Spring 2021

Comparative Literature Course Schedule
Why are women poor? Was a question asked by British author Virginia Woolf in her seminal essay “A Room of One’s Own” (1929). A similar question was asked by Japanese feminists in the 1910s. In the United States, not until the passage of the 1974 Equal Credit Opportunity Act in the U.S. Senate were women allowed to rent apartments, get loans, or have credit cards in their own names without a husband’s or other male family member’s authorization. So why is it important to keep women financially down? Why in the past have the following phrases existed to describe a woman’s worth? “Barefoot, pregnant, and in the kitchen,” the German Kinder, Küche, Kirche (Children, kitchen, church), the Japanese Ryōsai kenbo 良妻賢母 (Good wife, wise mother), and the Chinese Xián qī liáng mù 贤妻良母 (Good wife, wise mother). All these phrases equate a woman’s role with motherhood and home, not economic independence. While perhaps these phrases are outdated, they have not been completely obliterated. Examples of such mindsets still exist around the world. In this class, we will examine why various societies at different points in time have wanted to keep women poor. Whose advantage does it serve? We will examine this question through literature. We will examine the relationship of women and money in two ways. We will look at both the literary text and the social context that produces such a text as well as the economic story behind women getting their stories - their voices - published and heard. We will look at various types of literature (fiction, non-fiction, essays, travel memoirs, and poetry) from around the world that represent different time periods and mindsets. This list is by no means exhaustive or comprehensive, but hopefully through these readings you will get a sampling of the various threads to the conversation about why women have been and continue to be poor. **Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement, Honors in Course available, and Writing Course.**
Why do we read myths, legends, and folklore? When do we usually read such tales? And how are these tales imparted to us? Do you remember the tales you were told as a young child? Can you recall the lessons about life that you were supposed to cull from these stories? Now as an adult, with a more mature eye, you can probably see that these myths, legends, and folklore that often seem to be for entertainment purposes can also have a social agenda. What about the tales that come from Asia? Are the underlying premises of myths, legends, and folklore from Asian cultures the same as those from Anglo-European traditions? In this class, through assigned literary readings, we will travel to Japan, China, Korea, India, and ancient Mesopotamia to see how people of these areas have been shaped through the myths, legends, and folklore of their respective cultures. The goal of the class is to determine if there is a universal theme to all of these texts. Thus are we as human beings ultimately the same as Carl Jung posits with his idea of archetypes? Or are there cultural differences in the way people from different countries perceive the world? How do ideas of gender roles, social order, national identity, and morality get subtly transmitted in these tales? Moreover, we will look at the various ways in which such tales get transmitted. By studying the myths, legends, and folklore of other cultures, we will have a better understanding of how the world views of people who live in distant lands, as well as our own worldview, are shaped by supposed entertainment tales. Some of the readings and assignments will include one of the earliest extant epics Gilgamesh, tales from China, Japan, Taiwan, and Korea, and India's The Ramayana.

Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement, Diversity, and Writing Option.
“Den Göttern gleich ich nicht! Zu tief ist es gefühlt” – Faust
(“Not like the gods am I – profoundly it is rued!”)

In this course, students heroically pursue excellence in thought and written expression by reading, discussing, and writing about *The Iliad*, Dante’s *Inferno*, Goethe’s *Faust*, Dostoevsky’s *The Brothers Karamazov*, and Bulgakov’s *Master and Margarita*. Autonomy, integrity, perseverance, rationality, empathy, humility, courage, and probity – essential traits of literary heroes and hero students—are topics of daily discussion and debate. This course is equally concerned with the tradition of thought behind hero stories. Readings from Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, Gregory the Great’s *Moralia of Iob*, Aquinas’s *Summa Theologiae*, Capellanus’s *On Love*, and Vladimir Solovyov’s *Lectures on Divine Humanity* provide essential context for the literary texts read in this course.

**Fulfills:** Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement.
“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free.” These are some of the most famous lines from the “New Colossus” a poem by Emma Lazarus. The entire poem is on a bronze plaque at the base of the Statue of Liberty, a wonderful symbol of America’s ideal. Unfortunately, this ideal does not exist for all who live in this country. Due to the events that occurred in the United States this past summer that resulted in nationwide protests regarding Black Lives Matter, this year the course will focus solely on the various ways in which American citizens of certain races, religions, class, and physical mobility have been denied their freedoms. We will read both fiction and non-fiction that focus on religious, racial, gender, economic, and physical oppression in the United States. By the end of the course, you should have a better understanding of the myriad injustices that have occurred against people in this country who look to the symbolism of the Statue of Liberty, not to mention the words of our Constitution to right injustice and seek freedom for all in the United States of America. Works we will read include: *Bury My Heart at Wounded Knee, Uncle Tom’s Cabin, Invisible Man, No-No Boy, The Chicken Coop Chinaman, The Gentleman’s Agreement, House on Mango Street, The Miracle Worker, and Hillbilly Elegy*. **Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement, Honors in Course available, and Writing Option.**
What does it mean to read literature translated from one language to another? Are you in fact reading the same work of literature?

How does one capture the art of one language and translate it into the art of another? These are just some of the questions we will explore in this upper-level course on the art and theory of translation. We will read seminal essays on the theory of translation and then in workshop style practice such theory in our own attempts at translating literature. Students must be able to have some reading ability in a foreign language to take this class. This course is a requirement for the Comparative Literature Major. **Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement and Writing Option.**
Identity, Place, and Subversion in Contemporary Mizrahi Cinema in Israel

Yaron Shemer

AN ACCENTED CINEMA
Exile and Diasporic Filmmaking

Hamid Naficy

PALESTINIAN CINEMA
Landscape, Trauma, and Memory

Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi

Arab Cinema
History and Cultural Identity
New Revised Edition

Viola Shafik
This course examines Middle Eastern cinema from the early twentieth century to the present day. As a comparative literature course with a focus on the textual medium of film, “Cinemas of the Middle East” takes up questions of representation, translation, cultural identity, multilingualism, cosmopolitanism, trauma, and dissidence. The course is structured around several historical moments that reshaped the geopolitical and cultural landscape of the Middle East. We will start with a unit on Egyptian film and examine the notion of Egypt as the “Hollywood of the Middle East.” We will then move through a unit on the 1948 Arab-Israeli War and look at the ways in which 1948 is portrayed alternately as the birth of the Israeli nation and the catastrophic start of the Palestinian refugee crisis. Subsequent units examine cinematic treatments of the 1967 Arab-Israeli War and its aftermaths, the decline of cosmopolitanism, Mizrahi cinema and identity politics in Israel, the Lebanese civil war and trauma narratives, the 1979 Iranian Revolution and responses to censorship, transnational productions, and new filmic techniques that reflect the aesthetics and modes of communication of the digital age. Theoretical readings include Hamid Naficy’s *An Accented Cinema*, Ella Shohat’s *East/West And the Politics of Representation*, Nurith Gertz and George Khleifi’s *Palestinian Cinema: Landscape, Trauma, and Memory*, Joseph Gugler’s *Film in the Middle East and North Africa: Creative Dissidence*, Viola Shafik’s *Arab Cinema, and Yaron Shemer’s Identity, Place, and Subversion in Contemporary Mizrahi Cinema in Israel*. 

Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement, Diversity, and Writing Option.
This course offers an introduction to Western European thought and literature of the Middle Ages and Renaissance. Along with a consideration of our historically and culturally conditioned designations of the time period in question, we shall examine the emergence of spiritual and cultural ideals, humanism, the roles of women, constructions of the “other,” and the attempts to synthesize classical and Christian traditions. Among the authors considered are Christine de Pizan, Dante, Petrarch, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, and Gaspara Stampa. **Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement and Writing Option.**
Do you love the way Russian authors think, but you aren’t sure why? This course explores the close relationship between literature and philosophy in Russia. The literary works of Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky, and Tolstoy form the core of our studies. Together with Russian literary works, we will also read the writings of journalists, philosophers, political activists, religious thinkers and literary critics. Chaadaev, Belinsky, Herzen, Chernyshevsky, and Solovyov constitute the other half of the literary-philosophical dialogue under consideration. Literary works read include *Eugene Onegin, Dead Souls, Hunter’s Sketches, The Idiot, and Hadji Murat*. Fulfills: Group III - Humanities/Literature requirement and Writing Option.