

LITERATURE SUBJECTS

COURSE 21L SUPPLEMENT TO THE BULLETIN



Art Credit: **Fun Home: A Family Tragicomic**
by Alison Bechdel 2006 cartoonist & writer, graphic memoir)

SPRING 2022

“Haven’t you ever happened to come across in a book some vague notion that you’ve had, some obscure idea that returns from afar and that seems to express completely your most subtle feelings?” —Gustave Flaubert



LITERATURE SECTION

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21L Literature Subject Descriptions - Spring 2022

21L	Units	Course Code	SUBJECT TITLE	INSTRUCTOR	DAY	TIME	ROOM
INTRODUCTORY							
21L.000J	3-0-9 H	CI-149 - same as 21W.041 J	Writing About Literature	Lutz, M.	MW	3-4:30 pm	14N-325
21L.003	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Great Novels in English [Reading Fiction]	Buzard, J.	TR	3:30-5 pm	2-103
21L.004 L2	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Reading Poetry	Fuller, M.	TR	1-2:30 pm	1-246
21L.009	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Shakespeare	Habinek, L.	TR	9:30-11 am	2-103
21L.011	3-3-6 A	CI-H	Introduction to Film Studies (Lecture) Introduction to Film Studies (Screening) Introduction to Film Studies (Recitation 1) Introduction to Film Studies (Recitation 2)	Svensson, A.	T M R R	3:30-5 pm 7-10 pm 3-4pm 4-5pm	3-270 3-270 1-273 1-273
21L.015	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Imagining Alternative Worlds [Children's Literature]	Gubar, M.	MW	1:30-3 pm	4-257
21L.019	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Liars, Cheaters, & Thieves [Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction]	Terrones, J.	MW	3:30-5 pm	56-167
21L.021	3-0-9 H	CI-H	Comedy	Kelley, W.	TR	3-4:30 pm	4-249
21L.025	3-0-9 H	CI-H	A History of the Book from Papyrus to Pixel	Frampton, S.	TR	11-12:30 pm	2-103
SAMPLINGS (6-UNITS)							
21L.310	2-0-4		<i>The Great Gatsby & Black Culture</i> [Bestsellers] (Ends March 18)	Kelley, W.	TR	11:30-1 pm	4-253
21L.325	2-0-4		Children Creating Culture [Small Wonders]	Gubar, M.	M	11-12:30 pm	66-154
21L.355	2-0-4		Textual Mischief [Literature in the Digital Age] (Begins March 28)	Kelley, W.	TR	11:30-1 pm	5-232
INTERMEDIATE							
21L.432J	3-0-9 H	meets with CMB.515	Understanding Television	Hendershot, H.	W	7-10 pm	4-253
21L.433	3-0-9 H		Kubrick [Film Styles and Genres]	Brinkema, E.	R	7-10 pm	1-273
21L.434	3-0-9 H		21st Century Speculative Fiction [Science Fiction and Fantasy]	Finch, L.	TR	1-2:30 pm	14N-112
21L.435J	3-3-6 H	meets with CMB.540	In Dreams: The dream sequence in literature and film [Literature and Film]	Habinek, L.	TR	1-2:30 pm	1-375
21L.451	3-0-9 H		Literary Theory	Raman, S.	TR	2-3:30 pm	56-167
21L.455	3-0-9 H		Homeric Epics [Ancient Authors]	Forte, A.	MW	11-12:30 pm	2-103
21L.457	3-0-9 H		The Bible: New Testament	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	9:30-11 am	1-135
21L.480J	3-0-9 H	meets with WGS.540	Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures	Terrones, J.	MW	9:30-11 am	2-135
21L.485	3-0-9 H		Twentieth Century Masters [Modern Fiction]	Thorburn, D.	TR	3-4:30 pm	4-146
21L.486	3-0-9 A		Gender and Performance [Modern Drama]	Henderson, D.	TR	11-12:30 pm	14N-325
21L.487	3-0-9 H		Worlds Made and Unmade [Modern Poetry]	Jackson, N.	TR	1-2:30 pm	2-103
21L.512	3-0-9 H		Novelists' Essays [American Authors]	Alexandre, S.	TR	3-4:30 pm	1-242
INTERNATIONAL LITERATURES							
21L.609	2-0-4		Greek Readings (End March 18)	Forte, A.	MW	4-5 pm	1-246
21L.610	2-0-4		Latin I (Ends March 18)				
21L.611	3-0-3		Latin I (Ends March 18)				
21L.612	3-0-3		Latin II (Begins March 28)	Colaizzi, R.	MW	1-2:30 pm	14N-112
21L.640J	3-0-9 H	meets with WGS.740	The New Spain: 1977-Present	Resnick, M.	T	7-10 pm	14N-325
SEMINAR							
21L.702	3-0-9 H	CI-M	Afrofuturism, Magical Realism, and Other Otherwise Worlds [Studies in Fiction]	Terrones, J.	MW	1-2:30 pm	56-167
21L.703	3-0-9 H	CI-M	Ancient and Medieval Shakespeares--Now! [Studies in Drama]	Henderson, D.	TR	3:30-5 pm	4-253
21L.704	3-0-9 H	CI-M	Avatars, Allegory, and Apocalypse in Spenser's <i>Faerie Queene</i> [Studies in Poetry]	Fuller, M.	T	7-10 pm	2-103
21L.706J	3-3-6 H	CI-M - meets with CMB.550	Lost and Found Footage [Studies in Film]	Svensson, A.	TR	11-12:30 pm	4-253
21L.707	3-0-9 H	CI-M	The Written Kitchen: Reading Women's Cookbook and Food Blogs [Problems in Cultural Interpretation]	Lipkowitz, I.	TR	11:30-1 pm	4-144

Note: Rooms and times subject to change

TIME	Monday/Wednesday			
9:30 AM	21L.004 L1 AB 9:30-11a	21L.480J JT MW 9:30-11a		
10:00 AM				
10:30 AM				
11:00 AM	21L.325 MG M 11-12:30p	21L.455 AF 11-12:30p	21L.601J AB 11:30-1p	
11:30 AM				
12:00 PM				
12:30 PM				
1:00 PM		21L.611 RC 1-2:30p Ends Mar. 18	21L.612 RC 1-2:30p Begins Mar. 28	21L.702 JT 1-2:30p
1:30 PM				
2:00 PM	21L.015 MG 1:30-3pm			
2:30 PM				
3:00 PM		21L.000J ML 3-4:30pm		
3:30 PM				
4:00 PM	21L.019 JT 3:30-5p		21L.609/610 AF 4-5pm Ends Mar. 18	
4:30 PM				
5:00 PM				
7:00 PM	21L.011 AS M 7-10p Screening	21L.432J HH W 7-10p		
7:30 PM				
8:00 PM				
8:30 PM				
9:00 PM				
9:30 PM				

TIME	Tuesday/Thursday						
9:30 AM	21L.009 LH 9:30-11a	21L.457 IL 9:30-11a					
10:00 AM							
10:30 AM							
11:00 AM	21L.025 SF 11-12:30p	21L.486 DH 11-12:30p	21L.706J AS 11-12:30pm				
11:30 AM				21L.310 WK 11:30-1p Ends Mar. 18	21L.355 WK 11:30-1p Begins Mar. 28		
12:00 PM							
12:30 PM				21L.707 IL 11:30-1p			
1:00 PM	21L.004 L2 MF 1-2:30p	21L.434 LF 1-2:30p	21L.435J LH 1-2:30p		21L.487 NJ 1-2:30p		
1:30 PM							
2:00 PM							
2:30 PM				21L.451 SR 2-3:30p		21L.021 WK 3-4:30p	
3:00 PM							
3:30 PM	21L.003 JB 3:30-5p	21L.011 AS T 3:30-5p Lecture	21L.011 AS Recitation 1 R 3-4p Recitation 2 R 4-5	21L.703 DH 3:30-5p	21L.485 DT 3-4:30p	21L.512 SA 3-4:30p	
4:00 PM							
4:30 PM							
5:00 PM							
7:00 PM	21L.704 MF T 7-10p	21L.640J MR T 7-10p	21L.433 EB R 7-10p				
7:30 PM							
8:00 PM							
8:30 PM							
9:00 PM							
9:30 PM							

INTRODUCTORY

Writing About Literature

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

Same as
21W.041J

MW 3:00-
4:30pm

Michael Lutz

14N-325

This course will look at literature centered on monstrous figures to think about two things. The first: how do monsters (like devilish magicians, mad scientists, and any number of nameless creatures) show or de-monstrate the fears, anxieties, and problems of specific cultural moments throughout history? What are the techniques authors use to fashion their monstrous characters and what are their implications? The second: what are we to make of the fact that, while monsters are often objects of terror, they are also frequently sympathetic figures, vibrant fictional characters whose complexities seem to protest the fear they are (supposedly) meant to inspire?

Indeed, many of the monsters we will cover are, to some readers, the heroes of their stories.

By reading literature in genres ranging from 16th century English drama to the 19th century Gothic novel to contemporary American horror fiction, this course will teach you to understand and write about—through close reading, historical and contextual research, and comparative analysis of texts—literature’s rich, ongoing, and ambivalent tradition of making monsters.

Reading Fiction: Great Books in English

21L.003
(H, CI-H)

TR 3:30-
5:00pm

James
Buzard

2-103

A handful of great short to mid-sized novels from a golden age in English fiction, circa 1815-1930. We’ll study Jane Austen’s *Emma* (1815), Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* (1847), Charles Dickens’s *Great Expectations* (1860-61), and Thomas Hardy’s *The Mayor of Casterbridge* (1886), and Virginia Woolf’s *To the Lighthouse* (1927). Topics will include (but not be limited to): social class and its powers and limits; women’s place and power in society; the evolution of fictional realism; the novel of character development (*Bildungsroman*); the emergence of literary modernism. Some attention will be paid to the historical context in which these works were written, but the main emphasis will be on learning to read some classic texts with insight and appreciation.

Reading Poetry

21L.003
(H, CI-H)

L2

TR 1:00-
2:30pm

How do you read a poem? Many people find poetry “difficult” – sometimes pleurably and sometimes less so. But within that category of the difficult resides much what is useful and of value to us as readers and human beings. Among the goals of the class we will be developing and practicing some of the skills, habits, and knowledge to approach poetic texts – difficult or otherwise – so that you can judge for yourselves what they mean for you.

Mary Fuller

1-246

We’ll take a close look at the nature of evidence that can be used for thinking and talking about poetry: the formal properties of poetic language as well the use of context. We’ll read a wide variety of poetry from 1900 through the present, with some glances further back, and we will explore a variety of tools and approaches, from the old (memorization, listening, and reading out loud) to the new (digitally enabled visualization and annotation). Most of our reading will be in modern English, so that we can focus on how poets work with its particular properties and affordances, but any knowledge of other languages can be a valuable resource to contribute to our discussion. The last two weeks of the semester will focus on readings chosen and presented by the class.

Shakespeare

21L.007
(H, CI-H)

TR 9:30-
11:00am

Lianne Habinek

2-103

Dr. Johnson famously writes that Shakespeare’s natural disposition is comedy, in which he “seems to repose, or to luxuriate, as in a mode of thinking congenial to his nature.” In this course, we will ask how true such a statement is by contextualizing Shakespeare’s major comedies within a broader framework that includes “problem” plays and contemporary city comedies by Jonson, Middleton, and Dekker. We will ground our readings in performance and will pair comedies with their filmic realizations, allowing us to consider global instantiations of Shakespearean comedy, as well as to ask how well comedy travels across cultural boundaries. Connections may include *Twelfth Night*; *Some Like It Hot*; *Taming of the Shrew*; *Kiss Me, Kate*; *Beware of Eve*; *10 Things I Hate About You*; *A Midsummer Night’s Dream*; *Were the World Mine*; *Comedy of Errors*; and *Bhranti Bilas*.

Introduction to Film Studies

21L.011
(A, CI-H)

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

Lecture
T 3:30-5:00pm
3-270

Screening
M 7:00-10:00pm
3-270

Recitation 1
R 3:00-4:00pm
1-273

Recitation 2
R 4:00-5:00pm
1-273

Alex Svensson

Concentrates on close analysis and criticism of a wide range of films, including works from the early silent period, documentary and avant-garde films, European art cinema, and contemporary Hollywood fare. Through comparative reading films from different eras and countries, students develop the skills to turn their in-depth analyses into interpretations and explore theoretical issues related to spectatorship. Syllabus varies from term to term, but usually includes such directors as Coppola, Eisenstein, Fellini, Godard, Griffith, Hawks, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Tarantino, Welles, Wiseman, and Zhang

Children's Literature: Imagining Alternative Worlds

21L.015
(H, CI-H)

MW 1:30-
3:00pm

Marah Gubar

4-257

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 Middle-Earth and Narnia concluding with trips 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 other, more complicated story about their emergence and function? Since creative writers are themselves astute critics of fantasy, we will draw inspiration from essays by Ursula K. Le Guin, Philip Pullman, Daniel José Older, Zetta Elliott, and other writers for whom criticism itself constitutes a creative act.

Introduction to European & Latin American Fiction: Liars, Cheaters and Thieves

21L.019 (H,
CI-H)

MW 3:30-
5:00pm

Joaquín
Terrones

56-167

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.

Comedy

21L.021
(H, CI-H)

TR 3:00-
4:30pm

Wyn Kelley

4-249

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

A History of the Book from Papyrus to Pixel

21L.025
(H, CI-H)

TR 11:00-
12:30pm

Stephanie Ann
Frampton

2-103

This course is about the pleasures and powers of reading. From the Sumerian clay tablets of more than four millennia ago through to the spectacular emergence of the electronic text, the written word – in all its forms – has captivated the human mind, embodied our insights into the world around us, and made enduring our most profound artistic creations and scientific discoveries. This semester we journey into the history of the book by means of some of its most resonant artifacts, past and present. Readings include literary works by authors such as Miguel Cervantes, Emily Dickinson, and Italo Calvino and theoretical writing by scholars including Marshall McLuhan and Roland Barthes. Regular hands-on sessions in MIT Libraries lead to capstone research projects on objects in MIT Distinctive Collections. Students present on their readings and research in a variety of forms.

SAMPLINGS

Bestsellers *The Great Gatsby* & Black Culture

21L.310
ends
March 18th

TR 11:30-
1:00pm

Wyn Kelley

4-253

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

Small Wonders Children Creating Culture

21L.325

M 11:00-
12:30pm

Marah Gubar

66-154

Children's literature, many critics agree, "sets up a world in which the adult comes first and the child comes after, and neither of them enter the space in between" (Jaqueline Rose). This critical truism—that children themselves don't actively participate in the production of so-called "children's" texts—is so widely held that, to my knowledge, no college-level course exists that focuses exclusively on children's creative contributions to youth literature and culture.

This course represents my first attempt to build a whole class around youth-oriented cultural artifacts that were either authored, co-created by, or based closely on the words of young people. As we will see, a wonderfully wide variety of children's texts may be said to inhabit the "space in between" that critics deem nonexistent, including a witty historical fantasy written by a thirteen-year-old (and midwived into print by her mom, a professional literary editor); a zany children's TV show starring a multiethnic cast of kids performing kid-generated material (produced and directed by adults); and poetic picture books based on young children's sayings and stories (including one illustrated by none other than Maurice Sendak).

Besides close reading and writing about these critically neglected texts, students in this course will also serve as virtual tutors for children participating in an afterschool program with *826 Boston*, a local youth literacy organization.

Literature in the Digital Age Textual Mischief

21L.355
begins
March 28th

TR 11:30-
1:00pm

Wyn Kelley

5-232

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

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

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

INTERMEDIATE

Film Style & Genres: Kubrick

21L.433 (H)

R 7:00-
10:00pm

Eugenie
Brinkema

1-273

This seminar explores the films of the American director Stanley Kubrick. Though he made only 13 films, he is widely regarded as one of the greatest and most influential directors in film history. The course will closely study films from across his career, and spanning genres including noir, the war film, satire, science fiction, and horror. Our focus will be close analysis of Kubrick's unique formal language—his use of color, staging, editing, use of space(s), choreographed camerawork, and his extraordinary manipulations of sound and music. We will also analyze his use of satire, parody, and irony; his stylistic deployment of photography, theatricality, and reflexivity; and his complex relationship to war, violence, technology, gender, and sexuality.

Science Fiction and Fantasy

21L.434 (H)

TR 1:00-
2:30pm

Laura Finch

14N-112

The American author Octavia E. Butler once wrote: "There is nothing new under the sun; but there are new suns." This ability to up-end what we consider possible and to allow us to imagine differently is the hallmark of Speculative Fiction. In this class we will read books that makes use of this radical capacity in order to challenge the oppressive structures of race, gender, colonialism/settler colonialism, and capitalism that we currently live under. By tackling the social injustices of the present, the writers we will read invite us to imagine our futures differently.

This intermediate-level class is focused on issues of social justice. We will read 21st- century science fiction and speculative fiction (including short stories, novels, and films), as well as theoretical and critical texts. Assessment (presentations, short written responses, and a final paper/project) is based on consistent participation and engagement throughout the semester, rather than being heavily weighted towards a final paper.

Literature and Film: In Dreams: The dream sequence in literature and film

21L.435J (H)

TR 1:00-
2:30pm

Lianne Habinek

1-375

Famously, the Chinese philosopher Zhuangzi recounts that one day he fell asleep and dreamed he was a butterfly. When he awoke, he was no longer certain whether he was a man who dreamed he was a butterfly – or a butterfly who dreamed he was a man. In this course, we will walk this double line of doubt and belief, asking how literature and film can be used to translate and interpret these moments of unconscious consciousness. Dreams could prophesy, bearing witness to divine intent, as in Genesis and Homer's epics. Medieval visionary dream poems opened up experimental spaces, where visions of social, political, or personal change might come to fruition. Then, too, psychological interpretations of dreams – driven by Freudian criticism, or realized metaphorically on the screen, as in *Nightmare on Elm Street* or *The Science of Sleep* – offered a way to explore one's own unrealized desires. We will consider stories by E.T.A Hoffmann, H.P. Lovecraft, Mary Shelley, and Franz Kafka; novels such as Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca*; Shakespeare's *A Midsummer Night's Dream*; and contemporary works such as Yasutaka Tsutsui's *Paprika* and Karen Thompson Walker's *The Dreamers*. Threaded throughout, we will explore such films as *8 ½*, *Spellbound*, *Mulholland Drive*, and *Brazil*.

Introduction to Literary Theory

21L.451 (H)

Meets with
CMS.840

TR 2:00-
3:30pm

Shankar
Raman

56-167

This subject examines the ways in which we read. It introduces some of the different strategies of reading, comprehending and engaging with literary texts developed in the twentieth century, paying especial attention to poststructuralist theories and their legacy. The course is organised around specific theoretical paradigms. In general, we will: (1) work through the selected reading in order to see how it determines or defines the task of literary interpretation; (2) locate the limits of each particular approach; and (3) trace the emergence of subsequent theoretical paradigms as responses to the achievements and limitations of what came before. The literary texts and films accompanying the theoretical material will serve as concrete cases that allow us to see theory in action. For the most part, each week will pair a text or film with a particular interpretative approach, using the former to explore the latter. Rather than attempting a definitive or full analysis of the literary or filmic work, we will exploit it (unashamedly – and indeed sometimes reductively) to understand better the theoretical reading it accompanies.

Ancient Authors Homeric Epics

21L.455 (H)

MW 11:00-
12:30pm

Alexander
Forte

2-103

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

The Bible: New Testament

21L.457 (H)

TR 9:30-
11:00am

Ina Lipkowitz

1-135

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

Identities and Intersections: Queer Literatures

21L.480J (H)
Same subject
as WGS.245

MW 9:30-
11:00am

Joaquín
Terrones

2-135

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

Modern Fiction Twentieth Century Masters

21L.485 (H)

TR 3:00-
4:30pm

David
Thorburn

4-146

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 stress modern literature’s connection to social and cultural forces, especially the great Impressionist painters and their followers.

Modern Drama Gender and Performance

21L.486 (H)

TR 11:00-
12:30pm

Diana
Henderson

14N-325

Words fail.
—Samuel Beckett

What does it mean to stage a play in a world where talk is cheap but also incendiary, where screens have come to dominate our lives and we are deluged with multimedia entertainments? Is “liveness” still special, and if so, what does that mean? At a time when gender has become newly fluid and its performativity both a given and a source of political conflict, how does theater imagine the gendered world differently? How do race and class factor into gender’s meanings? 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 Caryl Churchill, Tony Kushner, Tom Stoppard, Suzan-Lori Parks and—of course—the master of failure, Samuel Beckett. And you. First and foremost, we will be considering and experiencing modern drama as performance art, technologies and embodiment... and, for lack of a better word, gender.

Worlds Made and Unmade: **Modern Poetry**

21L.487 (H)

TR 1:00-
2:30pm

Noel Jackson

2-103

A long tradition of thought endows poetry – derived from the Greek word *poiesis*, meaning “to make” – with the privilege not just to reflect the social world, but to shape it after its own beautiful image. By this understanding, poetry is naturally suited to utopian imaginings. But in a good deal of modern English-language poetry, poets’ utopian aspirations confront the intractable matter of the world that they would transform or recreate. In the midst of ruins, their poetry explores and seeks to extend the limits of its efficacy to make the world new. We will begin with some poetry of the previous century that responds to contemporary revolutions in America, France, and Haiti. Starting from the modern utopian experiments of the Romantic era, we will then read mainly 20th-century poetry, both utopian and dystopian, by poets including W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, T.S. Eliot, Langston Hughes, Wallace Stevens, Allen Ginsberg, Diane di Prima, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, as well as the work of some contemporaries.

American Authors Novelists’ Essays

21L.512 (H)

TR 3:00-
4:30pm

Sandy
Alexandre

1-242

What do writers who are mostly famous for their works of prose fiction have to say and how do they necessarily speak their minds differently when they’re writing essays instead of novels? What can this kind of ambidexterity teach us about why some thoughts need to be novels while other thoughts really just need to be essays? Do the essays of novelists have a certain “je ne sais quoi” that the essays of those who, perhaps, have never written a novel seem to lack? Can a novel begin as an essay? What essay has a writer’s own novel inspired that writer to pen after the novel’s publication? What can these essays teach us about experimenting, thinking, assembling, preparing, and organizing our way toward clearheaded and ethical actions in the real world? These are some of the questions that we’ll answer throughout the course of the semester as we read essays by James Baldwin, Gore Vidal, Toni Morrison, Alice Walker, Ralph Ellison, Truman Capote, and others.

INTERNATIONAL LITERATURE

Greek Readings

21L.609
ends
March 18th

MW 4:00-
5:00pm

Alexander Forte

1-246

Introduction to reading ancient Greek literature in the original language. Provides a bridge between the study of Greek grammar and the reading of Greek authors. Improves knowledge of the language through careful examination of literary texts, both prose and poetry. Builds proficiency in reading Greek and develops appreciation for basic features of style and genre. Texts vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs. 21L.609 and 21L.610, or two terms of 21L.609, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

Advanced Greek

21L.610
ends
March 18th

MW 4:00-
5:00pm

Alexander
Forte

1-246

Building on 21L.609, develops the ability to read and analyze ancient Greek literary texts, both prose and poetry. Focuses on increasing fluency in reading comprehension and recognition of stylistic, generic, and grammatical features. Texts vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs. 21L.610 and 21L.609, or two terms of 21L.610, may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS-H.

Latin I

21L.611
ends
March 18th

MW 1:00-
2:30pm

Randall
Collaizi

14N-112

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

Latin II

21L.611
begins
March 28th

MW 1:00-
2:30pm

Randall
Collaizi

14N-112

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

The New Spain: 1977-Present

21L.640J (H)
Same subject
as 21G.740

T 7:00-
10:00pm

Margery
Resnick

14N-325

What do we actually mean by “Latin America”? Is it possible to talk meaningfully about a common identity in a region with such enormous racial, ethnic, cultural, and linguistic diversity? We will tackle these questions by studying contemporary film, literature, popular music, television, and visual art. In particular, we will focus on cultural exchanges between Latin America and the rest of the world. How do Latin Americans consume (or resist) foreign goods, ideas, and influences? How do Latin American writers, directors, and artists create work that speaks to both local and international audiences? Course materials include readings by Roberto Bolaño, Valeria Luiselli, Eduardo Galeano, Rita Indiana, and Yuri Herrera; films such as *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Miss Bala*, *7 Boxes*, and *Wild Tales*; and the work of visual and musical artists including Frida Kahlo, Fernando Botero, Rubén Blades, Celia Cruz, and Calle 13. Taught in Spanish.

SEMINAR

Studies in Fiction: Afrofuturism, Magical Realism, and Other Otherwise Worlds

21L.702
(H, CI-M)

MW 1:00-
2:30pm

Joaquín
Terrones

56-167

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

Studies in Drama Ancient and Medieval Shakespeares--Now!

21L.703
(H, CI-M)

TR 3:30-
5:00pm

Diana
Henderson

4-253

From ancient Troy, Greece, Rome, and Egypt to medieval England and France, the heroes, lovers, and villains of Shakespeare's historical plays range widely across Europe and the Mediterranean—while speaking to the politics and passions of his present. We will work backwards and forwards in time from those stories, putting them in dialogue with the perspectives of modern media artists and literary and historical scholars alike, to map the playwright's imaginative journeys as well as our own. From *Troilus and Cressida* to *Antony and Cleopatra*, *Julius Caesar* to *Richard II*, we will compare historical upheavals and their dramatic representation, uncovering the societal and theatrical contexts that still compel artists across the globe to stage, rewrite and film them. As well as learning about different disciplinary and theoretical approaches to them, we will analyze drama as performance—a distinctive art form within an ever-changing media landscape. We will also celebrate the wit and outrageousness of plays such as *Henry V*, *Pericles*, and *Titus Andronicus*, learning from seminar participants as well as guest experts about adaptations and spinoffs, heroic myths and tragic destruction—so students in Theater Arts, Ancient and Medieval Studies, CMS/W, History and, of course, Literature will all be welcome!

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

21L.704
(H, CI-M)

T 7:00-
10:00pm

Mary Fuller

2-103

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...

Work for the class will include visual plot summaries, short research presentations on student-originated topics, close reading, some instruction focused on Spenser's language, and a major project with multiple options.

Studies in Film Lost and Found Footage

21L.706J
(H, CI-M)
Meets with
CMS.830

TR 11:00-
12:30pm

Alex
Svensson

4-253

Currently, the term "found footage" is perhaps most commonly understood as a sub-genre of the horror film – one that relies on supposedly "true" lost-and-found footage of hauntings, possessions, and other monstrosities to structure their nightmarish narratives (The Blair Witch Project; Paranormal Activity; Unfriended). By playing with audience expectations of authenticity and illusion, found footage horror encourages us to believe that the recovered and reassembled documentary, news, and/or home video footage we are seeing is "real" – making it all the more terrifying. While this seminar is indeed interested in examining the found footage horror genre formally and historically, it also uses it as a jumping off point to explore "found footage" for all its other linked and divergent possibilities. Missing, incomplete, damaged, destroyed, salvaged, remixed, recycled, and re-contextualized film and video structure and inform our moving image world; it is in these gaps, bits, pieces, collages, archives, and ephemera that this seminar takes interest. Over the course of the semester, this class will engage with the aesthetic, ideological, political, and historical implications of the following "lost and found footage": documentaries and newsreels; early silent and Hollywood cinema; experimental and avant-garde films that- -make use of found footage; unreleased films; home movies; industrial and educational films; fictional found footage and "mockumentary;" underground and

Studies in Film Lost and Found Footage (continued)

censored footage; and surveillance, webcam, and body-cam footage. In doing so, this seminar will address issues of film theory; cinematic heritage and preservation; film circulation and curation; physical and digital archives; re-appropriation; ownership and privacy; and of course realism and authenticity.

Problems in Cultural Interpretation The Written Kitchen: Reading Women's Cookbook and Food Blogs

21L.707
(H, CI-M)

TR 11:30-
1:00pm

Ina
Lipkowitz

4-144

Cookbooks can tell us how to bake a really good chocolate cake, but what is it we find when we read between the lines? Not only sources of recipes, cookbooks are also windows into the worlds that produced them, revealing what foods were available (and to whom), what technologies were used, who cooked (and for whom), and what food meant to the people who produced, transported, processed, cooked, and ate it. In this class we will give the same care and attention to American cookbooks and food blogs that are often given more traditional forms of writing. We will focus on women's contributions because historically it was through domestic manuals, recipes, and cookery books that women expressed themselves. Even today, with so many avenues open to them, women continue to dominate both cookbook publishing and the culinary blogosphere.

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 a film and newer media.

The Literature Focus or Film Focus 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.