

# Comparative World Literature

## *Interdisciplinary*

### FOR FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS

Fundamental to the concentration is coursework in two literary traditions. Students may choose to complete coursework in two of the three fields: Classics, English, and/or Modern Languages and Literature. These lower-level courses will satisfy the prerequisites required for advanced coursework in each discipline. First-year and sophomore students can also take the CWL 333 and CWL 220.

### CONCENTRATION REQUIREMENTS

3 Units total are required to complete the Comparative World Literature Concentration.

#### *Core Courses*

Students are required to take 1.5 units of the following three courses:

- CWL 220 Introduction to Comparative Literature - Altered States, Literary Trips
- An intermediate level CWL course
- CWL 48 Senior Seminar

The goal of the senior seminar is to help students identify the approach and methodological tools most suited to their area of specialization. Each student will work on a capstone project that focuses on one of the three approaches of CWL:

- World/Global
- Comparative/Transnational
- Critical/Multidisciplinary

Often, the student will seek a second advisor who will offer additional methodological guidance.

#### Elective

.5 unit. The elective course allows students to continue their exploration of comparative world literature on a more advanced level. These courses emphasize a particular aspect of the field:

- Transnational and Multilingual Comparisons
- Non-Western Literature
- Postcolonial Studies

- Translation Theory
- History and Literature
- Literary Theory
- Literature and the Other Arts
- Film as Text

Consult the [electives page](#) for current course offerings.

**Students must complete one (1) unit of advanced coursework in two of the following:**

#### *Classics*

Any advanced Greek or Latin course in the Department of Classics (normally the 300 level) will count toward the Comparative World Literature concentration.

#### *English*

Any advanced literature course in the Department of English (normally the 300 level) will count toward the Comparative World Literature concentration. Most students must take several lower-level English courses in preparation for this advanced coursework.

#### *Modern Languages and Literature*

Any advanced literature course offered and taught in the language of study in the Department of Modern Languages and Literature (normally above the 321 or 322 level) will count toward the Comparative World Literature concentration. For language disciplines that do not offer advanced literature courses in the target language, such as Arabic, Chinese, Japanese and Russian, students must have completed an advanced-level language course (321 or its equivalent) in order to count a literature course in translation (taught in English) toward the concentration.

#### *Language Study*

Students are expected to work in at least one foreign language at an advanced level.

Demonstration of this competency is satisfied by the completion of the Modern Languages and Literatures requirement detailed below. Study abroad is strongly recommended.

### **Courses**

CWL 215D CRISIS AND REBELLION: MODERNISM, THE AVANT-GARDE, AND EXISTENTIALISM

Credit: 0.5

Continuing the inquiries begun in IPHS 113Y-114Y, this seminar addresses the rise of modernism, which represented a massive fissure in Western consciousness. A fault line visible since Romanticism suddenly fractured and one consequence was that something utterly unique, highly unsettling and profoundly revolutionary occurred: the role of art and the artist leapt into extraordinary prominence. Why in modernism do the issues of "self," "society" and "authority" figure so prominently in the aesthetic domain? What does the signal role of art suggest about the character of modernism itself? How successful has art been as the focal point of questions

regarding authority? Is art's centrality itself a paradoxical response to the issues of complexity, specialization, fragmentation and relativity that inform the modern world? In view of modernism's paradoxes and chief concerns, we will address contending views of art and authority in various disciplines and media, including the visual arts, architecture, philosophy, literature, music, dance and film. Readings will include Baudelaire, Dostoevsky, Nietzsche, Woolf, Kafka, Breton and Sartre. Films will include Triumph of the Will, Rashomon, and Mulholland Drive. If you would like this course to be used as .5 unit of history toward fulfilling diversification requirements in the Social Sciences Division, you must take it as IPHS 215D. Prerequisite: IPHS 113Y-114Y or two semesters of English or philosophy. This course will be offered every other year.

Instructor: Elkins

#### CWL 220 ALTERED STATES, LITERARY TRIPS

Credit: 0.5

This introductory course in comparative world literature will introduce cutting-edge literary studies. Weekly visits from Kenyon faculty present current issues like: translation, film, theory, postcolonial studies, desire in literature, narrative studies, folktales, oral culture, and multilingual and transnational comparison. Crossing boundaries of space and time, readings will be selected from important works in world literature and will center on themes of altered states and travel. Guest visits will take place on Wednesdays. Mondays and Fridays will entail class discussion. This course is taught every fall semester.

Instructor: Elkins

#### CWL 318D POSTMODERNISM AND ITS CRITICS

Credit: 0.5

This course investigates the phenomenon of postmodernism and considers its relation to the modernist era. We will study key definitions and ask: Can postmodernism be defined as a postindustrial capitalistic phenomenon, as an increasing emphasis on language games, as a refusal of grand narratives, or as a shift from epistemological to ontological concerns? We will look at the advent of structuralism and its response to existentialism, as well as poststructuralist critiques. What does postmodern politics look like, and what are the implications of its critique of humanism? Postcolonialism, feminism, gender studies and critical race theory also will be considered for their critique of the Western tradition. We will then examine the reinvigoration of religious discourse. Through our study of postmodern architecture, literature, the visual arts and film, we will explore the nature of dual-coding, the critique of "instrumental" rationality, new representations of the past, identity, time and space, and a new role for the reader/viewer. Finally, we will consider key critics' defense of humanism before asking whether our "information age" demonstrates a clear departure from the tenets of postmodernism.

Prerequisite: IPHS 215 or CWL 215. This course is offered every other year.

Instructor: Elkins

#### CWL 333 READING WORLD LITERATURE

Credit: 0.5

Literature is world literature when it is read for its truly global significance. To read literature as world literature is to discover its diversity. It is to see how fundamental questions inspire very different forms of literary creativity across the globe--to seek intersections across time and space and thereby to appreciate the many ways literary texts represent their cultures. This course explores what it means to read world literature by focusing on a single theme or problem common to many cultures but different for each. For example, the course might focus on the problem of migrations to see how global literary forms have found different ways to represent what happens when people move from place to place. Or the course might focus on the world's different ways of representing coming of age, or how the environment is figured across cultures. The course studies these themes through focus on texts from nations and cultures not routinely featured together in literature classes. At the same time, the course explores the theory of world literature, as well as the reasons to study it, which include broadening our sense of literature's possible forms and uses, appreciating the world's diversity through its literature, and developing one basis for a sense of global citizenship. Offered every other year.

#### CWL 480 SENIOR SEMINAR

Credit: 0.5

The course will provide a setting for guided student advanced work in comparative world literature. Students will work collaboratively to assist one another in the development of individual research projects that represent the synthesis of the courses they have taken in comparative world literature, English, and modern languages and literatures. The course is required of all comparative world literature concentrators.

Instructor: Elkins

#### ADDITIONAL COURSES THAT MEET THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THIS CONCENTRATION:

ENGL 212: Introduction to Literary Theory

ENGL 266: Violence and the Body: Narrative Insurgency

ENGL 317: Poetry and the Visual Arts

ENGL 363: Writing the Global City

ENGL 370: Transnational South Asia

ENGL 412: The Arts of Memory

GERM 387: Rilke, Celan, and Theory

IPHS 318D: Postmodernism and Its Critics

MLL 260: World Cinema

SPAN 385: Cities of Lights and Shadows: Urban Experiences in Latin America

SPAN 388: Literary Translation