

# COMPARATIVE THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

<http://compthoughtlit.jhu.edu/>

The faculty of the Department of Comparative Thought and Literature shares an ongoing commitment to questions at the intersection of literature, philosophy and aesthetics. Central to these concerns is the analysis of literary and philosophical texts, ranging across a set of diverse traditions, genres, and languages, in juxtaposition to ethics, religion, history, art history, anthropology, media studies, political theory, and the natural sciences. Questions of literary theory, the history and value of literature, and the constitution and development of philosophical and literary forms in a global context are similarly at the forefront of the department's research and teaching.

The department's interdisciplinary nature is one of its main strengths and provides crucial common ground for scholars from humanities departments across the university. Faculty members work in a variety of fields but are unified by a common investment in intellectual curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and careful reading and criticism. Graduate students are encouraged to undertake projects addressing authentic philosophical or theoretical problems without the restriction of disciplinary conventions. Students may also cultivate strong ties with faculty in other departments working in their areas of interest.

Every year, the department hosts at least two associates, who are faculty members from other institutions that stay for an extended period to present lectures, give seminars, and interact with faculty and students. Previous and current associates include many distinguished scholars, such as Anita LaFrance Allen, Susan James, Barbara Cassin, David Wellbery, Robert Pippin, Jean-Luc Marion, Eli Friedlander, Sari Nusseibeh, and Toril Moi.

## History

In the mid-20th century, the department, which was then known as the Humanities Center, was established as a meeting ground for the various humanities departments. With Charles Singleton as its first director, the center aimed to strengthen the humanities at Johns Hopkins and provide a place where scholars could engage in theoretical reflections on the human sciences, including recent European movements such as structuralist thought and literary hermeneutics.

The department's first full academic year was 1966–67, and from the outset, its founders sought to establish a focal site for structuralism in the U.S., based on the model of the "sixième section" of the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris or the Institut für Sozialforschung at the University of Frankfurt. The conference held in the fall of its inaugural year, "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man: The Structural Controversy" brought many of the leading figures of European thought together in the U.S. and continues to be cited as both the substantial introduction of structuralist thought into the American academy and an important moment of transition between structuralism and post-structuralism. This model of exchange and innovation continued into the 21st century with a robust program of visiting scholars, professors, and lecturers.

As of January 1, 2018, the name of the Humanities Center has been changed to Department of Comparative Thought and Literature. The new name recognizes the department's ongoing commitment to serious interdisciplinary study, with a focus on questions at the intersection

of literature, philosophy, and aesthetics. It also represents the various literatures, philosophies, religions, political systems, cultures, and methodologies that its faculty studies and applies. A search is currently underway to fill the Boone Chair in the newly named department.

The department offers several courses taught by its faculty. These courses provide a broad introduction to the documents and thought of Western culture for all students, from those interested in a general liberal arts preparation to those in one of the university's pre-professional programs.

For qualified juniors and seniors preparing for graduate school, the department also offers the opportunity to pursue an independent and often interdisciplinary research project through the Honors Program (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/comparative-thought-and-literature/honors-program-humanities/>).

The Department of Comparative Thought and Literature does not offer a departmental major or minor. Students who wish to concentrate on the courses that it offers should consider a major in another humanities department.

## Programs

- Honors Program in the Humanities (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/comparative-thought-and-literature/honors-program-humanities/>)
- Humanistic Studies, PhD (<http://e-catalog.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/comparative-thought-and-literature/humanistic-studies-phd/>)

For current course information and registration go to <https://sis.jhu.edu/classes/>

## Courses

### AS.300.102. Great Minds. 3 Credits.

Introductory survey of foundational texts of modern Western literature and thought. This semester will include works by René Descartes, Max Weber, W. E. B. Du Bois, Virginia Woolf, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Martin Heidegger, Hannah Arendt, Theodor Adorno, Michel Foucault, Cora Diamond, and Stanley Cavell. The course is taught in lectures and seminar discussions led by the course faculty.

Area: Humanities

### AS.300.110. Philosophies of Existence. 3 Credits.

The question about the meaning of existence is as old as philosophy itself. In the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, however, this question received renewed attention due to various modern processes, chief among which was the process of secularization, giving rise to a philosophical movement that has come to be known as existentialism. This course will offer an examination of key themes, concepts, and doctrines that are associated with existentialist thought including: the rejection of the Aristotelian-scholastic distinction between essence and existence; the rejection of the Cartesian notions that "nothingness possesses no attributes or qualities" and that the infinite is prior to the finite; the problem of repetition and the thought experiment of the eternal return; the problems of death and suicide; and the philosophical significance of feelings such as anxiety, boredom, and nausea, and of experiences such as loneliness and despair. Reading will include a selection of texts by Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Shestov, Jaspers, Heidegger, Sartre, Camus, and others.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.114. Emotions: An Interdisciplinary Perspective. 3 Credits.**

What are emotions? Do they have a history? Can they be studied scientifically? The study of emotions is a newly emerging field that does not belong to a single discipline. Exploring this field from an interdisciplinary perspective, we will read texts by psychologists, biologists, philosophers, anthropologists, sociologists, and historians from the nineteenth century to the present, including, among others, Charles Darwin, William James, Lucien Febvre, Martha Nussbaum, and Ruth Leys.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.129. Capitalism and Tragedy: From the Eighteenth Century to Climate Change (Freshman Seminar). 3 Credits.**

In contemporary discussions of climate change, it is an increasingly prevalent view that capitalism will lead to the destruction of civilization as we know it. The notion that capitalism is hostile to what makes human life worth living, however, is one that stretches back at least to the early eighteenth century. In this class, we will examine key moments in the history of this idea in works of literature, philosophy, and politics, from the birth of bourgeois tragedy in the 1720s, through topics such as imperialism and economic exploitation, to the prospects of our ecological future today. Authors to be studied: George Lillo, Balzac, Dickens, Marx and Engels, Ibsen, Weber, Brecht, Arthur Miller, Steinbeck, Pope Francis, and contemporary fiction, politics and philosophy on climate change.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.139. Introduction to Intellectual History. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a conceptual and historical introduction to Intellectual History. What makes the "history of ideas" different from the history of other objects? What, if anything, distinguishes the history of ideas from the history of philosophy? What is it exactly that we call "ideas"? In what sense do they have a history? These are examples of the kind of questions addressed in the course.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.145. Humanities Collaboratory. 3 Credits.**

The Humanities Collaboratory is designed for new researchers from across the humanities as they gain the applied skills and experience to conduct their own independent research projects in the humanities. The Humanities Collaboratory model uses a high-tech classroom to allow students and instructors to work, learn, and research together. Three sections of this course will share a core list of materials focused on humanities research techniques, but your primary course materials will be individually selected. Students will have the unique opportunity to participate in a humanities lab section where all three course sections merge for discussion. You will choose your own topic to research with no limits of time period, subject, or genre, and through constant collaborative and independent research, each student will develop the expertise in that topic to both write a research paper and create a final oral presentation.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.203. Freshman Seminar: How Literature Works: Narrative Imagination from Ancient to Modern Times. 3 Credits.**

Is storytelling part of human nature? Do myths and legends have a universal structure? As a bridge between experience and language, narratives inform the way we understand history, gender, politics, emotion, cognition and much more. This course will explore how narratives are composed, how they are experienced, and eventually, how they evolve throughout history. We will be reading a diverse selection of ancient and modern texts, including selections from Plato and Aristotle, the Odyssey, the Hebrew Bible, as well as 19th-and-20th-century authors such as the Brothers Grimm, Gustave Flaubert, James Joyce and Virginia Woolf. The second part of the course focuses on philosophical and critical approaches to narrative in arts and media, concluding with the evolving concept of narrative in the digital age. Theoretical readings include selections from Karl Marx, Roland Barthes, Jacques Derrida and Judith Butler. All readings will be in English.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.219. Freshman Seminar: Babblers, Mumbler & Howlers:****Languages of Modernist Fiction: Freshman Seminar. 3 Credits.**

Does literature represent reality or create it? Is language just a tool we use to communicate, or is it shaped by our culture, or indeed, is our culture—and even our own experiences—shaped by our language? Modernist writers at the turn of the 20th century grappled with these questions, concerned that literature and in fact language itself was ill-equipped to face the changes occurring at the beginning of a new era of modernity. From symbolist and sound poetry to innovations in stream of consciousness narration and non-syntactic fragmentation, the literature of the time reflected a receding faith in the ability for ordinary spoken language to communicate feeling, meaning, and the authentic self. The task of modernism in turn became the reinvention of a new literary language that could either capture this condition of crisis or seek to overcome it. This course will investigate the various responses and solutions to the crisis of language in Anglo-American and European modernist fiction. Authors to be studied: Virginia Woolf, Andrei Bely, Franz Kafka, Jean Toomer, Filippo Marinetti, Andrei Platonov, Mikhail Bakhtin, Yuri Olesha, et al. All readings will be in English.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.223. Philosophy and Infinity. 3 Credits.**

What is the infinite? Can we comprehend it? Can we experience it? In this course we will explore various ways in which philosophers in the western tradition have answered questions such as these. In the first half of the semester, we will examine theoretical treatments of the infinite that inform how we understand the fabric of our world, from the ordinary objects around us to more sublime concepts of God, space, time, and mathematics. In the second half, we will turn to arguments in aesthetics and ethics that reveal an interplay between infinity and finitude occurring before our very eyes. Philosophers we will cover include Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Russell, Levinas, and Arendt. Throughout, we will ask such fundamental questions as, what is the starting point of philosophy? what is its methodology? what can it achieve in terms of knowledge? and in terms of practice?

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.232. Existentialism. 3 Credits.**

What is existence and why do we care about it? What happens when we think about the nothing? What is the philosophical significance of issues such as commitment, marriage, death, and suicide, or of feelings such as anxiety, boredom, and nausea? We will consider these themes and read a selection of texts dealing with them by some of the most famous thinkers associated with the existentialist tradition, including Pascal, Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Heidegger, Sartre, and Camus.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.237. Freshman Seminar: Tolstoy's War and Peace. 3 Credits.**

Leo Tolstoy's monumental novel *War and Peace*, which the author Henry James called "a loose baggy monster," is a sui generis work of modern literature that offered a response and challenge to the European Realist novel and founded a Russian national myth. We will read the novel in translation, alongside its adaptations into opera, film, and Broadway musical.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.302. Making Modern Poetry. 3 Credits.**

"Making Modern Poetry" will explore the intersection and conversation between literature, art history, and graphic design by examining the rapid global development of poetry, art, and print from 1890 to 1930. We will read canonical modernist poets such as T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound as well as those less familiar, like Mina Loy and César Moro, considering texts comparatively across national borders and through their relations to other arts. All readings will be in English.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.304. Hopkins/Memes/Lost Hopes and Dreams. 3 Credits.**

Find your lost hopes and dreams, through memes. This class is about why we can come to feel lost or disillusioned in the course of our educational journeys and about how we might begin to find our way again. We'll use memes as a window into our everyday experiences at Hopkins and think about how digital platforms like Facebook, Snapchat, and Tinder might be sources of and/or responses to our modern sense of alienation. The course will be discussion-based and shaped by the interests of those in the class.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.307. Dostoevsky and Critical Theory. 3 Credits.**

The tormented, obsessive and sadistic characters of Dostoevsky's novels posed a challenge to positivism and reason too scandalous and compelling to be ignored. The novels inspired some of the most brilliant and influential thinkers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries in the fields of religion, philosophy, psychology and literary theory. We will read three of Dostoevsky's philosophically challenging novels alongside works by these critics and philosophers. While exploring their ideas about faith and unbelief, madness and reason, violence and torture, society and history, we will also inquire into the relationships among literature, philosophy and biography and examine the processes of influence and adaptation.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.309. The Contemporary Philosophical Novel. 3 Credits.**

What can literature offer to philosophical reflection? Can literature address experiences that evade theoretical philosophy? Or, does fictional writing conflict with rigorous philosophical inquiry? The long-standing separation of philosophy and literature begins when Plato bans poetry and tragedy from the ideal city in the *Republic*. This seminar focuses on nineteenth and twentieth century thinkers that challenge the predisposition against literature through different attempts to write the "philosophical novel." In this seminar, we will take seriously the philosophical stakes of literary texts, and investigate how and why literature offers a unique perspective for philosophical reflection. We will read texts by Plato, Fyodor Dostoevsky, Friedrich Nietzsche, Jean-Paul Sartre, Simone de Beauvoir, Albert Camus, Iris Murdoch, and David Foster-Wallace.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.310. Imagining Social Change in TV Series. 3 Credits.**

How can the imagined worlds of television help us critically reflect on the social and political realities of modern life? This class will look at TV series that offer different ways for their viewers to consider the question: What are the possibilities and limits for social change in the twenty-first century? Each week, selections from a TV series will be paired with a reading from philosophy, literary theory, media studies, political science, theology, or another related field that responds to similar themes and concerns. Our seminar will be discussion-based, and the TV series we watch will be determined by the interests of those in the class, but may include: *Atlanta*, *Euphoria*, *The Handmaid's Tale*, *Black Mirror*, *House of Flowers*, *Dear White People*, *The GoodPlace*, and *BoJack Horseman*.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.311. Introduction to Intellectual History. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a conceptual and historical introduction to Intellectual History. What makes the "history of ideas" different from the history of other objects? What, if anything, distinguishes the history of ideas from the history of philosophy? What is it exactly that we call "ideas"? In what sense do they have a history? These are examples of the kind of questions addressed in the course.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.312. Imagining Revolution and Utopia. 3 Credits.**

What form should revolution take, and what should society look like after the revolution? What would happen to the state, family, home, status of women, human interrelations, and everyday life? These questions consumed radicals in 19th century Russia and Europe, and their answers helped to shape the political culture of the 20th century. This course examines theories of revolution and utopia and responses to them in literature, art and film. Primary case study is Russia and the Soviet Union, with a comparative look at influential European works.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.313. Maintaining Social Order: Elements of Conservative Political Philosophy and its Critics. 3 Credits.**

The seminar will discuss (primarily German) political philosophy of a broadly 'conservative' orientation in relation to three key periods of social and political upheaval: the Reformation, the French Revolution, and the crisis of parliamentary democracy in the Weimar Republic. Readings from these periods of European history will be approached under the common heading of 'conservatism' for their shared preoccupation with how traditional sources of social unity are to be replaced following times of dramatic change and conflict. We will explore why different political crises have always led philosophers to reiterate the fundamental question of what binds political communities together. This preoccupation distinguishes the philosophical currents of conservative thought surveyed in this course from other, more familiar conservatisms with purely reactionary agendas that reassert the superiority of a particular religion, culture, or ethnic group, the rule of elites, or the dismantling of the state in favor of free market forces. Each section on conservative thought will conclude with the most relevant critiques from Leftist political opponents. Readings include Hobbes, Burke, de Maistre, Herder, Hegel, Nietzsche, Schmitt, Kant, Marx, Marcuse.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.314. Dreams - From Genesis to Freud. 3 Credits.**

Die Traumdeutung is one of the groundbreaking books of the 20th century. Translated into English as *The Interpretation of Dreams*, this book argues that dreams are both interpretable and meaningful. Unlike the psychiatrists of his days, Freud held that dreams are expressions of the subject and thus positioned himself closer to the ancient conception of dreams than to the views of the positivistic science of his days. He emphasized that dreams represent not so much an objective reality but rather the symbolic manifestation of the truth of the subject's unconscious, a "symptom" of a history.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.315. Philosophical Conceptions of the Infinite. 3 Credits.**

What is the infinite? Can we comprehend it? Can we experience it? In this course we will explore various ways in which philosophers in the western tradition have answered questions such as these. In the first half of the semester, we will examine theoretical treatments of the infinite that inform how we understand the fabric of our world, from the ordinary objects around us to more sublime concepts of God, space, time, and mathematics. In the second half, we will turn to arguments in aesthetics and ethics that reveal an interplay between infinity and finitude occurring before our very eyes. Philosophers we will cover include Descartes, Spinoza, Locke, Kant, Hegel, Russell, Levinas, and Arendt. Throughout, we will ask such fundamental questions as, what is the starting point of philosophy? what is its methodology? what can it achieve in terms of knowledge? and in terms of practice?

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.316. Philosophy and Revolution: Four Case Studies. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a historical and systematic inquiry into the modern idea, most clearly expressed by the young Karl Marx, that revolution should be the realization of philosophy. We will take up four revolutionary moments or four crucial years in four places and study them together with their philosophical influences and / or consequences: the French Revolution of 1789/1792 with Hegel, the Russian/October Revolution of 1917 with Lenin and Georg Lukács, the Iranian Revolution of 1979 with Michel Foucault, the Egyptian Revolution of 2011 with Alain Badiou. Some of the concept with which we will be engaging include freedom, alienation, historical necessity, reification, political spirituality, infinity.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.317. The Russian Novel. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces students to the nineteenth century Russian novel and considers its lasting impact on world culture. We will read classic masterpieces of the psychological and philosophical novel, and their experimental forerunners. Short lectures on historical and cultural context and on methods of literary analysis will be combined with intensive group discussion. Novels include *Anna Karenina*, *Crime and Punishment*, *Eugene Onegin*, *Dead Souls*, and *Hero of our Time*.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.319. The Modernist Novel: Mann, Woolf, and Joyce. 3 Credits.**

In this course, we will survey the major works of three of the greatest, most relentless innovators of the twentieth century – Thomas Mann, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce – who explored and exploded narrative techniques for depicting what Woolf called the "luminous halo" of life.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.320. Lover's Discourse. 3 Credits.**

Much of what we know about love and desire we owe to fiction's ability to evoke these experiences. Consider for example that the publication, in Germany, of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* inspired young men across Europe to dress and behave just like him. We will study in this course a selection of love stories chosen because they break the mold and question their conventions. Taking a critical distance from these tales of seduction, we will examine not only the manifestations and meanings of love, but also the configurations of gender they inspire and reflect. Indeed, just as nowadays film and television represent, as well as mold, our identities as desiring subject, fictions from the eighteenth-century onwards have shaped our current understanding of gendered subjectivities. The readings for this seminar (all available in English) include: Austen, 'Persuasion'; Balzac, 'The Girl with the Golden Eyes' and 'Sarrasine'; Barthes, 'Lover's Discourse'; Goethe, 'The Sorrows of Young Werther'; Mann, 'Death in Venice'; Rousseau, excerpts from 'Julie or The New Heloise'; Sulzer, 'A Perfect Waiter', Winterson, 'Written on the Body'.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.321. Rise of the Modern Short Story. 3 Credits.**

A comparative tour of examples of short stories from three continents that emerged from earlier narrative forms in the 19th and 20th centuries. Attention will be given to new structural, rhetorical, and thematic concerns including the development of new sub-genres, e.g. fictions of detection, case histories, portraits of the artist, and the adaptation of several stories to newer media [at least 2 of the longer narratives translated to film will be screened]. A detailed syllabus of our readings will be available later in the summer; because there is no anthology that quite fits our needs, all the texts or translations, as well as critical and contextual notes will be supplied in digital forms. Note: there will also be an optional hour for questions & discussion TBA.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.323. Shakespeare and Ibsen. 3 Credits.**

William Shakespeare and Henrik Ibsen are the two most frequently performed playwrights in history, and both have been credited with reinventing drama: Shakespeare for the Elizabethan stage and Ibsen for the modern. In this course we will pair together plays by each author – those that stand in an explicit relation of influence as well as those that share a significant set of concerns – in order to investigate how each takes up and transform key problems in the literary, political, and philosophical tradition for their own historical moment. Plays to be studied: by Shakespeare, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Hamlet*, *Othello*, *King Lear*, *The Tempest*, *A Winter's Tale*; by Ibsen, *St. John's Night*, *Hedda Gabler*, *Rosmersholm*, *The Wild Duck*, *The Master Builder*, *When We Dead Awaken*.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.324. Cinema of the 1930s: Communist and Capitalist Fantasies. 3 Credits.**

Comedy and musical comedy film flourished in the USA during the Great Depression as well as in the USSR during the Stalinist Great Terror. This course will compare films of the era in a variety of genres (musical, epic, Western, drama), examining the intersections between politics and aesthetics as well as the lasting implications of the films themselves in light of theoretical works on film as a medium, ethics and gender.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.325. American Madness – History of the Treatment of the Mentally Ill. 3 Credits.**

As mental illnesses became a social issue during the 18th century, community institutions were created in order to handle the needs of individuals with such illnesses collectively. This course will investigate the history of these institutions in the USA from the seemingly quiet, secluded, and peaceful private asylums in country settings, at the beginning of the 19th century, through the notorious crowded public, so-called “psychopathic hospitals” in mid-20th century, to the crisis-services, short-term acute psychiatric units, and out-patient services that followed the “death of the asylum” at the end of the 20th century. The history of the institutional care of the mentally ill in America is also the story of American psychiatry changing attitudes towards these individuals. Reading will include selections from 200 years of writings of asylum superintendents, psychiatrists, patients, and historians of psychiatry such as Foucault, Goffman, Grob, Scull, Lunbeck, Micale, and Mora.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.327. Introduction to Comparative American Cultures: Obama and Philosophy. 3 Credits.**

This course will investigate the philosophical as well as theological, juridical and political, and rhetorical and literary backgrounds that have informed and shaped Barack Obama's writings, speeches, and policy strategies leading up to and during his presidency. While paying minute attention to a few selected controversial debates in domestic and international governance and relations, and while discussing the question of Obama's legacy in and after the upcoming elections, our primary focus will be on understanding the curious blend of Christian realism, influenced by the theologian Reinhold Niebuhr, the tradition of American civic republicanism and pragmatism, and Obama's specific brand of post-Civil Rights, if not necessarily post-racial, politics. All these tenets coalesce in a vision and politics that may well be described as one of 'deep' pragmatism. Attention will be paid to Obama's early appeal to 'simple ideas' and 'small miracles,' each of them yielding the Biblical and sobered injunction of a 'hope against hope.' But extensive consideration of his thought and impact in the assessment of biographers and intellectual historians, legal scholars and political theorists, cultural critics and pundits will add to our attempt to understand and take stock of the Obama phenomenon as well.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.329. Literature of the Everyday. 3 Credits.**

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels explore the nature of work, family, the body, consciousness, and the changing relation between individual and tradition in modernity. We will situate these novels in their social, historical, and literary contexts, and establish a set of terms for the formal study of the novel as a genre (plot, character, setting, narrative, etc).

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.331. The Authoritarian Image: Russian Cinema from Stalin to Putin. 3 Credits.**

Vladimir Putin's charismatic authority has a deep history in Russian culture. We'll investigate that history through cinema, which Lenin called “the most important of the arts.” While Soviet cinema often served as immersive propaganda, directors also found ways to question authority and power. Films to be screened range from Sergei Eisenstein's *Ivan the Terrible* (1944) to the 2013 documentary *Pussy Riot: A Punk Prayer*. This course will combine study of Russian and Soviet culture from the end of World War II to the present with study of film history, style, and technique.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.334. Love and its maladies. 3 Credits.**

Much of what we know about love and desire we owe to fiction's ability to evoke these experiences. Consider for example that the publication, in Germany, of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* inspired young men across Europe to dress and behave just like this lover. Just as nowadays film and television represent, as well as mold our conceptions of love, love-stories from the eighteenth-century onwards have given shape to gendered subjectivities in ways that still matter now. As, intriguingly, illness is a recurrent theme in many modern love stories, we will be prompted to decipher signs and symptoms in the bodies of mind of our protagonists. Why is it that in Western cultures, passion is tightly interwoven with a landscape of pain, suffering, and disease? In studying texts that represent major aspects of a romantic sensibility, we are indeed invited to trace the steps of a history of the body increasingly defined by gender and by medical knowledge. The readings for this class (all available in English) include: Austen, *Persuasion*; Balzac, *The Unknown Masterpiece*; Barthes, *Lover's Discourse*; Goethe; *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Mann, *Death in Venice*; Winterson, *Written on the Body*.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.336. Forms of Moral Community: The Contemporary World Novel. 3 Credits.**

Literary and philosophical imaginations of moral community in the post-WWII period (1950-2001). Texts include: Coetzee, *Disgrace*; McEwan, *Atonement*; Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Ishiguro, *An Artist of the Floating World*; Roy, *The God of Small Things*; Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*; Mistry, *A Fine Balance*; Morrison, *Beloved*; and essays by Levi, Strawson, Adorno, Murdoch, and Beauvoir on the deep uncertainty over moral community after the crisis of World War II. Close attention to novelistic style and narrative will inform our study of the philosophical questions that animate these works. What does it mean to acknowledge another person's humanity? Who are the members of a moral community? Why do we hold one another responsible for our actions? How do fundamental moral emotions such as contempt, humiliation, compassion, gratitude, forgiveness, and regret reveal the limits of a moral community?

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.337. The Tragic Tradition. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a broad survey of tragic drama in the Western tradition, from its origins in ancient Greece to the twentieth century. In weekly lectures and discussion sections, we will study the specific literary features and historical contexts of a range of different works, and trace the continuities and transformations that shape them into a unified tradition. Key questions and themes throughout the semester will include what counts as tragic, the tragedy of social and political conflict, the bearing of tragedy on the meaning and value of life, the antagonistic relation between world and humans, the promises and dangers of tragedy for contemporary culture. Authors to be studied: Sophocles, Euripides, Seneca, Shakespeare, Racine, Goethe, Ibsen, Strindberg, Chekov, Brecht, Pirandello, and Beckett.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.339. Introduction to Comparative Literature. 3 Credits.**

This course offers an introduction to the history, theory, and praxis of comparative literature. We will read texts from some of the founding figures of the discipline and look at the most recent debates in the field, including translation studies, literary theory, and world literature, among others. Particular attention will be given to the methodologies and problems of studying literatures in different linguistic traditions and the relation between literature and other areas of thought and culture, such as philosophy, art history, and psychoanalysis. Case studies in comparative approaches to literature will provide concrete examples to our discussions.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.341. Transwar Japanese and Japanophone Literatures. 3 Credits.**

A survey of Japanese and Japanese-language literatures produced in Japan and its (former) colonies during the "transwar" period, or the several years before and after the end of WWII. This periodization enables us to take into account the shifting boundaries, sovereignties, and identities amid the intensification of Japanese imperialism and in the aftermath of its eventual demise. We aim to pay particular attention to voices marginalized in this political watershed, such as those of Japanese-language writers from colonial Korea and Taiwan, intra-imperial migrants, and radical critics of Japan's "postwar" regime. Underlying our investigation is the question of whether literature can be an agent of justice when politics fails to deliver it. We will introduce secondary readings by Adorno, Arendt, Levinas, Derrida, and Scarry, among others, to help us interrogate this question. All readings are in English.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.342. Imagining Climate Change. 3 Credits.**

Climate change poses an existential threat to human civilization. Yet the attention and concern it receives in ordinary life and culture is nowhere near what science tells us is required. What are the causes of this mismatch between crisis and response? What accounts for our collective inability to imagine and grasp this new reality, and how can it be overcome? In pursuit of these questions, we will look at texts from politics, philosophy, literary theory, and religion that frame climate change as a fundamental challenge not only to humanity but to the humanities: the disciplines and modes of thought that we rely on to make sense of the human condition. The second part of the course will examine works of literature and film for examples of how contemporary artists attempt to make the climate crisis visible and intelligible to us.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.343. The Cinema of Revolution. 3 Credits.**

This course examines global political revolutions through cinema and the ways in which cinema helped to make political revolutions. Early cinema was intimately intertwined with the Russian revolution, and Russian revolutionary cinema had a profound impact on the ways in which media was used for revolutionary purposes through the 20th century and around the world. Students will be introduced to films from a number of different countries, and the history and context of their production and reception. They will also learn methods of film analysis and produce their own video essay.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.344. Literature and the World. 3 Credits.**

This course interrogates how modern literature not simply reflects the world but functions as world-making power. What is a world? How do we conceive of, live in, and change it? What if there are multiple worlds? How are literature and other aesthetic forms crucial to tackling these questions? We will survey literary and philosophical texts in a comparative setting, engaging examples from both Europe and East Asia. All readings are in English. Open to graduate students.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.349. Capitalism and Tragedy: from the 18th Century to Climate Change. 3 Credits.**

In contemporary discussions of climate change, it is an increasingly prevalent view that capitalism will lead to the destruction of civilization as we know it. The notion that capitalism is hostile to what makes human life worth living, however, is one that stretches back at least to the early eighteenth century. In this class, we will examine key moments in the history of this idea in works of literature, philosophy, and politics, from the birth of bourgeois tragedy in the 1720s, through topics such as imperialism and economic exploitation, to the prospects of our ecological future today. Authors to be studied: George Lillo, Balzac, Dickens, Marx and Engels, Ibsen, Weber, Brecht, Arthur Miller, Steinbeck, Pope Francis, and contemporary fiction, politics and philosophy on climate change.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.353. Present Mirth: Stages of Comedy. 3 Credits.**

A comparative survey of presentational comedies from Aristophanes to Beckett on stage and screen, with some attention to to the vexed question of theories of comedy [no laughing matter].

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.357. Forms of Modern Fiction. 3 Credits.**

A comparative tour of modern narrative forms from 3 continents. The emphasis is on the development of shorter fictional models, though some of the founders and innovators are better known for their novels. The emphasis will be on the emergence new structural, rhetorical, and thematic concerns, including adaptation to other media. There will be an optional hour for queries and discussion TBA.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.366. Russian Avant-Garde Cinema. 3 Credits.**

Russian cinema was born out of the intense artistic experimentation of the fin-de-siècle avant-garde and developed in a climate of dramatic political and cultural change in the twenties and thirties. While subject to draconian censorship in the Soviet period, it nonetheless engaged in active dialogue with the film industries of Western Europe and America and had a lasting impact on world cinema. This course examines the extraordinary flourishing of avant-garde cinema in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s including films by Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko, their theoretical writings, and their far-reaching influence on film and film theory. All readings in English, films subtitled in English.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.367. Seeing Like a Woman. 3 Credits.**

What does it mean to “see,” think, desire, feel, speak, act, or write “like a woman”? Gendered notions of seeing have had an impact on politics and society long before the #metoo movement and far beyond debates about women’s rights in isolation. This seminar examines the issues of female desire, subjectivity, spectatorship and performance in fiction, poetry, memoir and film from a variety of cultures and theoretical perspectives. This is not a course on “the image of the woman” in literature, film or politics, but a course in which we examine the ways in which both male and female theorists, novelists, poets, and filmmakers have imagined how women “see,” feel, think and behave.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.372. Dance and the Russian Avant-Garde. 3 Credits.**

This course will explore the relationship between art and dance during the explosion of artistic creativity at the time of the Russian Revolution (1900s-1920s) as well as the influence of the Russian Avant-Garde on modern dance and theories of movement through the 20th century. We will examine how dance both gave physical form to aesthetic, philosophical and political ideas and catalyzed new forms of thinking about the human body and modern spaces. Lecture and discussion of readings and screenings will be paired with a weekly movement workshop in the dance studio that will introduce students to different forms and theories of avant-garde and modernist dance and movement theory. No prior dance experience or knowledge of Russian is required.

Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.300.374. Marxist Theory of Consciousness: Class, Color, Creed, Gender. 3 Credits.**

This course takes up the tripartite problematic of class as social context, ideology as false consciousness, and gender as the perception of sexual difference in modern society through philosophical engagements in Marxist tradition with consciousness. It will primarily treat the formation and validity of the individual’s insight into her society as a whole. Our systematic and historical path runs through Marx, Georg Lukács, Adorno, Rosa Luxemburg, Althusser, Judith Butler.

Area: Humanities, Natural Sciences

**AS.300.389. Freud’s Cases - Source of Psychoanalytic Knowledge. 3 Credits.**

Even though major scientific discoveries have been made from the intensive study of singular cases, modern science is mostly quantitative in its approach. In this course we will follow psychoanalysis’ use of clinical practice as the primary context for the generation of knowledge. We will use two notions from the philosophy of science: “exemplars” (Kuhn) and “personal knowledge” (Polanyi), as we read Freud’s cases in which he combines theoretical consideration and detailed investment in the singularity of the person. In his accounts of the “hysteria” of Dora, the “phobia” of Little Hans, the “obsession” of the Rat Man, the “infantile neurosis” of the Wolf Man and Schreber’s “paranoia,” Freud not only generated theoretical and technical knowledge but also constituted the “single case study” genre of investigation, as the primary source of psychoanalytic knowledge. Readings will include: Freud, Foucault, Polanyi, Kuhn, Hacking, and Forrester. Cross-listed with Film and Media Studies

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.399. Cinema and Philosophy. 3 Credits.**

Do movies have anything to say about philosophical problems? Why is contemporary philosophy so interested in cinema? What are the most productive ways of bringing films and philosophy into conversation?

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.402. What is a Person? Humans, Corporations, Robots, Trees. 3 Credits.**

Knowing who or what counts as a person seems straightforward, until we consider the many kinds of creatures, objects, and artificial beings that have been granted—or demanded or denied—that status. This course investigates recent debates about being a person in literature and law. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Although our explorations will be focused on these questions, the genre of materials examined will be wide-ranging (including legal essays, philosophy, contemporary novels, and film). Texts will include novels by William Gibson and Lydia Millet, essays by John Dewey and Daniel Dennett, and films such as *Ex Machina* and *Her*.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.410. China in Imagination. 3 Credits.**

What is China? This question has gained new relevance amid the nation's recent rise as a global power. We survey how China was imagined, represented, and conceptualized in literature, film, and philosophical writings from mainland China, overseas Chinese communities, East Asia, and the West from the late nineteenth century to the present. Through exploring this complex history, we aim to understand China and the contemporary world in a diversified, historically self-reflective way. Topics of discussion include, but not limited to, representation, identity, form, allegory, exile, diaspora, modernism, translation, world history, and universality. All readings are in English; all films subtitled in English.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.414. Starobinski: The Art of Interpretation. 3 Credits.**

How can we become better readers of the signs and symptoms that texts, as well as minds and bodies, address to us? An eminent figure of European intellectual life, deeply versed in the world of the arts and of medicine, Jean Starobinski will guide us through this inquiry. With his seminal work *Jean-Jacques Rousseau: Transparency and Obstruction* as our focus, we will learn why the ideas of this modern humanist have had such a wide-ranging influence on twentieth-century conceptions of subjectivity, interiority, imagination, and illness (e.g. nostalgia, melancholia, paranoia). We will also learn through his work on Rousseau, why Starobinski's groundbreaking ideas about writing (*l'écriture*) shaped some of the major debates of French theory. This course is taught in English. For graduate students, reading knowledge of French is desirable. Next to *Transparency and Obstruction*, readings involve selections from Starobinski's essays and from Rousseau. No exams, but a short oral presentation and a final essay.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.422. Luther, Philosophy, Politics: 500 Years After the Reformation. 3 Credits.**

As historical legend has it, in 1517 the German monk and then professor of theology Martin Luther inaugurated a revolution in thinking, belief and moral practice, known as the Protestant Reformation by nailing his Ninety-Five Theses, under the title *Disputation on the Power of Indulgences*, to the door of the Castle Church of Wittenberg. Known for his brutal characterization of reason as 'the devil's whore,' his theology of the hidden god, his catechisms, the doctrine of the two realms, and his condemnation of peasants' revolts of his days, Luther's influence has been profound and lasting. We will study some of his most influential theses, treatises, and sermons and will seek to gauge the effect they had on the Western narrative of secularization and modernity, together with their deep influence on post-Reformation and, indeed, recent philosophy and political thought. Readings include: Luther, G.W. F. Hegel, Max Weber, Martin Heidegger, Karl Barth, Erik Peterson, Dietrich Bonhoeffer, Kaj Munk, Ernst Bloch, Philippe Lacoue-Labarthe, Marcel Gauchet, Giorgio Agamben, and others.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.424. Psychoanalysis as a Theory of Thinking. 3 Credits.**

This course will introduce students to the writings of Wilfred Bion, the British psychoanalyst who expanded Sigmund Freud's and Melanie Klein's metapsychology. Bion developed an epistemological theory of thinking, surmising that the mind grows when it is exposed to the truth of one's emotional experience. In his many writings and lectures, Bion developed a sophisticated theoretical model that conceptualizes the transformation of emotional experience into the capacity for thought. While in his early writings he is inspired by life sciences and mathematics, in his later writings Bion shifts away from the scientific view to an aesthetic/mystical vertex, drawing on poets mystics and philosophers, such as Keats, Milton, Shakespeare, Sophocles, Meister Eckhart, St John of the Cross, Plato, Hume and Kant.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.425. Modernities and Comparison. 3 Credits.**

Comparative survey of literary modernities in Europe and East Asia (China, Japan, and Korea). We will study works of modern literature as well as critical and philosophical texts from these civilizations in each other's light. We will, as a working hypothesis, begin our examination by bracketing off the conventional center-periphery (Europe-Asia) scheme and considering literary modernities to be singular and contested, yet mutually resonating attempts at reconstruction, restoration, and revolution vis-à-vis the deconstructive forces of capitalist modernity. Ultimately, we will interrogate how we should understand literary modernities in the plural, as they emerged in distant civilizations. Topics of discussion include decadence, repetition, the trope of the human, ideology, the sublime, ritual, and translation. Readings in Hegel, Nietzsche, Mann, Benjamin, Baudelaire, Proust, Breton, Soseki, Kobayashi, Wang Guowei, Lu Xun, and Yi Kwangsu. All readings are in English.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.429. Literature of the Everyday. 3 Credits.**

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels transform the conventions for the representation of lives of lower and middle class subjects, revealing such lives as capable of prompting reflection upon deep and serious questions of human existence.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive



**AS.300.437. Literature and Philosophy of the Everyday. 3 Credits.**

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Eliot, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels transform the conventions for the representation of lives of lower and middle class subjects, revealing such lives as capable of prompting reflection upon deep and serious questions of human existence. Theoretical and philosophical texts on the everyday by Auerbach, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lefebvre, Certeau, and Wittgenstein will accompany our discussions.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.439. Stories of hysteria. 3 Credits.**

Many are the stories that recount episodes of hysteria, and we owe them not only to medicine. To the modern observer, they are a puzzle, involving strange beliefs about wandering wombs, demonic possession, and female virtue (or lack thereof). Closer to our time, contemporary media, as well as accounts in the social and clinical sciences have evoked cases of "mass hysteria" in America and across the globe. Marriage, it was thought for a long time, might be the best cure, which might be the reason case-studies of this illness can be as intriguing and troubling as novels. Against a backdrop of medical and historical materials, we will examine a selection of stories, from the 17th century onward, that evoke aspects of hysteria. They serve as our case-studies and as prompts to study an illness born at the convergence of histories and myths, of medical science, and of cultural and gender assumptions. Among the notions we will explore: The birth of psychoanalysis, trauma and PTSD, the concept of repression, the visual aspects of an illness and its spread in the arts, including cinema.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.501. Independent Study. 3 Credits.**

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

**AS.300.508. Honors Seminar. 3 Credits.**

The Honors Seminar is a mandatory component of the Honors Program in Humanities, which offers qualified undergraduates the possibility of pursuing an independent research project in their Junior and Senior years in any humanistic discipline or combination of disciplines: intellectual history, comparative literature, philosophy, critical theory, psychoanalysis, religion, film, etc., as well as points of intersection between the arts and the sciences. After one year qualified students may apply for admission to the concurrent BA/MA degree program. Sophomores who plan to study abroad in their Junior year should also consider applying to the Program. In the 2017-2018 academic year, the Seminar will focus on a close reading of Coetzee's *Elizabeth Costello* and associated texts, which will serve as a point of departure for discussion on the relation between different intellectual disciplines and the idea of the humanities.

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service: Registration &gt; Online Forms.

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.601. How to Read Proust?.**

Given the difficulty of his prose, closely and patiently would seem the best way to read Proust, but who has time – time to read a book that, ironically, begins with "Longtemps" and ends with "le temps"? This course will offer for critical examination surgically selected passages of *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu* as a training ground for the (lost?) art of close reading and as entry points into wide-ranging aspects of literary criticism and theory. Open to advanced undergraduates with permission of the instructor. Taught in English. Knowledge of French is desirable, but not required.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.608. The Physics and Metaphysics of Handwriting.**

When word processing machines that can be held in the palm of a hand, why use pen and paper? Handwriting – and its juxtaposition against digital forms of communication – offers a unique approach to studying human interactions and the ways in which meaning, truth, intimacy, and agency are shaped by our changing technologies. At a time of exponential growth in machine writing, a study of this older form of communication enables a comparative approach that, perhaps surprisingly, opens up what are contemporary political questions. Centered on a few case-studies involving works by Sand, Chopin, Manet, Giacometti, Mallarmé, and Proust, this course takes a backward glance at a culture of written expression at a great remove from our word processing world and yet explicitly vested in an aesthetics of free expression. This modern graphological culture saw in the tracings of the hand, the uniquely personal marks of an intertwining of mind, body, and of subjectivity. Merleau-Ponty and recent work on embodiment will provide us with critical tools for our investigations into the "physics" of this activity, as will the methods of textual criticism and the new domain of creativity studies. The "metaphysics" of handwriting call, meanwhile, for a return to Heidegger, to Derrida and other major contemporary theorists of writing. They will help us see how hand and digital writing emerge as fundamentally different modes of human expression – philosophically and politically. Knowledge of French is not required for this course.

Undergraduates accepted with the permission of the professor.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.609. Bildungsroman, Vollendungsroman: Novels of Youth and Old Age.**

This seminar explores the *Vollendungsroman*, or novel of age, as a twentieth- and twenty-first-century counterpart to the late eighteenth- and nineteenth-century *Bildungsroman* that Moretti and others view as the symbolic form of modernity. We will examine how *Vollendungsromane* broach the relation between subjectivity and 'age' (not only in the sense of individual maturity, but also in the sense of historical epoch); how they bring into question traditional conceptions of growth, authority, interiority, body-soul, authenticity, and reconciliation; how they represent alternatives to the modes of moral response and being valorized in the *Bildungsroman*; and how, in and through their very form, they meditate upon the philosophical significance of the classic phase of the novel. Selected novels by Goethe, Austen, Brontë, Joyce, Woolf, Coetzee, Ishiguro, and McEwan. Open to qualified undergraduates.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.614. The End of Art.**

In this course we will examine Hegel's seminal claim that art has come to an end in the modern world. In addition to Hegel's original argument, readings will include important elaborations of the idea by Kierkegaard, Heidegger, and Adorno. In a final section of the course, we will relate these texts to reflections on the function and prospects of art under the unprecedented condition of the Anthropocene.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.618. What is a Person? Humans, Corporations, Robots, Trees..**

Knowing who or what counts as a person seems straightforward, until we consider the many kinds of creatures, objects, and artificial beings that have been granted—or demanded or denied—that status. This course investigates recent debates about being a person in literature and law. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Although our explorations will be focused on these questions, the genre of materials examined will be wide-ranging (including legal essays, philosophy, contemporary novels, and film). Texts will include novels by William Gibson and Lydia Millet, essays by John Dewey and Daniel Dennett, and films such as *Ex Machina* and *Her*.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.620. Cosmopolitanism: Conflicted Legacies, Potential Futures.**

In its modern version cosmopolitanism is a defining aspect of Enlightenment that bespeaks its emancipatory aspirations as well as the shortcomings of its Eurocentric and gendered presuppositions. In our time of resurgence of violent nationalisms and mass refugees crises, this seminar aims at reassessing the conflicted legacies of cosmopolitanism and its critical value for the present. Authors studied include: Montaigne, Kant, Marx, Derrida, Lévinas, Kwame A. Appiah, Seyla Benhabib, and others.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.621. Immersive Poetics and Permeable Screens.**

Victor Shklovsky claimed that the art exists “to return sensation to life, to make us feel objects, to make a stone feel stony.” This seminar examines various ways of understanding Shklovsky’s concept of *ostranenie* (“estrangement”) across media (literature, art, cinema, and beyond) and in comparative perspective, considering the problematics of politics, philosophy, and aesthetic form. Students will be encouraged to present on texts in their own area of expertise over the course of the term.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.625. Russian Literary and Critical Theory.**

Close reading of major authors from the Russian literary theoretical and critical tradition including Bakhtin, Eikhenbaum, Jakobson, Lotman, Shklovsky and Tynianov. Student will present primary sources or case studies from their own fields and research.

**AS.300.627. Graduate Proseminar: Introduction to Methods in Comparative Literature.**

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.629. Theory, Now and Then: Autonomy, Form, Critique.**

This course explores recent developments and disputes in critical theory in relation to their longer philosophical genealogies. The three topics—form, autonomy, and critique—have been the subject of much recent debate, contention, and new analysis, yet each was also a source of critical and philosophical interest in years past. Our aim will be to make sense of today’s interventions in conversation with earlier theory. “Historical” theory writing will include Adorno, Lukács, Cavell, and Jameson; contemporary theory will include Nicholas Brown, Rita Felski, Caroline Levine, Mark McGurl, and Toril Moi.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.638. Happy and Unhappy Words: Austin, Wittgenstein, and Cavell.**

This seminar studies how words help shaping the world we inhabit and how the power and limits of language affect the possibility of living in a shared world in the works of Austin, Wittgenstein, Cavell and others.

Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.639. Literature and Philosophy of the Everyday.**

The ordinary, the common, the everyday: why does literary realism consider the experiences of the average individual to be worthy of serious contemplation? In this course, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Eliot, Zola, Tolstoy, and Woolf from the period between 1850 and 1950 in which the development of realism reaches its climax. These novels transform the conventions for the representation of lives of lower and middle class subjects, revealing such lives as capable of prompting reflection upon deep and serious questions of human existence. Theoretical and philosophical texts on the everyday by Auerbach, Kierkegaard, Heidegger, Sartre, Beauvoir, Lefebvre, Certeau, and Wittgenstein will accompany our discussions.

**AS.300.642. Philosophy and Literature in Kierkegaard's Either/Or.**

Celebrated and reviled alike, Kierkegaard’s 1843 *Either/Or* has been viewed as both the culmination of the Enlightenment project and the birth of existentialism, a playful work of romantic literature and a piece of late-Hegelian philosophy, a vindication of the secular everyday and the articulation of a modern faith in a transcendent God. In this course we read the work closely and in its entirety and pay particular attention to the relation between its philosophical arguments and literary forms of presentation.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.647. Comparative Methods and Theory: Formalism and Materialism.**

This pro-seminar provides a brief overview and map of the theoretical and philosophical positions in the major debate, still ongoing, between formalism and materialism. Its aim is both theoretical and historical: to help graduate students understand the range and depth of these positions as well as their development over time, continuing to this day. We will study fundamental philosophical works (Kant, Hegel, Marx, de Beauvoir), classic theoretical texts (Propp, Lévi-Strauss, Foucault, Derrida), and contemporary variations on these debates (Fish, McGurl, Moi, Allen), to name a few. The course fulfills the pro-seminar requirements in comparative methods and theory for CTL but is open to all graduate students.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.652. Deleuze. Critical Philosophy.**

This seminar analyzes Deleuze’s philosophy in the light of his attempt to renew Kant’s critical and transcendental method and in dialogue with other contemporary conceptions of critiques.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.657. Martin Heidegger, Being and Time: Integral Reading and Current Perspectives, II.**

Starting with a brief overview and recapitulation of themes discussed in its Introduction and Division One, this jointly will focus on Division Two of *Being and Time* and bring phenomenological, hermeneutic, and deconstructive as well as analytic, epistemological, and pragmatist methods and viewpoints to bear upon this modern classic

**AS.300.660. Humanities Thesis Seminar.**

Required thesis seminar for Humanities Center MA students.

Area: Humanities

**AS.300.666. Russian Avant-Garde Cinema.**

Russian cinema was born out of the intense artistic experimentation of the fin-de-siècle avant-garde and developed in a climate of dramatic political and cultural change in the twenties and thirties. While subject to draconian censorship in the Soviet period, it nonetheless engaged in active dialogue with the film industries of Western Europe and America and had a lasting impact on world cinema. This course examines the extraordinary flourishing of avant-garde cinema in the Soviet Union in the 1920s and 30s including films by Eisenstein, Vertov, Pudovkin, and Dovzhenko, their theoretical writings, and their far-reaching influence on film and film theory. All readings in English, films subtitled in English.

Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.800. Independent Study.****AS.300.801. Ind Study-Field Exams.****AS.300.802. Independent Study Field Exam.****AS.300.803. Dissertation Research.****AS.300.804. Dissertation Research.****AS.300.805. Literary Pedagogy.****AS.300.806. Literary Pedagogics.****AS.300.809. In Study Field Exam.****AS.300.810. Thesis Seminar.**

Thesis Seminar.

**Cross Listed Courses****Computer Science****EN.601.769. Events Semantics in Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.**

This course explores selected topics in the nature of event representations from the perspective of cognitive science, computer science, linguistics, and philosophy. These fields have developed a rich array of scientific theories about the representation of events, and how humans make inferences about them – we investigate how (and if) such theories could be applied to current research topics and tasks in computational semantics such as inference from text, automated summarization, veridicality assessment, and so on. In addition to classic articles dealing with formal semantic theories, the course considers available machine-readable corpora, ontologies, and related resources that bear on event structure, such as WordNet, PropBank, FrameNet, etc.. The course is aimed to marry theory with practice: students with either a computational or linguistic background are encouraged to participate. [Applications]

**EN.601.783. Vision as Bayesian Inference. 3 Credits.**

This is an advanced course on computer vision from a probabilistic and machine learning perspective. It covers techniques such as linear and non-linear filtering, geometry, energy function methods, markov random fields, conditional random fields, graphical models, probabilistic grammars, and deep neural networks. These are illustrated on a set of vision problems ranging from image segmentation, semantic segmentation, depth estimation, object recognition, object parsing, scene parsing, action recognition, and text captioning. [Analysis or Applications] Required course background: calculus, linear algebra (AS.110.201 or equiv.), probability and statistics (AS.553.311 or equiv.), and the ability to program in Python and C++. Background in computer vision (EN.601.461/661) and machine learning (EN.601.475) suggested but not required.

**Music****AS.376.371. Introduction to Music Cognition. 3 Credits.**

What underlies our aesthetic response to music? How and why are we able to identify certain sounds as music? To what extent are music and natural language similar? What is it about music that evokes such powerful emotions such as happiness and sadness? What is unique to musical creativity? Examining such questions from cognitive science, neuroscience, psychology, and philosophical perspectives, this course explores relevant research and theory in the emerging domain of music perception and cognition. Students will complete a final research paper on the topic of their choice that integrates the course material.

Area: Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.376.372. Topics in Music Cognition. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the similarities and differences between music and language, the effects of musical training on cognitive development, and the expressive power of music, with an introduction to music and its role in film. We will read relevant research and theory on these topics from cognitive science, neuroscience, psychology, musicology, and philosophical perspectives.

Area: Natural Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Neuroscience****AS.080.320. The Auditory System. 3 Credits.**

This course will cover the neuroanatomy and neurophysiology of the human auditory system from the ear to the brain. Behavioral, electrophysiological, and neuroimaging methods for assessing peripheral and central auditory function will be discussed. Acquired and developmental disorders of auditory function will be reviewed using clinical case studies.

**Prerequisite(s):** AS.080.305 OR AS.080.203 OR AS.050.203 OR

AS.200.141 OR AS.020.312 or instructor permission.

Area: Natural Sciences

**Psychological Brain Sciences****AS.200.313. Models of Mind and Brain. 3 Credits.**

This is a seminar surveying computational approaches to understanding mental and neural processes, including sensory and conceptual representation, categorization, learning and memory. The course will also develop familiarity with computational tools such as numerical simulation, linear transformation and data visualization. Recommended Course Background: AS.110.106 / Calculus I OR AS.110.108 Calculus I, AS.050.101 / Cognition OR AS.200.211 / Sensation & Perception OR AS.080.105 / Introduction to Neuroscience OR other introductory coursework in cognitive & neural sciences. Experience with at least one programming language is strongly recommended.

Area: Quantitative and Mathematical Sciences, Social and Behavioral Sciences