

SPRING 2017

LITERATURE SUBJECTS

Course 21L Supplement to the Bulletin



“You think your pain and your heartbreak are unprecedented in the history of the world, but then you read.” — James Baldwin

Jersey Bounce-Benny Goodman, painting by Peggy Gyulai



LITERATURE SECTION

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Note: Rooms and times subject to change

21L Literature Subject Descriptions - Spring 2017

21L	Units	Gets Credit for	Subject Title	Spring 17 Instructors	Day	Time	Room
INTRODUCTORY							
21L.001	3-0-9	H CI-H	Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante	Bahr, A.	TR	3:30-5	56-167
21L.003 L1	3-0-9	H CI-H	Imagining Alternative Worlds [Reading Fiction]	Gubar, M.	MW	2-3:30	2-103
21L.003 L2	3-0-9	H CI-H	Counterpoint [Reading Fiction]	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	9:30-11	4-144
21L.004 L1	3-0-9	H CI-H	Reading Poetry	Tapscott, S.	MW	7-8:30	56-162
21L.004 L2	3-0-9	H CI-H	From Ben Jonson to Beyonce [Reading Poetry]	Terrones, J.	MW	9:30-11	2-103
21L.005	3-0-9	A CI-H	Introduction to Drama	Alexandre, S.	TR	2-3:30	5-234
21L.007	3-0-9	H CI-H	World Literatures	Donaldson, W.	TR	11-12:30	4-257
21L.008J	3-0-9	A/H <small>CI-H - Same subject as 24.912J, 21A.114J, 21H.106J, 21M.630J, 21W.741J, WGS.190J</small>	Black Matters: Intro to Black Studies	Degraff, M.	TR	9:30-11	56-167
21L.011	3-3-6	A CI-H	The Film Experience (Lecture) The Film Experience (Screening) The Film Experience (R1) The Film Experience (R2) The Film Experience (R3) The Film Experience (R4)	Thorburn, D.	T	3:30-5	3-270
					M	7-10	3-270
					R	3-4	1-273
					R	3-4	1-277
					R	4-5	1-273
21L.019	3-0-9	H CI-H	Great Fiction on the Page and the Screen [Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction]	Resnick, M.	TR	2-3:30	4-257
21L.021	3-0-9	H CI-H	Comedy & Love [Comedy]	Kelley, W.	MW	3:30-5	14N-325
SAMPLINGS							
21L.320	2-0-4		George Eliot's <i>Middlemarch</i> [Big Books]	Buzard, J.	W	3:30-5	2-103
21L.338	2-0-4		Virgil's <i>Eclogues</i> [Reading in the Original](Ends Mar. 24)	Frampton, S.	R	7-10	2-103
21L.350	2-0-4		Brave New Worlds [Science and Literature]	Raman, S.	R	2-3:30	56-167
INTERMEDIATE							
21L.431	3-0-9	H	Shakespeare on Film & Media	Donaldson, P.	W	7-10	16-644
21L.435	3-3-6	H Subject meets with CMS.840	Queer Cinema Literature and Film	Surkan, K.	T	7-10	3-270
21L.460	3-0-9	H	Arthurian Literature	Bahr, A.	W	7-10	2-103
21L.485	3-0-9	H	Twentieth Century Fiction: Modernist Masters [Modern Fiction]	Thorburn, D.	TR	12:30-2	2-103
21L.487	3-0-9	H	Healing the World [Modern Poetry]	Tapscott, S.	T	7-10	2-103
21L.489J	3-0-9	A Same subject as 21W.765J Subject meets with CMS.845	Interactive and Non-Linear Narrative	Montfort, N.	W	7-10	14E-310
21L.490J	3-0-9	H Same subject as 21G.077J Subject meets with 21G.618	Introduction to Classic Russian Literature	Khotimsky, M.	TR	2:30-4	16-628
INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES							
21L.616J	3-0-9	H Same subject as 21G.716	Introduction to Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Film	Terrones, J.	MW	1-2:30	14N-325
SEMINARS							
21L.703	3-0-9	H CI-M	Ten great plays from the modern American theatre [Studies in Drama]	Fleche, A.	TR	3:30-5	66-156
21L.705	3-0-9	H CI-M	Toni Morrison [Major Authors]	Alexandre, S.	T	7-10	14N-325
21L.706	3-3-6	H CI-M/ Subject meets with CMS.830 HASS	Color in Film [Studies in Film] (Lecture) Color in Film [Studies in Film] (Screening)	Brinkema, E.	W	2-5pm	1-379
					M	7-10	3-133
21L.707	3-0-9	H CI-M	Reading Cookbooks [Problems in Cultural Interpretation]	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	11:30-1	4-146
21L.709	3-0-9	H CI-M	Ethnic Literature in America [Studies in Literary History]	Kelley, W.	MW	11-12:30	1-136
21L.715	3-0-9	H CI-M/ Subject meets with CMS.871	Media in Cultural Context	Frampton, S.	M	2-4	14N-112
					W	2-3	14N-112
SPECIAL SUBJECTS (units TBD)							
21L.S88	TBD		Greek I [Special Subjects in Literature](Begins Apr. 3)	Frampton, S.	R	7-10	2-103
21L.S90	TBD		Design Workshop: James Joyce, the Computer Game [Special Subjects in Literature]	Graham, E.	R	7-10	4-253

Note: Rooms and times subject to change

INTRODUCTORY

Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante

21L.001 (H, CI-H)
T R 3:30 - 5:00 PM
Instructor: **Arthur Bahr**
Room: 56-167

This class covers about three thousand years of European literature, so it's a pretty labor-intensive way to get CI-H credit. So don't take it for that alone. Take it for the opportunity to read some of the coolest, weirdest, and most influential texts in the western canon: adventure tales of travel and self-discovery (Homer's *Odyssey* and Dante's *Inferno*); short poems of love and transformation (Ovid's *Metamorphoses* and the *Lais of Marie de France*); and epics of war, nation-building, and empire (Homer's *Iliad* and Virgil's *Aeneid*). We are going back in time: safety not guaranteed.

Reading Fiction Imagining Alternative Worlds

21L.003 (H, CI-H) (Section 1)
M W 2:00 - 3:30 PM
Instructor: **Marah Gubar**
Room: 2-103

In this course, we will study what one critic has called "the literary prehistory of virtual reality": fantasy narratives that invite readers to immerse themselves in enchanted alternative realms or magical worlds enmeshed within the realm of everyday life. Starting with L. Frank Baum's *Oz* and J. M. Barrie's *Neverland*, we will investigate how authors employ tools of fiction to craft such convincing alternative worlds. Were these fantasies an escapist solution to the problem of modern disenchantment, or can we tell some more complicated story about their emergence and function? As we move through the twentieth century, we will compare comic fantasies by writers like E. Nesbit with more somber ones by writers like C. S. Lewis, and conclude with J. K.

Rowling's *Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone*.

Reading Fiction Counterpoint

21L.003 (H, CI-H) (Section 2)
T R 9:30 - 11:00 AM
Instructor: **Ina Lipkowitz**
Room: 4-144

Counterpoint: the technique of combining two or more melodic lines in such a way that they establish a harmonic relationship while retaining their linear individuality. This term, we'll be reading fiction as both independent and interdependent works. How do Junot Diaz and Sandra Cisneros's story collections illuminate one another—or Margaret Atwood and Kazuo Ishiguro's dystopian novels? E.M. Forster and Jhumpa Lahiri's cross-cultural narratives? Virginia Woolf and Ian McEwan's 24-hour novels? In each case, the earlier work prepares us for the later one, which in turn forces us to reconsider its precursor.

Reading Poetry

21L.004 (H, CI-H) (Section 1)
M W 7:00 - 8:30 PM
Instructor: **Stephen Tapscott**
Room: 56-162

An introduction to poems and the traditions and forms of poetry in English. We'll read chiefly British and American poets and will concentrate on Renaissance, eighteenth-century, Romantic, and Modernist poems. 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, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Frost, Eliot, Elizabeth Bishop, Claudia Rankine. Readings: mostly poems, but also one Shakespeare play, several films, and a novel by Mary Shelley. Several evening events including readings by visiting writers.

Reading Poetry

From Ben Jonson to Beyoncé

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

MW 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Instructor: **Joaquín Terrones**

Room: 2-103

How do poems work? Who, and what, are they for? This course will introduce you to the pleasures of poetry in English, seeking to develop the tools and vocabulary in order to better appreciate the full range of what verse can do. In the first two-thirds, we will read key poets from the Renaissance to Modernism, including Shakespeare, Milton, Keats, Whitman, Emily Dickinson, T.S. Eliot and William Carlos Williams. In the last third, we will turn to contemporary American poetry and song in order to consider how they intervene in ongoing national conversations about democracy and identity. The poets and lyricists studied include Mos Def, Bob Dylan, Rita Dove, Claudia Rankine, Kendrick Lamar, Richard Blanco and Beyoncé.

Introduction to Drama

21L.005 (A, CI-H)

T R 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Instructor: **Sandy Alexandre**

Room: 5-234

In her autobiographical play, *To Be Young Gifted and Black* (1969), the playwright Lorraine Hansberry wrote: "I think that virtually every human being is dramatically interesting." In our own lives—through our own verbal and body language—we alternate between deprecating and eagerly embracing what it means to be dramatic: "Oh gosh, he is so dramatic," we accuse! "Yes, honey! I'm absolutely a drama queen," we might hear someone proudly profess. "D-rahmuh!" we drawl to diagnose a scandalous story. Drama is everywhere around us asserting itself: provoking us, amusing us, challenging us, prompting us, catching the conscience of Kings even—effectively acting on us in some way or another. By reading and watching video-recorded

plays as well as attending at least one theatrical performance, we will attempt to understand what drama does best and uniquely as a literary genre. Toward the end of the semester, we will also consider the various forms drama can take. Where, for example, do we situate a historical reenactment, a staged protest, or a flash mob in an Introduction to Drama course? Our readings will include, but are not limited to, plays by Tennessee Williams, Wole Soyinka, Lorraine Hansberry, August Wilson, Young Jean Lee, and Tarell Alvin McCraney.

World Literatures

21L.007 (H, CI-H)

T R 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM

Instructor: **William Donaldson**

Room: 4-257

We live in an era of Globalization, with vast media conglomerates commanding huge audiences, but is there really such a thing as "global" literature—and if there were, how would it be created and sustained? The World Literatures class considers the forces of cultural gravity that have bound a constellation of traditions together down the centuries. Areas of particular focus include

--poetry of the eighth-century Chinese Tang Dynasty and its reception in the West, with particular attention to translation, and what happens to texts when they move between cultures;

--fiction and poetry from the Caribbean which offer intriguing examples of hybridity--what happens when cultures overlap and interact to create new forms only tangentially related to the parent stocks;

--novels and poetry from twentieth-century Africa which show classic patterns of cultural diffusion and appropriation, with African art forms influencing the arts in the developed world and literary Modernism being adapted and re-defined in Africa;

--poetry and drama from Scotland, shedding light upon key areas of language and identity, on writing from the periphery and the possibility of long-term resistance to cultural hegemony--particularly relevant given the possible break-up of the United Kingdom.

Black Matters: Intro to Black Studies

21L.008J (A/H, CI-H)

T R 9:30 - 11:00 AM

Instructor: **Michel Degraff**

Room: 56-167

[Same subject as 24.912], 21A.114], 21H.106], 21M.630], 21W.741], WGS.190]]

What do texts and theories about, and the uses of, the languages and cultures of Africans and their descendants in the Diaspora reveal about the making of race- and class-related hierarchies of power throughout the world? What do these texts and theories require of all of us and how can they be enriched by our own analyses—of us as local community members and as world citizens? How can we improve our future through the study of our past? How can we identify and analyze general global patterns through the study of the local and specific?

And, most importantly, how can this “Black Matters” subject at MIT be made relevant to the “Black Lives Matter” movement writ large? We will use selected texts and theories to analyze the shaping and reshaping of languages, cultures and identities in Africa and the African Diaspora, especially in the “New World.” Haiti, my native land, will serve as starting point for these big questions that bear on both local and global issues of relevant to us here at MIT—and beyond, of relevance to our future as change makers. We will use language, linguistics, education, history, religion, literature, etc., to examine how theories and concomitant attitudes about Africans and their descendants in the African Diaspora have shaped, and have been shaped by, global events through struggle, rebellion, critique and innovation. And the struggle continues... YES, BLACK LIVES MATTER

The Film Experience

21L.011 (A, CI-H)

T (Lecture) 3:30 - 5:00 PM Room 3-270

M (Screening) 7:00 - 10:00 PM Room 3-270

R (R1) 3:00 - 4:00 PM Room 1-273

R (R2) 3:00 - 4:00 PM Room 1-277

R (R3) 4:00 - 5:00 PM Room 1-273

R (R4) 4:00 - 5:00 PM Room 1-277

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.

Intro to European and Latin American Fiction

Great Fiction on the Page and the Screen

21L.019 (H, CI-H)

T R 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Instructor: **Margery Resnick**

Room: 4-257

This class reads works by some of those famous authors whose names you have heard, but whose works you might not have read: Dostoyevsky, Machado de Assis, Zola, Puig, Calvino, Mann, Cholderlos de Laclos, Rulfo. We will pay attention not only to the literary movements these works represent, but also to the subtle interplay of history, geography, language and cultural norms that gave rise to these novels.

The books are compelling, and film versions of works we read give variety to the course and time to think about the interplay of film and print. Class projects will include the opportunity for students to create—using various media—their own fictional characters.

Comedy

Comedy & Love

21L.021 (H, CI-H)
 MW 3:30 - 5:00 PM
 Instructor: **Wyn Kelley**
 Room: 14N-325

This class considers romantic comedy in literature spanning over 2000 years of a mostly Western tradition. We will look at examples of Greek, Roman, and Shakespearean drama and the bawdy stories of Boccaccio, Chaucer, and Rabelais; investigate love in the social satire of Jane Austen and Oscar Wilde; and try to understand the uneasy relationship between farce and romance, violence and redemptive humor, satire and festivity in comic art. We will focus on certain continuities: the body as object and source of rebellious pleasure; transgression against social norms corrected and reordered through laughter; verbal play and wit; identity and mistaken identity; political protest and social reform. As the class develops, we will also note the ways writers appropriate and reshape comic plots and structures from the past for new uses. Discussion will frequently draw on examples of popular and contemporary forms of comic expression.

SAMPLINGS (6 units)

Big Books

George Eliot's *Middlemarch*

21L.320
 W 3:30 - 5:00 PM
 Instructor: **James Buzard**
 Room: 2-103

In *Middlemarch*, the novelist known as George Eliot (but in real life named Mary Ann Evans) created one of great masterpieces in the history of fiction. Many people think it the greatest novel in the English language and Eliot one of literature's greatest stylists. Her capacity for psychological, ethical, and social analysis is unrivaled. Her humor is subtle, delightful, and humane.

"It is the habit of my imagination," Eliot wrote, "to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself." *Middlemarch* immerses us in the medium of a society confronting profound changes and introduces us to memorable characters attempting to navigate, embrace, or resist those changes, in ways that are both specific to 19th-century Britain and still relevant today. What do you do when your ambition exceeds the scope of your life possibilities? How should you choose a mate? How much compromise is acceptable in pursuit of your goals? How do societies treat outsiders or misfits who challenge the status quo? These are just a few of the abiding questions Eliot explores in *Middlemarch*.

Middlemarch is long – the Victorians liked novels that way – but we will take plenty of time to get to know it. Meeting once a week for 90 minutes per session, the class will run for the entire semester, allowing 13 weeks for about 900 pages. We'll be able to dwell for a while with a masterwork eminently worth dwelling with.

Reading in the Original Virgil's Eclogues

21L.338

R 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: **Stephanie Frampton**

Room: 2-103

Ends Mar. 24

An introduction to reading Latin literature in the original language. Topic for 2015 will be selections from Virgil's *Eclogues*. This course provides a bridge for students with one semester or more of formal Latin training (Latin I/2, high school Latin, AP Latin, or equivalent) between the study of Latin grammar and the reading of Latin authors.

Special Subject Greek I

21L.S88

R 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: **Stephanie Frampton**

Room: 2-103

Begins Apr. 3

Introduces rudiments of ancient Greek—the language of Plato, Sophocles, Thucydides, Euclid, and the basis for that of the New Testament—to students with little or no prior knowledge of the subject. Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval texts. Greek I and Greek II may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS Elective.

Science and Literature Brave New Worlds

21L.350

R 2:00 - 3:30 PM

Instructor: **Shankar Raman**

Room: 56-167

While my title harks back to Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, it refers more directly to the Aldous

Huxley novel with which we shall begin our exploration of utopic and dystopic fantasies that imaginatively respond to the promises and perils of scientific 'progress.' Alongside fiction from the Renaissance to the twentieth century – including such authors as Bacon, Cavendish, Brecht, and H G Wells – we will delve into the work of writers such as Hannah Arendt and Martin Heidegger, who have thought deeply about the implications of scientific and technological rationality.

INTERMEDIATE

Shakespeare on Film and Media

21L.431 (H)

W 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: **Peter Donaldson**

Room: 16-644

Shakespeare on Film and Media raises many questions for literary and media studies about adaptation and 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.

The viewing list varies from term to term. This term we will emphasize international films and performance videos from Russia (Kozintsev's *Hamlet* and *King Lear*) Japan (Ryutopia Company's *Hamlet*; Kurosawa's *Throne of Blood*) Taiwan (Wu-Hsing-kuo's *Lear is Here*), Brazil (Nos de Morro *Midsummer Night's Dream*) and India (Bhardwaj's *Maqbool*) along with Polanski's *Macbeth*, Zeffirelli's and Baz Luhrman's *Romeo and Juliet*, Henry V (Olivier and Branagh) Julie Taymor's *Titus*, and Almereyda's *Hamlet*.

Literature and Film Queer Cinema

21L.435 (H)
T 7:00 - 10:00 PM
Instructor: **KJ Surkan**
Room: 3-270
[Subject meets with CMS.840]

Investigates relationships between the two media, including film adaptations as well as works linked by genre, topic, and style. Explores how artworks challenge and cross cultural, political, and aesthetic boundaries. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.

Arthurian Literature

21L.460 (H)
W 7:00 - 10:00 PM
Instructor: **Arthur Bahr**
Room: 2-103

As a quasi-historical, quasi-legendary figure of consistently great popularity, King Arthur has been subject to an extraordinary amount of reinvention and rewriting: as a Christian hero and war-leader; as an ineffective king and pathetic cuckold; and as a tragic figure of noble but doomed intentions. As we trace Arthur's evolution and that of principal knights, we will ask what underlies the appeal of this figure whose consistent reappearance in western culture has performed the medieval prophecy that he would be *rex quondam et futurus*: the once and future king. Readings will include early Latin and Welsh texts, the great Old French romances of Chretien de Troyes (*Yvain, Lancelot, Perceval*), and the extraordinary *Morte d'Arthur* of Sir Thomas Malory.

Modern Fiction Twentieth Century Fiction: Modernist Masters

21L.485 (H)
T R 12:30 - 2:00 PM
Instructor: **David Thorburn**
Room: 2-103

Tradition and innovation in a representative sampling of novels and shorter fiction by the great English and European modernists – Conrad, Woolf, Joyce, Kafka, and others. Recurring topics will include the role of the artist in the modern period, the representation of sexual and psychological experience, shifting attitudes toward gender roles and social class, and the aggressively experimental character of so many modern texts. Early classes will link our writers with the great impressionist and modernist painters.

Modern Poetry Healing the World

21L.487 (H)
T 7:00 - 10:00 PM
Instructor: **Stephen Tapscott**
Room: 2-103

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.

Topic for Spring 2017: Healing the World

Interactive Narrative

21L.489J (A)

W 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: **Nick Montfort**

Room: 14E-310

[Same as subject 21W.765] - Subject meets with CMS.845]

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.

Introduction to the Classics of Russian Literature

21L.490J (H)

T R 2:30 - 4:00 PM

Instructor: **Maria Khotimsky**

Room: 16-628

[Same as subject 21G.077] - Subject meets with 21G.618]

Russian literature holds a universal appeal in the eyes of many generations of readers. In a listing by Great Books, 10 of 100 world’s greatest novels are by Russian authors. How do these writers convey the particularities of Russian culture and shape our understanding of Russia? How do they reflect the turbulent history of their land, yet capture imagination of readers around the globe? What are some unique ways in which they define human psychology, the quest for the meaning of life and self-realization in the world? In this course, we will explore the works of classical Russian writers of the nineteenth and twentieth century, including stories and novels by Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Chekhov, Bunin, Nabokov, Platonov, Solzhenitsyn and others. In the first part of the course we will read the works of the major nineteenth-century Russian authors, focusing on their approaches to portraying self and society. In the second part of the course, we will look at how writers responded to pivotal events in Russian history – revolutions, wars, years of the Soviet regime, and the collapse of the communist system. All readings in English.

Students interested in completing some readings and a project in Russian should register for 21G.618.

Special Subject Design Workshop: James Joyce, the Computer Game

21L.S90

R 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: Elyse Graham

Room: 4-253

In this hands-on seminar, we design and build a computer game based on James Joyce's classic novel, *Ulysses*. Starting with an existing prototype, we explore ways to deepen and enrich the play experience through the use of game mechanics, storytelling, and music, with the aim of finishing the course with a realized product to put in the public domain (and into your portfolio).

Joyce's masterpiece is famous for its immersive world-building, adventurous storytelling, large cast of characters, and innovative use of narrative devices such as flashbacks and point of view. The task of realizing his novel as a game is a unique proving ground for students of literature and games alike. Students from the Berklee College of Music may collaborate with the workshop. Topics include ludology vs. narratology, remediation, interactive fiction, game studies, and theory of the novel.

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES

Introduction to Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Film

21L.616 (H)

MW 1:00 - 2:30 PM

Instructor: Joaquín Terrones

Room: 14N-325

[Same as subject 21G.716]

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, Gabriela Mistral, Roberto Bolaño, Mayra Febres-Santos, Luis Buñuel and Pedro Almodovar.

The course is conducted in Spanish, and all reading and writing will be in Spanish.

SEMINARS

Studies in Drama

Ten great plays from the modern American theatre

21L.703 (H, CI-M)

T R 3:30 - 5:00 PM

Instructor: Anne Fleche

Room: 66-156

What's a great play, or even a good one? And for what or whom is it good—the actor, the audience, the world? Does the production make it good, or is the text of the play enough? In this seminar, we will study plays that made a difference in the twentieth century, when American drama really began to define itself and to have an influence on world drama. We'll consider the plays' historical context, including influential productions, as well as editorial and publication decisions. Participants will have the chance to see both filmed and live productions, and to become an expert on a playwright of their choice.

Major Authors

Toni Morrison

21L.705 (H, CI-M)

T 7:00 - 10:00 PM

Instructor: **Sandy Alexandre**

Room: 14N-325

This subject provides a comprehensive and critical overview not only of the literary and scholarly work of the great American author Toni Morrison, but also of her cultural impact. Morrison's novels are well known for being stylistically dense and sometimes emotionally difficult to read and understand. But to borrow Morrison's own words—from her very first novel *The Bluest Eye* (1970)—the semester-long exercise of reading, thinking, and writing about her work promises to be “a productive and fructifying pain.” Indeed, our readings of Morrison's fictional and nonfictional texts will help us understand what it means to write, release, and learn from various forms of pain—from historical pain to personal pain. As we allow ourselves the opportunity to meditate on her writings, during the course of the semester, my ultimate hope is that we will open ourselves to the possibility of growing more intellectually astute as literary critics, readers, writers, and thinkers. We will read eight of her eleven novels, some of her essays, her short story “Recitatif,” and critical essays about her work.

Studies in Film

Color in Film

21L.706 (H, CI-M)

W (Lecture) 2:00 - 5:00 PM Room 1-379

M (Screening) 7:00 - 10:00 PM Room 3-133

Instructor: **Eugenie Brinkema**

[Subject meets with CMS.830]

“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.

Problems in Cultural Interpretation

Reading Cookbooks

21L.707 (H, CI-M)
T R 11:30 AM - 1:00 PM
Instructor: **Ina Lipkowitz**
Room: 4-146

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.

Studies in Literary Theory

Ethnic Literature in America

21L.709 (H, CI-M)
M W 11:00 AM - 12:30 PM
Instructor: **Wyn Kelley**
Room: 1-136

Although this class starts by critically examining the term “ethnic” as it pertains to a wide range of cultural forms over three centuries, we will focus mostly on contemporary writers. Questions to consider will include: How has ethnic writing changed American culture and renovated forms of literary expression? What are the varieties and nuances of what we might call an ethnic subjectivity? What could it mean to harbor fugitives within the self: transgressive thoughts or a “foreign” identity? And what is the future of “ethnic” literature in a global space?

This seminar will address a number of the following authors: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Dion Boucicault, Jade Chang, Sandra Cisneros, Samuel Delany, Junot Diaz, Louise Erdrich, Harriet

Jacobs, Brendan Jacob Jenkins, Jhumpa Lahiri, Ayana Mathis, Toni Morrison, Art Spiegelman. Students may also take advantage of the MELUS (Multi-Ethnic Literatures of the United States) conference, sponsored by the Literature Section in April 2017, which will bring writers and scholars of ethnic literature to MIT.

Media in Cultural Context

21L.715 (H, CI-M)
M 2:00 - 4:00 PM Room 14N-112
W 2:00 - 3:00 PM Room 14N-112
Instructor: **Stephanie Frampton**
[Subject meets with CMS.871]

A kaleidoscopic introduction to the history and theory of communications from papyrus to pixel. With weekly “lab” sessions in MIT Library’s Special Collections, where students will get to dig deep into historical books and other media through a series of special projects and case studies, this class offers a serious primer in media and media theory, with special focus on histories of the book. Will be of interest to students of literature, music, media, or history. Readings may include McLuhan, Derrida, Kittler, Gitelman, Vismann, Kirschenbaum, and Siegert. Satisfies the historical requirement for Literature.

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.

