

LITERATURE SUBJECTS

Course 21L Supplement to the Bulletin



FALL 2026

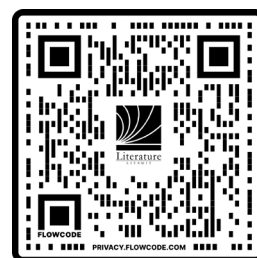
“A writer is a person who cares what words mean, what they say, how they say it. Writers know words are their way towards truth and freedom, and so they use them with care, with thought, with fear, with delight. By using words well they strengthen their souls. Story-tellers and poets spend their lives learning that skill and art of using words well. And their words make the souls of their readers stronger, brighter, deeper.”

— Ursula K. Le Guin

Image: “Narcissus,” Caravaggio. Oil on canvas. 1597-99. Edited 2026.



LITERATURE SECTION
77 Massachusetts Ave, Building 14N-407 | Cambridge, MA 02139
(617) 253-3581 | litacademics@mit.edu | lit.mit.edu



21L	UNITS	HASS	AFFILIATED	SUBJECT TITLE	INSTRUCTOR	DAY	TIME	ROOM	PRE-1900
INTRODUCTORY									
21L.003	3-0-9	H, CI-H		Jane Austen [Reading Fiction]	Buzard, James	T R	3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	14N-112	Yes
21L.004	3-0-9	H, CI-H		Reading Poetry, Section 1	Bahr, Arthur	M W	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	56-169	
21L.004	3-0-9	H, CI-H		Reading Poetry, Section 2	Tapscott, Stephen	M W	7:00 PM - 8:30 PM	2-103	Yes
21L.009	3-0-9	H, CI-H		Shakespeare	Henderson, Diana	M W	11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	66-156	Yes
21L.011	3-3-6	A, CI-H		Introduction to Film Studies (Lecture) (Recitation) (Screening)	Brinkema, Eugenie	T W M	7:00 PM - 8:30 PM 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	3-270 14N-313 1-190	
21L.016	3-0-9	H, CI-H		Gods and Mortals	Frampton, Stephanie	M W	1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	66-160	Yes
21L.017	3-0-9	H, CI-H		The Art of the Probable	Raman, Shankar	T R	9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	14N-325	
21L.020[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-H	same as WGS.145[J]	Globalization: The Good, The Bad and the In-Between	Resnick, Margery	T R	3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	14N-325	
21L.024[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-H	same as 21G.061[J]	Life, Death and Freedom [Literature and Existentialism] (Lecture) (Recitation 1) (Recitation 2)	Doyle, Caitlyn	T R R	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM 1:00 PM - 2:30 PM 2:30 PM - 4:00 PM	56-114 2-147 2-147	
21L.027[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-H	same as CMS.425[J], WGS.258[J]	Children Co-Creating Culture [Children and Culture]	Gubar, Marah	T R	3:00 PM - 4:30 PM	56-180	
21L.030	3-0-9	A, CI-H		A Random Walk Through Literature and Film	Jackson, Noel	M W	11:30 AM - 1:00 PM	2-103	
21L.032[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-H	same as WGS.130[J]	Afrofuturism, Magical Realism, and Other Otherwise Worlds	Terrones, Joaquín	T R	3:30 PM - 5:00 PM	56-169	
CMS.311[J]	2-2-8	H, CI-H	same as 21G.055[J]	Media in Weimar and Nazi Germany (Lecture) (Screening)	Ruffin, Jessica	T T	1:00 PM - 3:00 PM 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	56-167 4-231	
SPECIAL SUBJECT									
21.01	3-0-9	CI-H		Compass Course: Moral and Social Questions about the Human Condition	Fuller, Mary	T	9:00 AM - 11:00 AM	1-132	
SAMPLINGS (6 - UNITS)									
21L.325	2-0-4	H		Small Wonders of the Everyday [Small Wonders] (second half of semester)	Jackson, Noel	M W	1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	1-136	
INTERMEDIATE including subjects taught in Global Languages									
21L.433	3-0-9	H		Remakes and Remediations [Film Styles and Genres] (Lecture) (Screening)	Ruffin, Jessica	T R M	10:00 AM - 11:30 AM 7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	2-132 4-237	
21L.435[J]	3-3-6	H	same as CMS.435[J], meets with CMS.840	Indigenous Film and Literature [Literature and Film]	Doyle, Caitlyn	R	7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	4-253	
21L.438[J]	3-0-9	H	same as 21W.738[J], WGS.238[J]	Intersectional Feminist Memoir	Williams, Brianna	T R	9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	2-103	
21L.474[J]	3-0-9	H	same as CMS.422[J], WGS.230[J]	Representing Girlhood	Gubar, Marah	T R	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	14N-325	
21L.481[J]	3-0-9	H	same as WGS.250[J]	Black Lives and Queer Bodies [HIV/AIDS in American Culture]	Terrones, Joaquín	T R	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	2-103	
21L.492[J]	3-0-9	H	same as 21G.042[J], 21H.352[J], CMS.359[J], meets with 21G.133	Three Kingdoms: From History to Fiction, Comic, Film and Game	Teng, Emma	T R	1:00 PM - 2:30 PM	14E-310	Yes
21L.607	3-0-3	H		Greek I (first half of semester)	Driscoll, Eric	T R	11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	2-103	Yes
21L.608	3-0-3	H		Greek II (second half of semester)	Driscoll, Eric	T R	11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	2-103	Yes
21L.613/614	2-0-4	H		Latin Readings/Advanced Latin Readings (first half of semester)	Frampton, Stephanie	M W	11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	4-251	Yes
21L.903	2-0-4	H		Topics in Ancient and Medieval Studies: Latin (second half of semester)	Frampton, Stephanie	M W	11:00 AM - 12:30 PM	4-251	Yes
21L.620[J]	3-0-9	H	same as 21G.320[J]	Introduction to French Literature (Taught in French)	Rezvani, Leanna	MWF	10:00 AM-11:00 AM	14E-310	
21L.624[J]	3-0-9	H	same as 21G.321[J]	Childhood and Youth in French and Francophone Cultures (Taught in French)	Perreau, Bruno	R	7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	14N-313	
21L.630[J]	3-0-9	S	same as 21G.353[J]	Understanding Contemporary French Politics (Taught in French)	Perreau, Bruno	T	7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	14N-313	
21L.636[J]	3-0-9	H	same as 21G.716[J]	Introduction to Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Film (Taught in Spanish)	Terrones, Joaquín	T R	9:30 AM - 11:00 AM	56-167	
SEMINAR									
21L.703[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-M	same as 21T.246[J]	Stoppard, Churchill, & Company [Studies in Drama]	Henderson, Diana	M W	1:30 PM - 3:00 PM	1-375	
21L.704	3-0-9	H, CI-M		The Poetry of Witness [Studies in Poetry]	Tapscott, Stephen	T	7:00 PM - 10:00 PM	2-103	
21L.705	3-0-9	H, CI-M		Epics of Human Choice: Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> and Milton's <i>Paradise Lost</i> [Major Authors]	Fuller, Mary	T R	2:30 PM - 4:00 PM	2-103	Yes
21L.706[J]	3-0-9	H, CI-M	same as CMS.330[J], meets with CMS.830	Color in Film [Studies in Film]	Brinkema, Eugenie	T	2:00 PM - 5:00 PM	2-143	

INTRODUCTORY

21L.003 (H, CI-H) Jane Austen Reading Fiction

James Buzard

Pre-1900

One way to learn the art of reading fiction with insight and pleasure is to sample a variety of types; another is to dig deep into one author whose work is worth the attention. This class takes the latter approach: we'll read all six of Jane Austen's completed novels — *Sense and Sensibility*, *Pride and Prejudice*, *Emma*, *Mansfield Park*, *Persuasion*, and *Northanger Abbey* — plus (time permitting) the unfinished *Sanditon*. We'll investigate Austen's penetrating analyses of social, familial, and romantic relationships and her matchless comic style. Through reports and other projects, students will learn about the era and culture in which Austen worked. We will probably also watch some of the many film or TV adaptations that have been made of her novels. As a CI-H subject, the class will include a substantial amount of student writing and oral presentation.

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

Arthur Bahr

In this class we will read and discuss a lot of poems. We will also consider why so many people, going all the way back to Plato, have distrusted poets and despised their work. Among other activities, students will translate poetry into prose to see if there is something distinctive about poetic language; explore the many meanings that common words have gained and lost over the centuries, and think about how that matters; read all 154 Shakespeare sonnets to see if they're really as good as most people seem to think (don't worry, we'll read many authors besides Shakespeare!); and find a poem they love (or hate, or otherwise feel inspired to share), assign it to the class, and lead a discussion of it. Opportunities for writing will be many and varied.

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

Stephen Tapscott

Pre-1900

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.) Our focus will be less on names and dates than on tactics of analytic reading. Poets whose work we'll read include William Shakespeare, John Milton, John Keats, William Blake, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Langston Hughes, Elizabeth Bishop, Sylvia Plath, Marilyn Chin, Li-Young Lee, Louise Glück and others. Special course-related events (readings, lectures, film screenings) may take place on selected evenings throughout the term; regular classroom hours will be reduced in the weeks for which special events are scheduled.

INTRODUCTORY

21L.009 (H, CI-H) Shakespeare

Diana Henderson

Pre-1900

Four hundred and ten years after his death, William Shakespeare remains not only the central author of the English-speaking world but the most quoted poet and most regularly produced playwright on earth. His writing is among the most popular sources for novelists, screenwriters, and digital creators as well. Why is that, and who “is” he? What meanings did his plays have in his own time, and how do—and should—we read, speak, or listen to his words now? How should we perform his plays, and whose plays are we recreating, anyway? We’ll consider these questions as we examine a sampling of Shakespeare’s plays from a variety of critical perspectives (among them, literary, cultural, theatrical, and filmic). Texts will span the diverse genres of comedy, tragedy and history that his friends used to sort his plays, as well as the modern media and global cultures to which he’s been translated. Students will gain skills in communication, teamwork, interpretation, research, and self-expression, and discover direct connections between our subject and fields such as Music and Theater Arts, History, Philosophy, Comparative Media Studies, Ancient and Medieval Studies, and Women’s and Gender Studies. Alongside *The Merchant of Venice*, *Much Ado About Nothing*, *Henry IV Part I*, *Henry V*, *Julius Caesar*, *Hamlet*, and *Othello*, we will explore videos from across the globe, spinoffs, and scholarship, and will try to envision Shakespearean futures.

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

Eugenie Brinkema

Films are familiar to you; this course should make them strange again.

The Film Experience serves as an introduction to film studies, concentrating on close analysis and criticism. Students will learn the technical vocabulary for analyzing cinematic narrative, framing, editing, color, sound, and lighting; develop the critical means for turning close analysis into interpretations and comparative readings of films; and explore theoretical issues related to spectatorship, reflexivity, and ideology. We will look beyond the surface pleasures of cinema to ask how films are put together; what choices are made formally, narratively, and politically in the constructions of different types of films; and how films have changed historically and in different production and national contexts. We will study a wide example of works made between 1895 and 2023 and heralding from over a dozen countries, ranging from early silent experiments, documentary and avant-garde films, and canonical European art cinema, to contemporary Hollywood blockbusters, Hong Kong melodrama, and Iranian cinema. Directors include Ana Lily Amirpour, Maya Deren, Sergei Eisenstein, Jean-Luc Godard, Greta Gerwig, Howard Hawks, Alfred Hitchcock, Stanley Kubrick, Akira Kurosawa, David Lynch, Roberto Rossellini, Quentin Tarantino, Orson Welles, and Wong Kar-wai.

Format: one required evening screening, one required 90-minute lecture, and one 90-minute recitation.

INTRODUCTORY

21L.016 (H, CI-H) Gods and Mortals

Stephanie Ann Frampton

Pre-1900

Introduces students to moral and philosophical questions that emerge from the study of pre-modern literature, such as how humans have grappled with life on earth and negotiated their relationships with the known and unknown, nature and the cosmos, past and future, the physical and the metaphysical, life and death, one another, and the divine. Focuses on careful reading of major works and authors, including selections from Sappho's lyric poems, Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, Virgil's *Aeneid*, Augustine's *Confessions*, and Dante's *Inferno*. Develops skills in close reading and in persuasive and personal analytical writing. Students have the opportunity to present on their readings and research in a variety of forms.

21L.017 (H, CI-H) The Art of the Probable

Shankar Raman

"The Art of the Probable" addresses the history of scientific ideas, in particular the emergence and development of mathematical probability. But it is neither meant to be a history of the exact sciences per se nor an annex to, say, the Course 6 curriculum in probability and statistics. Rather, we will focus on the formal, thematic, and rhetorical features that imaginative literature shares with texts in the history of probability. These shared issues include (but are not limited to): the attempt to quantify or otherwise explain the presence of chance, risk, and contingency in everyday life; the deduction of causes for phenomena that are knowable only in their effects; and, above all, the question of what it means to think and act rationally in an uncertain world. Readings include work by Aristotle, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Dostoevsky, Darwin, H.G. Wells, Thomas Pynchon, Tom Stoppard, and more.

INTRODUCTORY

21L.020[J] (H, CI-H) Globalization: The Good, The Bad and the In-Between

Same as WGS.145[J]
Margery Resnick

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.

21L.024[J] (H, CI-H) Life, Death, and Freedom Literature & Existentialism

Same as 21G.061[J]
Caitlyn Doyle

Are we free? Do we live authentically? What is the meaning of life? What does it mean to die? This course examines the principal ideas regarding the human condition developed through existential philosophy, literature, and film. Death, absurdity, alienation, freedom, and authenticity are some of the key concepts that we will grapple with as we engage with works by foundational figures of existential thought such as Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Beauvoir, Sartre, and Camus. We will also consider films that explore and challenge existential themes by directors such as Kurosawa, Resnais, and Bergman. In addition to exploring the affinity between existential philosophy and art, students will investigate the different capacities of various media as they compare existential themes across philosophical, political, literary, and filmic texts.

INTRODUCTORY

21L.027[J] (H, CI-H) Children Co-Creating Culture Children & Culture

Same as CMS.425[J], WGS.258[J]

Marah Gubar

Children's creative contributions to culture are often belittled, ignored, and forgotten, rather than being judged worthy of preservation, sustained study, and critical analysis. This course therefore constitutes a bold experiment in reclamation, whereby we co-investigate the following question: What happens if we try to build *a whole class* around cultural artifacts that children themselves had a hand in creating?

We will begin by exploring the leading role that Native American, Jewish, and Black children (and their teachers) played in paving the way for a golden decade of youth participation in American culture that stretched from 1965 to 1975. Besides analyzing playground chants, diaries, and picture books based on children's sayings and stories, we will also study child-crafted films, poetry, and novellas, as well as plays, TV shows, photo books, and dances co-created by children and adults. In addition, contrasting how Holocaust-era children's artwork was received compared to contemporary Palestinian children's art will allow us to explore why and how adults appropriate, rewrite, and sometimes even censor children's creative efforts.

To expand and enrich our understanding of this archive, all students will be required to choose a single cultural artifact created or co-created by a child to do an in-depth oral presentation on, which you will then expand into a final essay. You might choose to dig up and scrutinize a story that you yourself wrote when you were young; or identify and analyze a particularly cool contribution to a new media trend involving children; or deepen your understanding of one of the cultural artifacts that's already on the syllabus by doing some additional independent research that you use to contextualize and enrich your close reading of it.

Whatever type of cultural artifact we are discussing in this seminar-style class, we will grapple with the following questions: What vision of childhood emerges in this artwork? Does it differ from how childhood tends to get represented in similar material created solely by adults? How is the adult-child relationship depicted? How do power asymmetries related to age, gender, ethnicity, and class affect the creation, content, and reception of this cultural artifact? And finally, what difference does the type of media being employed make, especially in terms of what liberties and rewards, risks and dangers are being afforded to young artists?

INTRODUCTORY

21L.030 (A, CI-H) A Random Walk Through Literature and Film

Noel Jackson

This class emphasizes the techniques of creative nonfiction writing: it aims to help you develop a personal voice, craft an effective autobiographical prose style, and perform your work to an audience. Our focus is the activity of walking in literature and film and in everyday life. Students conduct regular walks in the Greater Boston area on themes suggested by class material. In regular creative nonfiction assignments, you will narrate your own walking experiences and engage imaginatively with the works under discussion. Authors and filmmakers will vary but may include Jane Austen, Henry David Thoreau, Virginia Woolf, Frank O'Hara, Richard Linklater, and Ava DuVernay.

21L.032[J] (H, CI-H) Afrofuturism, Magical Realism, and Other Otherwise Worlds

Same as WGS.130[J]
Joaquín Terrones

Is this the only possible world? Or are there others free of white supremacy, colonialism, capitalism, patriarchy, and ecological devastation? What might it mean not just to imagine these possibilities but to listen for other worlds that already exist alongside our own? In this course, we will examine how Afrofuturism, magical realism, and other forms of the fantastic in North and Latin America not only envision alternatives to the current order but also identify existing ways of being otherwise in the world. In addition to analyzing texts and films, we will incorporate theoretical insights from black studies, indigenous studies, queer studies, and feminism into our discussions. Some of the authors we will read include Octavia Butler, N.K. Jemisin, Toni Morrison, Samuel Delany, Gabriel García Márquez, and José María Arguedas; films we will watch include *Sinners*, *Nope*, *Neptune Frost*, and *Embrace of the Serpent*; and pop culture narratives we will study include Janelle Monáe's *Metropolis Suite*, Ta-Nehisi Coates' *The Intergalactic Empire of Wakanda*, Disney's *Encanto*, and Beyoncé's *Black is King*.

INTRODUCTORY

CMS.311[J] (H, CI-H) Media in Weimar and Nazi Germany

Same as 21G.055[J]

Jessica Ruffin

Manifestos and debates over national and media identity in Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918-1945). Production and use of media under extreme political and social conditions with a focus on narrative, experimental and documentary films (such as *Nosferatu*, *Berlin Symphony of a City*, *Metropolis*, *Hitler Youth Quex*, and *Triumph of the Will*), as well as painting, news, and other media. Media approached as both texts and systems. Considers the legacy of the period, in terms of stylistic influence (e.g. film noir), techniques of persuasion, and media's relationship to social and economic conditions. Taught in English. Enrollment limited.

SPECIAL SUBJECT

21.01 (CI-H) Compass Course: Moral and Social Questions about the Human Condition

Mary Fuller

(Assorted lecture and recitation times with other faculty). Website: compass.mit.edu

21.01, the undergraduate class associated with the Compass initiative, is seminar-style and taught in a “flipped classroom” format, with in-person contact hours spent on active group discussion, activities, and debates. There are no traditional lectures during in-person contact hours; instead, students will watch pre-recorded video lectures as homework preparation. Some lessons will have a podcast, in which MIT professors from diverse disciplines discuss big questions in the contexts of their fields and lives. In addition, the class includes field trips to a variety of local arts events, from which students may choose one or more to attend.

Each section is taught by one or two faculty, who will lead the two-hour in-person class. There will also be one-hour recitation each week, led by a TA. Sections will be small with no more than 18 students.

SAMPLINGS

21L.325 (H) Small Wonders of the Everyday Small Wonders

Noel Jackson

The “small wonders” of this class are the routine practices of everyday life – activities like sleeping, eating, straightening up, commuting, and so on – and a range of similarly habitual feelings – of distraction, boredom, vigilance, apathy, relaxation, etc. These elements of everyday life are so commonplace as often to escape conscious observation, which is one reason why so many philosophers, sociologists, and cultural critics have made a deliberate attempt to understand them. In addition to reading some theoretical accounts of everyday life, we will watch the work of filmmakers (such as Chantal Akerman, Wim Wenders, Frederick Wiseman, and RaMell Ross) who display the tedium, dignity, and beauty of the quotidian. And we will read authors (Virginia Woolf, James Schuyler, Georges Perec, and others) who record habitual daily impressions with luminous precision. Students will produce, in writing or other media, a representation of select aspects of their own everyday life experience.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.433 (H) Remakes and Remediations Film Styles and Genres

Jessica Ruffin

Contemporary networked media landscapes are awash with remakes and remediations, from television reboots and movie adaptations to memes and genAI. What drives the remaking of the material world in new media technologies and the reproduction of stories and archetypes across centuries? Do remakes promise correction of past wrongs or merely their remediation in new form? When works of media produced in vastly different historical periods exist simultaneously in digital formats, do the concepts of original and remake lose their relevance or come more clearly into view? In this course, we engage cinematic works as complex intersections of history, culture, aesthetics, and technology. We will consider philosophical accounts of authenticity before and after the advent of photography; the purported aims and interpretations of cinematic remakes from narrative features to the avant-garde; and questions as to whether repetition is inherent to understandings of cultural history. In addition to analytical essays and historical research, students have the opportunity to produce their own cinematic remakes.

21L.435[J] (H) Indigenous Film and Literature Literature and Film

Same as CMS.435[J], meets with CMS.840

Caitlyn Doyle

This course examines diverse Indigenous films, television shows, and novels from Turtle Island (Canada & the United States). Students will study a wide variety of influential and popular Indigenous works of art, including activist-based documentaries, adventure comedies, memoirs, dystopian novels, sitcoms, and animations. These works 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 popular culture in the region. We will also consider the larger historical, legal, and political contexts to which these works respond.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.438[J] (H) Intersectional Feminist Memoir

Same as 21W.738[J], WGS.238[J]
Brianna Williams

In this class, we will explore the memoir genre through a feminist intersectional lens, looking at the ways in which feminist writers ground personal experience within a complex understanding of race, gender, sexuality, class, ethnicity, immigration status, religion, language, and disability. We will pay particular attention to the relationships between: form and content; fact and history; self and community; trauma and healing; coming to voice and breaking silence. To this end, we'll examine the use of metaphor, dreams, myth, and lore to make meaning out of memory, reconcile the loss thereof, and craft imaginative futures. Readings include books by Qian Julie Wang, Akwaeke Emezi, Carmen Maria Machado, Safiya Sinclair, Tara Westover and shorter works by Cinelle Barnes, Jamaica Kincaid, and Taiye Selasi.

21L.474[J] (H) Representing Girlhood

Same as CMS.422[J], WGS.230[J]
Marah Gubar

How have Americans experienced and represented girlhood, over time and across genres? In this course, we will trace how girlhood has been portrayed in the U.S. from the eighteenth century to the present, with a special focus on works that center the experiences of Black, Jewish, Asian American, trans, and Muslim girls.

We will begin close to home, with two writers who composed their famous works in and around the Boston area: the enslaved Black teenager Phillis Wheatley (who published the first volume of poetry by an African American in modern times) and the white feminist and abolitionist novelist Louisa May Alcott (whose girls' book *Little Women* quickly became a classic that has inspired multiple generations of women). To build community and learn more about these authors, we will take field trips to local sites such the African American History Museum and Alcott's Orchard House (where *Little Women* was written and set).

As we shift into studying 20th and 21st century films, novels, TV shows, and pop songs about girlhood, we will examine how such cultural artifacts themselves invite us to consider the role that cultural artifacts play in shaping girlhood. We will also encounter and analyze the popularity of both gender and age drag in contemporary portrayals of girlhood. In so doing, we will focus not just on the uneasy sense of displacement, unease, and exclusion that sometimes attends girlhood, but also on cultural artifacts that center girls' positive feelings of rootedness, kinship, and joy, celebrating their inspiring ambitions and invigorating desires.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.481[J] (H) Black Lives and Queer Bodies HIV/AIDS in American Culture

Same as WGS.250[J]

Joaquín Terrones

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.492[J] (H) Three Kingdoms: From History to Fiction, Comic, Film and Game

Same as 21G.042[J], 21H.352[J], CMS.359[J], meets with 21G.133

Emma Teng

Pre-1900

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.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.607 (H) Greek I

Eric Driscoll

Pre-1900

Introduces basics of ancient Greek: the language of Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides, Euclid, the New Testament, and more! Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval texts. Greek I and II may be combined (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

21L.608 (H) Greek II

Eric Driscoll

Pre-1900

Introduces basics of ancient Greek (with some prior knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary): the language of Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides, Euclid, the New Testament, and more! Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval texts. Greek I and II may be combined (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

21L.613/614 (H) Latin Readings/Advanced Latin Readings

Stephanie Ann Frampton

Pre-1900

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 an appreciation for basic features of style and genre. 21L.614 builds on 21L.613, developing students' ability to read and analyze Latin literary texts, with a focus on prose and poetry in alternate years. Increases fluency in reading comprehension and recognition of stylistic, generic, and grammatical features. 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.

21L.903 (H) Topics in Ancient and Medieval Studies: Latin

Stephanie Ann Frampton

Pre-1900

Covers topics in Latin classes that are not provided in the regular subject offerings. May be repeated for credit if topic differs.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.620[J] (H) Introduction to French Literature (Taught in French)

Same as 21G.320[J]
Leanna Rezvani

A basic study of major French literary genres — poetry, drama, and fiction — and an introduction to methods of literary analysis. Authors include: Voltaire, Balzac, Sand, Baudelaire, Apollinaire, Camus, Sartre, Ionesco, Duras, and Tournier. Special attention devoted to the improvement of French language skills. Taught in French.

21L.624[J] (H) Childhood and Youth in French and Francophone Cultures (Taught in French)

Same as 21G.321[J]
Bruno Perreau

Studies the transformation of childhood and youth since the 18th century in France, as well as the development of sentimentality within the family in a francophone context. Examines the personification of children, both as a source of inspiration for artistic creation and a political ideal aimed at protecting future generations. Considers various representations of childhood and youth in literature (e.g., Pagnol, Proust, Sarraute, Laye, Morgièvre), movies (e.g., Truffaut), and songs (e.g., Brel, Barbara). Taught in French.

21L.630[J] (S) Understanding Contemporary French Politics (Taught in French)

Same as 21G.353[J]
Bruno Perreau

Examines French politics since 1958. Analyzes how politics has deeply influenced cultural and social life in France, including daily interactions. Questions public controversies and history's political cleavages, from the Algerian war to postcolonial issues, from the birth of the European construction to the rise of populist movements. To explore French institutions and understand the impact of political issues in contemporary France, students “run” for the French presidency by preparing historical notes, delivering speeches, participating in a first-round presidential debate, and submitting a final political statement. Taught in French.

INTERMEDIATE

21L.636[J] (H) Introduction to Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Film (Taught in Spanish)

Same as 21G.716[J]
Joaquín Terrones

This course introduces students to the literature and cinema of contemporary Spain and Latin America. By becoming familiar with the historical, political, and cultural settings that shaped these texts and films, we will consider what, if anything, makes them uniquely Hispanic. What links the Old World with the New? How has Spain envisioned its place within Western Europe? How has Latin America defined itself in relationship to its northern neighbor? Some of the authors and filmmakers we will discuss include Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Roberto Bolaño, Luis Buñuel, and Pedro Almodovar. The course is conducted in Spanish, and all reading and writing will be in Spanish.

SEMINAR

21L.703 [J] (H, CI-M) Stoppard, Churchill, & Company Studies in Drama

Same as 21T.246[J]
Diana Henderson

Working outwards from the plays of two of Britain's most respected, prolific—and seriously funny—recent dramatists, this seminar will explore a wide range of knowledge in fields such as mathematics, philosophy, politics, history, genetics, and art...as well as, of course, literature and theater! To anchor our thinking and unleash your creativity, we will focus on selected texts by (the recently deceased) Sir Tom Stoppard and his exact but quite different (and still living) feminist contemporary, Caryl Churchill. To illuminate their plays, and in Stoppard's case screenplays, some students will report on earlier plays by Shakespeare, Wilde, and Beckett; others will explore topics ranging from the poetry of Lord Byron and A. E. Housman to the art of Dadaism and Pink Floyd, from the (financial) Big Bang to the bridges of Konigsberg, and from Czechoslovakian dissidents to socialist-feminist theater collectives.

We will uncover the societal and theatrical contexts informing these postmodern plays, and consider different critical approaches to them. In the process, we will analyze drama as multimedia performance—a distinctive art form within a rapidly changing media landscape. We will also celebrate the wit and verbal energy of these writers...not to mention, how Fermat's theorem, futures trading, Latin translation, Wittgenstein's language games and chaos theory can become the stuff of stage comedy. Plays will include *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead*, *Top Girls*, *Arcadia*, *Serious Money*, *Hapgood*, *A Number*, and *Rock 'n' Roll*.

21L.704 (H, CI-M) The Poetry of Witness Studies in Poetry

Stephen Tapscott

In our moment, the lyric poem has become one of the few vehicles for the formal of subjective experience, the voice of “the personal.” At least, that is how we popularly characterize the work the lyric does. But what happens when the lyrics’ commitments to the personal, the sublime, or the psychological about the facts of the social and political worlds and ideologies? How does the “personal” lyric reform when challenged by repressive regimes, absolutist ideologies, or historical traumas? How do poetic forms and ambitions change? Does the lyric poem adapt or resist, under such pressures? Or [less defensively], can lyric poetry serve a documentarian purpose? A subversive purpose? Can it bear moral witness or provoke political change? Does poetry really make nothing happen?

We begin the term by looking at several Anglo-American models for comparison – in part because, in some cases, international writers read those models as well [Walt Whitman, W.C. Williams, W. H. Auden, Audre Lorde, Langston Hughes]. We move through various genres and thematic modes [pressures on the lyric under totalitarian/rightist regimes, under occupation, under conditions of extreme poverty, in situations of repression based on gender or object-choice, in exile, under threat of linguistic extinction, and in other situations.] We consider whether literary Modernism was a dead end or an incomplete project, and how satire, pastiche, laughter, or formal reorganization can also be forms of social “testimony” or witness. We work through poems by South American and Spanish writers [Federico García Lorca, Gabriela Mistral, Antonio Machado, Pablo Neruda], Greek/North African [Constantine Cavafy], Russian [Anna Akhmatova, Boris Pasternak], Ukrainian and the Ukrainian Diaspora [Taras Shevchenko, Ilya Kaminsky], Caribbean [Aimé Césaire], Palestinian [Mahmoud Darwish], German [Paul Celan, Bertolt Brecht, Nelly Sachs], and Polish [Czesław Miłosz, Wisława Szymborska].

Two disclaimers: (1) the reading-list tilts toward Eurocentrism because the languages of those countries are languages I feel confident about discussing (other competences are welcome and invited!); (2) North America’s robust tradition of poems-of-witness are not the focus of this seminar, because attention to those works is the focus in other seminars (where, I hope, students will encounter them). Discussion-format, in-class reports, final project. No final exam.

21L.705 (H, CI-M) Epics of Human Choice: Spenser's *Faerie Queene* and Milton's *Paradise Lost* Major Authors

Mary Fuller

Pre-1900

Is an epic hero just the one who wins the fight — the strongest, the luckiest, the best-armed? Or can an epic do more than celebrate force? In this seminar, we'll read the work of two early modern poets who aimed to rework classical epic — the grandest, most prestigious poetic genre — to tell a story about the invisible struggles of trying to become a better human being. Edmund Spenser and John Milton came up with very different solutions to the problem of moving epic beyond a preoccupation with violence. Spenser set *The Faerie Queene* in the era of King Arthur, telling a story of chivalric quests and boss battles in deliberately old-fashioned style — but his wizards, duels and dragons are vehicles for a complex and often surprising moral and historical allegory. Milton took a radically simpler option: *Paradise Lost* retells the original story of moral choice confronting Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, surrounding it with the precipitating action of Satan's rebellion and a war in Heaven.

We'll spend the semester reading these two book-length poems. Each will begin as a difficult read that will get steadily more approachable as we spend time thinking about their language and the author's style; each will provoke debate and disagreement, including with the authors themselves, and this wrangling with important topics and textual evidence is part of the pleasure these poems reliably offer. As poems, each covers the gamut from low comedy through the most sublime passages of anything written in English. Reading them is a thrilling experience that you will always remember, and one best undertaken in the company of other like-minded readers making their way through the poems alongside you.

SEMINAR

21L.706 [J] (H, CI-M) Color in Film Studies in Film

Same as CMS.330[J], meets with CMS.830
Eugenie Brinkema

“Ce n’est pas du sang, c’est du rouge.” [It’s not blood; it’s red.]
—Jean-Luc Godard

The history of film theory has been the history of ignoring color. Treated as a minor detail, ornament, or gimmick, and aligned with degraded cultural modes such as the feminine, the exotic, and the melodramatic, a rigorous aesthetics of color has only recently received due scholarly attention. This seminar explores those aesthetic issues in addition to the affective, political, ethical and interpretive possibilities made available by taking color seriously. Although we will briefly study innovations in color film cinematography (attending to early hand-tinted films and the development of Technicolor), our focus will be on theoretical questions: How have philosophers defined color and how have these accounts moved between chromophobia and chromophilia (deriding or fetishizing it)? How does a logic of color work in specific genres and modes (melodrama, horror, surrealism, animation)? How is color linked to desire, excess, and other formal areas including sound, duration, space and movement? How is color attached to specific (gendered, raced) bodies? How is color linked to violence and how is color affectively provocative? Readings from philosophers, art historians, and film theorists pair with films early and recent from all over the globe, including: *The Wizard of Oz*, *Kill Bill*, *Blue*, *Raise the Red Lantern*, *Sombre*, *Vertigo*, *Red Desert*, *Fantasia*, *Written on the Wind*, *Schindler’s List*, *The Cook, the Thief, his Wife and her Lover*, *Blue is the Warmest Color*, *Contempt*, *Don’t Look Now*, *Three Colors Trilogy*, and *In the Mood for Love*. Prerequisite: 21L.011, one subject in Literature or Comparative Media Studies; or permission of instructor.

COURSE 21L LITERATURE MAJOR, MINOR, & CONCENTRATION INFORMATION

21L MAJOR

The **major in Literature** is well-suited to those students who want to experience a wide range of literary and filmic texts across historical periods. Can be completed along side any other major at MIT as a double major with the following degree requirements:

180 UNITS TOTAL BEYOND THE GIRS

TEN SUBJECTS IN LITERATURE

- No more than **three** subjects may be introductory, at least **three** must be intermediate subjects, and at least **three** must be seminars.
- Minimum of **three** subjects that focus on pre-1900 texts.

21E OR 21S MAJOR

The **joint major in Literature** is another pathway for students interested in combining study of Literature with a STEM field. Please see the bulletin for more details.

180 UNITS TOTAL BEYOND THE GIRS

AT LEAST EIGHT SUBJECTS IN LITERATURE

- At least **eight** subjects in Literature... along with at least **six** subjects in the science or engineering field of the student's choice.
- Of the **eight** Literature subjects, no more than **three** may be introductory subjects, at least **two** must be intermediate subjects and at least **two** must be seminars.
- Minimum of **three** subjects that focus on pre-1900 texts.

21L MINORS

A **minor in Literature** allows for an exciting focus either in film or literature. To propose a minor, you must meet with a minor advisor: litminoradvisor@mit.edu

The **minor program in Literature** requires **six subjects**:

- At least **one** and no more than **two** introductory Literature subjects
- **Two to three** Literature intermediate subjects. Six-unit samplings subjects may be petitioned to count for a maximum of **two** twelve-unit intermediate subjects
- At least **two** pre-1900 courses
- At least **two** seminars

A **film-focused minor in Literature** consists of **six** subjects, including two required subjects:

- 21L.011 Intro to Film Studies
- 21L.706 Studies in Film

and additional subjects from the following list:

- 21L.026 Film & Existentialism
- 21L.345 On the Screen*
- 21L.431 Shakespeare
- 21L.433 Film Styles and Genres*
- 21L.435 Literature and Film*
- 21L.706 Studies in Film*

*21L.345, 21L.433, 21L.435, and 21L.706 can be repeated towards the minor if class content varies.

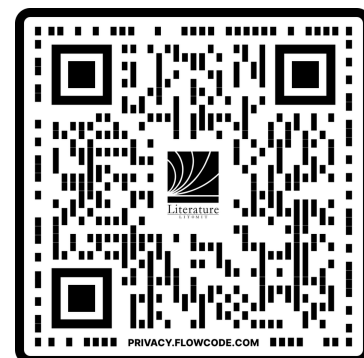
Students must include, in consultation with the minor advisor, at least **one** subject (and not more than **two** subjects) that does not focus on film but ties into the student's interests with regard to film.

21L CONCENTRATION

The **concentration in Literature** requires **three** subjects including **one** subject from the intermediate tier (400-, 500-, 600-) and **one** subject from the seminar (700-) tier.

AT LEAST THREE SUBJECTS IN LITERATURE

Two six-unit samplings courses (from the 300 and 600 tier) may be combined by petition to count as one intermediate-tier subject. Certain subjects from outside of Literature may also qualify as part of the concentration with permission of the instructor. To propose a concentration, you must meet with a concentration advisor: litconcentrationadvisor@mit.edu



lit.mit.edu/academics

**FOR MORE INFO ON ANY LITERATURE PROGRAM,
PLEASE EMAIL: LITACADEMICS@MIT.EDU**