

GS HUMA/ ENG/ TRANS 6157 3.0

Comparative and World Literature Seminar: History and Practice (FS 2016 – T 18:00 - 21:00pm, Glendon, YH A222)

Course Instructor

Susan Ingram

Office: 242 Vanier

Office Hour: M 16.30–17.30 or by appointment (singram@yorku.ca)

Course Description

This seminar introduces students to the conditions of emergence and development of the discipline of Comparative Literature 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?

Evaluation

- **weekly contributions (20%):**
 - web: before each class, post reflections on the readings on the Moodle (due by Mon of each week), then come to class prepared to discuss both the readings and the reflections
- **written assignment 1: due Oct 11 (20%):**
 - an 8-10 page, creative author's perspective on any culture and period before 1945, see as a guide on the Moodle: Piero Boitani, "World Literature Two Thousand Years Ago: Reflections of a Senator in 306 A.D." *Foundational Texts of World Literature*. Ed. Dominique Jullien. New York et al: Peter Lang, 2011, 17-28
- **oral exam to be held during the week of Nov. 29 (20%)**
- **written assignment 2: due Dec. 9 (40%):**
 - a 15-20 page reflection on "What World Literature and/or Comparative Literature Mean to Me"

Required Readings (available in the York University Bookstore). Other readings will be provided as pdfs on our Moodle site:

1. PSCL: *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.
2. 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.

Recommended Readings

1. <http://www.asymptotejournal.com>
2. <http://www.worldliteraturetoday.org>

Schedule

1) 13 Sept: Introductions

- Hanne, Mike. "A Short History of Comparative Literature."
- Williams, Raymond. "Literature" and "Culture." *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1981. 183-188.
- Bennett, Tony. "Culture." *New Keywords: A Revised Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. Malden: Blackwell, 2005. 63-69.
- Fisk, Gloria. "Against World Literature: The Debate in Retrospect."
([HTTP://THEAMERICANREADER.COM/AUTHOR/GLORIA-FISK/](http://theamericanreader.com/author/gloria-fisk/))

2) 20 Sept: no class

3) 27 Sept: Theory before Theory

- 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.
- Arnold, Matthew. "Cultural Anarchy." *Cultural Anarchy*. Ed. Samuel Lipman. New Haven: Yale UP, 1994. 28-48, 66-86.
- Cusset, François. "Preface to the English Edition" and "Introduction: The Sokal Effect"

4) 4 Oct: Goethe and Posnett

- Goethe, J.W. von and J. P. Eckermann, "Conversations on World Literature (1827)." PSCL: 17-25.
- Posnett, Hutcheson Macaulay. "The Comparative Method and Literature (1886)." PSCL: 50-60.
- 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.

5) 11 Oct: Fin de siècle (assignment 1 due)

- Meltzl, Hugo. "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature (1877)." PSCL: 41-49.
- Brandes, Georg. "World Literature (1899)." PSCL: 61-66.
- Gayley, Charles Mills. "From *What is Comparative Literature?* (1902)." PSCL: 67-78.
- Marno, David. "The Monstrosity of Literature: Hugo Metzl's World Literature and its Legacies." *World Literature, World Culture*. Eds. Karen-Margrethe Simonsen and Jakob Stougaard-Nielsen. Aarhus: Aarhus UP, 2008. 37-50.

6) 18 Oct: The Aftermath of War

- Curtius, Ernst Robert. "Preface to *European Literature and the Latin Middle Ages* (1948)." PSCL: 120-124.
- Auerbach Erich. "Philology and *Weltliteratur* (1952)." PSCL: 125-138.
- Carré, Henri. "Preface to *La Littérature comparée* (1951)." PSCL: 158-160.
- Wellek, René. "The Crisis of Comparative Literature (1959)." PSCL: 161-174.
- *Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Ed. Werner P. Friedrich. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1959.
- *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature Vol. 1*. New York: Russell & Russell Inc, 1965.

7) 25 Oct: The Beginning of Theory

- Cusset, "Part I. The Invention of a Corpus." 17-128.
- Barthes, Roland. "The Structuralist Activity (1963)." PSCL: 176-182.

8) 1 Nov: Women and Writing

- Johnson, Barbara. "Writing (1990)." PSCL: 227-239.
- Kristeva, Julia. "Women's Time (1977)." PSCL: 183-207.
- Moi, Toril. "I am not a woman writer - , About women, literature and feminist theory today." (<http://www.eurozine.com/articles/2009-06-12-moi-en.html>).
- "Critical Intimacy: An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak" (<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/critical-intimacy-interview-gayatri-chakravorty-spivak/>)

9) 8 Nov: Seeing Stars

- Cusset, "Part II. The Uses of Theory," "Part III. There and Back," 131-262, 265-339.
- Shumway, David R. "The Star System in Literary Studies." *PMLA* 112.1 (Jan. 1997): 85-100.

10) 15 Nov: The Making of Ages

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

11) 22 Nov: Worlding

- 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.
- Apter, Emily. "Introduction," *Against World Literature: On the Politics of Untranslatability*, 1-27.
- D'Haen, Theo. "Worlding World Literature." *Recherche littéraire Literary Research* Volume 32 (Été 2016 / Summer 2016): 7-23.

12) 29 Nov: Critical Reflections, Summing Up

- Oral Exam the week of Nov 29
- Final assignment due Dec 9