

COURSE 21L
SPRING 2016 LITERATURE SUBJECTS
SUPPLEMENT TO THE BULLETIN



“Imagination is a licensed trespasser: it has no fear of dogs, but may climb over walls and peep in at windows with impunity.”

—George Eliot

Page (11) from the book, *Flights of Fancy or Imaginary Scraps* Art Work by Charles Carrick

Literature Section

Massachusetts Institute of Technology
77 Massachusetts Avenue, Building 14N-407
Cambridge, MA 02139
617-253-3581 | lit@mit.edu

21L	Units	Gets Credit For	Subject Title	Spring 16 Instructors	Day	Time	Room
INTRODUCTORY							
21L.003	3-0-9	H CHH	Imaginary Journeys [Reading Fiction] SECTION 1	Buzard, J.	MW	2-3:30p	2-103
21L.003	3-0-9	H CHH	Reading Fiction SECTION 2	Kuhn, M.	TR	9:30-11a	4-144
21L.004	3-0-9	H CHH	Reading Poetry SECTION 1	Jackson, N.	MW	1-2:30p	56-167
21L.004	3-0-9	H CHH	Reading Poetry SECTION 2	Jones, E.	TR	9:30-11a	4-257
21L.005	3-0-9	A CHH	Introduction to Drama	Fleche, A.	MW	2-3:30p	1-135
21L.006	3-0-9	H CHH	American Literature	Bronstein, M.	TR	7-8:30p	14N-325
21L.008J	3-0-9	CHH - Same subject as AH 24.912J, 21H.106J, 21W.741J, WGS.190J	Black Matters: Intro to Black Studies	DeGraff, M.	TR	9:30-11a	56-167
21L.009	3-0-9	H CHH	Global Shakespeares [Shakespeare]	Donaldson, P.	TR	3:30-5p	16-644
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Lecture)	Thorburn, D.	T	4-5p & 7-8p	3-270
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Screening)		T	8-10p	3-270
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Recitation 1)	/	R	3-4p	56-191
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Recitation 2)	/	R	3-4p	56-180
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Recitation 3)	/	R	4-5p	56-191
21L.011	3-3-6	A CHH	The Film Experience (Recitation 4)	/	R	4-5p	56-180
21L.017	3-0-9	H CHH	Art of the Probable	Raman, S.	M W	1-3p 1-2p	5-232
21L.019	3-0-9	H CHH	Liars, Cheaters, and Thieves [Intro to European and Latin American Fiction]	Terrones, J.	MW	3:30-5p	2-103
21L.021	3-0-9	H CHH	Gender, Comedy, and the Body [Comedy]	Martinez, R.	MW	3:30-5p	14N-325
21L.048J	3-0-9	H CHH - Same subject as 21G.022 WGS.141	International Women's Voices	Resnick, M.	TR	2-3:30p	14E-310
SAMPLINGS (6 - UNITS)							
21L.310	2-0-4		Pulp Fictions [Bestsellers] (Ends March 18)	Picker, J.	TR	2-3:30p	1-135
21L.320	2-0-4		David Copperfield [Big Books] (Begins March 28)	Picker, J.	TR	2-3:30p	1-273
21L.325	2-0-4		The Romantic Lyric [Small Wonders] (Begins March 28)	Jackson, N.	MW	3:30-5p	56-167
21L.338	2-0-4		Roman Fiction: A "Golden Ass" with Many a Tale [Reading in the Original]	Ostrow, S.	W	3-4:30p	E51-393
21L.350	2-0-4		The Frankenstein Project [Science and Literature] (Ends March 18)	Jackson, N.	MW	3:30-5p	56-167
INTERMEDIATE							
21L.431	3-0-9	H	Shakespeare on Film & Media	Donaldson, P.	R	7-10p	16-644
21L.435	3-3-6	H HASS Meets with CMS.840	Reading Film / Seeing Literature [Literature and Film] (Lecture)	Bronstein, M.	TR	3:30-5p	14N-325
21L.435	3-3-6	H HASS Meets with CMS.840	Reading Film / Seeing Literature [Literature and Film] (Screening)		R	7-10p	2-103
21L.471	3-0-9	H HASS Elective	Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History [Major Novels]	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	9:30-11a	4-146
21L.486	3-0-9	A HASS Elective	Modern Drama	Henderson, D.	TR	1-2:30p	56-162
21L.487	3-0-9	H HASS Elective	Modern Poetry	Tapscott, S.	MW	7-8:30p	14N-112
21L.489	3-0-9	A Same subject as 21W.765J/ Meets with CMS.845	Interactive Narrative	Montfort, N.	W	7-10p	14E-310
21L.504J	3-0-9	H Same subject as WGS.140	Being Human [Race & Identity in American Literature]	Alexandre, S.	TR	12-1:30p	4-253
INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES							
21L.639J	3-0-9	H Same subject as 21G.739	Consuming Latin America [Globalization and its Discontents: Spanish-speaking Nations]	Terrones, J.	MW	7-8:30p	56-162
SEMINAR							
21L.701	3-0-9	H Cl-M	Medieval Manuscripts, Modern Media: Constructing Chaucer's <i>Canterbury Tales</i> [Literary Methods]	Bahr, A.	MW	9:30-11a	5-231
21L.703	3-0-9	H Cl-M	The Drama of Revenge [Studies in Drama]	Raman, S.	T	7-10p	2-103
21L.705	3-0-9	H Cl-M	George Eliot [Major Authors]	Buzard, J.	MW	11-12:30p	2-103
21L.706	3-3-6	H Cl-M Meets with CMS.830 HASS	Hollywood Renaissance – American Film in the 1970s [Studies in Film]	Thorburn, D.	TR	1:30-3p	5-231
21L.707	3-0-9	H Cl-M	Reading Cookbooks [Problems in Cultural Interpretation]	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	11:30-1p	4-146
21L.709	3-0-9	H Cl-M	Avatars, Allegory, and Apocalypse in Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> [Studies in Literary History]	Fuller, M.	M	7-10p	2-103

INTRODUCTORY

Reading Fiction

21L.003 (H, CI-H)

Section 1

Imaginary Journeys

M, W 2:00-3:30p

Room 2-103

Instructor: James Buzard

Great works of fiction often take us to far-off places; they sometimes conduct us on journeys toward a deeper understanding of what's right next door. We'll read, discuss, and interpret a range of short and short-ish works: the reading list **will be chosen from among** such texts as *Gilgamesh*, Homer's *Odyssey* (excerpts), Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress* (excerpts), Swift's *Gulliver's Travels*, Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*, Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, Saleh's *Season of Migration to the North*, Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*, John Cheever's "The Swimmer," Coetzee's *The Life and Times of Michael K*, Irving's "Rip Van Winkle," Toni Morrison's *Jazz*, H.G. Wells' *The Time Machine*, Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*, Beckett's *How it Is*, Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, Forster's *A Passage to India*.

Section 2

T, R 9:30-11:00a

Room 4-144

Instructor: Mary Kuhn

We will read a range of fictional works in this course—including short stories, novels, and a graphic novel—with the aim of becoming better at interpreting literary meaning. In order to do so, we'll consider how ideas are conveyed through the formal strategies, literary devices, and narrative techniques that authors use. We'll also consider the relationship between artistic form and historical context: how do writers respond to pressing personal or communal questions in their works? And how can style itself be interpreted as a form of engagement with social, ethical, and political questions? Finally, we'll draw on what we've learned to consider where and how fictional conventions operate in the world around us. Authors may include: Jane Austin, Herman Melville, Kate Chopin, James Baldwin,

Chang-Rae Lee, Edwidge Danticat, George Saunders, Alison Bechdel, and ZZ Packer.

Reading Poetry

21L.004 (H, CI-H)

Section 1

M, W 1:00-2:30p

Room 56-167

Instructor: Noel Jackson

An introduction to poetry in English, chiefly by British and American poets. We will explore the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Modernism 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. Special course-related events (readings, lectures, film screenings) will take place on selected evenings throughout the term. Regular classroom hours will be reduced in the weeks for which special events are scheduled.

Section 2

T, R 9:30-11:00a

Room 4-257

Instructor: Emily Jones

In this course, we will closely read a broad range of British and American poetry from the Renaissance through the present day. We will discuss traditional poetic periods and genres in order to appreciate poetry as an evolving, living art. However, this course is organized by theme as well as chronology, since as English-language verse grows and changes through history, much that inspires us to write and to read it remains similar. How does poetry help us express love, desire, devotion, and doubt? How does the poet relate to the world in which he or she lives? Can poetry make anything happen in the real world? What kind of role and future does poetry have in our society today?

Introduction to Drama

21L.005 (A, CI-H)

M,W 2:00-3:30p

Room 1-135

Instructor: Anne Fleche

Drama might be described as a game played with something sacred. It tells stories that go right to the heart of what people believe about themselves. And it is enacted in the moment, which means it has an added layer of interpretive mystery and playfulness, or “theatricality.” This introductory course will explore theater and theatricality across periods and cultures, through intensive engagement with performance texts. We will study and discuss plays that exemplify different kinds of dramatic structure, and class members will also attend and review dramatic performances and have a chance to perform scenes on their own. In addition to modern and contemporary plays, readings will range from ancient Greece to Medieval England, Renaissance Spain and Classical Japan.

American Literature

21L.006 (H, CI-H)

T, R 7:00-8:30p

Room 14N-325

Instructor: Michaela Bronstein

What makes a work of literature “American”? The United States is proverbially a nation of immigrants, but its literary history is also rife with famous expatriates who moved elsewhere to work. This course covers major works of literature by authors from America, from elsewhere who settled here, from elsewhere who wrote about here, and more. We’ll think through many possible answers to the question of what counts as American literature—and examine what the stakes of the question are. Authors will likely include Sherman Alexie, Dion Boucicault, James Baldwin, Henry James, Herman Melville, Maaza Mengiste, and more.

Global Shakespeares

Shakespeare

21L.009 (H, CI-H)

T, R 3:30-5:00p

Room 16-644

Instructor: Peter Donaldson

Global Shakespeares approaches some of the playwright’s most enduring works through their vibrant and varied afterlife. We will focus on four or five plays, drawn from different genres, including *Hamlet*, *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*, and *The Tempest*. Close reading of the texts will accompany examining how they have been adapted and performed around the world, on film, and in theater. Students will reflect upon how adapting the plays in different ways and for different contexts changes our understanding of their cultural impact. We may also attend one or more theatrical performances, depending on what is available in the Boston area during the semester.

The Film Experience

21L.011 (A, CI-H)

T 4:00-5:00p (Lecture)

Room 3-270

T 7:00-8:00p (Lecture)

Room 3-270

T 8:00-10:00p (Screening)

Room 3-270

R 3:00-4:00p (Recitation 1)

Room 56-191

R 3:00-4:00p (Recitation 2)

Room 56-180

R 4:00-5:00p (Recitation 3)

Room 56-191

R 4:00-5:00p (Recitation 4)

Room 56-180

Instructor: David Thorburn

This subject will examine a series of classic films by American, European, and Asian directors with emphasis on the historical evolution of the film medium and on the cultural and artistic importance of individual films. The course will be organized in three segments: The Silent Era (films by such directors as Griffith, Chaplin, Keaton, Murnau); Hollywood Genres (Capra, Fosse, Hawks, Huston, Kelly, Polanski, Welles); International Masters (Renoir, De Sica, Kurosawa, Kar-wai).

All films will be screened in an evening lab slot and will also be available for streaming on demand for registered students. Two lectures and one recitation meeting per week.

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

M 1:00-3:00p
W 1:00-2:00p

Room 5-232

Instructor: Shankar Raman

“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 may include work by Aristotle, Sophocles, Shakespeare, Voltaire, Dostoevsky, Darwin, H.G. Wells, Thomas Pynchon, and Tom Stoppard.

Liars, Cheaters, and Thieves

Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction

21L.019 (H, CI-H)

M, W 3:30-5:00p

Room 2-103

Instructor: Joaquin Terrones

Fiction writers are masters of the art of deception. They lie all the time. It should come as no surprise, then, that some of their most enduring (and sometimes endearing) characters are themselves liars, swindlers, adulterers, rogues, and criminals. This course will introduce you to European and Latin American fiction through a selection of its most memorable lowlifes. We will examine how novels, short stories, graphic novels, and films use these outsiders and their transgressions to comment on societal norms and problems. Some of the works we will analyze and discuss are the *Lazarillo de Tormes*, Voltaire’s *Candide*, Gustave Flaubert’s *Madame Bovary*, Machado de Assis’s *Epitaph of a Small Winner*, Jorge Luis Borges’s *A Universal History of Infamy*, Gabriel García Márquez’s *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*, and

Clarice Lispector’s *The Hour of the Star*. Class projects will include the opportunity for students to create—using various media—their own lowlife characters.

Gender, Comedy, and the Body

Comedy

21L.021 (H, CI-H)

M, W 3:30-5:00p

Room 14N-325

Instructor: Rosa Martinez

“Comedy, it seems, is never the gaiety of things: it is the groan made gay.” – Walter Kerr

“Comedy always comes second, late, after the fact,” as Walter Kerr suggests. This course is designed around analyzing *what’s so funny* and *why is it that we laugh when we do*. How is comedy characterized on the fictional page, the screen, and the stage? And what might the comic teach us about the self and culture(s), especially when we come to understand its patterns of transgression as confounding social norms through laughter? Tracking a history of comedy, we will traverse genres, periods, and cultures to reflect on various types of humor: satire, farce, slapstick, love, tragedy, parody, and screwball. Taking physical comedy as our central theme, this class investigates what happens to the body in the comic moment when it transforms into something physically superior or, dare I say, something physically inferior? Essentially, in this course, you will read for laughter.

Course will include novels, short stories, plays, graphic novels, films, television series, and live performances, such as: Shakespeare, Cervantes, Benjamin Franklin, Mrs. Fanny Trollope, Mark Twain, Oscar Wilde, Alison Bechdel, television series like *Veep* or *Modern Family*, a local musical or play, and a drag queen performance and talk by Miss Shuga Cain.

International Women's Voices
21L.048J (H, CI-H – Same subject as
21G.022, WGS141)

T, R 2:00-3:30p
Instructor: Margery Resnick

Room 14E-310

This class introduces students to a variety of works by contemporary women writers from Asia, Africa, the Middle East, and Latin America. Emphasis is placed on determining to what extent each writer's work and her literary style reflects her distinct cultural heritage and to what extent, if any, we can identify a voice that transcends national cultures. In our discussions, we examine the patterns of socialization of women in patriarchal cultures, how in the imaginary and real world we adapt or rebel, the relationship of the characters to love and work, the search for identity, and both the author's and the character's thoughts on sex roles, marriage, and politics. Includes novels, short stories, graphic novels, films and video-conference discussions with students in Cairo who are reading the same works.

SAMPLINGS

**6 units; may be repeated for credit if topic differs*

Pulp Fictions

Bestsellers

21L.310 (Ends March 18)

T, R 2:00-3:30p
Instructor: John Picker

Room 1-135

In this half-term course, we will survey some of the larger-than-life heroes, femmes fatales, and exotic worlds that filled the pages of the best-selling genres of pulp fiction. The syllabus likely will range from detective stories to action to sci-fi, and from Victorian precursors to major pulp magazine stories of the early twentieth century, and onto media forms fundamentally influenced by pulp. Works may include fiction, comics, and films by: Arthur Conan Doyle, Robert Louis Stevenson, H. Rider Haggard, H. G. Wells, Edgar Rice Burroughs, Dashiell Hammett, Jerry Siegel and Joe Shuster, John Huston, and Quentin Tarantino.

David Copperfield

Big Books

21L.320 (Begins March 28)

T, R 2:00-3:30p
Instructor: John Picker

Room 1-273

This half-term subject will examine the book that Dickens called his "favorite child" and Virginia Woolf thought "the most perfect" of his novels, *David Copperfield*. We'll consider the central position of this work in Dickens's development as a writer, as well as the interplay between fiction and autobiography, and the structure of serial narrative by a pioneer of the form. Topics will include such Dickensian subjects as childhood, memory, comedy and the grotesque, guilt and loss, growing up, and more. But we won't neglect to take time to enjoy the experience of an epic read from an author whose big books, even in an age of distraction, continue to engage and entertain.

The Romantic Lyric

Small Wonders

21L.325 (Begins March 28)

M, W 3:30-5:00p

Room 56-167

Instructor: Noel Jackson

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

Roman Fiction: A “Golden Ass” with Many a Tale

Reading in the Original

21L.338

W 3:00-4:30p

Room E51-393

Instructor: Steven Ostrow

Tales of love and lust, of spite and whips, of hot oil and cold calculation: all these and more are on stage in the *Golden Ass* by Apuleius, dating to the Golden Age of the Roman empire and one of only two surviving Roman novels. We focus on the work’s central “Cupid and Psyche” story and (time permitting) may also sample its companion novel, Petronius’ *Satyricon* (with lust, whips, and oil of its own!).

Prerequisite: Latin 1 & 2, or equivalent.

The Frankenstein Project

Science and Literature

21L.350 (Ends March 18)

M, W 3:30-5:00p

Room 56-167

Instructor: Noel Jackson

Mary Shelley’s classic tale *Frankenstein* is often called the first science fiction novel. The *Frankenstein Project* will examine in depth one of English literature’s most famous pieces of fiction, the tale of a brilliant scientist with overweening ambition and his misbegotten creation. The daughter of famous literary parents, both renowned philosophers and novelists, Mary Shelley was highly conversant with the intellectual debates of the day. This subject will explore some of the familial, literary, scientific, and political contexts of Shelley’s novel. We will read *Frankenstein* in its editions of 1818 and 1831, and will examine some of the afterlives, adaptations, and remixes of the novel in fiction and film, including H. G. Wells’s *The Island of Doctor Moreau*, Ridley Scott’s *Blade Runner*, and Shelley Jackson’s *Patchwork Girl*.

INTERMEDIATE

Shakespeare on Film and Media

21L.431 (H)

R 7:00-10:00p

Room 16-644

Instructor: Peter Donaldson

Filmed Shakespeare began in 1899, with Sir Herbert Beerbohm Tree performing the death scene from *King John* followed by Sarah Bernhardt in the duel scene for the Paris Exposition of 1900. In the era of silent film, several hundred Shakespeare films were made: even without the spoken word, Shakespeare was popular in the new medium. The first half-century of sound included many of the most highly regarded Shakespeare films, among them—Laurence Olivier’s *Hamlet* and *Henry V*; Orson Welles’ *Othello* and *Chimes at Midnight*; Kurosawa’s *Throne of Blood*; Polanski’s *Macbeth*; Kozintsev’s *Hamlet* and *King Lear*; and Zeffirelli’s *Romeo and Juliet*. Another extremely rich and varied period for Shakespeare on film began with the release of Kenneth Branagh’s *Henry V* in 1989 and includes such films as Richard Loncraine’s *Richard III*, Julie Taymor’s *Titus*, Zeffirelli and Almereyda’s *Hamlet* films, Baz Luhrmann’s *William Shakespeare’s Romeo + Juliet* and *Shakespeare in Love*. This period has also seen an extraordinary growth of films as well as theatrical performances of Shakespeare in Asia and other regions of the world, including India (*Maqbool*, *Omkara*), East Asia (major work in theater now available by directors such as Ong Keng Sen, Yukio Ninagawa, the Ryutopia Company, Wu Hsing-kuo, and many others).

Shakespeare on film and video raises many questions for literary and media studies about adaptation, authorship, the status of “classic” texts and their variant forms, the role of Shakespeare in popular culture, the transition from manuscript, book, and stage to the modern medium of film and its recent digitally enhanced forms, and the implications of global production and distribution of Shakespeare on film in the digital age.

This term we will emphasize international films and performance videos from Russia, Japan, Taiwan, and Singapore, along with British and American works.

Reading Film / Seeing Literature

Literature and Film

21L.435 (H – Meets with CMS.840)

T, R 3:30-5:00p (Lecture)

Room 14N-325

R 7:00-10:00p (Screening)

Room 2-103

Instructor: Michaela Bronstein

Once we sit down in a darkened theater, we only rarely get up and leave before the movie is over. By contrast, when we read a novel, we put it down when we reach our T stop, when it’s time for lunch, when we drift off to sleep. Yet, like filmmakers, novelists can take control of our experience over the duration of their work. This is even more true when a story isn’t being told the way we might expect it—when events appear out of order, when a narrator can’t be trusted, when one story interrupts another. We’ll examine pairs of novels and films united by similar narrative techniques across the twentieth century: unreliable narrators; montage; and more. Whether to make a social point or to get an emotional response, storytellers in both forms have developed an impressive arsenal of formal devices to manipulate our experience of their material. How can the appearance of a style or technique in one medium illuminate its use in another?

Authors will likely include Conrad, Faulkner, Hemingway, Ngūgī, Woolf, and others; directors will likely include Coppola, Eisenstein, Kurosawa, Lee, Welles, and others.

Well Behaved Women Seldom Make History

Major Novels

21L.471 (H)

T, R 9:30-11:00a

Room 4-146

Instructor: Ina Lipkowitz

“Well behaved women seldom make history,” as they say. Nor do they often make it into the pages of novels where we’re far more likely to find scheming women, defiant women, abandoned women, seduced women, dangerous women—and an occasional good one, too. As we read and discuss important examples of what has become one of, if not *the* most widely read literary genre today—the novel—we’ll pay particular attention to the role played by women and consider such questions as:

Why are they called “novels”? Who wrote them? Who read them? Who narrates them? What are they likely to be about? Do they have distinctive characteristics? What is their relationship to the time and place in which they appeared? And, most of all, why do we like them so much? Authors might include: Daniel Defoe, Frances Burney, Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, George Eliot, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Thomas Hardy, Sylvia Townshend-Warner.

Modern Drama 21L.486 (A)

T, R 1:00-2:30p
Instructor: Diana Henderson

Room 56-162

“Words fail.”
—Samuel Beckett

What does it mean to stage a play in a world where talk is cheap, and we are deluged with multimedia entertainments? Is “liveness” still special, and if so, what does it mean? We will consider the reasons playwrights still write drama, attending to the different possibilities that theater affords those whose voices are ignored or marginalized; those who want to challenge the dominant culture; and those who delight in the legacies of literary drama, community rituals, and language as an essential part of performed storytelling. Playwrights will include Tom Stoppard, Eugene Ionesco, Caryl Churchill, Anna Deveare Smith, Tony Kushner, Bertolt Brecht, and—of course—the master of failure, Sam Beckett. First and foremost, we will be considering and experiencing modern drama as performance art, *mens et manus...* and so much more.

Modern Poetry 21L.487 (H)

M, W 7:00-8:30p
Instructor: Stephen Tapscott

Room 14N-112

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 early WW II internationalism (ca. 1918-1940). Our special focus this term will be on how the concept

of “the Image” evolved during this period. The War had undercut beliefs in master-narratives of nationalism and empire, and the language-systems that supported them (religious transcendence, rationalism, and formalism). Retrieving energies from the Symbolist movements of the preceding century and from turn-of-the-century technologies of vision, early twentieth-century poets began to rethink how images carry information, and in what ways the visual, visionary, and verbal image can take the place of transcendent beliefs. New theories of linguistics and anthropology helped to advance this interest in the artistic/religious image. So did Freud. So did Charlie Chaplin. 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, aesthetic experience as displaced religious impulse, and to poetry as faith, ritual, and cultural form. Poets whose work we will read include: W.B. Yeats, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Hilda Doolittle, Gertrude Stein, William Carlos Williams, Langston Hughes.

Interactive Narrative 21L.489 (A – Same subject as 21W.765J/ Meets with CMS.845)

W 7:00-10:00p
Instructor: Nick Montfort

Room 14E-310

The course consists of three units:

NARRATIVE THEORY. After an introductory look at multi-sequential novels and electronic literature, we study narratology (narrative theory) to gain a better understanding of the form and function of narratives and the elements and aspects of interactive narrative.

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 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 through programming or by structuring language as hypertext.

Being Human

Race & Identity in American Literature

21L.504J (H – Same subject as WGS.140)

T, R 12:00-1:30p

Room 4-253

Instructor: Sandy Alexandre

In this course, we will not only consider how writers portray and try to understand what it means to be distinctly human, but also explore what it means and entails to become a better human being, especially as we enter what many are calling a “second machine age,” in which machines will take over jobs formerly occupied by human beings. What does it mean to be humane and to evolve into your own distinct humanity while pursuing your various definitions of success? What aspects of our identity get sacrificed in this pursuit of success, particularly in the context of what standards of success tend to look like in American culture? How is the label “human” wielded to exclude certain groups of people from that category? We’ll read essays by Sylvia Wynter and Lorraine Hansberry and fictional texts by Toni Morrison, Octavia Butler, Suzan Lori Parks, Claudia Rankine, and others:

<i>Beloved</i>	Toni Morrison
<i>Lilith’s Brood Trilogy</i>	Octavia Butler
<i>Venus</i>	Suzan Lori Parks
Essays	Lorraine Hansberry
<i>I, Robot</i>	both Isaac Asimov’s collection & Alex Proyas’s film
<i>Henrietta Lacks</i>	Rebecca Skloot

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES

Consuming Latin America

Globalization and its Discontents:

Spanish-speaking Nations

21L.639J (H – Same subject as 21G.739)

M, W 7:00-8:30p

Room 56-162

Instructor: Joaquin Terrones

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

Medieval Manuscripts, Modern Media: Constructing Chaucer's Canterbury Tales Literary Methods **21L.701 (H, CI-M)**

M, W 9:30-11:00a Room 5-231
Instructor: Arthur Bahr

How do eighty-three handwritten versions—each different from all the others and none written by the author himself—of a long, complicated, and apparently unfinished poem get synthesized into a single copy for people like us to read, study, and teach from? This seminar will use Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* to study the methodology of textual editing and how it matters for—and can even become a form of—literary criticism. Students will read the vast majority of the *Canterbury Tales* (in Middle English) and become expert in the textual tradition of one of the most interesting Tales (Cook, Wife of Bath, Clerk, Squire, Franklin, Pardoner, Prioress, or Chaucer's own *Tale of Sir Thopas*), culminating in a seminar paper that explores how the existence of a single literary *work* (abstract) across multiple discrete *texts* (material) creates practical challenges and interpretive opportunities.

The Drama of Revenge Studies in Drama **21L.703 (H, CI-M)**

T 7:00-10:00p Room 2-103
Instructor: Shankar Raman

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.

George Eliot Major Authors **21L.705 (H, CI-M)**

M,W 11:00a-12:30p Room 2-103
Instructor: James Buzard

FACT: "George Eliot" is the pen-name of Mary Ann Evans (1819-1880).

FACT: Many people consider George Eliot's novel *Middlemarch* the GREATEST NOVEL IN THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

Come find out why!

In this class, we'll read, discuss, and interpret *Middlemarch* and two of Eliot's other great novels, *The Mill on the Floss* and *Daniel Deronda*.

Hollywood Renaissance – American Film in the 1970s

Studies in Film
21L.706 (H, CI-M – Meets with CMS.830)

T, R 1:30-3:00p Room 5-231
Instructor: David Thorburn

Our primary work will involve close reading and discussion of films from the era many have said is the richest in movie history. We'll talk about theme and technique, actors and directors, and study some clips shot by shot in class. We'll pay special attention to the ways in which the central films of that time are shaped by competition from a now-mature TV system and by the social and political turbulence of the era – the Vietnam War, the civil rights movement, Watergate.

The syllabus will include, among other titles, *Annie Hall*, *Chinatown*, *Five Easy Pieces*, *The Last Detail*, *The Godfather*, *Mean Streets*, *Nashville*, *The Parallax View*. Weekly assignments will also include brief readings in social and movie history.

Registered students will have on-demand access to a course server that contains our required films. There will be no public screenings.

Reading Cookbooks

Problems in Cultural Interpretation

21L.707 (H, CI-M)

T, R 11:30a-1:00p

Room 4-146

Instructor: Ina Lipkowitz

Iron chefs & home cooks; molecular gastronomy & farm-to-table dining; grain-based & protein-based diets: a time traveler from the future would learn a lot about us from our cookbooks, blogs, and Food Network. When we visit the past through cookbooks, we find strange and quirky recipes, but we also learn about the worlds that produced them: about foodstuffs & technology; about religious beliefs and nutritional theories; about who wrote, read, and cooked; and about the gender dynamics of culinary writing.

Avatars, Allegory, and Apocalypse in Spenser's Faerie Queene

Studies in Literary History

21L.709 (H, CI-M)

M 7:00-10:00p

Room 2-103

Instructor: Mary Fuller

After the medieval legends of King Arthur, and before modern fantasy novels and role-playing games, lies Spenser's epic poem, *The Faerie Queene*. *FQ* – written by a contemporary of Shakespeare's – weaves together quests, moral allegory, political argument, apocalyptic vision, gender play, and comedy into a sequence of multi-layered stories loosely connected by the youthful Arthur's search for the Faerie Queene. Each of its major characters seeks to complete a series of tasks and ordeals linked to one of the qualities a perfect man should have. At least, that's the job the poet initially sets out to do....

Each week, we will storyboard the action of the poem, visualizing the arcs of characters and narrative and mapping the spaces through which they progress. Alongside our reading in *FQ*, we will pay attention to its prehistory in medieval chivalric romance; its historical context, in an England struggling to found an empire and build a national identity; and its afterlives, in fantasy genres and modern allegory.

21L LITERATURE

C O N C E N T R A T I O N

The Concentration in Literature is available in particular genres such as poetry, drama, fiction and in historical periods (ancient studies, nineteenth-century literature, modern and contemporary literature, etc.), as well as in popular culture, media and film studies, minority and ethnic studies, literary theory, and a range of national literatures.

Students must discuss their plans for concentrating in Literature with a Concentration Advisor and fill out a *Proposal for a Concentration* form. Ideally, this should be done by the end of their sophomore year. Once the Concentration requirements have been fulfilled, students should meet with a Concentration Advisor and submit a *Certification of Completed Concentration* form. Keep in mind that Concentration is part of the 8 HASS subject requirement for the GIR and both forms must be submitted on time or you may be subject to a late fee or/and delay in graduation.

M I N O R

Minoring in Literature aims to lay a foundation for advanced study and to enhance a 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 minor program should be designated by the end of the sophomore year and no later than two full terms before receiving the SB degree. Designate a minor by completing an *Application for a Minor* form in consultation with a Literature Minor Advisor. Upon successful completion of the minor program, submit a *Completion of a Minor* form by the END OF THE THIRD WEEK of your final term, or you may be subject to a late fee and/or delay in graduation.

M A J O R

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.

For more information on the various types of majors offered as well as a detailed breakdown of subject requirements for the different Literature majors contact Literature Headquarters in 14N-407, 617-253-3581 or email lit@mit.edu.

For a list of current term advisors, consult the Literature Section website <http://lit.mit.edu/academic-advisors/> or the bulletin board outside Literature Headquarters, 14N-407.

The MIT Literature Faculty invites you to attend
Monday Tea
4:15-5:45 in 14N-417



Companionable discussion, light refreshments, and a different tea every Monday during the semester *except* holidays.

All are welcome!