The Department of Comparative Literature is organized to facilitate the study of literature unrestricted by national boundaries and the conventional demarcations of subject matter. The department makes every effort to arrange a course of studies fitted to the individual student’s background and interest. Students may choose from courses offered by the department, as well as those offered by relevant departments in the Division of the Humanities and in some cases those offered by other divisions. Students are expected to read relevant texts in the original languages. The time period leading to the master’s degree may be used to explore areas of interest by the student, as well as to strengthen areas of established interest and competence. Students pursue the Ph.D. in one of two tracks of learning and training:

1. National literatures
2. Literature and other disciplines

Track 1 is a program of studies of one national literature (the major) in its historical entirety and of a second national literature (the minor) in a specified area. Track 2 will consist of the study of a literature or some part of that literature and its relationship to another discipline such as sociology, psychoanalysis, philosophy, or religion. It is assumed that whichever option the student chooses, an international perspective on the relevant problem will be sought and maintained. Students will be provided with individual counseling to help them formulate programs of study that will answer to their needs and interests. There are no formal boundaries to the extent and nature of these interests, although the department will require that programs be coherently conceived and responsibly carried out.

The Degree of Master of Arts

The objective of the program is the Ph.D. degree. Doctoral students in the program are eligible for the M.A. degree after completing the following requirements: For students entering the program in the fall 2003 and after, a program of eight graduate level courses (one full academic year), all of which must be taken for a letter grade; the required two quarter sequence; and demonstrated competence (high proficiency in a graduate literature course or high pass in a University examination) in two foreign languages, one of which must be either French or German. The remaining six quarter courses
are normally divided among two literatures, although a student may, with department permission, place greater emphasis on one literature or on some special interest. Satisfactory completion of the MA requirements will be based on a student’s grade record and performance in the required two quarter sequence.

The Degree of Doctor of Philosophy

Programs leading to the doctor’s degree in the department will be organized for students possessing the M.A. who have shown unusual competence and who wish to prepare themselves for teaching and scholarly investigation in comparative literature. Students are required to take six graduate level courses in their second year of Ph.D. study and two in their third year. Students are also required to write a minimum of two substantial papers the second year, and one the third year. Copies of these papers must be submitted to the graduate chair.

In the two years of post-M.A. courses, students may take no more than one of the required courses per year for a Pass/Fail grade (i.e., one of the six required graduate level courses for the first year of post-M.A. doctoral level study, and one of the two required graduate level courses in the second year of doctoral level study).

Before the student is recommended for admission to candidacy for the doctor’s degree he or she must pass satisfactorily an oral examination after completion of eight Ph.D. level courses. This examination will be based on one of the following two options.

Track I requires The National Literature Oral. This is an examination based on no fewer than 60 titles in the major literature and no fewer than 30 titles in the minor literature. The list for the major literature will cover all periods and genres. The list for minor literature will cover the major texts of the approved period or genre.

Track II requires The Field Oral. This is an oral examination on a representative list of approximately 70-90 titles in a given comparative field, such as literature and anthropology, literature and art, literature and film, literature and history, literature and linguistics, literature and music, literature and psychology, literature and sociology, literature and religion, literature and science. Texts chosen for this exam are to be distributed evenly between the two disciplines.

For admission to candidacy the same language requirements hold for BOTH tracks. These are as follows: either high proficiency in one language (=normally one graduate literature course) + two University reading exams in two additional languages (with a high pass on both) OR two high proficiency (graduate literature courses) in two languages. In both tracks one of those languages must be either French or German. All graduate students who wish to fulfill the language requirement through graduate course work must pick up a form in the departmental office to be filled out by the instructor after the course work has been completed. No student will get credit for the language requirement by course work without the instructor’s completion of such a form. The form will rate the student’s general knowledge of the language with almost exclusive emphasis on reading.

Before entering candidacy students will be asked to present and discuss their dissertation proposals at a proposal hearing attended by their dissertation committee and other interested faculty. After entering candidacy students will participate in a colloquium, normally in the fifth quarter after their admission to candidacy, in which they will discuss with their dissertation committee the current state of the dissertation and outline their plans and schedule for further progress. Students are strongly urged to join appropriate workshops and present dissertation chapters on a regular basis to such workshops. After satisfying the above requirements, the candidate is expected to pursue independent research under the direction of a member of the faculty culminating in the writing of a doctoral dissertation. The candidate must conclude his or her studies by defending successfully this dissertation in an oral final examination.

For additional information about the Comparative Literature program, please see http://complit.uchicago.edu/

Application

The department requires a writing sample of no more than 25 pages, usually a critical essay written during the student’s college years.

The application process for admission and financial aid for all graduate programs in Humanities is administered through the divisional Office of the Dean of Students. The Application for Admission and Financial Aid, with instructions, deadlines and department specific information is available online at: http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions

Questions pertaining to admissions and aid should be directed to humanitiesadmissions@uchicago.edu or (773) 702-1552. Our application process is now entirely online. Please do not send any materials in hard copy. All materials should be submitted through the online application (http://humanities.uchicago.edu/students/admissions/apply-now).

Comparative Literature Courses

CMLT 30510. Translation and Translation Theory. 100 Units.
Translation is one of the central mechanisms of literary creativity. This course will consider translation both concretely and theoretically. Topics to be discussed will include semantic and grammatical interference, loss and gain, the production of difference, pidgin, translationese, bilingualism, self-translation, code-switching, translation as metaphor, foreignization vs. nativization, and distinct histories of translation.
Instructor(s): Haun Saussy Terms Offered: Spring
Prerequisite(s): For advanced undergraduates and graduate students. 20 student cap. Instructor consent not required.
CMLT 32303. Prosody and Poetic Form: An Introduction to Comparative Metrics. 100 Units.
This class offers (i) an overview of major European systems of versification, with particular attention to their historical development, and (ii) an introduction to the theory of meter. In addition to analyzing the formal properties of verse, we will inquire into their relevance for the articulation of poetic genres and, more broadly, the history of literary (and sub-literary) systems. There will be some emphasis on Graeco-Roman quantitative metrics, its afterlife, and the evolution of Germanic and Slavic syllabo-tonic verse. No prerequisites, but a working knowledge of one European language besides English is strongly recommended.
Instructor(s): Boris Maslov Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLCV 21313, CLAS 31313, SLAV 22303, SLAV 32303, ENGL 22310, ENGL 32303, GRMN 22314, GRMN 32314, CMLT 22303

CMLT 32400-32500. History of International Cinema I-II.
This sequence is required of students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies. Taking these courses in sequence is strongly recommended but not required.

CMLT 32400. History of International Cinema I: Silent Era. 100 Units.
This course introduces what was singular about the art and craft of silent film. Its general outline is chronological. We also discuss main national schools and international trends of filmmaking.
Instructor(s): J. Lastra Terms Offered: Autumn
Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 required. Required of students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies.
Note(s): This is the first part of a two-quarter course.
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 28500, ARTH 38500, CMLT 22400, CMST 48500, ENGL 29300, ENGL 48700, MAPH 36000, ARTV 20002, CMST 28500

CMLT 32500. History of International Cinema II: Sound Era to 1960. 100 Units.
The center of this course is film style, from the classical scene breakdown to the introduction of deep focus, stylistic experimentation, and technical innovation (sound, wide screen, location shooting). The development of a film culture is also discussed. Texts include Thompson and Bordwell’s *Film History: An Introduction*; and works by Bazin, Belton, Stinney, and Godard. Screenings include films by Hitchcock, Welles, Rossellini, Bresson, Ozu, Antonioni, and Renoir.
Instructor(s): Y. Tsivian Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Prior or concurrent registration in CMST 10100 required. Required of students majoring in Cinema and Media Studies.
Note(s): CMST 28500/48500 strongly recommended
Equivalent Course(s): ARTH 28600, ARTH 38600, CMLT 22500, CMST 48600, ENGL 29600, ENGL 48900, MAPH 33700, ARTV 20003, CMST 28600

CMLT 32402. Fate and Duty: European Tragedy from Aeschylus to Brecht. 100 Units.
This class will explore the development of European drama from Attic tragedy and comedy and their reception in Ancient Rome and French Neoclassicism to the transformation of dramatic form in 18-20th c. European literatures. The focus will be on the evolution of plot, characterization, time-and-space of dramatic action, ethical notions (free will, guilt, conscience), as well as on representations of affect. All readings in English. No prerequisites.
Instructor(s): Staff Terms Offered: Autumn
Equivalent Course(s): GRMN 22402, CLCV 22117, CLAS 32117, REES 22402, CMLT 22402

CMLT 35302. Fashion and Modernity. 100 Units.
The relationship between fashion and modernity has always been taken for granted. Indeed, it is guaranteed in the very etymology of the French and German words “mode” and “modernité”. Yet, on closer inspection, there is a blind spot in this relation in that fashion seems rather to be the Other of modernity than modernity itself, an Oriental colony in the heart of the West.

The modern discourse of fashion testifies to the ambivalences and paradoxes in this relationship. From the beginning of the modern world until now, it is strangely split: there is fashion and fashion. Properly speaking, men’s fashion is not really fashionable. The perfectly functional suit without superfluous adornment is, in its world-wide constancy through the centuries, almost invariably classical. Its staggering universal success is due to the fact that it is the ideal modern dress: beautiful, because functional. Women’s fashion, on the contrary, is a remnant of the old, effeminate aristocracy – a frivolous frill, an all-in-all dysfunctional ornament, badly in need of thorough modernization. The “new woman” is born in agonizing pain and perpetual fallbacks: while Chanel almost lead us toward a functional feminine form, Dior’s new look was, from this perspective, a setback: it brought back the unhealthy, restrictive corset and offered a slap in the face to the modern aesthetic dogma of “form follows function”. Fashion therefore seems to be the locus of a strange intimation of the poli
Instructor(s): Barbara Vinken Terms Offered: Spring
CMLT 35918. From the Victim to the Witness, From the Witness to the Hero, and Back. 100 Units.

In recent years the Victim has risen to the role of ethical touchstone once attributed to the Hero. Through the analysis of the textual strategies and the reception of Primo Levi’s and Roberto Saviano’s works, the course aims to explain the reasons and dynamics of this paradigm shift. Since the Hero is someone who does something, while the Victim is someone who suffers the effects of other people’s actions, the question is: according to which conceptual framework may the testimony of a victimization be considered a sufficient condition for that person (or the role he/she epitomizes) to acquire the status of an exemplary figure, custodian of unalienable values and bearer of moral teachings?

Instructor(s): D. Giglioli Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): Taught in English. Italian majors and minors will write midterm and final in Italian. Graduate students in Italian will read Italian texts in the original Italian and write their final essay in Italian.

Equivalent Course(s): ITAL 35918,CMLT 25918,ITAL 25918

CMLT 39023. Returning the Gaze: The West and the Rest. 100 Units.

This course provides insight into the existential predicament of internalized otherness. We investigate identity dynamics between the “West,” as the center of economic power and self-proclaimed normative humanity, and the “Rest,” as the poor, backward, volatile periphery. We will focus on self-representational strategies of the “Rest” (primarily Southeastern Europe and Russia), and the inherent internalization of the imagined western gaze whom the collective peripheral selves aim to seduce but also defy. Two discourses on identity will help us understand these self-representations: the Lacanian concepts of symbolic and imaginary identification, and various readings of the Hegelian recognition by the other in the East European context. Identifying symbolically with a site of normative humanity outside oneself places the self in a precarious position. The responses are varied but acutely felt: from self-consciousness to defiance and arrogance, to self-exoticization and self-mythicization, to self-abjection, all of which can be viewed as forms of a quest for dignity. We will also consider how these responses have been incorporated in the texture of the national, gender, and social identities in European and other peripheries.

Instructor(s): Angelina Ilieva Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): REES 39023,CMLT 29023,HIST 23609,HIST 33609,NEHC 29023,NEHC 39023,REES 29023

CMLT 40000. CDI Seminar: From Baroque to Neo-Baroque. 100 Units.

We will take a transatlantic and hemispheric approach to examining the political, epistemological, and aesthetic dimensions of the concept of the Baroque, by reading European and Latin American theory and poetry from three centuries (17th, 20th, 21st). The course is purposefully designed to put modern and early modern texts in constant dialogue. The literary essays of 20th-c. Latin American writers such as Lezama Lima and Alfonso Reyes, for instance, will illuminate the 17th-c. poems of Góngora and Sor Juana, while these will be read in conjunction with those of José Kozer, Luis Felipe Fabre, and Tamara Kamenszain. The remarkable persistence of the Baroque across centuries, geographies, and cultures raises a number of questions. Why has the Baroque not gone out of fashion, but rather, been reborn again and again? How does this apparently recondite mode manage to remain politically relevant and articulate urgent ideas in its moment? How does the Baroque provide poets with a prism through which to explore questions of subjectivity, originality, and capital? How does the connection between the neo-Baroque and antropofagia, the Brazilian notion of cultural cannibalism, play out in poems not only written in Brazil, but also throughout Latin America and in the United States? Although the course will be conducted in English, most of the materials will also be available in Spanish.

Instructor(s): R. Galvin and M. Martinez Terms Offered: Autumn

Equivalent Course(s): CDIN 40000,SPAN 40017,ENGL 63400

CMLT 42000. Comparative Mystical Literature: Islamic, Jewish and Christian. 100 Units.

This course will examine Islamic, Christian, and Jewish mystical literature, with one third of the class devoted to each of the three traditions. Our focus will be upon writings from the late 12th to early 14th centuries, CE by Ibn al-`Arabi, Meister Eckhart, Hadewijch, Marguerite Porete, and Moses de Loen (by attribution). We will also look at some selections from other writings, including Plotinus and Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite. Class format centers upon close readings of specific primary texts.

Instructor(s): Michael Sells Terms Offered: Spring

Prerequisite(s): Willingness to work in one of the following languages: Arabic, Latin, Greek, French, German, Hebrew, Aramaic or Spanish.

Equivalent Course(s): RLIT 43600,ISLM 43300

CMLT 40800. Brechtian Representations: Theatre, Theory, Cinema. 100 Units.

Brecht is indisputably the most influential playwright in the 20th century, but his influence on film theory and practice and on cultural theory is also considerable. In this course we will explore the range and variety of Brecht’s own theatre, from the anarchic plays of the 1920’s to the agitprop Lehrstück and film esp Kuhle Wampe) to the classical parable plays, as well as the work of his heirs in German theatre (Heiner Müller, Peter Weiss) and film (RW Fassbinder, Alexander Kluge), in French film (Jean-Luc Godard, Chris Marker), film and theatre in Britain (Mike Leigh and Lucy Prebble), and theatre and film in Africa, from South Africa to Senegal and US (TBA). We will also give due attention to the often unacknowledged impact of Brecht’s theorizing on a range of genres and media on his better known contemporaries Adorno, Benjamin, Lukács as well as on cultural theory elsewhere from the Situationists to digital labor. Requirements: oral presentations; short midterm and final research paper.

Instructor(s): L. Kruger Terms Offered: Spring

Note(s): Designed for MAPH or PhD.

Equivalent Course(s): ENGL 44500,TAPS 44500,CMST 36200
CMLT 42802. Conceptual History and Greek Literature. 100 Units.
In this seminar, we will approach conceptual history (a.k.a. Begriffsgeschichte) as a resource for philologically-informed study of cultural interaction, continuity, and change. We will begin by developing a theoretical background in historical semantics, conceptual history, Metaphorologie, and history of ideas (focusing on the work of Nietzsche, Spitzer, Koselleck, Blumenberg, and Hadot); the second part of the quarter will be dedicated to historical and theoretical problems in the study of concepts in literary texts and across cultures. Reading knowledge of two (or more) foreign languages is a strong desideratum. As a final project, seminar participants will be expected to choose a particular concept and trace its history and uses in literary texts, ideally in more than one language.
Instructor(s): Boris Maslov Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CLAS 42813,SLAV 42802

CMLT 42918. CDI Seminar: Exploratory Translation. 100 Units.
Focusing on the theory, history and practice of poetic translation, this seminar includes sessions with invited theorists and practitioners from North and South America, Europe, and Asia. Taking translation to be an art of making sense that is transmitted together with a craft of shapes and sequences, we aim to account for social and intellectual pressures influencing translation projects. We deliberately foreground other frameworks beyond “foreign to English” and “olden epochs to modern”—and other methods than the “equivalence of meaning”—in order to aim at a truly general history and theory of translation that might both guide comparative cultural history and enlarge the imaginative resources of translators and readers of translation. In addition to reading and analysis of outside texts spanning such topics as semantic and grammatical interference, gain and loss, bilingualism, self-translation, pidgin, code-switching, translationese, and foreignization vs. nativization, students will be invited to try their hands at a range of tactics, aiming toward a final portfolio of annotated translations.
Instructor(s): J. Scappettone and H. Saussy Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CDIN 42918,RLLT 42918,SCTH 42918,ENGL 42918

CMLT 48017. Phaedras Compared: Adaptation, Gender, Tragic Form. 100 Units.
This seminar places Racine’s French neoclassical tragedy Phaedra within a wide-ranging series of adaptations of the ancient myth, from its Greek and Latin sources (Euripides, Seneca, Ovid) to twentieth-century and contemporary translations and stage adaptations (Ted Hughes, Sarah Kane), read along with a series of theoretical and critical texts. Particular attention will be paid to critical paradigms and approaches in the evolving fields of classical reception studies, theater and performance studies, and gender studies. Reading knowledge of French strongly preferred.
Instructor(s): D. Wray & L. Norman Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CDIN 48017,FREN 48017,TAPS 48017,CLAS 48017,GNSE 48017

CMLT 50104. Blood Libel: Damascus to Riyadh. 100 Units.
This course examines the Blood-Libel from the thirteenth-century to the present, with special focus upon the Damascus Affair of 1840 and its repercussions in the modern Middle Eastern and European contexts and in polemics today among Muslims, Christians and Jews. We will review cases and especially upon literary and artistic representations of ritual murder and sacrificial consumption alleged to have been carried out by Waldensians, Fraticelli, witches, and Jews, with special attention to the forms of redemptive, demonic, and symbolic logic that developed over the course of the centuries and culminated in the wake of the Damascus Affair. Each participant will be asked to translate and annotate a sample primary text, ideally one that has not yet been translated into English, and to use that work as well in connection with a final paper.
Instructor(s): Michael Sells Terms Offered: Winter
Prerequisite(s): Willingness to work on a text from one of the following languages—Latin, German, French, Italian, Spanish, Polish, Hungarian, Russian, Arabic, Modern Greek, or Turkish—at whatever level of proficiency one has attained. This course fulfills the autumn core requirement for first year PhDs in Comparative Literature
Equivalent Course(s): ISLM 41610

CMLT 50201. Seminar: Contemporary Critical Theory. 100 Units.
This course will examine some of the salient texts of postmodernism. Part of the question of the course will be the status and meaning of “post”-modern, post-structuralist. The course requires active and informed participation.
Instructor(s): Francoise Meltzer Terms Offered: Winter
Note(s): Comp Lit core course, 2nd part of sequence.
Equivalent Course(s): DVPR 50201
CMLT 50204. Destruction of Images, Books and Artifacts in Europe and South. 100 Units.
The course offers a comparative perspective on European and South Asian iconoclasm. In the European tradition, iconoclasm was predominantly aimed at images, whereas in South Asian traditions it was also enacted upon books and buildings. The combination of these traditions will allow us to extend the usual understanding of iconoclasm as the destruction of images to a broader phenomenon of destruction of cultural artifacts and help question the theories of image as they have been independently developed in Europe and South Asia, and occasionally in conversation with one another. We will ask how and why, in the context of particular political imaginaries and material cultures, were certain objects singled out for iconoclasm? Also, who was considered to be entitled or authorized to commit their destruction? Through a choice of concrete examples of iconoclasm, we will query how religious and political motivations are defined, redefined, and intertwined in each particular case. We will approach the iconoclastic events in Europe and South Asia through the lenses of philology, history, and material culture. Class discussions will incorporate not only textual materials, but also the close collaborative study of images, objects, and film. Case studies will make use of objects in the Art Institute of Chicago and Special Collections at the University Library.
Instructor(s): Tyler Williams and Olga Solovieva Terms Offered: Spring
Equivalent Course(s): SALC 50204, SCTH 50204, RLVC 50204, HREL 50204, ARTH 50204, CDIN 50204

CMLT 50900. Space, Place, and Landscape. 100 Units.
This seminar will analyze the concepts of space, place, and landscape across the media (painting, photography, cinema, sculpture, architecture, and garden design, as well as poetic and literary renderings of setting, and "virtual" media-scapes). Key theoretical readings from a variety of disciplines, including geography, art history, literature, and philosophy will be included: Foucault's "Of Other Spaces," Michel de Certeau's concept of heterotopia; Heidegger's "Art and Space"; Gaston Bachelard's The Poetics of Space; Henri Lefebvre's Production of Space; David Harvey's Geography of Difference; Raymond Williams's The Country and the City; Mitchell, Landscape and Power. Topics for discussion will include the concept of the picturesque and the rise of landscape painting in Europe; the landscape garden; place, memory, and identity; sacred sites and holy lands; regional, global, and national landscapes; embodiment and the gendering of space; the genius of place; literary and textual space.
Course requirements: 2 oral presentations: one on a place (or representation of a place); the other on a critical or theoretical text. Final paper. Preference to PhD students in ENGL / ARTH / CMST / CMLT.
Instructor(s): W.J.T. Mitchell Terms Offered: Winter
Equivalent Course(s): CMST 69200, ARTH 48900, ENGL 60301
Font Notice

This document should contain certain fonts with restrictive licenses. For this draft, substitutions were made using less legally restrictive fonts. Specifically:

- Times was used instead of Trajan.
- Times was used instead of Palatino.

The editor may contact Leepfrog for a draft with the correct fonts in place.