

The Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures has offered a spectrum of courses bridging centuries and disciplines. Some examples of our previous courses are listed below:

**Love, Selfishness, Honor, Reason, Strength, Dishonesty, Beauty, Perception**

**Comparative Literature 223-Images of the Self**

**(From the Classical Age to the Modern Age)**

**Note: This course satisfies Core Curriculum Requirement**

How does one define the Self? What makes up one's personality or the traits we often define as distinctly human? What is Love? Can Dishonesty be the trait of a hero? How is one able to accurately perceive the world? Is Beauty more than skin deep? For the Greeks there were many definitions: the heroic Odysseus was "the man of many turns;" Penelope was "she of prudent mind;" the buffoon Margites "knew many things, and none of them well;" the tragic hero Pentheus was "the man of sorrows." In the 20th century, the French and Americans provided answers of their own – some quite different and modern, others remarkably "Classical".

This course will explore a variety of definitions of the Self as demonstrated in a cross section of national arts and literatures. We will consider a variety of Greek and Roman artistic expression. The course will then compare many of these "Classical conceptions" with two modern traditions, specifically 20th century French literature and American cinema. We will investigate how local cultural, intellectual, and ideological developments influence differences in characterizing the Self, and learn how to compare texts across genres, cultures, and time in general.

There will be a midterm, short paper (5-10 pages), and a final exam. Texts include excerpts from Homer's *Iliad* and *Odyssey* and Aeschylus' "Orestia", Sophocles' "Antigone", Euripides' "Alcestis", Plato's *Apology*, Petronius' *The Satyricon*, Lyric poetry, Sartre's "The Flies", Anouilh's "Antigone", Camus' *The Myth of Sisyphus* and *The Stranger*, De Beauvoir's *Second Sex* (excerpts), poetry of WWII, Nietzsche's *The Birth of Tragedy*, and essays by Derrida and Barthes. Films will include *Unforgiven*, *After Hours*, *The Oxbow Incident*, and *L'Orphée*.

## COMP 224 - THE QUESTION OF THE ANIMAL

### Prof. Walter Putnam

*"The greatness of a nation and its moral progress can be judged by the way its animals are treated."* (Gandhi)

A re-evaluation of animals, human and non-human, is underway, making the question of the animal of utmost importance to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This interdisciplinary core course will explore key issues in that debate from a cultural studies perspective: How do animals figure into our identity politics? Where do we separate human from non-human animals? How are animals depicted in today's world? How are they treated? Should animals have rights? How can human and non-human animals coexist in a rapidly shrinking world? We will look at how animals are captured and displayed, how they become pets, how they figure in fashion, advertising, art, how humans "become" animals, how animals raise thorny ethical questions about legal rights, conservation, vegetarianism, etc. We will read an array of texts from literature, philosophy, science, and popular culture. We will examine images, photos, and films that raise questions about the role and status of animals. It is my hope that, by semester's end, you will be able to cast an informed, critical eye on the animal world around you.

## Comp 332/AfSt 380/Engl 332/WSt 397-African Women Writers

### Steve Bishop

In this course we will investigate the contributions a number of African women have made to African literature. The texts to be read and discussed do not share a geographic, linguistic, or temporal commonality. Readings will consist of novels and short stories from places as diverse as South Africa, Senegal, Egypt, Nigeria, Algeria, and Kenya among other places, will be originally in English or translated from French, Arabic, or Portuguese, and will be from the 1950's through the turn of the century. What will instead form the central axis of the course are a number of topics and themes that these writers have treated in some form or another. These include, but are not restricted to: Independence from colonization, Women's role in society, Politics, Love, Race relations, Sexuality, War, and Economics. Aside from looking at these specific issues, we will investigate to what degree their writing is "African", to what degree it is "feminine", and to what degree such categorizations are perhaps missing the point. Aside from these topics, students are welcome and encouraged to bring in outside material, to pursue other lines of investigation, and to make comparisons with other literatures, genres, periods, etc. Students will be expected to participate in class discussions, give one short presentation, write six 2-3 page reaction papers, and do a final project.

Texts for the class, in whole or as excerpts, include: Flora Nwapa's *Efuru*, Buchi Emecheta's *The Joys of Motherhood*, Mariama Bâ's *Scarlet Song*, Ama Ata Aidoo's

*Changes: A Love Story*, Alifa Rifaat's *Distant View of a Minaret*, Calixthe Beyala's *Your Name Shall Be Tanga*, Assia Djebar's *Women of Algiers in Their Apartment*, and Yvonne Vera's edited collection *Opening Spaces: An Anthology of Contemporary African Women's Writing*. There will also be a collection of short stories (some of them from some of the above-listed texts, thus rendering their purchase optional) and articles on e-reserve from a number of authors, including Bessie Head, Grace Ogot, Nadine Gordimer, and Sindiwe Magona. Students are encouraged to read translated works in the original if they so desire.

### **CLCS/ENGL/FREN 432 - INVENTING AMERICA, 1492-1624**

In this course, we will explore European representations of the "New World" through travel narratives, letters, essays, and plays. We will begin with the earliest records of the encounter and analyze the development of opposing images of America as an earthly paradise or an inhospitable land unfit for human habitation. We will look at complementary stereotypes of the Native Americans as either bloodthirsty cannibals or innocent and noble creatures. We will conclude our survey with the romanticized encounter between "princess" Pocahontas and Captain John Smith. Primary texts will be supplemented by critical material. Primary sources may include: Christopher Columbus, *Diario*; Hernán Cortés, *Letters from Mexico*; Bartolomé de las Casas, *A Short Account of the Destruction of the Indies*; Walter Raleigh, *The Discoverie of the...Empyre of Guiana*; Jean de Léry, *History of a Voyage to the Land of Brazil*; Michel de Montaigne, "Of Cannibals;" Thomas Harriot, *A Briefe... Report of the New Found Land of Virginia*; and John Smith, *The Generall Historie of Virginia*.

### **CLCS480/ENGL 452 - THE RENAISSANCE (AND ITS DISCONTENTS)**

The European Renaissance is often regarded as one of the most important epochs in the history of Western culture. In this course, we will look at how "the Renaissance" came to receive its identity, why that identity has been seen as significant, and what that identity has meant at various points in time. Among the questions we will tackle will be the recent debates on the terms "Renaissance" and "early modern;" the notion of "Renaissance self-fashioning" and how this meant different things for men and women; the "discovery" of America, globalization, and the impact of European expansion abroad. Primary texts from the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries will accompany critical selections and ancillary materials. Primary sources may include: Desiderius Erasmus, *The Praise of Folly*; Baldassar Castiglione, *The Book of the Courtier*; Niccoló Machiavelli, *The Prince*; Michel de Montaigne, *The Essays*; Edmund Spenser, *The Faerie Queene*; and Elizabeth Cary, *The Tragedie of Mariam*.

## **Comp L/Engl 580/Fr 611-Theories of Law and Literature**

### **Steve Bishop**

In the early 1970's, scholars of both literature and law began to encroach on one other's theoretical terrain. Legal scholars began investigating the presence of legal thought and argumentation in canonical literary works, largely under the guise of studies in rhetoric, while literary scholars began to apply literary concepts such as narration, subjectivity, voice, etc. to legal discourse. This dual theoretical movement, at least as a defined discipline, was largely confined to the academic world of common law countries, most prominently in Great Britain and the United States. The first thorough, concrete presentation of this developing movement was *The Legal Imagination*, published in 1973 by an American professor of Law, English, and Classics. Nonetheless, this thoroughly common law, and predominantly American phenomenon had been developing in civil law France for several years, and has continued to develop in parallel with what is now known as the Law and Literature movement. While French legal scholars demonstrated no particular interest in this genre mixing, such influential writers as Barthes, Duras, Foucault, and Derrida were treating the law as any other readable discourse. Some of their writing, in fact, became seminal in the Law and Literature movement. This course will investigate the (oft-competing) principles behind the Law and Literature movement, the interaction of various intellectual traditions (especially American and French interpretative strategies), the usefulness of such theories in "normal" legal and literary study, and why Law and Literature has mostly remained on the margins of academic study (without, however, ever disappearing).

The course will be taught entirely in English, although those students who wish to read translated texts in the original are encouraged to do so. The course will hopefully attract students of a wide variety of disciplines, including but not limited to literature, law, history, political science, philosophy, cultural studies, classics, women's studies, and American studies. Despite its minor emphasis on French cultural studies, the course is not designed for any one group of students and rather is meant to be accessible and interesting to all those generally interested in the topic. Students' interests will, in fact, assist in the evolution of the course's form, readings, and direction.

The final readings list (largely excerpts) will be drawn from M. Foucault, C. MacKinnon, J. Derrida, R. Posner, S. Levinson, R. Weisberg, M. Duras, R. Barthes, J.B. White, S. Fish, R. West, P. Brooks, P. Williams, and M. Montoya among others. Some other primary texts will also be read, although their choice will depend on the make-up of the class. Some possibilities include readings from ancient Greece, "crime fiction", cinema, and legal cases. Accordingly, students are encouraged to bring outside material into the classroom. Students will be expected to participate in classroom discussions, give one presentation, and write a final paper of approximately 20 pages (in English, French, or Spanish).