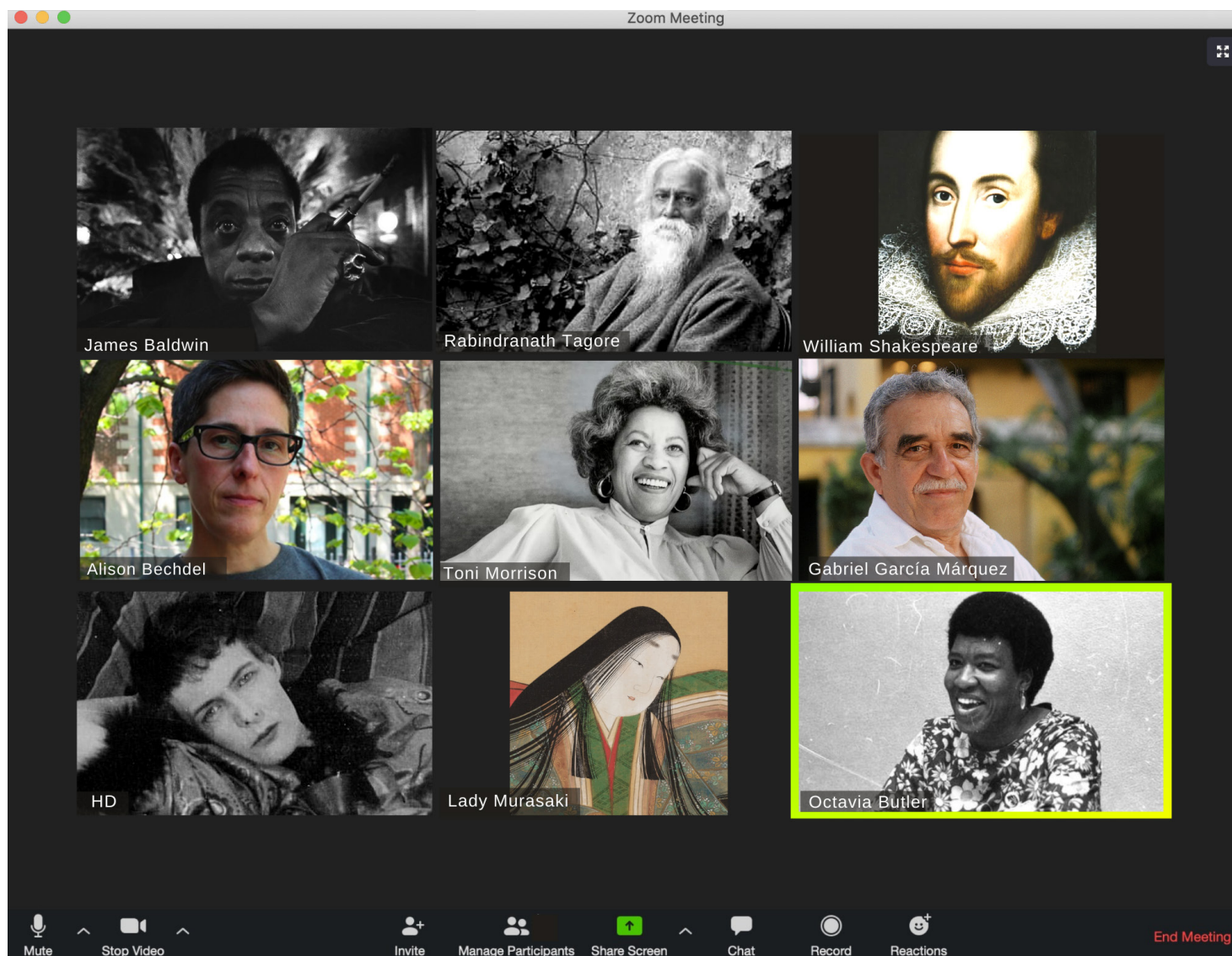


# LITERATURE SUBJECTS

COURSE 21L SUPPLEMENT TO THE BULLETIN



“There is nothing new under the sun, but there are new suns.”  
- Octavia Butler

## SPRING 2021



### 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](mailto:litacademics@mit.edu)) if you have any questions. Below please find a list of faculty members who are teaching in the Spring 2021 semester:

**Academic Advisor Information:**

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

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Margery Resnick	<a href="mailto:resnick@mit.edu">resnick@mit.edu</a>

21L Literature Subject Descriptions - Spring 2021

21L	Units	Gets Credit For	Subject Title	Instructor	Days	Times
<b>INTRODUCTORY</b>						
21L.000J	3-0-9	H CI-HW	<b>Writing About Literature</b>	Lutz, M.	MW	9:30-11a
21L.001	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante</b>	Buzard, J.	TR	2:30-4p
21L.004 L1	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Reading Poetry</b>	Jackson, N.	MW	7-8:30p
21L.004 L2	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Reading Poetry</b>	Fuller, M.	TR	3:30-5p
21L.006	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Debt: Obligations, Intimacies, and Environments [American Literature]</b>	Finch, L.	MW	1-2:30p
21L.007	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>East Asian Literature as World Literature [World Literatures]</b>	Denecke, W.	TR	9:30-11a
21L.008J	3-0-9		<b>Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies</b>	Degraff, M.	T	2-5p
21L.011	3-3-6	A CI-H, Same subject as 21H.106 21W.741 24.912 CMS.160 WGS.190	<b>Introduction Film Studies (Lecture)</b>	Svensson, A.	M	7-10p
			<b>(Screening)</b>		T	3:30-5p
			<b>(Recitation 1)</b>		R	3-4p
			<b>(Recitation 2)</b>		R	4-5p
21L.019	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction</b>	Terrones, J.	MW	3:30-5p
21L.021	3-0-9	H CI-H	<b>Comedy</b>	Kelley, W.	MW	11-12:30p
<b>SAMPLINGS 6-UNITS</b>						
21L.310	2-0-4		<b>The Great Gatsby &amp; Black Culture [Bestsellers](ends April 2)</b>	Kelley, W.	MW	1-2:30p
21L.320	2-0-4		<b>Kindred [Big Books](begins April 5)</b>	Alexandre, S.	TR	3-4:30p
21L.325	2-0-4		<b>Poems of Loss and Comfort, Exile and Community [Small Wonders]</b>	Bahr, A.	T	1-2:30p
21L.355	2-0-4		<b>Textual Mischief [Literature in the Digital Age](begins April 5)</b>	Kelley, W.	MW	1-2:30p
<b>INTERMEDIATE</b>						
21L.431	3-0-9	H	<b>Shakespeare Behind Bars and Across the Globe [Shakespeare on Film &amp; Media]</b>	Henderson, D.	TR	11-12:30p
21L.433	3-0-9	H	<b>Film Styles and Genres</b>	Svensson, A.	TR	7-8:30p
21L.434	3-0-9	H	<b>Science Fiction and Fantasy</b>	Finch, L.	MW	11-12:30p
21L.455	3-0-9	H	<b>The Homeric Epics [Ancient Authors]</b>	Forte, A.	MW	9:30-11a
21L.457	3-0-9	H	<b>The Bible: New Testament</b>	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	9:30-11a
21L.480J	3-0-9	H Same subject as WGS.245	<b>Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures</b>	Terrones, J.	TR	1-2:30p
21L.486	3-0-9	A	<b>Modern Drama</b>	Fleche, A.	TR	2:30-4p
21L.487	3-0-9	H	<b>What Comes Next? [Modern Poetry]</b>	Tapscott, S.	M	7-10p
21L.490J	3-0-9	H Same Subject as 21G.077	<b>Introduction to the Classics of Russian Literature</b>	Khotimsky, M.	TR	2:30-4p
21L.512	3-0-9	H	<b>Weird Americas [American Authors]</b>	Terrones, J.	MW	1-2:30p
<b>INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES</b>						
21L.609/610	2-0-4		<b>Greek Readings</b>	Forte, A.	TR	4-5p
21L.611	3-0-3		<b>Latin 1 (ends April 2)</b>	Colaizzi, R.	MW	1-2:30p
21L.612	3-0-3		<b>Latin 2 (begins April 5)</b>			
21L.640J	3-0-9	H Same subject as 21F.740	<b>The New Spain: 1977 to Present</b>	Resnick, M.	TR	1-2:30p
<b>SEMINAR</b>						
21L.702	3-0-9	H CI-M	<b>Toni Morrison [Studies in Fiction]</b>	Alexandre, S.	TR	11-12:30p
21L.705	3-0-9	H CI-M	<b>Paradise Lost and Twentieth Century Fantasy [Major Authors]</b>	Fuller, M.	MW	1-2:30p
21L.706	3-3-6	H CI-M /meets with CMS.830	<b>Hitchcock: Film, Theory, Murder [Studies in Film]</b>	Brinkema, E.	MW	9:30-11a
21L.707	3-0-9	H CI-M	<b>Literature, Truth, and State Power in Asia [Problems in Cultural Interpretation]</b>	Denecke, W.	TR	11-12:30p

Note: Rooms and times subject to change

# INTRODUCTORY

## Writing About Literature

**21L.000J**  
**(H, CI-H)**

MW 9:30-  
11:00a

Virtual

Intensive focus on the reading and writing skills used to analyze literary texts such as poems by Emily Dickinson, Shakespeare or Langston Hughes; short stories by Chekhov, Joyce, or Alice Walker; and a short novel by Melville or Toni Morrison. Designed not only to prepare students for further work in writing and literary and media study, but also to provide increased confidence and pleasure in their reading, writing, and analytical skills. Students write or revise essays weekly.

## Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante

**21L.001**  
**(CI-H)**

TR 2:30-  
4:00p

James  
Buzard

Virtual

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, 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 selections from Dante's *Divine Comedy*.

~~As a CI-H class, 21L.001 will devote considerable attention to student writing and speaking. There will be a number of short essays and at least one formal oral report per student.~~



## Reading Poetry

**21L.004**  
**(H, CI-H)**  
Section 1

MW 7:00-  
8:30p

Noel Jackson

Virtual

An introduction to poetry in English, chiefly by British and American poets. We will explore Renaissance, eighteenth-century, Romantic, and Modernist poetry in particular detail. 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 William Shakespeare, Sir Philip Sidney, William Wordsworth, John Keats, Emily Dickinson, Robert Frost, T.S. Eliot, and Elizabeth Bishop.

## Reading Poetry

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

TR 3:30-  
5:00p

Mary Fuller

Virtual

How do you read a poem? Many people find poetry “difficult” – and almost everyone finds some 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 will 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.

## American Literature Debt: Obligations, Intimacies, and Environments

21L.004   
(H)

MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Laura Finch

Virtual

Debt comes in many forms: those to do with money (student loans, medical bills, credit cards); the debts we have to each other (how we respond to the COVID-19 pandemic, how we consider issues of justice and incarceration, what reparations we owe for the atrocities of slavery and Indigenous genocide); and environmental debts (what rights do we owe to animals, what do we owe the earth in the face of human-created climate catastrophe?).

This class is focused on issues of social justice, and we will learn to recognise and critique capitalist forms of debt within the United States. We will also read a range of novels, poems, and critical/theoretical texts in order to imagine other kinds of indebtedness and togetherness that value worth beyond credit scores and bank balances.

~~This class is a CI-H subject, which means that it will provide you with a foundation in written and oral communication. CI-H subjects require that you plan, organise, draft, and revise a series of sequenced assignments based on course material. Assessment is based on consistent participation and engagement throughout the semester, rather than being heavily weighted towards a final paper.~~

## World Literature East Asian Literature as World Literature

**21L.007**  
**(H,CI-H)**

TR 9:30-  
11:00a

Wiebke  
Denecke

Virtual

Today we have the luxury of reading more literatures in more languages than ever before in world history. In this course we ask: what can we learn from the great diversity of literatures? In what ways does “literature” look different when viewed through a different lens (such as through the literary heritage of China, Japan, or Korea)? 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?


Our selective journey through world literature will take us through some of Asia’s most seminal and thought-provoking texts, including philosophical masters such as Confucius, Laozi, and Zhuangzi; Tang poetry; China’s classical novels *Dream of the Red Chamber* and *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 pansori play *Song of Ch’unhyang*.

To enhance your ability to appreciate these rich texts and to speak and write about how they matter to us today, we will also draw in films, venture into creative exercises, and work on a translation project (~~no foreign language required!~~). All readings are in English ~~translation~~.

## Introduction to Film Studies

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

Same subject as  
21H.106, 21W.741,  
24.912, CMS.150,  
WGS.190

  
Lecture  
M 7:00-10:00p  
Screening  
T 3:30-5p  
Recitation 1  
R 3:00-4:00p  
Recitation 2  
R 4:00-5:00p

Virtual

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 European & Latin American Fiction: Liars, Cheaters and Thieves

**21L.019**  
**(H, CI-H)**

MW 3:30-  
5:00p

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*, 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.

## Comedy

**21L.021**  
**(H, CI-H)**

MW 11:00-  
12:30p

Wyn Kelley

Virtual

Comedy, the most elastic of literary and performance modes, skewers artifice, topples authority, and reverses expectations, not with the fatal outcomes of tragedy but with laughter and festivity. This class examines the deep roots and current forms of comedy, with a particular focus on the mechanisms and mysteries of comic insurrection. We will revel in Greek, Roman, and Shakespearean drama and the bawdy humor of *Rabelais*; explore Aphra Behn's eighteenth-century theater of feminist rakes in *The Rover*; investigate romantic comedy, parody, and social satire in Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde; peek under the covers of small-town family life in Alison Bechdel's *Fun Home*; and observe the uneasy relationship between farce and romantic love, violence and redemptive humor, satire and festivity in comic art. Discussion will frequently draw on examples of popular and contemporary forms, including political humor, stand-up, and sketch comedy.



# SAMPLINGS

## Bestsellers *The Great Gatsby* & Black Culture

21L.3   
begins

MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Wyn Kelley

Virtual

F. Scott Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby* (1925), a long-time bestseller, is often read as a quintessential portrayal of the American Dream. Jay Gatsby, a white working-class outsider, adopts the persona of a wealthy aristocrat in Jazz Age New York. Black authors in the last century have engaged with Fitzgerald's book or its themes, refreshing its impact in intriguing ways. As we will see in this class, the protagonist of Nella Larsen's *Passing* (1929), like Fitzgerald's Jay Gatsby, aspires to the world of wealthy socialites; Toni Morrison's *Jazz* (1992), taking place in the same period as Fitzgerald's novel, views the Jazz Age within the context of the Great Migration and Jim Crow; and Stephanie Powell Watts's *No One Is Coming to Save Us* (2017) situates Gatsby's story in a declining North Carolina town, where JJ Ferguson, a wealthy Black entrepreneur, builds an impressive mansion. Reading Fitzgerald's novel in dialogue with African American history and literary culture suggests how *The Great Gatsby* has grown and changed over the last century.

## Big Books *Kindred*

21L.3   
begins

TR 3:00-  
4:30p

Sandy  
Alexandre

Virtual

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].

## Small Wonders Poems of Loss and Comfort, Exile and Community

21L  5  
begins

T 1:00-  
2:30p

Arthur Bahr

Virtual

In this age of global pandemic and Zoom fatigue, we have all experienced loss and exile, and we therefore crave comfort and community. At their best, poems distill such raw emotions into intensified verbal form. So: together we will read and discuss a bunch of marvelous short poems that touch on these themes. We will range widely, from Old English to Elizabeth Bishop and Gwendolyn Brooks. Everyone will lead discussions at least once. Emphasis on reading and presentation rather than formal writing.

## Literature in the Digital Age Textual Mischief

21L  5

MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Wyn Kelley

Virtual

Herman Melville's novella *Benito Cereno*, a nineteenth-century story of mutiny at sea, is a duplicitous text. Somewhat in the manner of a detective story, Melville's narrative raises questions about its design and its designs upon a reader. This class seeks to understand the text's perils and pleasures by applying digital tools to the reading process. We will explore methods for deepening the reading experience, using a wide range of approaches:

1. Reading and annotating the text in MIT's Annotation Studio
2. Fluid-text analysis: exploring and collating different versions—magazine and book publication, as well as different editions and formats
3. Comparison with source text, Amasa Delano's *A Narrative of Voyages and Travels*, and other literary and historical sources
4. Marginalia: Melville's manuscript annotations as critical tool
5. Text analysis using Voyant Tools to locate significant patterns
6. Digital research in MIT Libraries databases

Students will read and discuss texts intensively in class; practice using different digital platforms; post questions and responses in a class discussion forum; present an in-class report; and keep a portfolio of materials to submit at the end of the term. No technical expertise required.

# INTERMEDIATE

## Shakespeare on Film & Media: Shakespeare Behind Bars and Across the Globe

**21L.431**  
**(H)**

TR 11:00-  
12:30p

Diana  
Henderson

Virtual

Shakespeare wrote in times of plague, protest, and social division: whether kings, queens, or commoners, characters in his plays struggle with personal confinement and their own emotions, highlighting themes of justice, responsibility, and forgiveness. From Nelson Mandela to Toni Morrison and from Kashmir to Kentucky, in every new medium and across the entire world, artists, citizens, fans, and social reformers have taken inspiration from—or taken issue with—Shakespeare’s words. We will study how these plays, re-mediated as books, films, television, images and more, work and circulate now. We will look at scenes and speeches, spin-offs and spoofs, as well as studying especially powerful films from India, Russia, western Europe, the US, and Japan.

This semester, drawing on the affordances of Zoom and other digital technologies, we will also create a unique community of students learning together at a distance while aware of their own confinement—whether in homes, hostels, dorm rooms or New England prisons. We will highlight Shakespeare’s dramas of isolation and social struggle, including *Hamlet*, *King Lear*, *Richard II*, *Henry IV, Part 1* and *The Tempest*, with special attention to the challenges of cross-cultural filmic translation and the importance of collaborative artistic processes across media.

## Film Styles and Genres

**21L.433**  
**(H)**

TR 7:00-  
8:30p

Virtual

Close study of one or more directors, genres, periods, artistic movements, or national cinemas which have been of major significance in the history of film. Previously taught topics include Hollywood and Hong Kong, and Movie Realists: Chaplin, Renoir, Neorealism, Truffaut. May be repeated for credit by permission of instructor.

## Science Fiction and Fantasy

**21L.434**  
**(H)**

MW 11:00-  
12:30p

Laura Finch

Virtual

Sci-fi writer 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 science fiction. In this class we will read science fiction 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.

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.

## Ancient Authors The Homeric Epics

**21L.455**  
**(H)**

MW 9:30-  
11:00a

Alexander  
Forte

Virtual

This course will feature a detailed examination of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, with a focus on the oral-formulaic background of the poems and the wider context of their creation. Topics will include the historicity of the Trojan war, orality and literacy in archaic Greece, the question of one or many Homer(s), the structure of the poems, and the degree to which Homeric concepts (of mind, time, speech, glory, and justice, among others) match our own.

## The Bible: New Testament

**21L.457**  
**(H)**

TR 9:30-  
11:00a

Ina Lipkowitz

Virtual

Beginning with an overview of the narrative arc and major themes of the Hebrew Bible, this course will introduce students to the New Testament as a collection of historical documents from the 1st and 2nd centuries, including biographies, history, letters, and an apocalyptic vision. We will study its historical and cultural context, address issues resulting from the translation of Hebrew into Greek, imagine how the various writings might have been understood by their earliest readers, and draw upon a range of methodologies and the interpretive practices of different traditions. Note: There are no prerequisites for this class; students may register without having taken The Hebrew Bible (21L.456).

## Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures

**21L.480J**  
**(H)**

Same  
subject as  
WGS.245

TR 1:00-  
2:30p

Joaquín  
Terrones

Virtual

This course will focus on LGBT literature from the late nineteenth century to the present with an emphasis on fiction and poetry. In particular, we will analyze how LGBT identities and their literary representations have changed over time. Our discussion will give special attention to the ways in which race, class, and disability intersect with sexuality and gender. Some of the authors we will read include James Baldwin, Virginia Woolf, Samuel Delany, Tony Kushner, Alison Bechdel, Cherrie Moraga, Janet Mock, and Audre Lorde.

## Modern Drama

**21L.486**  
**(A)**

TR 2:30-  
4:00pm

Virtual

Explores major modern plays with special attention to performance, sociopolitical and aesthetic contexts, and the role of theater in the contemporary multimedial landscape. Includes analysis of class, gender, and race as modes of performance. Typically features Beckett and Brecht, as well as some of the following playwrights: Chekov, Churchill, Deaver Smith, Ibsen, Fornes, Friel, Kushner, O'Neill, Shaw, Stoppard, Soyinka, Williams, Wilson.

## Modern Poetry What Comes Next?

**21L.487**  
**(H)**

M 7:00-  
10:00p

Stephen  
Tapscott

Virtual

After a period of great disruption –war, pandemic, plague, fire, loss-- or after a state of exception, “someone” (as the poet Wislawa Szymborska says) “someone has to clean up the mess.” Periods of shut-down and recalibration can lead to periods of fierce revaluation, re-formation. In this term we’ll look at several such periods of convulsive revaluation, in social and aesthetic terms: the decades just after the Spanish flu/WWI, and the years just after the Depression/WWII, were periods of radical rethinking—poets and artists asked fundamental questions about aesthetic forms, about the materials of their practice, and about the relation of art to the social world. So, what comes next? What have we learned? What are we learning? Who are we, the survivors? What comes next?

**(continues onto next page)**

## Modern Poetry What Comes Next?

In this intermediate subject we will read major poems by the most important poets in English in the twentieth century, emphasizing especially the period between post-WW I disillusionment and post-World War II internationalism (ca. 1918-1950). We will read poems that pay attention both to this disillusionment and to the compensatory joyous attention to the image: to ideas of the poet as language priest, to aesthetic experience as displaced religious impulse, and to poetry as faith, ritual, and cultural form. Poets whose work we will read include: Robert Browning, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes, Gertrude Stein, Rabindranath Tagore, Hilda Doolittle.

In-class discussions, frequent student reports, final presentation-projects, no final.

## American Authors Weird Americas

21L.512  
(H)

MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Joaquín  
Terrones

Virtual

Christopher Columbus's initial description of the Americas featured rivers of gold and man-eating monsters. From the moment colonists and conquistadors first encountered its endless frontiers, abundant nature, and alien cultures, the New World has often stood as otherworldly counterpart to European worldliness. This course will examine how contemporary North and Latin American authors have reflected on race, gender, sexuality, and national identity through horror, magical realism, Afrofuturism, and science fiction. Our first unit will consider hauntings and ghosts stories as attempts to make sense of the hemisphere's violent past. In the second, we will explore divergent worlds, geographies, and timelines that reimagine otherness and cultural plurality. The final unit will study genetic and cybernetic splicings that blur the carefully guarded lines between man, animal, and machine.

Some of the texts we will read include Octavia Butler's *Wild Seed*, Margaret Atwood's *Oryx and Crake*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, and Toni Morrison's *Beloved*, as well as short stories by J.L. Borges, H.P. Lovecraft, and Samuel Delany. We will also analyze the Brazilian graphic novel *Daytripper*, the television series *Orphan Black* and *Watchmen*, Ryan Coogler's *Black Panther* film, Beyoncé's *Black Is King* visual album, and Janelle Monáe's *Metropolis* series.

# INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES

## Greek Readings

**21L.609**  
**end date**

TR 4:00-  
5:00p

Alexander  
Forte

Virtual

Introduction to reading ancient Greek literature in the original language. Provides a bridge between the study of Greek grammar and the reading of Greek authors. Improves knowledge of the language through careful examination of literary texts, both prose and poetry. Builds proficiency in reading Greek 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.609 and 21L.610, or two terms of 21L.609, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

## Advanced Greek Readings

**21L.610**  
**begin date**

TR 4:00-  
5:00p

Alexander  
Forte

Virtual

Building on 21L.609, develops the ability to read and analyze ancient Greek literary texts, both prose and poetry. Focuses on increasing 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.610 and 21L.609, or two terms of 21L.610, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

## Latin I

**21L.001**  
**end date**

MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Randall  
Collaizi

Virtual

Latin I offers an introduction for those who do not know the language, or a review for those who would like to refresh the Latin that they have previously learned. In this half-semester intensive course, students will learn the rudiments of Latin vocabulary and grammar, including basic vocabulary, word forms, and simple sentence structure. This is the equivalent of a full first semester of college-level Latin.

## Latin II

**21L.6TZ**  
end date



MW 1:00-  
2:30p

Randall  
Collaizi

Virtual

Latin II offers a continuation of Latin I. This class will complete the basic preparation for those who have begun the language with Latin I (611), or will give a review to those who have learned some Latin previously. In this half-semester intensive course, students will reach the level necessary to read Latin texts at an intermediate level, including the full basic Latin vocabulary, word forms, and a knowledge of more complex sentence structures. This is the equivalent of the second semester of college-level Latin.

## The New Spain: 1977-Present

**21L.640J**  
(H)

Same  
subject as  
21F.740

TR 1:00-  
2:30p

Margery  
Resnick

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 Toni Morrison

**21L.702**  
**(H, CI-M)**

TR 11:00-  
12:30p

Sandy  
Alexandre

Virtual

This subject provides a comprehensive and critical overview of the literary and scholarly work of the inimitable writer Toni Morrison. Morrison's novels are well known for being stylistically dense and sometimes difficult to read and understand. But to borrow Morrison's own words, from *The Bluest Eye*, the semester-long exercise of reading, thinking, and writing about her work promises to be "a productive and fructifying pain." My goal is to ensure that all participants in the class actually gain something useful and fortifying from such an in-depth analysis of her oeuvre. As we allow ourselves the opportunity to meditate on her writings, during the course of the semester, I hope we will open ourselves to the possibility of growing more intellectually conscious not only as readers, writers, and thinkers in the classroom, but also as compassionate citizens out in the world. We will watch interviews of her and read seven or eight of her novels, some of her speeches, her short story "Recitatif," and critical essays about her work.

## Major Authors *Paradise Lost* and Twentieth Century Fantasy

**21L.705**  
**(H, CI-M)**

 MW  
1:30-3:00p

Mary  
Fuller

Virtual

A world created good has turned dark: suffering and injustice pervade it at every level, from bodily and emotional experience through the macro-systems of climate and social hierarchy. "Whose fault?" The poet John Milton posed this question at a time of tremendous personal and political difficulty. Blind and endangered by the fall of the republican government he served and the restoration of a monarchy, he turned to the Genesis story of origins as the seed of *Paradise Lost*, an epic poem instantly seen—even in a hostile political environment—as a classic.

One fate of a classic is to be rewritten, both by admirers and by antagonists. We will read *Paradise Lost* alongside works of twentieth-century fantasy and science fiction which rethink both Milton's text and its source: *Perelandra* (C. S. Lewis), *Dawn* (Octavia Butler), and the trilogy *His Dark Materials* (Philip Pullman). Not only arguing with or elaborating on Milton's story, these texts make us aware that *Paradise Lost* is itself a work of world-building speculative fiction, imagining not only radically different human conditions but also the cognitive, emotional and sensory experiences of non-human actors.

*Paradise Lost* is a challenging text that may be most rewarding when read in a diverse community of other minds and views. Milton's style can be a challenge as well, but we will make sure it is tractable. Note: this version of the class will be COVID/online adapted, with flexible assignment structure and provision for weeks without tasks other than reading and discussion.

## Studies in Film Hitchcock: Film, Theory, Murder

**21L.705**  
**(H, CI-M)**

Meets with  
CMS.830

MW  
9:30-11:00a

Eugenie  
Brinkema

Virtual

There are many things one can do with Alfred Hitchcock. The first English-language director to turn his name into a brand, marking each film with a cameo and his famous silhouette, Hitchcock insisted on the recognition of the director as auteur or author. At the same time, he was a notoriously untrustworthy author who loved to taunt the public with contradictory statements about himself and his films—(one of his most famous adages was “torture the audience”). He made immensely popular films in the 1950s and 1960s, which brought him fame and box office success, but he was also known for a small-budget, quirky television series; his films are taught in every introductory film course in the world as examples of artistic virtuosity in the medium, but he also made horror films and screwball comedies. His films are examples of cruel, methodical directorial control, but they are also often very funny; they weave through meditations on compulsion, obsession, aggression, paranoia, guilt, and desire, but they are also durably entertaining. One might read the director’s films as allegories in relation to politics, nationalism, ethics, and the social versus the individual, or turn him into a critic of the ideology of marriage and heterosexuality. In this seminar, we will do all of these things with Alfred Hitchcock and more, examining a broad range of paradoxical films from this most complex director. We will closely study over 15 of Hitchcock’s films, from his early silent pictures of the 1920s to his studio productions of the 1960s to his dark, violent later work. Readings from film theory will help us understand Hitchcock through psychoanalytic, feminist and formalist lenses, and will present major concepts analytically useful for many of his works (suspense, guilt, disguise, desire, the wrong man, the MacGuffin, the blonde, and the blot or stain). At least one previous course in film analysis is required. Required work will involve a mix of theoretical readings and film screenings (on plex), asynchronous listening and writing, and one weekly synchronous meeting. Scholarly output will include a long essay engaging theory and films, and a portfolio mixed-media project.

## Problems in Cultural Interpretation Literature, Truth, and State Power in Asia

**21L.707**  
**(H, CI-M)**

TR 11:00-  
12:30p

Wiebke  
Denecke

Virtual

Although we often enjoy literature for its autonomy, treating it as a welcome escape from the pressures of the “real world,” nonetheless outside powers—in particular the state—have left deep imprints on its themes, forms, and functions. How has state power encroached on literary production and imagination in Asia and what resources and strategies have writers drawn on to fight back? How have appeals to “truth” and “realism” played out in this struggle?

**(continues onto next page)**

## **Problems in Cultural Interpretation Literature, Truth, and State Power in Asia**

This course explores how particular political institutions, societal customs, and artistic forms have shaped literature in Asia over the past three millennia. Drawn from the literatures of China, Japan, Korea, Vietnam, and India, our readings include early Chinese and Indian philosophical texts; courtly chronicles and diaries such as *The Tales of the Heike* and *The Memoirs of Lady Hyegyong*; recluse writers such as Tao Qian, Kamo no Chōmei, and Kim Sisŭp; and stories by modern writers, including Lu Xun, Mori Ōgai, Satō Haruo, Park Wansuh, Rabindranath Tagore, and Saadat Hasan Manto.

By comparing works from different cultures, places, and periods, we will also develop an understanding of the methods of comparative literature, in part through cross-cultural creative exercises.



**ZOOM ID:  
639-783-714**

**EVERY MONDAY  
(EXCEPT HOLIDAYS)  
@ 4:30 - 6:00PM**



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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.