“It is better to fail in originality than to succeed in imitation.” — Herman Melville

Portrait of James Baldwin by Bee Johnson

LITERATURE SECTION
77 Massachusetts Ave, Building 14N-407, Cambridge, MA 02139
phone: (617) 253-3581 | email: lit@mit.edu | lit.mit.edu
Note: Rooms and times subject to change
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subject</th>
<th>Units</th>
<th>Designation</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Fall '18 Faculty</th>
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<tr>
<td>21L.0001L1</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>The Art of the Short Story [Writing About Literature]</td>
<td>W. Kelley</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>1 - 2:30p</td>
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<td>21L.0001L2</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>The Art of the Short Story [Writing About Literature]</td>
<td>I. Lipkowitz</td>
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<td>21L.001</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante</td>
<td>J. Buzard</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>1 - 2:30p</td>
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<td>21L.003</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Literary Storms [Reading Fiction]</td>
<td>A. Abramson</td>
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<td>11 - 12:30p</td>
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<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Reading Poetry</td>
<td>N. Jackson</td>
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<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>A CI-H</td>
<td>Introduction to Drama</td>
<td>A. Fleche</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>3:30 - 5p</td>
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<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Writing Place in Contemporary World Literature [World Literatures]</td>
<td>L. Finch</td>
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<td>21L.010</td>
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<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Shakespeare</td>
<td>S. Raman</td>
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<td>9:30 - 11a</td>
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<td>21L.011</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>CI-H</td>
<td>Writing with Shakespeare</td>
<td>D. Henderson</td>
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<td>3:30 - 5p</td>
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<td>A/H CI-H</td>
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<td>3:30 - 5p</td>
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<td>A/H CI-H</td>
<td>The Film Experience (Screening)</td>
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<td>21L.014</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>CI-H</td>
<td>Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies</td>
<td>S. Frampton/</td>
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<td>21L.015</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Imagining Alternative Worlds [Children’s Literature]</td>
<td>M. Gubar</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>1:30 - 3p</td>
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<td>21L.020</td>
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<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-Between</td>
<td>J. Terrones</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>3 - 4:30p</td>
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<td>21L.021</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Comedy, Irony, Satire, Farce, and Silly Walks [Comedy]</td>
<td>S. Tapscott</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>7 - 8:30p</td>
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<td>2-0-4</td>
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<td>Out For the Count [Bestsellers] (Ends October 19)</td>
<td>W. Donaldson</td>
<td>MW</td>
<td>3 - 4:30p</td>
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<td>The Sketch [Small Wonders] (Ends October 19)</td>
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<td>9:30 - 11a</td>
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<td>Literature in the Digital Age (Begins October 23)</td>
<td>W. Kelley</td>
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<td>9:30 - 11a</td>
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<td>Twenty-First Century Science Fiction [Science Fiction and Fantasy]</td>
<td>L. Finch</td>
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<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H CI-H</td>
<td>Interactive Narrative</td>
<td>N. Montfort</td>
<td>W</td>
<td>2 - 5p</td>
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<td>21L.512</td>
<td>3-0-9</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>Weird Americas [American Authors]</td>
<td>J. Terrones</td>
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<td>7 - 8:30p</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>Greek I (Ends October 19)</td>
<td>R. Colaizzi</td>
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<td>Greek II (Begins October 23)</td>
<td>R. Colaizzi</td>
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<td>Latin Readings (Ends October 19)</td>
<td>S. Frampton</td>
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<td>H CI-M</td>
<td>The Drama of Revenge [Studies in Drama]</td>
<td>S. Raman</td>
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<td>Milton’s Paradise Lost and Modern Speculative Fiction [Major Authors]</td>
<td>M. Fuller</td>
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<td>The Written Kitchen: Reading Women’s Cookbooks &amp; Food Blogs [Problems in Cultural Interpretation]</td>
<td>I. Lipkowitz</td>
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<td>9:30 - 11a</td>
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Note: Rooms and times subject to change.
The short-story writer Alice Munro accepted the 2013 Nobel Prize in Literature expressing her “hope [that] this would make people see the short story as an important art, not just something you played around with until you got a novel.” In this class, we’ll take Munro at her word and read a variety of short stories by writers including Amy Tan, Raymond Carver, John Updike, Tim O’Brien, Jamaica Kincaid, Sandra Cisneros, and Alice Munro herself. Of course reading stories for the sheer pleasure of it is one thing; thinking about what they might mean is another; expressing those thoughts in writing is still another. In this class, we’ll be doing all three. The goal will be to increase enjoyment in reading and in understanding, as well as to feel more confident in the ability to express oneself effectively, efficiently, and gracefully.

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 Dante’s *Inferno*.

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**

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.

**Reading Poetry**

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 Shakespeare, Sidney, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Frost, Eliot, and Elizabeth Bishop.
Introduction to Drama

21L.005 (A, CI-H)
MW 3:30 - 5:00
Anne Fleche
Room: 2-103

In this course, we'll encounter dramatic texts from the Greeks to the present, exploring their cultural and period differences, as well as the “theatricality” of an art form experienced in three dimensions and in real time. Class members will discuss readings, write papers, review dramatic performances and have the option to perform scenes themselves. In addition to modern and contemporary plays, readings will range from Ancient Greece to Medieval England, Golden Age Spain and Classical Japan.

World Literatures  Writing Place in Contemporary World Literature

21L.007 (H, CI-H)
TR 9:30 - 11:00 a
Laura Finch
Room: 56-167

Spaces and places do not just exist out there, but are made through the ways that we interact with them. Space is shaped through a huge variety of things, including maps, borders, transportation, traditions, customs, architecture, and the environment. And of course, different people experience place in different ways. In addition to this already-existing range of experience, we also invent places through literature, film, and visual art: what is the relationship between the written city and the lived city?

We will address these topics through contemporary literature by writers from a variety of global locations. We will primarily read novels, but also short stories, films, and theoretical texts to develop critical thinking, reading and writing skills. In particular, we will address the question of how power affects our relationship to place, asking what effects differences of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, class, and disability have on experiencing and writing about space?

Shakespeare

21L.009 (H, CI-H)
TR 9:30 - 11:00 a
Shankar Raman
Room: 4-253

We will focus on four or five plays by Shakespeare, drawn from different genres. While close readings of his plays will be our focus, we will also explore how they have been adapted and performed around the world, on film and on stage. We may also attend one or more theatrical performances, depending on what is available in the Boston area. Plays selected will include A Midsummer Night’s Dream, The Merchant of Venice, and Hamlet.
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—creatively, critically, in groups, and in a variety of media—you will have ample opportunity to explore the elements and occasions that shape effective, meaningful communication. In addition to famous speeches and sonnets, we will analyze film versions and perform scenes from what is now a “problem play,” *The Merchant of Venice*. Other plays will include one each from Shakespeare’s major tragedies, histories, and comedies. In all these cases, we will examine the reasons for Shakespeare’s enduring power and performance around the globe. Nevertheless, our aim is less to appreciate Shakespeare as an end in itself than to draw on his remarkable drama (its vocabulary, variety, and verbal command) in order to help you improve your own writing, speaking, analytic thinking, use of resources, and understanding of media today.
Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies

21L.014 (H, CI-H)
[Same subject as 21H.007J]
TR 9:30 - 11:00 a
Stephanie Frampton
Eric Goldberg
Room: E51-085
Explores the fascinating history, culture, and society of Europe and the Mediterranean in Antiquity and the Middle Ages. Investigates essential themes, structures, and developments in the ancient and medieval worlds and the diverse methodologies scholars use to interpret them. Wrestles with big questions about the diversity of life and thought in pre-modern societies, the best ways to study the distant past, and the nature (and limitations) of knowledge about the long-passed eras. Considers a wide range of scholarly subjects such as the rise and fall of the Roman empire, the triumph of Christianity and Islam, the Vikings and Crusades, courts and castles, philosophy and religion, and the diversity of art, literature, and government. Ponders different types of evidence, reads across a variety of disciplines, and develops skills to identify continuities and changes in ancient and medieval societies. Serves as an excellent introductory subject as well as a springboard for future work in MIT’s Ancient and Medieval Studies curriculum.

Children’s Literature Imagining Alternative Worlds

21L.015 (H, CI-H)
MW 1:30 - 3:00
Marah Gubar
Room: 5-231
In this course, we will study fantasy narratives that invite readers to immerse themselves in enchanted alternative realms or magical worlds enmeshed within the realm of everyday life. Revisiting familiar environs such as Never Land, Narnia, Middle-Earth, and Hogwarts and concluding with a trip through more contemporary and diverse fantasylands, we will investigate how authors employ the tools of fiction to craft such convincing alternative worlds. Are these fantasies an escapist solution to the problem of modern disenchantment, or can we tell some more complicated story about their emergence and function? Since creative writers are themselves astute critics of fantasy, we will take inspiration from Ursula K. Le Guin, Lev Grossman, and other writers for whom criticism itself constitutes a creative act.
Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-Between

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.

Comedy

Texts:
Geoffrey Chaucer, Selected ‘Canterbury Tale’,
William Shakespeare, ‘Midsummer Night’s Dream’
Jane Austen, ‘Pride and Prejudice’,
Lewis Carroll, ‘Alice in Wonderland’
Oscar Wilde, ‘The Importance of Being Earnest’.
Robert Browning, ‘My Last Duchess’ and other poems,
Henry James, ‘Daisy Miller’
Mark Twain, ‘The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn’
Anton Chekhov, ‘The Cherry Orchard’
Samuel Beckett, ‘Waiting for Godot’

films, videos, performance:
‘I Love Lucy’
‘My Beautiful Laundrette’
‘Modern Times’
‘East is East’
Monty Python skits
‘Get Out’
and Gilbert and Sullivan production
Bestsellers Out For the Count

21L.310
MW 3:00 - 4:30
William Donaldson
Room: 1-379
ends October 19

Dracula, first published in 1897, has undergone a dramatic re-evaluation in modern literary history. Long dismissed as mere pulp fiction, it is by now hailed as a highly significant work and a pioneering proto-modernist text. But how did its author, Bram Stoker, create this extraordinary tale? There were no vampires in British folklore—so where did he get his ideas? Out for the Count tracks the growth of the vampire trope from the early nineteenth century through a series of classic works by Byron, Polidori, le Fanu and others, during which we learn about the formation of the modern literary canon, the folklore of the undead, and the creation and subsequent growth of one of the most prolific popular culture genres—vampire fiction—which reached its first apotheosis in Stoker’s masterwork, Dracula.

Small Wonders The Sketch

21L.325
MW 9:30 - 11:00
Wyn Kelley
Room: 2-103
ends October 19

Although the term implies spontaneity, haste, improvisation, and ephemerality, the sketch has endured and flourished for centuries. Sketches appear in many forms (artistic, literary, dramatic) and with different aims (moral, biographical, journalistic, comic). This class samples American sketch artists and work ranging from the romantic musings of Washington Irving and Nathaniel Hawthorne, to satiric essays of Fanny Fern, Mark Twain, Dorothy Parker, Alice Childress, Nora Ephron, and David Sedaris, as well, according to the interests of the class, as televisual sketches by a wide range of comics.

Literature in the Digital Age

21L.355
MW 9:30 - 11:00
Wyn Kelley
Room: 2-103
begins October 23

How have digital media changed the way authors write? How has the internet affected literary texts and the ways they conceive of memory, information, identity, space, and time? This class tests these questions by examining authors whose careers span the digital age (roughly from the early 1980s to the current moment). We will explore early and later works by Philip Roth (Goodbye, Columbus and The Human Stain) and Toni Morrison (Sula, God Save the Child). Then we will look at authors who foreground digital media and devices: Chimimanda Ngoza Adichie (Americanah) and/or Mohsin Hamid (Exit West). Besides giving us an opportunity to compare books by a range of contemporary authors, this experiment will draw attention to such topics as reading habits, fans and audiences, the economics of publishing, and the migrations of narrative across different cultural spaces and media forms.
Film Styles and Genres  Hollywood Renaissance — American Film in the 1970s

21L.433 (H)  
TR 12:30 - 2:00  
David Thorburn  
Room: 5-234

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 *Bonnie and Clyde*, *The Graduate*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *The Godfather*, *Nashville*, *Mean Streets*, *Chinatown*, *Cabaret*, *Annie Hall*.

Prerequisite: 21L.011 or permission of the instructor.

Science Fiction and Fantasy  Twenty-First Century Science Fiction

21L.434 (H)  
TR 2:00 - 3:30  
Laura Finch  
Room: 5-234

The course that North America is on in the present moment can make imagining a liveable future seem like an impossible task: an increasing gap between rich and poor, continued warfare, and the looming disaster of environmental collapse. One response to this by writers has been to represent an apocalyptic future, often including zombies, climate catastrophes, and biological pandemics.

This seminar is not about these writers. Rather than the relative luxury of being able to imagine a future-world that is worse than ours, some writers — typically minority writers — argue that the world is already pretty apocalyptic in 2018. These writers choose to use the imaginative potential of science fiction and speculative fiction to rewrite our collective future. By tackling the social injustice of the present, these writers invite us to imagine our future differently.

Specifically, this intermediate literature class will focus on global science fiction from the last two decades, including short stories, novels, and films. Our texts will address topics such as: race, indigeneity, LGBTQIA+ and gender rights, mass incarceration and police violence, immigrant rights, and environmental devastation, and colonialism/settler colonialism.
How do we know what we know? That’s the central question that animates the philosophical field known as epistemology. It’s also a problem that creative writers regularly ponder in their poetry and prose. Reading literary and philosophical texts side by side, we will discuss the nature of empirical, scientific, and poetic ways of knowing, as well as considering what it means to achieve self-knowledge and knowledge of other minds. Ought we to conceive of knowledge as perspectival or situated? If so, how might that affect how we try to obtain it? To enrich our discussion of these and other puzzling philosophical questions, we’ll read everything from a raucous eighteenth-century comic novel to a Modernist masterpiece to pulp horror stories, children’s fiction, and contemporary poems. Meanwhile, we will ask: does literature merely illustrate philosophical ideas or does it do philosophy in its own right?

Authors we will read include David Hume, Laurence Sterne, Virginia Woolf, H. P. Lovecraft, E. L. Konigsberg, Iris Murdoch, Herman Melville, and Wallace Stevens.

The course focuses on one methodology and includes two large-scale creative projects which students undertake individually.

NARRATIVE THEORY is the methodology. We study narratology (narrative theory) to gain a better understanding of the form and function of narratives in general, and to be able to discuss and work with the elements and aspects of interactive narrative particularly. Narrative theory is introduced throughout the first half of the course, during the FORKING PATHS unit, and is applied in the ELECTRONIC LITERATURE unit as well.

FORKING PATHS. We study non-linear print pieces of different sorts—not only the Choose-Your-Own-Adventure series but other juvenile fiction books of similarly unusual structure; parodies of Choose-Your-Own-Adventure books; literary works such as those by Saporta, Queneau, Mathews, Pavić, Coover, and others; and comics by Jason Shiga and others. Students write their own creative multisequential print piece.

ELECTRONIC LITERATURE. We focus on digital work that has narrative as an important component. Often, the “user” or “reader” is the one who gets to produce the narratives by interacting. A narrative electronic literature work can be a structured document that the interactor can traverse in many ways or a more complex computer program that simulates a world, accepts English input, and perhaps does other interesting things. This includes many computer and video games, including interactive fiction, along with classic and more recent hypertext fictions, visual novels, and many other examples of creative computing.
The main project for the term is to create a work of electronic literature of some sort, which can be done by programming or for instance by creating a hypertextual work, which does not require programming.

**American Authors  Weird Americas**

21L.512 (H)  
MW 7:00 - 8:30 p  
Joaquin Terrones  
Room: 4-253

Christopher Columbus’s initial description of the Americas featured rivers of gold and man-eating monsters. From the moment settlers 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 their national identities through horror, magical realism, 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 Margaret Atwood’s *Oryx and Crake*, Gabriel García Márquez’s *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Philip K Dick’s *The Man in the High Castle*, and Toni Morrison’s *Beloved*, as well as short stories by Borges, Poe, Lovecraft, and Ocampo. We will also analyze the Brazilian graphic novel *Daytripper*, the Canadian television series *Orphan Black*, the film *Jupiter Ascending*, and the music of Janelle Monáe.

**INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES**

**Greek I**

21L.607 (H)  
MW 7:00 - 8:30 p  
Randall Colaizzi  
Room: 14N-112  
ends October 19

Introduces rudiments of Greek to students with little or no prior knowledge of the subject. Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval literary and historical texts. Greek I and Greek II may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS Elective.
**Greek II**

21L.608 (H)
MW 7:00 - 8:30 p
Randall Colaizzi
Room: 14N-112
begins October 23

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 by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS Elective.

**Latin Readings**

21L.613/614 (H)
MW 1:00 - 2:30
Stephanie Frampton
Room: 14N-112
ends October 19

Read Latin literature in the original language! This year, our text will be the poems—carmina—of the Roman poet Catullus, famous for his playful epigrams, his heartfelt love songs, and his rich mythological tales in hexameter. 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.

**The New Spain: 1977-Present**

21L.640 (H)
[Same subject as 21F.740]
T 7:00 - 10:00 p
Margery Resnick
Room: 4-253

Deals with the vast changes in Spanish social, political and cultural life that have taken place since the death of Franco (1975). Topics include new freedom from censorship, the re-emergence of strong movements for regional autonomy (the Basque region and Catalonia), the new cinema including Almodovar and Saura, educational reforms instituted by the socialist government, the changes in the role of the Catholic church, the emergence of one of the world’s most progressive gender environment, and new forms of fiction. Special emphasis on the mass media as a vehicle for expression in Spain. Materials include magazines, newspapers, films, television series, fiction, and essays. Each student chooses a research project that focuses on an issue of personal interest. Taught in Spanish.
What are novels for? How should they be made?

In this class, we'll not only study George Eliot's *Middlemarch* (1871-72) — one of the greatest of all novels — but will also examine two other major works that make critical contributions to the evolution of the novel form itself: Eliot's own *Daniel Deronda* (1874-76), her last finished novel, and Henry James's *The Portrait of a Lady* (1880), which attempts to rewrite the basic plot of *Deronda* and to set the novel as a genre on a different course. This was the course, many critics think, that led to the Modernist fiction of such writers as Joseph Conrad, James Joyce, and Virginia Woolf, with its apparent fixation on psychological states (think “stream of consciousness”) and its apparently overriding commitment to literary form. By focusing on James's vexed response to Eliot, we'll reconsider the story critics have told of how the novel moves from Victorian to Modernist, or from “traditional” to “experimental.” I am currently working on a critical project on this very issue.

Student work will most likely involve short responses to readings, brief oral reports, one critical essay, and a creative project at the semester's end.

This seminar will explore narratives of vengeance, from the horrific to the comic and the parodic, across a range of time periods and cultures. Our goal will be to study the mechanics, ethics, and aesthetics of payback. Alongside plays, books, and films, we will be reading critical and theoretical essays that will help sharpen our understanding of such stories and their enduring relevance.

What motivates a poet to set down his or her life story in verse, and how does one do so? To what extent does the aim to tell the authentic truth about an individual life come into conflict with the time-honored aims of poetry, upending traditional expectations of formal regularity and decorum? The poets we will read wrote frankly about a range of personal topics not typically regarded as the stuff of poetry in their time. More broadly, they wrote with a sense that one of poetry’s
highest attainments is the accurate recording of subjective experience and inward states of mind. The course subtitle ("Apologia, Confession, Concealment") names three possible, by no means comprehensive or mutually exclusive, modalities of self-representation in poetic life writing. Our reading will be organized around the study of two literary-historical periods each known for their innovative turn to the autobiographical mode and the precise delineation of inner life: British Romanticism (Samuel Taylor Coleridge, William Wordsworth, Lord Byron) and the second half of the twentieth century, with the American poets labeled "confessional" foremost (Robert Lowell, Sylvia Plath, Anne Sexton, John Berryman), as well as others (Elizabeth Bishop, Frank O'Hara, Allen Ginsberg).

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**Major Authors  Milton’s *Paradise Lost* and Modern Speculative Fiction**

21L.705 (H, CI-M)  
T 7:00 - 10:00 p  
Mary Fuller  
Room: 2-103

Overturn the government. Invent your own belief system. Go blind. Then rewrite Genesis, and reimagine the origins of everything: culture, knowledge, gender, human beings, the universe. That’s the story behind John Milton’s *Paradise Lost*: arguably the greatest epic poem written in English.

In this seminar, we will engage deeply with Milton’s rewriting of the Bible’s story of human origins alongside some modern versions of that project in fantasy and sci-fi: Octavia Butler’s Xenogenesis trilogy, and Philip Pullman’s Dark Materials trilogy. Work for the subject will include online reading journals, oral presentations, and a set of shorter exercises leading to a long-form seminar paper.

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**Problems in Cultural Interpretation**  
**The Written Kitchen: Reading Women’s Cookbooks & Food Blogs**

21L.707 (H, CI-M)  
TR 9:30 - 11:00 a  
Ina Lipkowitz  
Room: 4-146

In the words of Louis Menand, “advanced pop criticism” is “the belief that you can talk about cultural goods loved uncritically by millions in terms originally developed to talk about cultural goods known mainly to an overeducated few.” In this class, we will give the same care & attention to cookbooks and food blogs that are often given more traditional forms of writing. Why cookbooks and blogs? Because historically women have expressed themselves through domestic manuals, recipes, and cookery books; even today, with so many avenues open to them, women continue to dominate both cookbook publishing and the culinary blogosphere. The lines themselves might tell us how to bake a really good chocolate cake, what is it we read *between* the lines?
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.