

# COMPARATIVE THOUGHT AND LITERATURE

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

The Department of Comparative Thought and Literature (CTL) comprises scholars and students who share a commitment to philosophical questions as they relate to art, literature, film, history, and public culture.

The Department of Comparative Thought and Literature offers courses in support of the Humanistic Studies PhD and the undergraduate Comparative Thought and Literature minor. The minor is designed for students who wish to examine and practice humanistic thinking in order to tackle complex contemporary problems, which no single civilization or discipline alone can solve. The minor provides a broad introduction to the documents and thought of modern culture for all students, from those interested in a general liberal arts preparation to those in one of the university's pre-professional programs.

Departmental strengths include moral, aesthetic, political, and media philosophy; the relations between literature, philosophy, and law; and the environmental humanities. At the forefront of the department's teaching and research is the question of the history and transformative power of literature, and the comparative analysis of philosophical and literary forms across linguistic and national boundaries.

CTL faculty share an investment in intellectual curiosity, flexibility, open-mindedness, and careful reading and criticism. Graduate and undergraduate students are encouraged to undertake projects addressing authentic philosophical/theoretical problems beyond the constraints of disciplinary conventions.

The bi-monthly Departmental Seminar provides a forum for CTL and other KSAS faculty, as well as CTL doctoral students, to present their work for discussion. In addition, every year CTL hosts at least two faculty members from other institutions, who visit 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, and Sari Nusseibeh.

## 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 was changed to the 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.

## Programs

- Humanistic Studies, PhD (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/comparative-thought-and-literature/humanistic-studies-phd/>)
- Comparative Thought and Literature, Minor (<https://e-catalogue.jhu.edu/arts-sciences/full-time-residential-programs/degree-programs/comparative-thought-and-literature/comparative-thought-literature-minor/>)

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

## Courses

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

This course offers an introductory survey of foundational authors of modern philosophy and moral and political thought whose ideas continue to influence contemporary problems and debates. The course is taught in lectures and seminar discussions. Authors studied include Plato, René Descartes, Immanuel Kant, Karl Marx, Virginia Woolf, Ludwig Wittgenstein, Iris Murdoch, James Baldwin, Cora Diamond, Judith Butler, Kwame A. Appiah and others.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

### AS.300.209. Dilemmas. 3 Credits.

In Justine Triet's *Anatomy of a Fall* (2023), a woman is tried for murdering her husband. In the myth of *Antigone*, a young woman is torn between the obligation to obey the law and the necessity to resist. Which way will she embrace? In Yorgos Lanthimos' *The Killing of a Sacred Deer*, a heart surgeon must sacrifice a member of his family to compensate for mishandling an operation as he was drunk. Is it just to demand a life for a life? Fiction constitutes an inexhaustible source of alternative worlds and experiences that theoretical reasoning fails to address. That is, fictions often present us with dilemmas for which there are no clear answers. And yet, we are asked to choose. In this class, we will explore and analyze a variety of extreme situations. What is so tantalizing about fictional dilemmas? Do they teach us something that can last? Together, we will experiment with a variety of critical reading practices that bring us to grapple with our own position as readers, judges, interpreters, and ethical agents who are forced to make impossible choices for which we are nevertheless accountable.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)

**AS.300.211. Collaboration across the arts: Modernism and beyond. 3 Credits.**

Using Daniel Albright's *Untwisting the Serpent: Modernism in Music, Literature, and Other Arts* (2000) and *Panaesthetics: On the Unity and Diversity of the Arts* (2014) as guides, this class investigates the idea of collaboration and communication across and between the arts from the late nineteenth century to the present. Albright's book includes the famous dictum: "The great Modernist collaborations all survive as fragments." This class examines and, as possible, reassembles and reassesses these fragments. Among other artistic collaborations, topics will include dialogues between Eric Satie, Pablo Picasso, and Jean Cocteau; Virgil Thomson and Gertrude Stein; and John Cage and Merce Cunningham; as well as Richard Wagner's *Gesamtkunstwerk*—"Total work of art"—and its implications for artistic interrelationships from his time to now, including its impact on Serge Diaghilev and the Ballets Russes, among many others.

**AS.300.227. Business Fictions. 3 Credits.**

When you are working for a company, how do you distinguish your ideas, actions, and responsibilities from the firms'—if that is even possible? What is corporate culture or a corporate person, and how is it similar or different from any other kind of culture or person? These and related questions inspired and fascinated writers from the nineteenth century through the present. By reading and thinking about short stories, novels, film, a television series, and a play, we will explore these issues and potential resolutions to them. The course especially considers how problems of action, agency, and responsibility become an intriguing challenge for writers of a variety of modern and contemporary fictions of the business world. Texts will include short stories by Herman Melville, Alice Munro, Ann Petry, and John Cheever; novels by Willa Cather, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Lydia Millet; films, plays, and television by Charlie Chaplin, David Mamet, and Dan Harmon (*Community*).

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.300.229. Lu Xun: Literary, Comparative, Philosophical. 3 Credits.**

Modern China's foremost writer and intellectual Lu Xun (1881–1936) wrote to think, to innovate, to fight, and, ultimately, to transform. What and how did he write as he confronted a radically changing world in early-twentieth-century China, and what can we learn from his works, as we once again face an uncertain world? This course introduces students to fundamental methods of textual analysis by exploring the contemporary significance of Lu Xun's writings—short stories, poems, "miscellaneous essays"—through three distinct approaches: literary, comparative, and philosophical. Our investigation will revolve around questions such as: How did he expand what written language was capable of doing? How did he engage with world literature (from Europe, Russia, and beyond), and how have his works been read and adapted by writers in East Asia? How can his works be understood in a broader context of the global spread of Enlightenment thought and the discontents it caused? This course is open to any student interested in Lu Xun's works and their transnational significance, and satisfies the "text-based" course requirement for the minor in Comparative Thought and Literature. All readings are in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.300.300. 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. Sophomores who plan to study abroad in their Junior year should also consider applying to the Program. In the 2021-2022 academic year, the Seminar will focus on a close reading of Tolstoy's *The Death of Ivan Ilych* and associated texts by Plato, Montaigne, Heidegger, Beauvoir, Levi, Gawande, and others on death and dying.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.307. The Theory of Everything. 3 Credits.**

Most physicists and cosmologists still dream of a final theory for the cosmos, the one-inch mathematical formula that will explain... everything. From atoms to galaxies, from morals to daydreams. Is this possible? Can a single theory account for everything we see? Some physicists, such as Don Lincoln and Steven Weinberg believe so. Others, such as Lisa Randall and Carlo Rovelli are skeptical. In this course we will examine arguments for and against the existence of an all-encompassing theory from the point of view of philosophy and cosmology. We will read from a wide variety of sources, including popular science books, scientific articles, and classical texts in the philosophy of science. We will also trace the intellectual history of the notion of an all-encompassing theory in Western philosophy and in physics.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.313. Myself Through the Years: Women and the Personal Essay. 3 Credits.**

Virginia Woolf famously called the lives of women "infinitely obscure" seeing as their everyday, domestic existence had long passed unnoticed, undervalued, and unrecorded. The personal essay, a form which inherently values the ordinariness and even triviality of subjective experience, has helped counteract the burdensome "accumulation of unrecorded life," to use Woolf's phrase, and fill in the gaps of women's collective history. In this course we will read a diverse range of personal essays by Sei Shonagon, Virginia Woolf, Alice Walker, Anne Carson, Audre Lorde, Naomi Shihab Nye, Annie Dillard, Joan Didion, and more, tracing a tradition of women's essayism. We will attend to the essay's unique and flexible modalities for portraying subjectivity, exploring universal themes, and experimenting with form. This is a writing intensive course that will incorporate critical and essayistic modes of writing that will teach us first-hand about experimentation with voice, temporality, rhetorical argument, narrative, and the representation of consciousness on the page.

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.316. Art and Thought of the Soviet and Post-Soviet Peripheries. 3 Credits.**

his class explores the art, culture, and history of the Soviet and post-Soviet peripheries, meaning the non-Russian republics of the USSR, including, among others, the Baltic countries (Estonia, Latvia, Lithuania), Ukraine, Belarus, the Caucasus (Georgia, Armenia, Azerbaijan), and the diverse countries of Central Asia including Kyrgyzstan and Kazakhstan). We will focus on notable examples from different art forms, including literature (fiction and poetry), music (popular, traditional, and classical), film, and the visual arts, as we investigate questions about identity, power, cultural politics, and coloniality and decoloniality from the early twentieth century up to the present. Representative creators include Oksana Zabuzhko (The Museum of Abandoned Secrets), Dato Turashvili (Flight from the USSR), Chinghiz Aitmatov (The Day Lasts More than a Hundred Years), Rashid Nugmanov (The Needle), Sergei Parajanov (The Color of Pomegranates), Kira Muratova (The Piano Tuner), Valentyn Sylvestrov, Viktor Tsoi, the Ganelin Trio, and Sainkho Namchylak. We will consider how different Soviet and post-Soviet thinkers from representative traditions wrestled with local definitions of "Sovietness" as well as with varied interpretations of the "post-Soviet." The discourse of socialist realism and its bureaucratic and aesthetic negotiations will be a central topic, but so too will divergences from Moscow-centered artistic and philosophical demands

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.300.322. Lu Xun And His Times: China's Long 20th Century And Beyond. 3 Credits.**

The "founding father of modern Chinese literature," Lu Xun (1881-1936) saw himself as a contemporary of writers like Gogol, Ibsen, and Nietzsche in creating his seminal short stories and essays, and likewise, he has been seen by numerous Chinese and Sinophone writers as their contemporary since his lifetime until today. In this course, we will survey Lu Xun's canonical works and their legacies through a comparative approach. What echoes do Lu Xun's works have with the European and Russian texts he engaged with? Why did his works manage to mark a "new origin" of Chinese literature? How were his works repeated, adapted, and appropriated by Chinese and Sinophone writers from the Republican period through the Maoist era to the post-socialist present, even during the Covid-19 pandemic? Are his times obsolete now that China is on the rise? Or, have his times come yet? We will raise these questions to guide our comparative investigation into Lu Xun's works and their legacies in China's long twentieth century and beyond.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

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 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 Updated description: the literary, political, and philosophical tradition for their own historical moment. Plays to be studied by Shakespeare: Hamlet, King Lear, Coriolanus, The Tempest; by Ibsen: Hedda Gabler, The Wild Duck, An Enemy of the People, The Master Builder. As part of the course, we will try to organize at least one excursion to a Shakespeare or Ibsen performance in the Baltimore-D.C. area. This class counts towards the requirement of text-based courses for the minor in comparative thought and literature.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.300.325. Origins of Postwar Japanese and Japanophone Literatures. 3 Credits.**

A survey of post-WWII literatures written in Japanese and/or by writers of Japanese backgrounds from the perspective of their engagement with the memories of war and imperialism. Reading novels, short stories, essays, and poems produced by representative postwar Japanese writers, zainichi Korean writers, and overseas Japanophone writers, we will discuss how their struggles with the contested, politicized, and/or un-historicized memories of suffering from war and imperialism shapes literary forms. These works will be coupled with critical writings on key concepts such as pain, trauma, victimhood, responsibility, nationalism, diaspora, and gender. Readings in Hayashi Fumiko, Abe Kobo, Mishima Yukio, Oe Kenzaburo, Murakami Haruki, Lee Yangji, Yu Miri, John Okada, and Kazuo Ishiguro, among others. This course also serves as an introduction to postwar Japanese literature and culture. All readings are in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.328. Contemporary Sinophone Literature and Film. 3 Credits.**

A survey of contemporary literature and film from the peripheries of the Chinese-speaking world, with a special focus on Hong Kong, Taiwan, and overseas Chinese communities in Southeast Asia, the Americas, and Europe. We will not only examine literary and filmic works in the contexts of the multilayered histories and contested politics of these locations, but will also reexamine, in light of those works, critical concepts in literary and cultural studies including, but not limited to, form, ideology, hegemony, identity, history, agency, translation, and (post)colonialism. All readings are in English; all films subtitled in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.330. Modern East Asian Literatures Across Boundaries. 3 Credits.**

Modern literature in East Asia is as much defined by creation of national boundaries as by their transgressions, negotiations, and reimaginings. This course examines literature originally written in Chinese, Japanese, and Korean in light of contemporary understandings of political, social, and cultural boundary demarcation and crossings. How do experiences of border-crossing create and/or alter literary forms? How, in turn, does literature inscribe, displace, and/or dismantle boundaries? Our readings will include, but not limited to, writings by intra- and trans-regional travelers, exiles, migrants, and settlers; stories from and on contested borderlands and islands (e.g. Manchuria, Okinawa, Jeju); and works and translations by bilingual authors. All readings are provided in English translation.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.334. From Catharsis to Pathosformel: Forms of Affect in Art and Life. 3 Credits.**

Catharsis isn't solipsistic. Its power requires an eccentric stimulus, be it Antigone's tragic fate or a cascade of sounds in a Baroque concerto. Occasionally, the experience of catharsis occurs in everyday life, where it is dimmed, while in art it is fulgurant. The course will analyze catharsis in response to selected literary, visual, and musical representation from Aristotle to the present. We will also consider ironic catharsis, anti-catharsis, and the catharsis of comedy. Selected readings: Clarice Lispector, *The Hour of the Star*; Lev Vygotsky, *The Psychology of Art*; Stanislaw Lem, *Tales of Pirx the Pilot*; J. L. Austin, *How to Do Things with Words*; Sianne Ngai, *Ugly Feelings*; Aby Warburg on Pathosformeln.

Theater, film, music, art: Jacques Tati, *Mr. Hulot's Holiday*; Janusz Glowacki, *Antigone in New York*; Albrecht Dürer's *Death of Orpheus*; Gustav Mahler, *Second Symphony*; Iwo Arabiski, selected paintings.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

**AS.300.335. Contemporary Opera and Literature: Identity, Society, Politics. 3 Credits.**

Composer Matthew Aucoin has recently called opera "the impossible art." Its impossibility feels particularly acute today, as it is buffeted by competing media, genres, and attention. Yet since 2000, opera has never seemed as vibrant, with composers new and old continuing to engage with its "generative impossibilities," using a variety of literary genres as their sources. This class considers central opera examples from the past twenty years, looking at compositions by such creators as Thomas Adès, Unsuk Chin, Missy Mazzoli, Terence Blanchard, and György Kurtág, among others. These composers and their performers and critics engage with a variety of literary genres including novels, short stories, memoirs, and plays, as well as different media, chief among them film. They address opera's tangled history and its possible roles in our contemporary world, asking questions about race, class, ideology, the environment, politics, and identity. This class will do the same, asking what opera today is capable of doing that other genres (musical and otherwise) cannot. How can—and does—opera speak to the present moment? The class will spend time developing a theoretical and practical vocabulary for considering both literary texts and how best to listen to, watch, and analyze opera. No musical background is required.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

**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. 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?

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**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 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, de la Barca, Racine, Goethe, Strindberg, Lorca, and Beckett.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)



**AS.300.338. Saharan Imaginations. 3 Credits.**

Deserts have always mesmerized and fascinated people from different cultures and backgrounds. These arid lands, which are principally known for the scarcity of water resources, excessive heat, and dusty winds, have attracted romantics, dreamers, mystics, spies, ethnographers, explorers, and fearless adventurers as well as social outcasts and brigands. Students in the course will engage with different literary works that are emplotted in different deserts. Drawing on the tension between Saharanism, which we simply define as a universalizing imaginary of deserts, and ecological care (ecocare), whereby is meant the intimate relationship between people and place, the course will allow students to engage in multifaceted analyses of the representations of the desert in scholarship, literature, and cinema. In addition to subverting all sorts of romantic, colonialist, and adventurist approaches to deserts, the students will emerge from the course understanding that desertic spaces are home to myriad forms of mobility, solidarity, and connectivity. Literature depicts people as they go about their quotidian life, producing artifacts, exchanging material and immaterial goods, and forming relationships, thus debunking Saharanism myths of emptiness, death, and danger that have overtaken the image of deserts in popular imagination. Accordingly, by excluding the false assumption of the desert's death, the course will allow students to think about the environmental and humanistic ethics of nuclear experiments, policing, and extraction that unfold in deserts across the globe.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**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 peace and justice when politics fails to deliver it. We will introduce secondary readings by Adorno, Arendt, Moi, Nancy, and Scarry, among others, to help us interrogate this question. All readings are in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.345. Narrative Imagination in Philosophy and Literature. 3 Credits.**

We are constantly immersed in narratives or, as Roland Barthes said, narrative "is simply there like life itself. . . international, transhistorical, transcultural." As a bridge between experience and language, narrative informs the way we understand history, gender, politics, emotion, cognition and much more. Through reading a series of philosophical and literary texts, this course will provide a systematic understanding of how narratives are composed, how they are experienced, and eventually, how they evolve. The first part of this course will focus on building a foundation in the formal study of narrative, focusing on elements such as genre, plot, character, narrator and reader. We will start with a brief consideration of ancient approaches to literary narrative in Aristotle's Poetics and Plato's Republic. From there, we will engage with a wide range of readings in narrative theory. The second part of the course will focus on critical approaches to narrative, such as gender and narrative, social and political critique of narrative, narratives in the age of artificial intelligence, and conclude with the evolving concept of narrative in the Anthropocene.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.348. Modern Drama. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a survey of modern drama, from the mid nineteenth century to the present. We will sample a broad range of dramatic styles and movements in order to uncover the variety of ways theatre has made sense of the human experience over the past two hundred years.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**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 gender, imperialism, and economic exploitation, to the prospects of our ecological future today. Authors to be studied will include: Lillo, Balzac, Marx and Engels, Ibsen, Brecht, Heidegger, Achebe, and current politics, philosophy, theology and film on climate change.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.300.351. The Concept of Time. 3 Credits.**

The purpose of this course is to ask the most important questions concerning the concept of time. What is time? Does time exist? Is it a fundamental aspect of the cosmos or just an illusion of human perception? Do different cultures, historical periods, or individuals have unique conceptions of time? Or are there universal aspects of time that transcend our differences? Do animals perceive time or is the perception of time a uniquely human phenomenon? Is time travel possible? The history of philosophy, both Western and Eastern, provides an array of different answers to these and other fundamental questions related to time. Additionally, there is much contemporary research on the concept that is entirely original. In the past four decades, time has been a major interdisciplinary theme, often bringing together humanists and scientists fascinated by its paradoxes. The guiding concern of this course will be to diagnose those aspects of time that are most relevant to us. What can we add to what has been written about time? Does our unique place in time—post COVID-19 pandemic, on the verge of a possible Third World War—prepare us in any specific way to examine the concept? The syllabus for the course will juxtapose canonical philosophical texts by some of the greatest thinkers of time with contemporary writings about time. The readings will support a problem-centered approach, exploring different possibilities for understanding the concept of time and different possible solutions for its many difficulties.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.353. Ibsen, Strindberg, Beckett, Brecht. 3 Credits.**

This course examines the revolutions produced by four of the most innovative and influential figures in modern drama: Henrik Ibsen, August Strindberg, Bertolt Brecht, and Samuel Beckett. We will look in detail at specific plays and literary programs in order to trace the transformation drama underwent during this period and to probe the claims and ambitions of modern art.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

**AS.300.355. Literature and the Idea of Nature. 3 Credits.**

This course traces the changing idea of nature and our relation to it. We will study this topic through the close attention to a variety of exemplary literary texts from a range of different historical situations. These include drama, poetry, novels, and essays, as well as topics such as renaissance pastorals, the dream of dominating our environment through mechanical reason, the idealization of nature in romantic poetry, and contemporary confrontations with our planet's sixth mass extinction, climate change, and problems of environmental justice. We will read texts by Tasso, Shakespeare, Defoe, Hölderlin, Leopardi, Mary Shelley, Thoreau, Hemingway, Carson, Albee, as well as writings in current ecological humanities.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.300.372. Children's Literature and the Self: From Fairy Tales to Science-Fiction. 3 Credits.**

It was more or less like this. They said: You know, Hela, you're an anxious human being. She: I'm a human being? - Why, of course. You're not a puppy. - She pondered. After a long pause, surprised: I'm a human being. I'm Hela. I'm a girl. I'm Polish. I'm mommy's little daughter, I'm from Warsaw.... What a lot of things I am! (Janusz Korczak, *Ghetto Diary*) This course isn't what you expect. It is not easy. It is not even fun. We will tackle painful topics: orphanhood, loneliness, jealousy, death. You will learn that "Snow White expresses, more perfectly than any other fairy-tale, the idea of melancholy." (Theodor Adorno) We will also deal with parenthood, childhood, justice, and love. We will not watch any Disney films (but we shall analyze some memes). So who is a child? "Children are not people of tomorrow; they are people today," wrote in 1919 Janusz Korczak, pediatrician, pedagogue, and children's author who proposed the idea of inalienable Children's Rights. We will read folk tales from different cultures, discuss authorial fairy tales (Oscar Wilde), fantasy books (Tove Jansson's *Moomintrolls*) and science-fiction (Stanislaw Lem's *Fables for Robots*). We will also investigate the special connection between children and animals (Juan Ramón Jiménez, Margaret Wise Brown). Many iconic children's literature characters, such as J.M. Barrie's Peter Pan, "a Betwixt-and-Between" with a Thrush's Nest for a home, St.-Exupéry's Little Prince, and Astrid Lindgren's Pippi Longstocking, are outsiders. All along we will consider how children's literature reflects and shapes ideas of selfhood, from archetypal to post-humanistic ones.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

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

What do films and philosophy have in common? Do films express, with their own means, philosophical problems that are relevant to our experience of ourselves and the world we live in? This term we will study such issues with a particular focus on questions of justice, truth, revenge, forgiveness, hope, hate, and fear.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who are enrolled in or have completed AS.300.699 are not eligible to take AS.300.399.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.400. Anti-nostalgia in Literature and Film. 3 Credits.**

I looked for home elsewhere, and was confident of finding none which I should relish less than the one which I was leaving. Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* Caught between Paradise Lost and the Promised Land, between a yearning for utopia and the menace of dystopia, humans seem prone to nostalgia. Originally defined as a disease, nostalgia in literature has functioned both in space and in time. If Romanticism codified certain forms of literary nostalgia, it only follows that anti-nostalgia comes later, maturing in modern exilic and science-fiction works. Both notions lose their *raison d'être* without the concept of home, be it a place, a temporal home of childhood, or a future home. In the seminar we will analyze modern expressions of anti-nostalgia, from Stendhal's revulsion towards his hometown of Grenoble, through various accounts of precluded return, to a poisoned, mangled return. Disappointment, disillusionment, even horror accompany anti-nostalgia. Shock and trauma pervert a sense of belonging into disgust and fear. While nostalgia is lyrical, anti-nostalgia can be violent and bitter or passive and indifferent. We will study works of prose (Stendhal, Kafka, Bunin, Lem, Lispector, Márai, Bobowski) and poetry (Szymborska, Grynberg) as well as film (Nadav Lapid, Pawel Lozinski). Our secondary sources will include Jean Starobinski, Vladimir Jankélévitch, Jean Baudrillard, and Jora Vaso.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.401. Comparative Late- and Post-Cold War Cultures in China, the USSR, and Beyond. 3 Credits.**

This course invites students to explore culture in the late and post-Cold War world from a broader perspective by surveying literature, thought, cinema, art, and music in Chinese and Soviet societies from the 1980s to the present. How did Chinese and Soviet intellectuals reconfigure, reform, and/or reinvent their cultures as they re-embraced the ideas of freedom, democracy, and globalization? How did they grapple with the legacies of their socialist and even pre-socialist pasts as they entered new eras of reforms? How did reform movements adopt different forms and strategies in different parts of the USSR and in the Sinophone world? What kinds of negotiations took place between various centers and peripheries within and around these regions? What can we learn from their cultural endeavors about the promises, contradictions, and discontents of the post-Cold War world, as we witness the rise of a so-called "new cold war" today? In this co-taught course, specialists in Sinophone and Soviet cultures will guide students to read and discuss representative works from the 1980s onward from a comparative perspective. Readings include Cui Jian, Yu Hua, Can Xue, Mo Yan, Yan Lianke, Guo Songfen, and the film *Hibiscus Town*, as well as Viktor Tsoi, Komar and Melamid, Aka Morchiladze, Oksana Zabuzhko, Serhiy Zhadan, and the film *Repentance*. No prerequisites. All course materials will be provided in English translation or with English subtitles.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

**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 explores recent debates on being a person in culture, law, and philosophy. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Materials examined will be wide-ranging, including essays, philosophy, novels, science fiction, television, film. No special background is required.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.300.405. Illness across Cultures: The Ethics of Pain in Literature and Film. 3 Credits.**

Although fundamentally grounded in human existence, illness, pain, and suffering are also cultural experiences that have been depicted in literature and film. The way different cultures relate to and convey pain is embedded in the cosmogonic ideas each society holds about suffering and its outcomes. Reading through different literary texts from different parts of the world and drawing on movies that portray varied experiences of illness, this course aims to help students think about illness and its ramifications in a more transcultural way in order to understand how illness functions across different geographic, climatic, political, and social conditions. The students will also gain a better understanding of the causes of pain, its symptoms, and the different manners in which the authors and filmmakers whose works we will study mediate it to their readers and viewers. From basic traditional potions to hyper-modern medical technologies, illness also mobilizes different types of science across cultures and social classes. By the end of the course, students will develop an ethics of reading for illness not as a monolithic condition but rather as an experience that has unique cultural codes and mechanisms that need to be known to better understand it and probably treat it.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.300.409. Modernist Animacies and the Politics of Wonder. 3 Credits.**

From dancing skeletons and Mickey Mouse to nuclear-powered robots and Fritz the Cat, modernist visual culture is replete with iconic images of animated existence. This course surveys these diverse forms of "animatedness" emerging within the interconnected histories of special effects film and animated media, focusing on their entanglement with broader modernist practices, movements, and styles between the 1920s and the 1970s. Students will explore the shared origins of animation and special effects in the frame-by-frame manipulations of early trick film, the hopes and fears attached to machine aesthetics in German expressionism, French surrealism, and Soviet avant-garde cinema of the 1920s, and the ambivalent agency expressed by animated bodies in American and Japanese cartoons of the 1920s-40s. They will then assess the continuities and ruptures in the aesthetic and political commitments of interwar and postwar modernisms through case studies from North American, Central and Eastern European, and Japanese animation. By engaging with the diverse forms of "animatedness" and animated media presented in this course, students will develop critical theoretical, historical, and comparative frameworks for navigating the complex entanglements of organic life, emotional states, and machine technologies that increasingly define contemporary existence.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students may not have taken the AS.300.321 version of this course.

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)

**AS.300.412. Indigenous Ecologies: Thinking with Indigenous Worldviews. 3 Credits.**

There are almost 500 million Indigenous people in the world. They speak a variety of languages, produce knowledge in their mother tongues, and have deep connections to their lands and cultures. Indigenous people have been at the helm of a Global Indigeneity Movement that has mobilized both scholarship and activism in search of a better world. Despite their best efforts, the rich indigenous cultural production and their worldviews remain confined to very limited circles. Building on the notion of "indigenous ecologies," which spans a wide range of approaches and fields, this course will interrogate some of the salient questions related to literature, translation, extraction, environmentalism, and social justice from the perspective of Indigenous creators. The students will engage with materials produced by Indigenous thinkers, filmmakers, activists, and academic scholars to gain a deeper understanding of indigeneity across cultures and continents as well as the myriad critical ways in which its proponents approach knowledge production, climate change, and many other pressing questions.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.418. The Modernist Novel: James, 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 – Henry James, Virginia Woolf, and James Joyce – who explored and exploded narrative techniques for depicting what Woolf called the "luminous halo" of life.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.421. Introduction to Concepts and Problems of Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Critical Theory. 3 Credits.**

This seminar aims at providing a survey of some fundamental concepts and problems that shape modern and contemporary debates in philosophy, literary studies, and the humanities at large. This term we will study different notions of existence, language, truth, power, otherness, race, gender, and reality. This course serves as the proseminar in methods and theory for graduate students in Comparative Thought and Literature but is open to students in all departments.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.429. Literature of the Everyday: The Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel. 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 closely read 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.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have taken AS.001.116 are not eligible to take AS.300.429.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1)

**AS.300.501. Independent Study. 1 - 3 Credits.**

Undergraduate student having directed work with a specific faculty.

**Prerequisite(s):** You must request Independent Academic Work using the Independent Academic Work form found in Student Self-Service:

Registration, Online Forms.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

**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. Sophomores who plan to study abroad in their Junior year should also consider applying to the Program. In the 2024-2025 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, Online Forms.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.603. Emerson, Baldwin, Cavell and the Unfinished Promise of America: Then and Now. 3 Credits.**

At a time when racial, economic, social, cultural, religious, and political divides seem more irreconcilable than ever, the very fabric of democracy shows its vulnerability in the United States as well as at the global scale. This seminar aims to study how different thinkers, in different historical periods, addressed the challenges, betrayals, and fragile hope of the American Dream and how their voices resonate with contemporary authors and problems inside and outside the United States.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.604. Cicero and Deleuze. 3 Credits.**

A comparative study of the philosophy, rhetoric, and naturalism of Marcus Tullius Cicero (Rome, 106–43 BCE) and Gilles Deleuze (1925–1995). Texts include Cicero's *On Fate* and *On Divination* and Deleuze and Guattari's *A Thousand Plateaus*. The seminar will explore themes pertaining to the environmental humanities and eco-criticism, semiotics, materialisms, stoicism, and the practice of cross- and trans-historical comparison and invention.

**AS.300.605. Late Heidegger. 3 Credits.**

This course will consist of a close reading of the eleven texts collected in Heidegger's 1954 volume *"Vorträge und Aufsätze,"* including such seminal pieces as "The Question Concerning Technology," "What is Called Thinking?," "Building, Dwelling, Thinking," "... poetically man dwells..." and "Aletheia." Discussions in English; reading knowledge of German required.



**AS.300.609. Old/New Questions: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Scholarship in the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

The academic profession is becoming increasingly interdisciplinary. However, in many cases, graduate training has yet to fully adapt to this shift. Beyond the changing nature of knowledge production, which now requires scholars to engage with fields of expertise that might not have been necessary in the past, institutions—especially liberal arts colleges—are seeking candidates who can work across disciplines to fill gaps in their curricula and foster collaborative scholarly synergies with colleagues in other fields. Moreover, academia is shaped by both continuities and interruptions, and interdisciplinary scholarship, with its venture-friendly approaches, offers a way for students to revisit old questions and explore new ones by endeavoring to explore uncharted paths. Hence, students in the humanities will benefit from both the opportunities and the challenges that come with engagement with interdisciplinary critical approaches. This year-long seminar draws on the experience of a broad pool of interdisciplinary scholars at Johns Hopkins University. It seeks to introduce students to a variety of conceptual, epistemic, experiential, experimental, and methodological approaches that JHU faculty members have used to produce interdisciplinary knowledge. Students will have the opportunity to hear directly from these faculty members, read their work, and discuss the processes and methodological choices they made—or chose not to make—in their interdisciplinary work. By revisiting old questions and raising new ones from an interdisciplinary perspective, this seminar will help incoming graduate students in the humanities develop a deeper appreciation for interdisciplinary scholarship and gain insight into the professional opportunities that can arise from proactively embracing approaches that span multiple disciplines. The students will also have opportunities to collaborate with each other throughout the year.

**AS.300.611. Schopenhauer's 'The World as Will and Representation'. 3 Credits.**

A close reading of Schopenhauer's magnum opus, one of the most influential works of philosophy in 19th- and 20th-century literature and art.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.613. Modern Drama. 3 Credits.**

This course offers a survey of modern drama, from the mid nineteenth century to the present. We will sample a broad range of dramatic styles and movements in order to uncover the variety of ways theatre has made sense of the human experience over the past two hundred years.

**AS.300.617. Philosophy and Literature in Either/Or. 3 Credits.**

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.

**AS.300.618. 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 explores recent debates on being a person in culture, law, and philosophy. Questions examined will include: Should trees have standing? Can corporations have religious beliefs? Could a robot sign a contract? Materials examined will be wide-ranging, including essays, philosophy, novels, science fiction, television, film. No special background is required. Distribution Area: Humanities  
Writing Intensive

**AS.300.623. Modern American Poetry: Engaging Forms. 3 Credits.**

A dive into the poetry of Wallace Stevens, Gertrude Stein, Marianne Moore, Muriel Rukeyser, and Langston Hughes (among a few others), exploring American modernism's aesthetic and philosophical preoccupations. How do these texts' formal ambitions engage with philosophical thinking as well as social concerns and political theorizing? Writing assignments: two short presentation papers and either two 10-12 pages papers or one, multi-drafted, 20-25-page seminar paper.

**AS.300.628. Introduction to Concepts and Problems of Modern Philosophy, Aesthetics, and Critical Theory. 3 Credits.**

This seminar aims at providing a survey of some fundamental concepts and problems that shape modern and contemporary debates in philosophy, literary studies, and the humanities at large. This term we will study different notions of existence, language, truth, power, otherness, race, gender, and reality. This course serves as the proseminar in methods and theory for graduate students in Comparative Thought and Literature but is open to students in all departments.

**AS.300.629. Theory, Now and Then: Autonomy, Form, Critique. 3 Credits.**

This course explores recent developments and disputes in critical theory in relation to their longer philosophical genealogies. The three topics—autonomy, form, 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 exciting and controversial interventions in conversation with earlier theory. "Historical" theory writing will include Poe, Adorno, Benjamin, Lukács, Cavell, R. Williams, Shklovsky, and Jameson; contemporary theory will include Stephen Best, Barbara Fields, Sharon Marcus, Walter Benn Michaels, Sianne Ngai, Nicholas Brown, Rita Felski, Caroline Levine, Mark McGurl, and Toril Moi.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.631. On Literature and Ethics. 3 Credits.**

Arguments for the immorality of literature, the morality of literature, and the amorality of literature. Can a literary text be evaluated on ethical grounds, and how? How do literary texts make ethical arguments? What does it mean to read literary texts or do literary criticism in an ethical mode? We will be concerned throughout with the philosophical uses, and abuses, of literary forms.

Writing Intensive

**AS.300.633. Departmental Seminar. 1 Credit.**

Presentations by faculty, students, and invited speakers.

**AS.300.634. Contemporary Opera and Literature: Identity, Society, Politics. 3 Credits.**

Composer Matthew Aucoin has recently called opera “the impossible art.” Its impossibility feels particularly acute today, as it is buffeted by competing media, genres, and attention. Yet since 2000, opera has never seemed as vibrant, with composers new and old continuing to engage with its “generative impossibilities,” using a variety of literary genres as their sources. This class considers central opera examples from the past twenty years, looking at compositions by such creators as Thomas Adès, Unsuk Chin, Missy Mazzoli, Terence Blanchard, and György Kurtág, among others. These composers and their performers and critics engage with a variety of literary genres including novels, short stories, memoirs, and plays, as well as different media, chief among them film. They address opera’s tangled history and its possible roles in our contemporary world, asking questions about race, class, ideology, the environment, politics, and identity. This class will do the same, asking what opera today is capable of doing that other genres (musical and otherwise) cannot. How can—and does—opera speak to the present moment? The class will spend time developing a theoretical and practical vocabulary for considering both literary texts and how best to listen to, watch, and analyze opera. No musical background is required.

**AS.300.635. Foucault’s Late Seminars: the Courage of Truth and the Care of the Self. 3 Credits.**

In his latest seminars Foucault shifts his attention from power relations and historical scientific paradigms to the study of the history and philosophical, ethical, and political implications of the knowledge and care of the self as well as its relation to truth. In our current context, where speaking of a supposed “post-truth” epoch is commonplace, the analysis of the later works of Foucault provides precious insights in the nature of subjectivity, social and power relations, and the enduring significance of the search for truth regardless of any particular epistemological attempt to define what ‘truth really is.’

**AS.300.636. Forms of Moral Community: The Contemporary World Novel. 3 Credits.**

Literary and philosophical imaginations of moral community in the post-WWII period. 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?

**AS.300.647. Comparative Methods and Theory: Formalism and Materialism (Graduate Pro-Seminar). 3 Credits.**

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, Bourdieu), and contemporary variations on these debates (Fish, McGurl, Moi, Pippin), 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.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.300.802. Independent Study Field Exam. 3 - 9 Credits.**

Graduate student having directed work with a specific faculty.

**AS.300.803. Dissertation Research. 10 - 20 Credits.**

Dissertation research and discussion of progress. Limited to students writing dissertations.

**AS.300.804. Dissertation Research. 10 - 20 Credits.****AS.300.805. Literary Pedagogy. 3 - 9 Credits.**

Teaching Assistant graduate student

**AS.300.810. Directed Readings. 3 Credits.**

Directed Readings

**AS.300.812. Graduate Research. 3 - 9 Credits.**

Graduate Research

**AS.300.813. Teaching Assistantship. 3 Credits.**

Teaching assistants are required to register for this course. See handbook for details.

**AS.300.891. Summer Research. 9 Credits.**

Summer Research

**Cross Listed Courses****Anthropology****AS.070.607. Schelling and Anthropology. 3 Credits.**

The 18th century German philosopher Schelling has been hugely influential on 20th century thought (Freud, Heidegger, Nancy, Zizek, Pierce) but remains unknown outside of philosophical circles. This neglect is unfortunate given that he has so much to offer anthropological inquiries into the relations between mind and matter, nature and culture, theology and mythology among other topics. This course places Schelling’s writings and commentaries on his work alongside anthropological texts and figures to explore lines of productive conversation. The theme of a romanticism appropriate to our present will be consistently explored throughout the course.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences  
Writing Intensive

## Classics

### **AS.040.121. Ancient Greek Mythology: Art, Narratives, and Modern Mythmaking. 3 Credits.**

This course focuses on major and often intricate myths and mythical patterns of thought as they are reflected in compelling ancient visual and textual narratives. Being one of the greatest treasure troves of the ancient world, these myths will further be considered in light of their rich reception in the medieval and modern world (including their reception in the modern fields of anthropology and philosophy).

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

### **AS.040.126. Religion, Music and Society in Ancient Greece. 3 Credits.**

Emphasis on ancient Greek ritual, music, religion, and society; and on cultural institutions such as symposia (drinking parties) and festivals.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

### **AS.040.615. Ovid's Metamorphoses. 3 Credits.**

A study of the Roman poet Ovid's timeless tale of change, explored in relationship to the philosophical Daoism of Zhuangzi and to recent critical and philosophical concepts such as becoming, transformation, autopoiesis.

## Critical Study of Racism, Immigration, & Colonialism

### **AS.305.135. The Future of Work: AI, Labor, and Migration. 3 Credits.**

How is the so-called "AI Revolution" altering the landscape of work? This course takes up this question through the lens of underemployment, migratory labor, and diasporic communities. We will read a variety of key works on migration and imagined communities, precarity and alienation, labor, automation, and empire—as well as texts produced in the margins of globalization. In conversation with these texts, we will investigate the dynamics of diasporic communities, migration, and solidarity vis-a-vis the future of work in a global society increasingly automated by AI models such as DeepSeek, ChatGPT, and Qwen 2.5, and the entities that own them. Through a variety of writing assignments and presentations, students engage issues such as race, class, gender, the border, citizenship, and community as they exist for diasporic and migratory workers. This course explores themes relevant to students of Critical Diaspora Studies, as well as the history of science and technology, political science and political economy, international studies, literature, film, and sociology. Readings may include works by Ruha Benjamin, Audre Lorde, Harry Braverman, Benedict Anderson, David Harvey, Edward Said, Mary L. Gray, Octavia Butler, and Ngugi wa Thiong'o.

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

## English

### **AS.060.106. A Literary History of the Devil to 1800. 3 Credits.**

This course reads major works in European literature before 1800 (give or take) depicting the devil. It examines the history of the various social, cultural and political guises under which the devil appears, and the function that representing radical evil performs aesthetically. Among our readings may be selections from the Bible; Dante's *Inferno*; Milton's *Paradise Lost*; Goethe's *Faust*; and many other major hellish works.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have already taken AS.060.209, A Literary History of the Devil to 1800, are not eligible to take AS.060.106.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

### **AS.060.388. Old World/New World Women. 3 Credits.**

The course considers the transatlantic writing of three women in the early modern period, Anne Bradstreet, Aphra Behn, and Phillis Wheatley. We will consider issues of identity, spatiality, religion, commerce, enforced labor, sexuality, race, and gender, along with literary tradition, formal analysis and poetics. We will read a good deal of these early women writers.

Foremost in our mind will be the question of how perceptions of space and time are mediated through the global experiences of early modernity.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

### **AS.060.690. Fascism in Theory and Practice. 3 Credits.**

"Fascism" has returned to the political vocabulary of the times suddenly and without much intellectual preparation. This graduate seminar proposes to put on a firmer conceptual footing the possibility of understanding the present political and social crisis as the "return" of fascism as a political culture across the Euro-American world and beyond. We shall examine historical and contemporary developments in (and encounter texts from) a range of regions across the world: Western Europe, the United States, Russia, and India. We shall read works of literature, theory and philosophy, literary and linguistic analysis, and sociology by such figures as Sinclair Lewis, Bertolt Brecht, Filippo Marinetti, Julius Evola, Ezra Pound, Martin Heidegger, Emmanuel Levinas, Georges Bataille, Theodor Adorno, Hannah Arendt, Margaret Atwood, and Alexander Dugin, among others.

Distribution Area: Humanities

## First Year Seminars

### **AS.001.106. FYS: Legal Fictions - Law and Humanities. 3 Credits.**

A legal fiction is a fact assumed or created by courts to help reach a decision. In this First-Year Seminar, we study how legal fictions and fictions about law work in order to examine the possibilities and limits of fiction's (legal) power. Drawing from legal and literary thought, as well as plays, short stories, cases, and legal commentary, we critically explore the capacity of words to reveal (or conjure) some fundamental features of our shared worlds and discuss their impact in contemporary debates about justice. The course is designed with first-year students in mind and requires no prior knowledge of law.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.001.108. FYS: Heart Matters. 3 Credits.**

To the human imagination, the heart is more than a muscle and thumping pump keeping us alive. From the Renaissance to the present, writers have helped us make sense of our bodies, in health and in illness or pain. The history of the heart, meanwhile, starts in Antiquity, where it shapes our beliefs about life. One of our aims will be to trace the historical, cultural, and subjective meanings our minds have given to this “sublime engine.” The other will be to discover how our scientifically inquisitive minds, backed up with technical skills and technological devices such as the stethoscope, have found new ways to take care of this volatile organ. Our materials will involve a constellation of texts in medical history, modern fiction in the form of poems and short-stories, and recent scientific prose on such topics as heart transplants, heart-monitoring implants, xenotransplants as well as heartbreaks.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.001.116. FYS: Literature of the Everyday: The Nineteenth-Century Realist Novel. 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 First-Year Seminar, we will read closely a set of novels by Flaubert, Mann, Dickens, Zola, and Tolstoy 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.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have taken AS.300.429 are not able to take AS.001.116.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.001.123. FYS: Wired to Read: the Science and the Art. 3 Credits.**

Trying to make sense of words I have written. But how do we do we do it? How do mere shapes and lines on the page suddenly begin to mean something? Is our brain wired for reading? Apart from our eyes, are other parts of the body involved? When did humans start to write and read? These are the kinds of questions we'll pursue. This First-Year Seminar will explore two distinctive perspectives: one literary, the other is scientific. We'll divide our attention between the study of chapters and articles that present scientific findings about how we read and a practical exploration of a novel. Literary works tax our brains in multiple ways and our example will show why and how. Maylis de Kerangal's medical fiction *The Heart* will serve as our case study. The book and scenes from its adaptation for the screen will enable us to experience the power of fiction as it transports us into an enhanced reality made of images and words. We'll see how written words are able to redirect our attention in ways that make us more perceptive about a “real” world of human interactions. Slowed down and staged in the book, the life-stories, fateful accidents, and heroic gestures that make up a medical universe can paradoxically bring us closer the life and death decisions that begin in the ER.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.001.196. FYS: What is Love?: A Long History. 3 Credits.**

“Love is mad, love is obsessive, love can be a painful or tragic, or on the contrary an experience to be treasured forever. That’s what books have taught us, by giving poetic souls a chance to imagine and develop romantic ideas – on paper. These books have in turn inspired films, or in earlier days, great operas. This course is offered to those of you who might miss the experience of getting lost in a book or story! As a historian of ideas and a specialist of narrative with a keen interest in bodies, minds and feelings, and in gender, I will explore with you in this seminar a few favorite love stories. Each is chosen because it helps us uncover a universe of romantic feelings, often in conflict with social conventions (as is *Romeo and Juliet* for example). Our course will also involve the study of a film (Jane Campion's *Bright Star*) and possibly of the opera, *La Traviata* – as well as a class trip to the movies to see, if available, a recent presentation of our theme. Among the readings for this class: *The Legend of Tristan and Isolde*, Goethe's *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; a selection of contemporary short stories.

**AS.001.197. FYS: Doctors and Patients: A Few Case Studies. 3 Credits.**

A famous, very experienced clinician used the phrase “The Soul of Care,” signaling that medicine is not merely about fixing bodies. He wants to remind us that scientific knowledge involves mastery as well as empathy. “Narrative medicine” as this domain is called, assumes that the close study of stories can play a decisive role in preparing doctors for the challenging humanistic aspects of their profession. We focus in this First-Year Seminar on stories connected to medical cases, stories that can take us beyond medical questions to deeper issues connected to the human condition. Our seminar will be centered on discussions, often prepared in teams, based on your attentive close reading and research. The aim is to exercise your observational skills and imagination. What is at stake, medically and humanly speaking, is our capacity to uncover problems, dilemmas, ethical questions woven into texts that take us into the worlds of doctors and patients. Readings will involve a combination of modern and contemporary short stories, some of them more obviously fictional than others, some of them geographically or culturally more remote. Part of our study will also involve one longer text, namely *When Breath Becomes Air*, by Paul Kalanithi, and a small “anthology” of documents of a preparatory kind. We'll have at least one guest speaker, and also see a film together.

**AS.001.214. FYS: Doing Things With Maps. 3 Credits.**

In this First-Year seminar, we will ask why maps and mapping technologies have become useful – some would say central – to the pursuit of new knowledge. Do they clarify, simplify, amplify, organize, reveal unexpected connections, point the way forward, or severely complicate our thoughts and send us back to the drawing board? We will learn/review some GIS basics, and those among you with previous experience in these technologies will be welcome to contribute ideas and share skills (no previous experience is required). Over the course of the semester students will pursue their own group projects, developed in class discussions and visits to various mapping technology hubs around Hopkins, such as Geospatial Data and GIS technologies at Milton S. Eisenhower Library, brain mapping technologies at Biomedical Engineering, and approaches to mapping the heavens at the Space Telescope Science Institute. We will also ground ourselves in the Humanities by reading *The Odyssey* of Homer (trans. James Lattimore, any edition) and testing out various mapping techniques on the intersecting adventures of Odysseus, his son Telemachus, and his wife Penelope. A series of short close reading assignments on selected passages from *The Odyssey* will help to refine analytical and writing skills, and a final group or personal project report on a topic of your choice will address the (very) general subject of “How maps enhance, change, clarify or complicate ideas.



**AS.001.246. FYS: 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 pair literary works and films with texts from politics, philosophy, literary theory, and religion, that frame climate change as a fundamental challenge to our ways of making sense of the human condition.

**History****AS.100.306. Cultural History of the USSR. 3 Credits.**

This class explores the history of the USSR through its varied cultural domains. It will consider music, literature, film, painting, and sculpture in both "high" and "low" registers, as well as aesthetics, power, and control over the entire Soviet period, at both the center and, especially, the periphery.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.100.338. Islam and Dune. 3 Credits.**

In this course we will explore how religion in general and Islam in particular informs the world of Frank Herbert's sci-fi novel *Dune*, laying particular emphasis on how the messianic and mystical tradition within Islam pervades the first novel. We will also watch excerpts from the film adaptation by Denis Villeneuve, and the forthcoming second part in its entirety together in a local theater. As we do so, we will also discuss questions of Orientalism, representation, adaption, and appropriation in both the books and the films.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.100.411. AI and Data Methods in History. 3 Credits.**

This course engages both a 'history of data' and the 'data of history' by exploring American labor, consumer and business history. Students will learn how to think critically about how data are made and organized. They will then use that data to build arguments and visualizations about social and economic change over time. Throughout the course, we will learn to use various tools such as Google Sheets, Python, and ChatGPT for data analysis. No prior experience with statistics or programming is necessary, but students should come with a desire to learn.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Science and Data (FA2), Projects and Methods (FA6)

Writing Intensive

**AS.100.682. Introductory Topics in Computation for Scholarship in the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

The first half of this seminar course consists of non-mathematical introductions to, and discussions of, the fundamental motivations, vocabulary, and methods behind computational techniques of particular use for humanistic research. The second half combines selected readings chosen to address specific questions raised by these discussions with hands-on application to students' research goals. Each participant will lead discussion for one of the selected readings relevant to their interests.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**AS.100.728. Historical Writing in the Middle Ages. 3 Credits.**

This course investigates the basic techniques of writing history and the matters traditionally covered in medieval historical texts by reading a series of exemplary medieval historiographical works. This is preceded by a section on theoretical orientations to the study of history and historiography in order to provide the analytic tools for analyzing medieval texts.

**History of Art****AS.010.238. The Painting of Modern Life: From the Avant-garde to the Everyday. 3 Credits.**

This course offers an introduction to modern European painting. Our point of departure will be Charles Baudelaire's famous essay, "The Painter of Modern Life" (1863) in which he suggests that painting must engage the tensions that inform everyday life, in all its novelty and banality. We will put this claim to the test by approaching a constellation of key works that unlock different aspects of modern life: freedom and alienation, labor and leisure, metropole and colony, art and life, and the troubled intersections of class, race, and gender. Rather than treating the works we look at as "masterpieces" emblematic of European modernity, we will consider how they contribute to a critique of the idea of Europe and the modern project. Works studied will range from Francisco Goya's "The Third of May 1808, or 'The Executions'" to Hannah Höch's "Cut with the Kitchen Knife Dada Through the Last Weimar Beer Belly Cultural Epoch of Germany," from Édouard Manet's "Olympia" to Carolee Schneemann's "Up to and Including Her Limits."

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.010.255. Contemporary Performance Art. 3 Credits.**

Performance art is provocative and often controversial because it troubles, without dissolving, the distinction between art and life. Not just a matter of activating bodies, engaging viewers, or spurring participation, performance art asks what it means to perform, and what kinds of actions count, in contemporary culture. As such, performance art allows us to rethink established art historical concerns with form, perspective, and materiality, while offering critical insight into everyday life. We will explore how performance art addresses ingrained assumptions about action and passivity, success and failure, embodiment and mediation, "good" and "bad" feelings, emancipation and dependency. The study of performance art invites transdisciplinary approaches. Students from across the university are welcome. Our attention to a diverse array of artists and practices will be supplemented by readings in art history and criticism, as well as in feminist and queer theory, critical race theory, and political thought.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

**AS.010.681. Figuration after Formlessness. 3 Credits.**

What would an art history of modernism look like that sought not to overcome or eliminate painterly figuration, but to attend to displaced and disparaged figures in it? At least since Benjamin Buchloh's important 1981 warning about a "return to figuration" in European painting, figuration has been linked with questionable, if not highly suspect, aesthetic and political values – from nostalgia to repression. Buchloh inherits this view from the historical avantgardes, which sought to counter conventions of figuration by developing disparate strategies of abstraction. And it is this view of figuration that guides both formalist and social art histories: For both share an anxiety about the authoritative figure of the human form. This seminar invites an alternative perspective on the artistic project of figuration. We look at modern and contemporary practices of figuration that cannot so easily be dismissed as retrogressive or authoritarian. These practices suggest ways of thinking the figure without an appeal to its coherent visibility or sovereign standing. We will read broadly in the contemporary critical theory, feminist and queer theory, Black thought, and critical disability studies that share this investment (e.g. Butler, Cavarero, Garland-Thomson, Halberstam, Hartman, Honig, Sharpe, Wynter). We will critically reconsider Rosalind Krauss and Yve-Alain Bois' project *Formless: A User's Guide*, along with the turn of the twenty-first century debates about abjection, feminism, and "body art" it engaged. Artists under discussion include Maria Lassnig, Ana Mendieta, Alina Szapocznikow, Kara Walker, and Hannah Wilke, amongst others. For the final research paper, graduate students are encouraged to bring their own archives to the questions addressed in the seminar.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.010.730. Vulnerable Images. 3 Credits.**

What is a vulnerable image? The Latin *vulnus* points us in two directions: toward the relational vulnerability arising from the sight of wounds and the action of wounding; and toward the raw disclosure of the body's interior. This seminar, team-taught so as to bring the perspectives of the modern and the long premodern era into dialogue, attends to vulnerable images in both senses: we will consider not only works that picture vulnerable subjects, but images that, in their vibrant materiality or through their use and circulation, themselves become vulnerable. Across both domains we will examine what is arguably their shared capacity: to make viewers aware of their own vulnerability, and to provoke a range of responses, from the "tragic" emotions of pity and fear, to horror and disgust, compassion and care, pleasure and pain. Each week involves the critical juxtaposition of artworks and texts drawn from modern and contemporary culture with those from the long premodern past. Topics include pain as spectacle and perceptions of pain; care, attention, and maternal inclination; the vulnerability of gendered and racialized bodies; representations of torture, punishment, and war; laughter and grotesque humor; the subjects and objects of iconoclasm; material decompositions and forms of fragility. Readings run the gamut from Aristotle to Arendt, Freud to Butler, Warburg to Hartman, Sontag to Scarry.

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**Interdepartmental****AS.360.133. Freshman Seminar: Great Books at Hopkins. 3 Credits.**

Students attend lectures by an interdepartmental group of Hopkins faculty and meet for discussion in smaller seminar groups; each of these seminars is led by one of the course faculty. In lectures, panels, multimedia presentations, and curatorial sessions among the University's rare book holdings, we will explore some of the greatest works of the literary and philosophical traditions in Europe and the Americas. Close reading and intensive writing instruction are hallmarks of this course; authors for Fall 2020 include Homer, Plato, Dante, John Donne, George Herbert, Christina Rossetti, Mary Shelley, Frederick Nietzsche, Isaac Bashevis Singer, Frederick Douglass.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

**AS.360.207. Great Books and Conversations. 3 Credits.**

*Great Books and Conversations* engages students across all disciplines in critical reading of and writing on foundational texts of the Western tradition (and beyond), from Homer's *The Odyssey* to Dante's *Inferno*, Machiavelli's *The Prince*, Douglass' *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Virginia Woolf's *A Room of One's Own*, and others. The course encompasses lectures by JHU professors and guest speakers, group discussions, and an introduction to the library's exceptional collection of rare books. Guided by a team of Humanities professors from different departments, students will learn how to read closely, analyze, and converse on great literature. This course fulfills three foundational abilities: (1) Writing and Communication; (3) Culture and Aesthetics; and (5) Ethics and Foundations.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.360.305. Introduction to Computational Methods for the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces basic computational techniques in the context of empirical humanistic scholarship. Topics covered include the command-line, basic Python programming, and experimental design. While illustrative examples are drawn from humanistic domains, the primary focus is on methods: those with specific domains in mind should be aware that such applied research is welcome and exciting, but will largely be their responsibility beyond the confines of the course. Students will come away with tangible understanding of how to cast simple humanistic questions as empirical hypotheses, ground and test these hypotheses computationally, and justify the choices made while doing so. No previous programming experience is required.

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.360.306. Computational Intelligence for the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces substantial machine learning methods of particular relevance to humanistic scholarship. Areas covered include standard models for classification, regression, and topic modeling, before turning to the array of open-source pretrained deep neural models, and the common mechanisms for employing them. Students are expected to have a level of programming experience equivalent to that gained from AS.360.304, Gateway Computing, AS.250.205, or Harvard's CS50 for Python. Students will come away with an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different machine learning models, the ability to discuss them in relation to human intelligence and to make informed decisions of when and how to employ them, and an array of related technical knowledge.

AS Foundational Abilities: Science and Data (FA2), Citizens and Society (FA4), Projects and Methods (FA6)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.360.605. Introduction to Computational Methods for the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces basic computational techniques in the context of empirical humanistic scholarship. Topics covered include the command-line, basic Python programming, and experimental design. While illustrative examples are drawn from humanistic domains, the primary focus is on methods: those with specific domains in mind should be aware that such applied research is welcome and exciting, but will largely be their responsibility beyond the confines of the course. Students will come away with tangible understanding of how to cast simple humanistic questions as empirical hypotheses, ground and test these hypotheses computationally, and justify the choices made while doing so. No previous programming experience is required.

**AS.360.606. Computational Intelligence for the Humanities. 3 Credits.**

This course introduces substantial machine learning methods of particular relevance to humanistic scholarship. Areas covered include standard models for classification, regression, and topic modeling, before turning to the array of open-source pretrained deep neural models, and the common mechanisms for employing them. Students are expected to have a level of programming experience equivalent to that gained from AS.360.304, Gateway Computing, AS.250.205, or Harvard's CS50 for Python. Students will come away with an understanding of the strengths and weaknesses of different machine learning models, the ability to discuss them in relation to human intelligence and to make informed decisions of when and how to employ them, and an array of related technical knowledge.

**AS.360.623. Latin America in a Globalizing World. 3 Credits.**

An interdisciplinary seminar on Latin America's role in wider cultural, economic, and political processes, from both historical and contemporary perspectives. Please see class search for semester topic description. Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

**Modern Languages and Literatures****AS.211.245. AI from Descartes to Bladerunner 2049. 3 Credits.**

How long has AI been part of our cultural imagination? This course critically engages instances of artificial intelligence in thought, literature, and film from the 17th century to the present. In conversation with the realities of machine learning, algorithms, generative AI, large language models, automation, and so on, we will investigate the nature of artificial intelligence vis-à-vis issues of labor, consciousness, collectivity, individualism, fantasy, and futurity. Students will consider philosophical texts alongside works of science fiction, literature, and film. Readings may include texts by Descartes, Leibniz, Kant, Hegel, Poe, Hofmannsthal, Marx, Foucault, Alan Turing, Charles Babbage, Philip K. Dick, and Ursula Le Guin. No technical knowledge or prior courses are required!

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.211.301. Nietzsche and Literature. 3 Credits.**

Nietzsche and Literature is devoted to exploring the philosophy and literary works of the German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche, and studying his impact on literature and literary modernism. Readings will include works by Nietzsche and by the literary writers he influenced, including Rainer Maria Rilke, Stefan George, Thomas Mann, Stefan Zweig, Hugo von Hofmannsthal, Franz Kafka, Jorge Luis Borges, Hermann Hesse, James Joyce, Wallace Stevens, and William Butler Yeats, and Else Lasker-Schüler.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

**AS.211.314. Jewish in America, Yiddish in America: Literature, Culture, Identity. 3 Credits.**

Yiddish was the language of European Jews for 1000 years. From the 19th century to the present day it has been a language that millions of Americans — Jewish immigrants and their descendants—have spoken, written in, conducted their daily lives in, and created culture in. This course will examine literature, film, newspapers, and more to explore how Jewish immigrants to America shaped their identities—as Jews, as Americans, and as former Europeans. What role did maintaining, adapting, or abandoning a minority language play in the creation of Jewish American identity—cultural, ethnic, or religious? How was this language perceived by the majority culture? How was it used to represent the experiences of other minoritized groups? What processes of linguistic and cultural translation were involved in finding a space for Yiddish in America, in its original or translated into English? The overarching subjects of this course include migration, race, ethnicity, multilingualism, and assimilation. We will analyze literature (novels, poetry, drama); film; comedy; and other media. All texts in English.

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

**AS.211.315. The Meanings of Monuments: From the Tower of Babel to Robert E. Lee. 3 Credits.**

As is clear from current events and debates surrounding monuments to the Confederacy, monuments play an outsize role in the public negotiation of history and identity and the creation of communal forms of memory. We will study the traditions of monuments and monumentality around the world – including statues and buildings along with alternative forms of monumentality – from antiquity to the present day. We will examine the ways that monuments have been favored methods for the powerful to signal identity and authorize history. This course will also explore the phenomenon of “counter-monumentality”, whereby monuments are transformed and infused with new meaning. These kinds of monuments can be mediums of expression and commemoration for minority and diaspora communities and other groups outside the economic and political systems that endow and erect traditional public monuments. The first half of the course will examine the theoretical framework of monumentality, with a focus on ancient monuments from the ancient Near East (e.g., Solomon’s temple). More contemporary examples will be explored in the second half of the course through lectures and also field trips. We will view contemporary debates around monuments in America in light of the long history of monuments and in comparison with global examples of monuments and counter-monuments. All readings in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.211.323. Bees, Bugs, and other Beasties: Insects in Literature. 3 Credits.**

Beetles, fleas, bees, ants, ticks, butterflies: as the earth’s most abundant animals, insects affect our lives in countless ways. In this seminar, we will explore the diverse world of insects and other arthropods and analyze their appearance in philosophy, literature, and the sciences. Reading our way from John Donne’s “The Flea” and Robert Hooke’s “Micrographia” to Mandeville’s “The Fable of the Bees,” Uexküll’s biosemiotics, and Kafka’s “Metamorphosis,” we will ask how concepts and stories of insects reflect and shape the ways we imagine our ecological milieus. We will look more closely at how entomological imaginaries evolved over time and pursue lines of inquiry that will shed new light on human interactions with the environment, politics, and cultural diversity. This course covers a wide range of sources from different European languages (all made available in English translations) and is writing intensive.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.211.329. Museums and Identity. 3 Credits.**

The museum boom of the last half-century has centered largely around museums dedicated to the culture and history of identity groups, including national, ethnic, religious, and minority groups. In this course we will examine such museums and consider their long history through a comparison of the theory and practice of Jewish museums with other identity museums. We will study the various museological traditions that engage identity, including the collection of art and antiquities, ethnographic exhibitions, history museums, heritage museums, art museums, and other museums of culture. Some of the questions we will ask include: what are museums for and who are they for? how do museums shape identity? and how do the various types of museums relate to one another? Our primary work will be to examine a variety of contemporary examples around the world with visits to local museums including the Jewish Museum of Maryland, the National Museum of African American History and Culture and the National Museum of the American Indian.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

**AS.211.333. Representing the Holocaust. 3 Credits.**

How has the Holocaust been represented in literature and film? Are there special challenges posed by genocide to the traditions of visual and literary representation? Where does the Holocaust fit in to the array of concerns that the visual arts and literature express? And where do art and literature fit in to the commemoration of communal tragedy and the working through of individual trauma entailed by thinking about and representing the Holocaust? These questions will guide our consideration of a range of texts – nonfiction, novels, poetry – in Yiddish, German, English, French and other languages (including works by Primo Levi and Isaac Bashevis Singer), as well as films from French documentaries to Hollywood blockbusters (including films by Alain Resnais, Claude Lanzmann, and Steven Spielberg). All readings in English.

**Prerequisite(s):** Cannot be taken by anyone who previously took

AS.213.361

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.211.361. Dissent and Cultural Productions: Israeli Culture as a Case Study. 3 Credits.**

This course explores the interplay between protest and cultural productions using the Israeli society as a case study. We will examine the formation and nature of political and social protest movements in Israel, such as the Israeli Black Panthers, Israeli feminism, the struggle for LGBTQ rights and the 2011 social justice protest. Dissent in the military and protest against war as well as civil activism in the context of the Palestinians-Israeli conflict will serve us to explore the notion of dissent in the face of collective ethos, memory and trauma. The literary, cinematic, theatrical and artistic productions of dissent will stand at the center of our discussion as well as the role of specific genres and media, including satire and comedy, television, popular music, dance and social media. We will ask ourselves questions such as how do cultural productions express dissent? What is the role of cultural productions in civil activism? And what is the connection between specific genre or media and expression of dissent? All material will be taught in English translation.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive



**AS.211.383. Haunting Flesh: Women, Horror, and the Body. 3 Credits.**

A course that examines how women's bodies are depicted in horror literature and film, asking: how are issues of race, class, national identity, and belonging illuminated through the genre and its ongoing fascination with gender and sexuality? Why do we return to women's bodies to illuminate our fears? Why do we represent women's bodies through the horror genre? Focusing on speculative fiction and film, we will investigate how women's bodies speak to issues of power and spectatorship through affects such as disgust, terror, titillation, and pleasure.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.211.440. Literature of the Holocaust. 3 Credits.**

How has the Holocaust been represented in literature? Are there special challenges posed by genocide to the social and aesthetic traditions of representation? Where does the Holocaust fit in to the array of concerns that literature expresses? And where does literature fit in to the commemoration of communal tragedy and the working through of individual trauma entailed by thinking about and representing the Holocaust? These questions will guide our consideration of a range of texts — nonfiction, novels, poetry — originally written in Yiddish, German, English, French and other languages (including works by Primo Levi and Isaac Bashevis Singer). A special focus will be works written during and in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust. All readings in English.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.211.477. Renaissance Witches and Demonology. 3 Credits.**

Who were the witches? Why were they persecuted for hundreds of years? Why were women identified as the witches par excellence? How many witches were put to death between 1400 and 1800? What traits did European witch-mythologies share with other societies? After the witch-hunts ended, how did "The Witch" go from being "monstrous" to being "admirable" and even "sexy"? Answers are found in history and anthropology, but also in medicine, theology, literature, folklore, music, and the visual arts, including cinema.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have already taken AS.214.171 cannot take AS.211.477.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.211.607. Hermeneutics/Posthermeneutics. 3 Credits.**

In this course, we will examine the evolution of the modern hermeneutic tradition, from textual hermeneutics to philosophical hermeneutics, in relation to a range of posthermeneutic approaches to the study of literature, concerning questions of media, materiality, affect, and presence. We will consider how "post"-hermeneutics is not simply anti- or non-hermeneutic, but rather in complex dialog with hermeneutics, and is inscribed into the modern hermeneutic tradition since the late 18th century. Throughout the semester, we will return to a selection of literary works that serve as case studies with which to apply the theoretical and philosophical frameworks examined. Readings may include works by Friedrich Schleiermacher, Wilhelm von Humboldt, Hans-Georg Gadamer, Jürgen Habermas, Susan Sontag, Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, Friedrich Kittler, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, and Brian Massumi, among others.

Distribution Area: Humanities

Writing Intensive

**AS.211.613. The Three Fundamental Moments of Psychoanalytic Criticism. 3 Credits.**

In this seminar we will explore psychoanalytic theory as a method for interpreting art, literature, media, and political discourse. Our approach will be structured around an interlinking set of elements: historical stages in the development of Lacan's theory; dimensions of experience as defined by the theory, specifically the symbolic, the imaginary, and the real; and moments of analytic interpretation, namely, the identification of the symptom, the staging of a fundamental fantasy in transference, and traversing the fantasy through subjective destitution. Readings will include texts from Lacan's seminars and writings as well as commentaries by the Slovenian philosophers Slavoj Žižek and Alenka Zupancic, the Haitian analyst Willy Apollon, the Argentine analyst Juan-David Nasio, and others. The seminar is being offered across several programs and will be taught in English, although students who can are encouraged to do readings in the original language. Attendance and participation are mandatory, but a term paper is not required.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.211.620. The Aesthetics of Empathy. 3 Credits.**

I feel, therefore I am: beginning with Diderot's Letter on the Blind for the Use of Those Who Can See (1749) and Rousseau's Letter to M. D'Alembert on Spectacles (1758), the seminar will explore connections between various aspects of neurophysiological, bodily perception and their representations in culture. We will then consider the origins of the term *Einfühlung* in Robert Vischer's and Theodor Lipps' seminal works. Embodied perception that informs Heinrich Wölfflin's *Prolegomena to a Psychology of Architecture* (1886) is also the focus of several of Georg Simmel's essays. We shall discuss the environment as an extension of the self in Charles Baudelaire's "The Swan" and in Andrzej Leder's "Psychoanalysis of a Cityscape. A Case of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder: The City of Warsaw." Aby Warburg's notion of *Pathosformeln* will allow us to see the link between pathos and empathy. Finally we will read Zuzanna Ginczanka's poetry and Clarice Lispector's *The Hour of the Star*, whose narrator announces: "I write with my body."

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.211.791. Film Theory and Practical Methods. 3 Credits.**

This seminar combines practice and theory-oriented approaches to film studies. In addition to exposing and immersing students into the film practice of various filmmakers and their approaches, including professor Wegenstein's, this seminar pays close attention to feminist film theory, queer film theory, indigenous ethnographic film methods, and decolonial film strategies, analyzing their practical implementations in documentary, fiction films, and animation films. The seminar will also offer students the opportunity to sit in and learn the editing process, as Fall 2024 coincides with Bernadette Wegenstein's latest documentary film post-production phase, *The Archives*. No prior practical experience in filmmaking needed to attend this class.

**Prerequisite(s):** Cannot be taken if student took any of AS.212.791, AS.213.791, AS.214.791, or AS.215.791

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.212.337. Illness and Immunity in Postwar French Literature. 3 Credits.**

What does immunity have to do with literary studies? We will explore this question by examining the concept of immunity, not only as a medical and legal concept, but also as a cultural phenomenon. Students will analyze what “immunity” can teach us about the ideas of tolerance and defense and about the ways we come into contact and build relationships with others. Through attention to French novels and graphic novels, students will investigate the grammars and images linked to the concept of immunity and research how these languages and images shape how we think of mental and physical illnesses, vulnerability, exposure, as well as how they permeate body representations in French literature. Secondary sources such as philosophical texts, movies, and photographs will embed these narratives into larger issues within the history of medicine and postwar French literature.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

**AS.212.477. Caribbean Fiction in/and History: Self-understanding and Exoticism. 3 Credits.**

The Caribbean is often described as enigmatic, uncommon and supernatural. While foreigners assume that the Caribbean is exotic, this course will explore this assumption from a Caribbean perspective. We will examine the links between Caribbean and Old-World imagination, the relationship between exoticism and Caribbean notions of superstition, and the way in which the Caribbean fictional universe derives from a variety of cultural myths. The course will be taught in English and all required texts are in English, French, and English translations from French. Students in the French program can choose to read all the original French versions and write in French.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.213.208. Dystopian Fiction & Socioeconomic Thought. 3 Credits.**

Dystopia (from the Latin) means “bad place.” Classic literary dystopias such as *We*, 1984, *Brave New World*, and *Fahrenheit 451* depict societies gone wrong, bad places in which socioeconomic ideas promise harmony but produce nightmarish, even apocalyptic outcomes. A common theme of dystopian fiction is the conflict between collective need and individual desire. In this course we will pursue this theme, and others, as we read works of fiction alongside influential works of socio-economic thought. One of our aims will be to tease out the buried dreams and latent possibilities in the historical realities and literary imaginings of dystopic worlds. Readings include selections from popular fiction and contemporary media as well as texts by authors such as Karl Marx, Friedrich Hayek, Rosa Luxemburg, W.E.B. Du Bois, Franz Kafka, Juli Zeh, Olivia Wenzel, Elias Canetti, Brigitte Riemann, Hannah Arendt, Frantz Fanon, Herta Müller, and Philip K. Dick.

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)

Writing Intensive

**AS.213.374. Existentialism in Literature and Philosophy. 3 Credits.**

What does it mean to exist, and to be able to reflect on this fact? What is it mean to be a self? This course explores the themes of existentialism in literature and philosophy, including the meaning of existence, the nature of the self, authenticity and inauthenticity, the inescapability of death, the experience of time, anxiety, absurdity, freedom and responsibility to others. It will be examined why these philosophical ideas often seem to demand literary expression or bear a close relation to literary works. Readings may include writings by Kierkegaard, Nietzsche, Dostoevsky, Heidegger, Rilke, Kafka, Simmel, Jaspers, Buber, Sartre, de Beauvoir, Camus, and Daoud.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.213.460. Animals and Animality in Literature and Philosophy. 3 Credits.**

This course critically engages the presentation and imagination of animals and other non-human life in modern literature, philosophy, and thought. We will examine the figure of the animal and the means of conceptual differentiation between the animal and the human, considering animals' relation to or perceived exclusion from language, pain, embodiment, sexuality, and the visual gaze. The course is ideal for students interested in fascinating themes in literature and how they reflect philosophical concerns. No prior courses in philosophy are required. Students will read philosophical texts alongside literary works in learning the conceptual history of animals and of humanity as a distinct species. Expect fascinating readings and engaging, lively discussions. Readings may include works by Marx, Nietzsche, Freud, Heidegger, Derrida, Agamben, Poe, Kleist, Hofmannsthal, Rilke, Kafka, Mann, Pirandello, and Coetzee.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3)

Writing Intensive

**AS.213.608. Literary Geographies: Landscape, Place and Space in Literature. 3 Credits.**

This graduate-level course will explore the material topographies of literature, both real and imagined, engaging the landscapes, geographies, and environments of literary works both as a vital dimension of the text and as contributions to 'cultural ecology'. We will explore how topography may be engaged not as mere background or setting for literary situations, but as a dynamic and vital dimension thereof, and how the human experiences evoked can be radically recontextualized and engaged through environmental attention to the text. We will read theoretical and philosophical works on geography and topography in literature along with environmental literary theory in approaching literary works by writers from the late 18th to the mid 20th centuries. Readings may include works by Goethe, Novalis, Heine, Thoreau, Schnitzler, Thomas Mann, Rilke, Hofmannsthal, Brecht, Woolf, Borges, and other writers from the late 18th through 20th centuries. Discussions will invite phenomenological, de- or post-colonial, and ecological perspectives.

**AS.213.623. Poetry and Philosophy. 2 Credits.**

This course will trace the tensions, antagonisms, and collaborations between poetry and philosophy as distinctive but fundamental expressions of human thought and experience. We will engage poetry as a form of artistic expression that compliments, completes, or challenges other forms of knowledge, and consider the range of philosophy's responses to poetry and poetics. Readings will include works by philosophical poets and poetic philosophers including Hölderlin, Schlegel, Rilke, Bachmann, Celan, Stevens, Heidegger, Gadamer, Adorno, Benjamin, Merleau-Ponty, Valéry, Wittgenstein, and Agamben.

**AS.213.631. Social Imaginaries and the Public Sphere in European Literature, 1760-1815. 3 Credits.**

We will examine the contribution of (post-)Enlightenment literature to the evolution of a modern social imaginary. First we will acquaint ourselves with some theoretical approaches to the concept of the social imaginary (Cornelius Castoriadis, Charles Taylor, Albrecht Koschorke). We will then read selected texts from European literature (from Rousseau and Ferguson to Lessing, Schiller, Kleist, Novalis and Fichte, among others) that are characteristic of the formation of a modern social imaginary at the epochal threshold between the 18th and 19th centuries. We will attend to the interface of social self-conceptions and the public sphere. Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.213.644. Dynamic Manuscripts: Potentials of Writing in Hölderlin, Nietzsche, Lasker-Schüler, and Others. 3 Credits.**

Taught by the Max Kade Visiting Professor. According to Aristotle's Poetics, the poet's task is to speak not of things that have happened (ta genomena) but of the sort of things that might happen and are possible (dunata). But how does the literary work come into being—in other words, how is it possible as a locus of possibilities? Since the late 18th century, authors have increasingly focused on their manuscripts as the space of poetic potential and have engaged in different ways with the gestural, technical, and pictorial dynamics of writing. In this course, we will look at these material practices and how they shape notions of poetic possibility. Authors to include Hölderlin, Nietzsche among others. The class will also consider the theory of poetic writing in the Paris school of critique génétique.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.215.406. Novelist Intellectuals. 3 Credits.**

What does a novelist's op-ed about economics have to do with her literary writing? In what ways does a fiction writer's essays on the environment inform how we read her novels? What happens when we find the political opinions of a writer objectionable? This undergraduate seminar will consider what the Spanish writer Francisco Ayala termed "novelist intellectuals," that is, literary writers who actively participate in a society's public sphere. Considering writers from Madrid to New York, from London to Buenos Aires, we will ask how one should hold a novelist's fictional and non-fictional writings in the balance and explore ways of reading that allow us to consider the public intellectual side and the aesthetic side of a novelist together.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

**AS.215.633. Spectacle, Subjectification, and Reality Literacy in Early Modern Society. 3 Credits.**

In this seminar we will examine the widespread deployment of cultural production in the early modern period in the service of generating social cohesion around an emerging national project, primarily in the case of Spain. At stake will be how cultural practices can determine a shared sense of reality, often at odds with the interests of marginal groups, as well as the strategies that emerge to counteract and question those practices. While reading knowledge of Spanish is desirable, graduate students from other disciplines who wish to explore these theoretical questions with regard to a different cultural corpus are welcome. Graded Pass/Fail.

**AS.215.718. Public Humanities Writing Workshop. 3 Credits.**

Humanists possess a reservoir of scholarly abilities that prime them for contributing to debates well beyond the academy. This semester-long workshop will introduce graduate students to the basics of writing for such broad audience. Each session will be organized around particular topics in public humanities writing, including the pitching, writing, editing, and publishing processes of newspapers, magazines, and online outlets. We will also consider the forms of writing that most allow scholars to draw from their academic training and research: reviews, personal essays, op-eds, interviews, and profiles. Throughout the course we will see how the interdisciplinarity, comparativism, and multilingualism of fields from across the humanities can be helpful for reaching wide audiences. Beyond the nuts and bolts of getting started in so-called "public" writing, this course aspires to teach graduate students how to combine quality writing with academic knowledge, scholarly analysis with a general intellectual readership—and, ultimately, make academic knowledge a public good. Taught in English.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who took AS.215.748 are not eligible to take AS.215.718.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**AS.216.601. Eastern European Literature. 2 Credits.**

Twentieth-century and contemporary Eastern European Literature is the locus of poetry and the essay. In this course we shall examine classic authors, such as Bruno Schulz, Zbigniew Herbert, and Adam Zagajewski, as well as those less known in the English-speaking world: Zuzanna Ginczanka, Ota Pavel, Henryk Grynberg, Oksana Lutsyshyna. We will consider verse, poetic prose and lyrical essays. The issues that will inform our readings will be internal and actual emigration, translingualism, and the persistence of war. Polish, Ukrainian, Hungarian, Czech, Serbo-Croatian, but also French and American English are the languages in which these authors speak to us. Eastern European literature resonates with voices that have, time and again, brushed against catastrophe.

**AS.216.640. Literature and the Holocaust. 3 Credits.**

The Holocaust appears in scholarship as a figure or catalyst of analysis as often as it does as a historical event. It has prompted debates about historiography, about aesthetics, and about modernity across the humanistic disciplines, yet many of these debates and analyses have relied on a small number of sources, primarily literary texts. This course will assess some of the major areas of critical and scholarly inquiry regarding the Holocaust, but in relation to a different corpus of works, written by victims and survivors, that has been mostly overlooked. These works, many in Yiddish, many written during or in the immediate aftermath of the Holocaust, afford an opportunity to reassess the degree and the kind of challenge the Holocaust posed to the various aesthetic, memorial, and social formations of modernity. Taught in English; all readings available in English translation.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have taken, or are currently enrolled in, AS.211.440 are not eligible to enroll in AS.216.640.

Distribution Area: Humanities

**Political Science****AS.190.180. Introduction to Political Theory. 3 Credits.**

In the Republic, the ancient Greek philosopher Plato posed three questions: what is justice? How would a just person live? How would a just society be governed? These three questions form the basic subject matter of political theory. In this course we will survey the history of political theory, reading a series of political theorists who took up Plato's questions in a wide range of contexts, from Renaissance Italy and early modern England to late colonial India and the Jim Crow US South. Throughout, we'll consider whether there are better and worse answers to these questions, or simply different answers that appear better or worse depending on the perspective from which one considers them. We'll look closely at how the circumstances in which political theorists lived influenced their thinking, and how those circumstances should influence our own evaluation of their thinking. And we'll ask whether Plato's questions were the right questions to ask in his time, whether they are still relevant in ours, and whether there are other questions that political theorists would do better to spend their time considering.

Distribution Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

EN Foundational Abilities: Engagement with Society (FA4)

**AS.190.204. Ancient Political Thought. 3 Credits.**

The premise of this course is that a political perspective is tied up with a (meta)physical one, that is to say, with ideas about the nature of Nature and of the status of the human and nonhuman elements within it. How is the universe ordered? Who or what is responsible for it? What place do or should humans occupy within it? How ought we to relate to nonhuman beings and forces? We will read three different responses to such questions and show how they are linked to a particular vision of political life. In the first, the world into which human are born is ordered by gods whose actions often appear inexplicable: Prometheus Bound by Aeschylus, Oedipus the King by Sophocles, and Hippolytus by Euripides will represent this tragic vision of the cosmos. In the second, Plato, in Republic and in Phaedrus, the forces of reason and eros play central and powerful roles. In the third, Augustine of Hippo presents a world designed by a benevolent, omnipotent God who nevertheless has allowed humans a share in their own fate. We end the course with Nietzsche's Birth of Tragedy, which offers a perspective on these three visions of the world – the tragic, the rational, and the faithful – which will help us evaluate them in the light of contemporary political and ecological concerns.

Distribution Area: Humanities, Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1) Writing Intensive

**AS.190.415. Political Arts: Dada, Surrealism, and Societal Metamorphoses. 3 Credits.**

In the years between World Wars I and II, a fascinating group of artists, manifesto-writers, performers, intellectuals, and poets, in Europe and the Caribbean, who were put off by conventional politics of the time, decided to pursue other means of societal transformation. This seminar explores the aims and tactics, and strengths and liabilities, of Dada and Surrealism, as it operated in Europe and the Americas in the years between the World Wars. We will also read texts and images from writers and artists influenced by Dada and Surrealism but applied to different historical and political contexts.

**Prerequisite(s):** Students who have taken AS.001.193 OR AS.190.613 are not eligible to take AS.190.415.

Distribution Area: Social and Behavioral Sciences

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4), Democracy (FA4.1)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)



### Study of Women, Gender, & Sexuality

#### AS.363.302. Feminist and Queer Theory: Women in Western Thought an Introduction. 3 Credits.

Women in Western Thought is an introduction to (the history of) Western thought from the margins of the canon. The class introduces you to some key philosophical question, focusing on some highlights of women's thought in Western thought, most of which are commonly and unjustly neglected. The seminar will be organized around a number of paradigmatic cases, such as the mind/body question in Early Modern Europe, the declaration of the rights of (wo)men during the French revolution, the impact of slavery on philosophical thought, the MeToo debate and others. By doing so, the course will cover a range of issues, such as the nature of God, contract theory, slavery, standpoint epistemology, and queer feminist politics. Students will engage with questions about what a canon is, and who has a say in that. In this sense, Women in Western Thought introduces you to some crucial philosophical and political problems and makes you acquainted with some women in the field. The long term objective of a class on women in Western thought must be to empower, to inspire independence, and to resist the sanctioned ignorance often times masked as universal knowledge and universal history. People of all genders tend to suffer from misinformation regarding the role of women and the gender of thought more generally. By introducing you to women who took it upon themselves to resist the obstacles of their time, I am hoping to provide role models for your individual intellectual and political development. By introducing you to the historical conditions of the exclusion and oppression of women (including trans and queer women as well as black women and women of color), I hope to enable you to generate the sensitivities that are required to navigate the particular social relations of the diverse world you currently inhabit. By introducing philosophical topics in this way, I hope to enable you to have a positive, diversifying influence on you future endeavours.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Writing and Communication (FA1), Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

Writing Intensive

#### AS.363.335. Gender and Friendship: The ".....". 3 Credits.

How far does it make sense to say, as Harry Burns put it in When Harry Met Sally, "that men and women can't be friends"? What presumptions of female and male friendships underlie such a claim? Does it even make sense to talk of a distinctive difference between male and female friendships? Beginning with tracts on friendship from the Western philosophical tradition, and then weaving between sociological analyses and representations of friendship in literature and film, we will explore in this course how gender inflects friendship as we live it. Assignments include two 6-8 page papers and a short summary of readings due each week.

Distribution Area: Humanities

AS Foundational Abilities: Citizens and Society (FA4), Ethics and Foundations (FA5)

#### AS.363.406. Feminist and Queer Theory: Marxism. 3 Credits.

Famously, Karl Marx had little to say about gender, sexuality, or race. Yet, scholars have developed Marxist theory to account for how a capitalist political economy generates racial divisions, gender inequalities, and queer and trans subcultures. This course will introduce students to feminist, queer, trans, and Black Marxist theory. Key concepts will include: social reproduction, racial capitalism, and sexual hegemony. Students will consider how Marxist theorists envision the place of race, gender, family, and sexuality in a utopian post-capitalist future.

AS Foundational Abilities: Culture and Aesthetics (FA3), Citizens and Society (FA4)

EN Foundational Abilities: Creative Expression (FA3), Engagement with Society (FA4)