

**Comparative and World Literature Seminar: History and Practice
(FS 22, M 2:30-5:30, Founders 105)**

Course Instructor

Susan Ingram (singram@yorku.ca)

Professor, Dept. of Humanities; Coordinator, Graduate Diploma in Comparative Literature
Office hours via Zoom: please email to arrange a mutually convenient time

Course Description

This seminar introduces students to the conditions under which the discipline of Comparative Literature emerged and developed from its beginnings in nineteenth-century Europe to its most recent global iteration of World Literature. Students will experience how expanded understandings of cultural translation and textuality have radically altered and expanded the Eurocentric character of the discipline.

Questions for investigation include: How have the aesthetics and politics of Comparative Literature changed over the past two hundred years? What factors have influenced those changes? How is World Literature related to Comparative Literature? How do both relate to colonial, postcolonial, diasporic, cultural and translation studies, and digital humanities?

This seminar course is required for both the Humanities Graduate Diploma in Comparative Literature and the English Graduate Diploma in World Literature. The seminar introduces students to the history of both fields, and the theories and methodologies that have forged them. Students who are not enrolled in either diploma are, of course, also welcome.

Course Learning Objectives

Students will be able to:

- discourse knowledgably, verbally and in writing, on the discipline of Comparative Literature and its relation to World Literature and on the influential scholarly contributions to both
- set the parameters for a feasible research project
- develop an original argument suitable for academic publication
- generate discussion of key concepts and readings
- work collegially and cooperatively

Evaluation

- weekly contributions (30%):
 - before each class, post reflections on the readings on eClass, then come prepared to discuss everything with the class
- 2 moderations of a week’s readings (15%)
 - to be done in groups, sign up on the wiki on the eClass
- first written assignment: due 17 Oct (20%)
 - 500-, 250-, and 100-word summaries of a feasible research project in comparative or world literature, accompanied by a 10-source bibliography formatted in MLA 9 and a paragraph explaining why it is a comparative and/ or world literature topic (Zotero can be downloaded at zotero.org).
- final assignment
 - a) presentation: 5 Dec
The last class of the term will be spent helping each other with the final paper. Each student will have a few minutes to explain the main lines of their paper, and we will then give feedback and suggestions.
 - b) ~6000-7500 word paper due 16 Dec (35%)
whichever option is chosen, the assignment should have a Works Cited section that has been generated by Zotero, and two versions should be submitted: one formatted in MLA 9 and the other in Chicago.
- **EITHER** a creative author’s perspective on any culture and period before 1945. See as a guide on eClass: Piero Boitani, “World Literature Two Thousand Years Ago: Reflections of a Senator in 306 A.D.” *Foundational Texts of World Literature*, edited by Dominique Jullien, Peter Lang, 2011, pp. 17-28.
- **OR** a final research paper to be used as a basis for **Capstone Diploma Research Paper** (length: 10,000 words)

The **Capstone Diploma Research Paper** requires that students demonstrate the interdisciplinary, cross-cultural research and critical skills acquired throughout their Comparative or World Literature Diploma studies in an article-length essay, which students are encouraged to submit to a journal for publication.

Students are allowed to expand the essay written for the Diploma in the core course or in one of their other courses, or to combine two essays into a coherent, sustained argument. For the Graduate Diploma in World Literature, students can choose to expand papers that involve theoretical or methodological discussion with literary analyses, or to use literary analyses performed in another essay as illustration of this theoretical discussion. Students can also choose to write an entirely new paper for the Capstone Research Paper, which will be marked by the primary advisor and then submitted to a second reader (who will also mark and comment); both reports will be sent to the Graduate Program Director.

Recommended Readings

- *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*. Eds. David Damrosch, Natalie Melas, Mbongiseni Buthelezi. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton UP, 2009.
- Cusset, François. *French Theory: How Foucault, Derrida, Deleuze, & Co. Transformed the Intellectual Life of the United States*. Translated by Jeff Fort with Josephine Berganza and Maron Jones. Minneapolis, London: U of Minnesota P, 2008.

Required Readings will be provided as pdfs on our eClass site.

Schedule

1) 12 Sept: Introductions

- Hanne, Mike. "A Short History of Comparative Literature."
- Berman, Sandra. "World Literature and Comparative Literature." *The Routledge Companion to World Literature*. Eds. Theo D'haen, David Damrosch, and Djelal Kadir. London: Routledge, 2011. 169-179.
- Hamilton, John T. "Ellipses of World Literature." *Poetica* 46.1-2 (2014): 1-16.

2) 19 Sept: Literature and Early Literary Study

- Williams, Raymond. "Literature" and "Culture." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1981. 183-188, 87-93.
- Barry, Peter. "Theory before 'Theory' – Liberal Humanism." *Beginning Theory: An Introduction to Literary and Cultural Theory*. 3rd ed. Manchester and New York: Manchester UP, 2009. 11-37.
- Goldhill, Simon, "Literary History without Literature: Reading Practices in the Ancient World." *Debating World Literature*. Ed. Christopher Pendergast. London and New York: Verso, 2004. 175-196.
- Chasles, Philarètes Euphémon. "Foreign Literature Compared." *Comparative Literature: The Early Years*. Ed. Hans-Joachim Schulz and Phillip H. Rhein. Chapel Hill, N.C.: The University of North Carolina Press, 1973. 13-37.

3) 26 Sept: Culture and Early Cultural Studies

- Bennett, Tony. "Culture." *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Malden: Blackwell, 2005. 63-69.
- Arnold, Matthew. "Culture and Anarchy." *Culture and Anarchy*. Ed. Samuel Lipman. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994. 28-48, 66-86.
- Hebdige, Dick. "Ch. 1: From Culture to Hegemony." *Subculture: The Meaning of Style*. London: Methuen, 1979. 5-19.

4) 3 Oct: *Weltliteratur*

- Goethe, Johann Wolfgang von. "Conversations with Eckermann on *Weltliteratur* (1827)." *World Literature in Theory*. Ed. David Damrosch. Chichester, West Sussex: John Wiley & Sons, Ltd., 2014. 15-21 (also in the *Princeton Sourcebook*

for *Comparative Literature*, 17-25).

- Damrosch, David. "Introduction: Goethe Coins a Phrase." *What is World Literature?* Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press. 1-36.
- Berman, Antoine. "Goethe: Translation and World Literature." *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*. Translated into English by Stefan Heyvaert. Albany: SUNY Press, 1992. 53-68 (*L'épreuve de l'étranger: Culture et traduction dans l'Allemagne romantique: Herder, Goethe, Schlegel, Novalis, Humboldt, Schleiermacher, Hölderlin*. Paris: Gallimard, 1984).
- Yamini-Hamedani, Azadeh. "Foundational Metaphors: Goethe's World Literature; Posnett's Comparative Literature." *Foundational Texts of World Literature*. Ed. Dominique Jullien. New York et al: Peter Lang, 2011. 155-164.

READING WEEK

5) 17 Oct: The Role of the Exiles (assignment 1 due)

- Apter, Emily. "Global Translatio: The 'Invention' of Comparative Literature, Istanbul, 1933." *Critical Inquiry* 29.2 (Winter 2003): 253-281.
- *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature Vol. 1*. New York: Russell & Russell Inc, 1952.
- *Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Ed. Werner P. Friedrich. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1959.
- Wellek, René. "Prospect and Retrospect." *Journal of Comparative Literature and Aesthetics* 1.2 (Winter 1978): 1-12.
- Heller Anderson, Susan. "Henri Peyre of Yale Is Dead at 87; Was Sterling Professor of French." *New York Times*, December 10, 1988, Section 1, Page 12.
- Hutchinson, Ben. "The Rest is Silence: On George Steiner, 1929-2020," *Times Literary Supplement*, 13 March 2020.

6) 24 Oct: Theory, Stars, Awards

- St. Pierre, Paul. "The Beginnings of Translation Studies." *TTR* 30.1-2 (2017): 101-119.
- Shumway, David R. "The Star System in Literary Studies." *PMLA* 112.1 (Jan. 1997): 85-100.
- Engdahl, Horace. "Canonization and World Literature: The Nobel Experience." *World Literature, World Culture*. Eds. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen and Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen. Aarhus: Aarhus UP, 2008. 195-214.

7) 31 Oct: The State of the Discipline

- Bernheimer, Charles. "Introduction: The Anxieties of Comparison." *Comparative Literature in the Age of Multiculturalism*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 1995. 1-17.
- Saussy, Haun. "Exquisite Cadavers Stitched from French Nightmares: Of Memes, Hives, and Selfish Genes." *Comparative Literature in an Age of Globalization*. Baltimore and London: Johns Hopkins UP, 2006. 3-42.
- Heise, Ursula K. "Introduction: Comparative Literature and the New Humanities." *Futures of Comparative Literature: ACLA State of the Discipline Report*. Eds. Ursula Heise et al. Routledge, 2017. 1-8.

- 2014-2015 state of the discipline report: <http://stateofthediscipline.acla.org>

8) 7 Nov: Debating Worlding

- Comparative Literature/World Literature: A Discussion with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and David Damrosch.” *Comparative Literature Studies* 48.4 (2011): 455-485.
- Fisk, Gloria. “Against World Literature: The Debate in Retrospect.” <https://theamericanreader.com/against-world-literature-the-debate-in-retrospect>
- D’Haen, Theo. “Worlding World Literature.” *Recherche littéraire Literary Research* 32 (Été 2016 / Summer 2016): 7-23.
- Connery, Christopher Leigh, “Introduction: Worlded Pedagogy in Santa Cruz.” *The Worlding Project: Doing Cultural Studies in the Age of Globalization*. Eds. Rob Wilson and Christopher Leigh Connery. Santa Cruz: New Pacific Press and Berkeley: North Atlantic Books, 2007. 1-11.

9) 14 Nov: Frameworks for Comparing Worlds

- Anderson, Benedict. “Frameworks of Comparison.” *London Review of Books* 38.2 (21 Jan 2016)
- Behdad, Ali. “The Orientalist Photograph.” *Canadian Review of Comparative Literature* 43.2 (June 2016): 265-281.
- Keynote CCLA 2019: David Palumbo-Liu, Stanford University: “Ethics Before Comparison,” <https://complit.ca/congres-2/congres/>

10) 21 Nov: Where is the World Now?

- Ball, Tyler. “A Tale of Two Worlds.” *World Literature Working Group Blog*, 18 May 2019, <http://www.worldlitworkgroup.com/2019/05/>
- Puchner, Martin. “Learning from World Literature in the South.” *Inside Higher Education*, 13 Dec. 2017
- Brouillette, Sarah. “On the African Literary Hustle.” *Blind Field: A Journal of Cultural Inquiry*, 14 Aug. 2017, <https://blindfieldjournal.com/2017/08/14/on-the-african-literary-hustle/>

11) 28 Nov: Brave New Worlds?

- Chotiudompan, Suradech. “Comparative Literature: Recent Debates on an Imagined Discipline.” *MANUSYA: Journal of Humanities* (Special Issue No. I 1 2006), 88-108.
- Da, Nan Z. “Language After the Fact: Rey Chow’s “Not Like a Native Speaker.” *Los Angeles Review of Books*, June 2, 2016, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/language-fact-rey-chows-not-like-native-speaker/>
- Wark, McKenzie, “On the Obsolescence of the Bourgeois Novel in the Anthropocene.” *Verso Books*, Aug. 16, 2017, <https://www.versobooks.com/blogs/3356-on-the-obsolescence-of-the-bourgeois-novel-in-the-anthropocene>

12) 5 Dec: Critical Reflections

- workshopping of final papers