

GS HUMA/ ENG/ TRANS 6157 3.0

Comparative and World Literature Seminar: History and Practice (WS 2018, Th 11:30-2:30, VH 1152)

Course Instructor

Susan Ingram

Office: 242 Vanier

Office Hour: T and Th 3:00-4:00 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%):**
 - before each class, post reflections on the readings on the Moodle (preferably before Wed), then come to class prepared to discuss both the readings and the reflections
- **moderations with a short (not more than 2 page) written reflection due the following class (30%)**
 - Each week, groups of students will help facilitate discussion. Moderators should aim to get at the most important issues in the readings, which will also mean prioritizing them, since we won't be able to discuss every aspect of every reading every week. In addition to addressing the Moodle posts, they should bring in discussion questions and topics, which can range from basic content questions (like "what does the passage on p. 25 mean?") to "big picture" issues that connect the week's readings with other readings and discussions.
- **oral exam to be held during the week of 16 Apr (20%)**
- **final assignment: due 23 Apr (30%):**

Either a 15-20 page, creative author's perspective on any culture and period before 1945, see as a guide: 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 (to be posted on the Moodle) Or a 15-20 page reflection on “What World Literature and/ or Comparative Literature Mean to My Academic Work.” For those interested in completing either the Graduate Diploma in Comparative Literature or World Literature, this reflection will provide the basis for your capstone paper.

Required Readings (available in the York University Bookstore). Other readings will be provided as links or 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) 4 Jan: Introductions

- Hanne, Mike. “A Short History of Comparative Literature.”
- Puchner, Martin. “Readers of the World Unite.” *Aeon* 27 Sept 17, <https://aeon.co/essays/world-literature-is-both-a-market-reality-and-a-global-ideal>
- Cusset, François. “Preface to the English Edition” and “Introduction: The Sokal Effect.” 1-13.

2) 11 Jan: Theory before Theory

- Williams, Raymond. “Literature.” *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*. London: Fontana, 1981. 183-188.
- 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.
- 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.

3) 18 Jan: *Weltliteratur*

- Herder, Johann Gottfried. "Results of a Comparison of Different Peoples' Poetry in Ancient and Modern Times (1797)." PSCL: 3-9.
- De Staël, Germaine. "Of the General Spirit of Modern Literature (1800)." PSCL: 10-17.
- Goethe, J.W. von and J. P. Eckermann, "Conversations on World Literature (1827)." PSCL: 17-25.
- 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).

4) 25 Jan: Comparing the World

- Meltzl, Hugo. "Present Tasks of Comparative Literature (1877)." PSCL: 41-49.
- Posnett, Hutcheson Macaulay. "The Comparative Method and Literature (1886)." PSCL: 50-60.
- Brandes, Georg. "World Literature (1899)." PSCL: 61-66.
- Gayley, Charles Mills. "From *What is Comparative Literature?* (1902)." PSCL: 67-78.
- 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) 1 Feb: Europeans and Literature

- 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.

6) 8 Feb: American Institutionalization

- *Yearbook of Comparative and General Literature Vol. 1*. New York: Russell & Russell Inc, 1965.
- *Proceedings of the Second Congress of the International Comparative Literature Association*. Ed. Werner P. Friedrich. Chapel Hill: U of North Carolina Press, 1959.
- Schultz, Hans-Joachim and Phillip H. Rhein, "Introduction." *Comparative Literature: The Early Years*. Chapel Hill, N.C.: University of North Carolina Press, 1973. vii-ix.
- Cusset, chs 1 & 2 ("Prehistories" and "The Academic Enclave"), 17-53.

7) 15 Feb: Literature and Theory

- Barthes, Roland. "The Structuralist Activity (1963)." PSCL: 176-182.
- Johnson, Barbara. "Writing (1990)." PSCL: 227-239.
- Cusset, chs 3-5 and 8 ("The Seventies: A Turning Point," "Literature and Theory," "Deconstruction Sites" and "Academic Stars"), 54-128, 193-216.

- Shumway, David R. "The Star System in Literary Studies." *PMLA* 112.1 (Jan. 1997): 85-100.

READING WEEK

8) 1 Mar: Questions of Identity and Ideology

- 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>).
- Cusset, chs 6 & 7 ("The Politics of Identity" and "Ideological Backlash"), 131-192.
- Weigel, Moira, "Political Correctness: How the Right Invented a Phantom Enemy." <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2016/nov/30/political-correctness-how-the-right-invented-phantom-enemy-donald-trump>

9) 8 Mar: 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>
- Spivak, Gayatri. "Crossing Borders (2003)." *PSCL*: 380-398.
- "Critical Intimacy: An Interview with Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak." (<https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/critical-intimacy-interview-gayatri-chakravorty-spivak>)

10) 15 Mar: Against World Literature?

- 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.
- Fisk, Gloria. "Against World Literature: The Debate in Retrospect." ([HTTP://THEAMERICANREADER.COM/AUTHOR/GLORIA-FISK/](http://theamericanreader.com/author/gloria-fisk/))
- Stefan Helgesson and Pieter Vermeulen, "Introduction: World Literature in the Making," 1-20.
- Alon, Shir. "The Becoming-Literature of the World: Pheng Cheah's Case for World Literature." (*LARB*, Dec. 19, 2016, <https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/becoming-literature-world-pheng-cheahs-case-world-literature/>)

11) 22 Mar: What is the World Now?

- 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.
- Cusset, chs 13 & 14 ("Worldwide Theory: A Global Legacy" and "Meanwhile, Back in France..."), 287-327.
- 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/>).

12) 29 Mar – away (ACLA)

13) 5 Apr: Urban Studies panel

Oral Exam the week of 16 Apr

Final assignment due 23 Apr