer to readers and writers in today’s global world?

As we read across three millennia, we will have the unique privilege to witness in fast-forward motion, like in a historical laboratory, how Chinese authors increasingly adapted, satirized, rewrote or resisted earlier literary themes and models as their literary tradition grew older and ever more diverse. All texts are in translation. No language skills are required.

SAMPLINGS

21L.310 Bestsellers: American Icons

Ends
Oct 21

T 7-10p

Stephen
Tapscott

2-103

In this 6-week Samplings subject, we read texts – chiefly poems and visual images – 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 collectively acknowledge a historical moment, and a journalist or writer documents the moment; eventually the documentation seems to represent [or to embody] the moment, so that we interpret the text formally in order to understand the historical or ideological or psychological nuances of the original moment. Some texts directly aspire to that representative status; some artists manipulate the reality they portray; some deliberately alter or play on the received dominant narrative or on a text/image that is already recognizable.

Texts by Walt Whitman, Emma Lazarus, Paul Lawrence Dunbar, Robert Frost, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Edgar Allan Poe, AI [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.

21L.320 Big Books: DFW@MIT: *Infinite Jest*

Begins
Oct 24

TR 1-2:30p

Noel Jackson

4-251

David Foster Wallace’s 1996 novel *Infinite Jest* is a “Big Book” in a number of senses. One of the masterpieces of postmodern American fiction, the novel is regularly found on best-of lists for the last quarter or half century. A novel of colossal proportions and equally massive ambitions, with a large cast of characters and frequently shifting perspectives and times, *Infinite Jest* is a novel whose maximalism, overwhelming at times, reflects the enormity and chaos of the world it describes. Both clear-eyed and fabulist, probing and problematic, the novel addresses geopolitical conflict, ecological crisis, information overload, postirony, addiction and recovery, and more.

Infinite Jest is placed in a number of settings, but much of its action takes place in the greater Boston area. Some of the local sites DFW describes are now gone, some are imaginary or partly imagined, and many are still around, including some landmarks on the MIT campus. Students will have the opportunity to generate site-specific readings through exploratory trips into the community and/or virtual mapping of the novel.

21L.325 Small Wonders: The Romantic Lyric

Ends
Oct 21
TR 1-2:30p
Noel Jackson
4-251

The “small wonders” of this class are short poems, songs, sonnets, odes, and others from a period famed for excellence in these short literary forms. The poetry produced in England in the years 1789-1820 revolutionized the themes and diction of poetry and substantially rethought the nature of poetic thinking. This subject will read ample selections of lyric writing from the major poets of English Romanticism, and will situate this poetry in relation to what William Wordsworth described as “the great national events” of his moment (political revolution, economic modernization, urbanization and industrialization, feminist and abolitionist movements, etc.). Our readings will attend chiefly to the invention of formal literary languages responsive to these contexts. Authors will include William Blake, William and Dorothy Wordsworth, Anna Barbauld, Charlotte Smith, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, Percy Shelley, and John Keats. The student who takes this subject can expect to gain an intimate familiarity with some of the most exhilarating, challenging, and beautiful short poems in the language.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.433 (H) Understanding Television

W 7-10p	A cultural approach to television's evolution as a technology and system of representation. Considers television as a system of storytelling and mythmaking, and as a cultural practice studied from anthropological, literary, and cinematic perspectives. Focuses on prime-time commercial broadcasting, the medium's technological and economic history, and theoretical perspectives. Considerable television viewing and readings in media theory and cultural interpretation are required. Previously taught topics include <i>American Television: A Cultural History</i> . Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
Heather Hendershot	
4-253	

21L.433 (H) Film Style & Genres: Hollywood Renaissance — American Film in the 1970s

MW 1-2:30p	A close study of landmark films of the late 1960s and 70s when a new generation of actors and directors transformed American movies. Syllabus will include such films as <i>Bonnie and Clyde</i> , <i>The Graduate</i> , <i>Five Easy Pieces</i> , <i>The Godfather</i> , <i>Wanda</i> , <i>Nashville</i> , <i>Mean Streets</i> , <i>Chinatown</i> , <i>Cabaret</i> .
David Thorburn	
4-144	Students will write three short essays centered on our primary films, actors or directors and will be responsible for two or three oral reports.

21L.434 (H) Science Fiction and Fantasy: 21st Century Speculative Fiction

TR 11-12:30p	The American author Octavia E. Butler once wrote: "There is nothing new under the sun; but there are new suns." This ability to up-end what we consider possible and to allow us to imagine differently is the hallmark of Speculative Fiction. In this class we will read books that makes use of this radical capacity in order to challenge the oppressive structures of race, gender, colonialism/settler colonialism, and capitalism that we currently live under. By tackling the social injustices of the present, the writers we will read invite us to imagine our futures differently.
Laura Finch	
56-167	

This intermediate-level class is focused on issues of social justice. We will read 21st-century science fiction and speculative fiction (including short stories, novels, and films), as well as theoretical and critical texts. Assessment (presentations, short written responses, and a final paper/project) is based on consistent participation and engagement throughout the semester, rather than being heavily weighted towards a final paper.

21L.481J HIV/AIDS in American Culture: Black Lives and Queer Bodies

Same Subject
as WGS.250

MW 9:30-11a

Joaquín
Terrones

2-147

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*.

21L.500J (A) How We Got to *Hamilton*

Same Subject
as 21M.729

MW 1-2:30p

Marah Gubar

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 appreciation 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. Listening to or watching multiple performances of the same material will help us to deepen our analysis of how individual songs, dances, and entire shows are structured, as well as to appreciate how they vary depending on who is performing them.

In the process, we will celebrate the groundbreaking yet often forgotten (or appropriated) achievements of artists of color, including Master Juba, the Black Swan, Ethel Waters, Buck and Bubbles, and many others. By the time we get to *Hamilton*, our attunement to how popular songs and musicals are structured will enable us to analyze Manuel-Miranda's debts to past artists as well as to appreciate his scintillating originality. We'll also discuss insightful critiques of *Hamilton* by a wide range of contemporary commentators. Because this is an "Arts" course that's cross-listed with Music and Theater Arts, it will feature a mix of creative and critical assignments, some of which may be linked to field trips to local theaters, dance studios, and performance-related archives.

21L.512 American Authors: Race, Environment, and Modern American Fiction

TR 9:30-11a	This course considers how literary representations of the environment intersect with American ideas about race and national identity. We'll ask: What does it mean to be "American"? Who belongs in the nation's cities, deserts, farms, towns, and forests? And how does the literary representation of the environment reflect ideas about belonging?
Benjamin Mangrum	
56-167	To explore these questions, we'll consider the work of writers such as Ann Petry, Willa Cather, Hisaye Yamamoto, and William Faulkner, among others. We'll draw on insights from critical theories of race and the environmental humanities to examine how modern literary movements represent place and identity.

21I.580 Translations: Lost in Translation: From Luther to Google Translate

MW 11-12:30p	Today, translation is frequently delegated to machines. But despite impressive technological advances, literary texts quickly demonstrate the limits of artificial intelligence. Why do sophisticated machines struggle with literary translation? We will address this question by engaging perspectives articulated by a range of influential thinkers – from Luther's reflections on translating the Bible, to Goethe and Schleiermacher's thoughts on translation as an interpretive act, to twentieth-century responses developed by Nietzsche, Benjamin and Szondi. Over the course of the semester, students will create a structured portfolio of their own translations with critical reflections that will connect their experiences as translators to issues broached in the theoretical texts. Equipped with a nuanced appreciation of translation as an art, we will turn our attention to machine translation and critically assess the affordances and limitations of translation engines to generate satisfactory output in response to a variety of literary and expository genre. Our discoveries will provide us with a deeper understanding of specific characteristics of literary discourse. Oral fluency in a foreign language is not required, but the willingness and comfort to engage with a language other than English using dictionaries and other tools is required.
Per Urlaub	
56-167	

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

21L.607 (H) Greek I

Ends
Oct. 21

TR 11:30-1p

Alexander
Forte

1-134

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.

21L.608 (H) Greek II

Begins
Oct. 24

TR 11:30-1p

Alexander
Forte

1-134

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.

21L.613 Latin Readings

Ends
Oct. 21

TR 2-3p

Randall
Colaizzi

14N-112

Read Latin literature in the original language! This year our texts will be selections from Plautus and Terence, whose plays of intrigue, deception, and problematic love were the fertile soil from which sprouted comedies from the Renaissance to the modern sitcom. 21L.613 serves as a bridge for students with one semester or more of formal Latin training (Latin 1/2, high school Latin, or equivalent) between the study of Latin grammar and vocabulary and the reading of Latin authors. 21L.614 offers more of a challenge for advanced readers. They run simultaneously and each may be repeated once for credit.

21L.614 Advanced Latin Readings

Ends
Oct. 21

TR 2-3p

Randall
Colaizzi

14N-112

Read Latin literature in the original language! This year our texts will be selections from Plautus and Terence, whose plays of intrigue, deception, and problematic love were the fertile soil from which sprouted comedies from the Renaissance to the modern sitcom. 21L.613 serves as a bridge for students with one semester or more of formal Latin training (Latin 1/2, high school Latin, or equivalent) between the study of Latin grammar and vocabulary and the reading of Latin authors. 21L.614 offers more of a challenge for advanced readers. They run simultaneously and each may be repeated once for credit.

21L.612[J] French Feminist Literature: Yesterday and Today

Same
Subject as
21G.344
WGS.321

T 7-10p

Bruno
Perreau

14N-313

The course explores feminist literary voices in France throughout the ages. It investigates how feminist genealogies redefine the relationship between belonging and knowledge. The course examines lifestyles, family norms, political representation, social movements, and the relation to the body. Studying several generations of women writers, the course discusses the theory that the power of feminist writing lies in its ability to translate male-dominant language into a language of one's own. Taught in French.

21L.637[J] Power and Culture: Utopias and Dystopias in Spain and Latin America

**Same
subject as
21G.717**

T 7-10p

Margery
Resnick

14N-325

This class examines how new literature, film, art and musical forms have emerged in response to tensions and contradictions in Hispanic culture. Can the Arts bring about social change? Utopias and dystopias provide the axis along which honor, family, war and religion take distinctive shapes in Spain and in Latin America. Through readings that include essays, speeches, newspaper articles, as well as short stories, poetry and the novel, we review historical realities from moments of vibrant heterogeneity to enforced homogeneity; from revolutionary, democratic politics to crushing dictatorships; from the promise of globalization to the struggle against US cultural imperialism.

Students will understand the connection between the written word, music, film and social change. Classwork includes group projects that reflect students' interests. Authors read include Miguel de Cervantes, Mariano José Larra, Ortega y Gasset, Manuel Puig, García Lorca, Rosario Castellanos, Blas de Otero, Juan Rulfo, Che Guevara, Pablo Neruda, Angela Figuera, Ariel Dorfman, Mariano José Larra, Carmé Riera. Films from Argentina, Spain, Chile, Mexico are an integral part of this subject. Offered in Spanish.

21L.638[J] Literature and Social Conflict: Perspectives on the Hispanic World

MW
1-2:30pm

Joaquín
Terrones

66-148

This course examines some of the most important conflicts and social justice issues in the Spanish-speaking world through fiction, poetry, essays, film and popular culture. We will study the Mexican and Cuban Revolutions; the military dictatorships in South America; contemporary struggles for black and indigenous rights; and feminist and LGBT movements across the region. Offered in Spanish.

SEMINAR

21L.704 (H, CI-M) Studies in Poetry: Poetic Life Writing: Apologia, Confession, Concealment

TR 3:30-5p

Noel
Jackson

4-144

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 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).

21L.705 (H, CI-M) Major Authors: Charles Dickens: Early, Middle, and Late

TR 1:00-
2:30pm

James
Buzard

2-103

If Charles Dickens had given us nothing more than Ebenezer Scrooge and the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Present, and Future, we would probably still be reading him. And he gave us much, much more. Nicknamed in his time “the Inimitable,” Dickens produced a large body of work incomparably rich and strange.

This class will study *three and a half* of Dickens’s major novels, taking our time to sink into their immersive worlds of plentiful characters, multiple plots, unexpected connections, zany humor, and searing pathos.

First we will read *Pickwick Papers*, that miracle of comic improvisation that launched his career and made Dickens a household name. For the middle of his career we’ll examine *Bleak House*, Dickens’s true masterpiece, a bold and capacious work taking in the whole of his society from high to low. We’ll also read *A Tale of Two Cities*, his famous historical novel set during the French Revolution. (If you read it in high school, go deeper with it in this class.)

Finally, we’ll consider the supremely weird half-novel *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, on which Dickens was working when he died. Exactly six of twelve planned installments of this final work exist, and readers since 1870 have speculated on how it was all supposed to turn out.

Students will be asked to give one or two brief oral reports, to write short response papers on a regular basis, and, as a final project, to complete *either* a sustained critical essay or a final creative project.

21L.706J (H, CI-M) Studies in Film: Global Indigenous Cinemas

**Meets with
CMS.830**

MW 11:30-
1:00p

Caitlyn
Doyle

1-134

This course examines diverse Indigenous cinemas from Turtle Island (Canada & the United States) to Aotearoa (New Zealand). Students will study a wide variety of Indigenous films, including activist-based documentaries, adventure comedies, sitcoms, and animations. These films challenge accepted historical and contemporary fictions that sustain settler-colonial forms of domination, offering poignant correctives to the misrepresentations of Indigenous peoples that have dominated Hollywood cinema. The films will be considered in the larger historical, legal, and political contexts to which they respond. Films will include: *The Mountain of Sgaana*, by Christopher Auchter (Haida), *Hunt for the Wilderpeople*, by Taika Waititi (Māori), *Rhymes for Young Ghouls*, by Jeff Barnaby (Mi’kmaq), *Smoke Signals by Chris Eyre* (Cheyenne and Arapaho) and *Maliglutit*, by Zacharias Kunuk (Inuk).

21L.720 (H, CI-M) Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*

MW 9:30-
11a
Arthur Bahr
56-167

In this course we will read 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.

LIT TEA

WHERE: BUILDING 14

14N-417

EVERY MONDAY (EXCEPT
HOLIDAYS) @ 4:30-5:30PM

**COME BY FOR SNACKS & TEA
WITH THE LITERATURE SECTION
INSTRUCTORS, STUDENTS, &
FRIENDS!



 Literature
LIT@MIT

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 a film and newer media.

The Literature Focus or Film Focus 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.