C LIT 210

Proseminar in Comparative Literature:
Comparative Literature as Profession

Image of Klementinum Library in Prague, Czech Republic

Winter 2018
Sara Pankenier Weld

Meetings: Wednesdays 9-11:50am
Location: Phelps 6206C

Instructor: Professor Sara Pankenier Weld
Associate Professor of Russian and Comparative Literature
Office: Phelps 6323; E-mail: saraweld@ucsb.edu
Office hours: Tuesday/Thursday 11:00-12:00pm and by appointment

Course Description:

Recently Ali Behdad and Dominic Thomas (re)defined Comparative Literature as an “inter-disciplinary, cross-cultural, and trans-national endeavor.” In this proseminar, we ask, what does it mean to read and study literatures and cultures from comparative perspectives, across geographical and linguistic boundaries, and through wide historical periods, along other print or visual media? Through readings and discussion, we pursue this multi-pronged question and address the tools and goals of comparative literature as an evolving discipline, from the early nineteenth century to the present. We discuss seminal essays and theoretical works that have shaped and are currently reshaping “comparative literature” and “world literature” from Western and non-Western vantage points. We also read two reports on the state of the discipline prepared by the American Comparative Literature Association in recent decades and examine issues pertaining to the material conditions and interpretive practices of literary inquiries in the era of globalization and digitization.
**Objectives:**

This seminar will encourage students to examine and assess the key concepts, themes, and debates that have shaped the evolving fields of Comparative Literature and the literary humanities in the western world. It will provide students with opportunities for professional training in the form of writing, formal presentations, revision of written work, and scholarly dialogues. In addition, it offers training in specific skills required by the profession, such as facilitating discussion, reviewing work by others, presenting work, and answering questions in a conference format.

**Required Texts:**


A Required Reader is available for mandatory purchase at SBPrinters at the University Center. It includes essays reprinted from the following sources, as well as a few others: 1) *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature,* 2) *World Literature: A Reader,* 3) *The Routledge Companion to World Literature.*

**Recommended Texts:** (primarily US-based discussions on Comparative Literature as a discipline)


**Expectations:**
1. Attendance at all seminars and careful preparation are mandatory.
2. Informed participation in discussions is essential. The quality of the seminar depends on your sustained preparation and informed participation in discussions, which in turn will support substance-based intellectual conversations.
3. For each class, prepare a brief response to the texts we will be reading and post this response on Gauchospace by midnight two days before our seminar meeting.

**Grading:**
All areas below must be satisfactory in order to pass the seminar. It must be taken for a letter grade.

10%  **Active Participation** in seminar discussions, and eight brief commentaries on the day’s reading(s), which must be posted on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before each seminar meeting.
10%  **Presentation/Discussion Facilitation** based on assigned readings that day. Plan to present for 20 minutes, concluding your presentation with stimulating questions for discussion, which you then will facilitate. Sign up for a presentation topic and time at our first meeting on January 17, 2018.
10%  **Review Essay** (600 words) due January 31, 2018 – Write a 600-word review essay on an article/work of your choice that examines issues relevant to the goals and methods of comparative literature. Include a formulation defining comparative literature as a field and briefly describing its methodology. You may refer to the bibliography of recommended texts above for potential titles.
20%  **Commentary Papers** (750 words each). Write two 750-word reaction papers to the readings and conclude with two well-focused, engaging questions on each reading. Choose the readings you are the most interested in and submit your commentary at the relevant class meeting. One of these commentary papers should have been submitted by February 21, 2018.
10%  **Peer Review** (up to 300 words each) of two anonymous paper drafts submitted by classmates. Your two peer reviews are due on March 7, 2018, one week after receiving two paper drafts on February 28, 2018. In your review, offer one of the following recommendations: recommend for publication as is, recommend for publication with revisions, recommend revision and resubmission, or deny for publication in its present state. Submit two copies of each of the two peer reviews you write, one with your name listed and one anonymous.
10%  **Conference Style Presentation** of the core of your final paper to be delivered in a professional manner at our final class meeting on March 14, 2018. Time your presentation carefully so it takes no more than 20 minutes (about 8 pages of text). Your paper presentation will be followed by 5-10 minutes of questions from the audience.
30%  **Final Paper** (15-20 pages) on an analytical topic of your choice. Paper topic, major questions, and sample bibliography are due for prior instructor approval by email on February 14, 2018; draft of final paper (2 anonymous copies) is due for peer review on February 28, 2018; final draft (incorporating feedback from peer reviews and reactions to your conference-style presentation of its core) is due in my mailbox in Phelps 5215 by March 21, 2018.

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1 The Commentary Paper should provide a brief analysis of the major arguments of one or two of the assigned readings. The summary must cite one major passage from the work(s) and direct us to key passages that are relevant to the overall architecture of the writers’ arguments. Please be clear, concise, and accurate. Raise at least one critical insight or question regarding the shortcomings of the essay(s) assigned, and list one question pertaining to the strength of the essay. You may refer to a source cited by the author. Identifying whom an author cites most frequently provides insight into his/her intellectual or theoretical framework, assumptions, as well as the scholarly arguments that take place in the margins of the essay. Alternatively, you can also identify one work that has used (or challenged) the insights of the works you have analyzed. In all cases identify the source(s) and very briefly explain their arguments.
# Schedule of Readings:

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<tr>
<th>Wednesday, Jan. 17, 2018</th>
<th>The “Origins” of Comparative Literature; Major and Minor Literatures in Tension</th>
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                          | Johann Gottfried Herder “Results of a Comparison of Different Peoples’ Poetry in Ancient and Modern Times” (1797) (PS 3-9)  
                          | Germaine de Staël “Of the General Spirit of Modern Literature” (1800) (PS 10-16)  
                          | Johann Wolfgang (von) Goethe “On World Literature” (1827) (WL 9-15)  
                          | John Pizer, “Johann Wolfgang von Goethe: Origins and Relevance of Weltliteratur” (RC 3-11)  
                          | Read Preface (ICL ix-xviii)  
                          | Read Introduction (Ecology 1-36) |
| Assignments:            | * Sign up for Presentation/Discussion Facilitation in class today |

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<th>Wednesday, Jan. 24, 2018</th>
<th>The (Mythical) “Origins” of Comparative Literature; Major and Minor Literatures in Tension (continued)</th>
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| Readings:               | Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels, “The Communist Manifesto” (1848) (WL 16-17)  
                          | Hugo Meltz, “Present Tasks of Comparative Literature” (1877) (WL 18-22)  
                          | David Damrosch, “Hugo Meltz and ‘the Principle of Polyglottism’” (RC 12-21)  
                          | Read Chapter 1 “Comparative Literature and the Future of Literary Studies” (ICL 1-19)  
                          | Read Chapter 1 “Epichoric Literature” (Ecology 37-62) |
| Assignments:            | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
                          | * Versatile Ph.D. Plot out your professionalization goals and Ph.D. plan using the new Versatile Ph.D. tool available at [http://career.sa.ucsb.edu/gradstudents/versatile-phd](http://career.sa.ucsb.edu/gradstudents/versatile-phd)  
                          | Print out a copy of your plan to submit in class today.  
                          | * Presentation/Discussion Today |

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<th>Wednesday, Jan. 31, 2018</th>
<th>Reshaping the Discipline: Comparative Literature, Exile, and Politics</th>
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| Readings:               | Erich Auerbach, “Philology and Weltliteratur” (1952) (WL 65-73)  
                          | Aamir R. Mufti, “Erich Auerbach and the Death and Life of World Literature” (RC 71-80)  
                          | Mikhail Bakhtin, From “Epic and Novel” (PS 104-119)  
                          | René Wellek, “The Crisis of Comparative Literature” (1959) (PS 161-174)  
                          | René Étiemble, “Do We Have to Revise the Notion of World Literature?” (1964) (WL 93-103)  
                          | Read Chapter 2 “Panchoric Literature” (Ecology 63-100) |
| Assignments:            | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
                          | * Review Essay Due Today  
<pre><code>                      | * Presentation/Discussion Today |
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<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
<th>Readings</th>
<th>Assignments</th>
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Barbara Johnson, “Writing” (1990) (PS 227-239)  
Bernard Stiegler, “Memory” (Media Studies 64-87)  
Lydia H. Liu, “Writing” (Media Studies 310-326)  
Read Chapter 3 “Cosmopolitan Literature” (Ecology 101-144) | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
* Presentation/Discussion Today |
| Wednesday, Feb 14, 2018 | **Comparative Identities in the Post-Colonial World** | Edward Said “The World, the Text, and the Critic” (1983) (PS 259-283)  
Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o “The Quest for Relevance” (1986) (PS 284-308)  
Robert J. C. Young, “World Literature and Postcolonialism” (RC 213-222)  
Read Chapter 3 “Comparative Literature and Decoloniality” (ICL 41-55)  
Read Chapter 4 “Vernacular Literature” (Ecology 145-194) | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
* Submit Paper Topic, Major Questions, and Sample Bibliography by email today  
* Presentation/Discussion Today |
| Wednesday, Feb 21, 2018 | **Comparative Literature as World Literature** | Itamar Even-Zohar “The Position of Translated Literature within the Literary Polysystem” (1978) (PS 240-247)  
Helena Caravalhão Buescu, “Pascale Casanova and the Republic of Letters” (RC 126-135)  
Franco Moretti, “Conjectures on World Literature and More Conjectures” (WL 160-175)  
Mads Thomsen, “Franco Moretti and the Global Wave of the Novel” (RC 136-144)  
Read Chapter 4 “World Literature as a Comparative Practice” (ICL 56-67) | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
* First Commentary Paper should have been submitted by today  
* Presentation/Discussion Today |
| Wednesday, Feb 28, 2018 | **From Comparative Literature to Translation Studies: Beyond Eurocentrism?** | Laurence Venuti, “World Literature and Translation Studies” (RC 180-193)  
Sandra Nadaff, “The Thousand and One Nights as World Literature” (RC 487-496)  
Read Chapter 6 “Comparative Literature and Translation” (ICL 78-87)  
Read Chapter 7 “Comparative Literary History” (ICL 88-106)  
Read Chapter 5 “National Literature” (Ecology 195-242) | * Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class  
* Draft of Final Paper Due for Peer Review Today (2 anonymous copies and one removable cover sheet listing your name and title)  
* Presentation/Discussion Today |
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<th>Wednesday, March 7, 2018</th>
<th>Interartistic Comparisons, the Ethical Turn, and the Return of Literature</th>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Peter Hitchcock “The Ethics of World Literature” (RC 365-372)</td>
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<td>Sanja Bahun, “The Politics of Word Literature” (RC 373-382)</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 5 “Comparing Themes and Images” (ICL 68-77)</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 8 “Interartistic Comparison” (ICL 107-124)</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 9 “The Return of Literature” (ICL 125-142)</td>
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<td>Assignments:</td>
<td>* Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Peer Reviews Due Today (2 copies of each, 1 anonymous)</td>
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<td>* Presentation/Discussion Today</td>
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<th>Wednesday, March 14, 2018</th>
<th>Comparative Literature, the New Media, &amp; the Digital Humanities: Rethinking the Global</th>
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<td>Readings:</td>
<td>Thomas O. Beebee, “World Literature and the Internet” (RC 297-306) (pdf)</td>
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<td>Read Chapter 6 “Global Literature” (Ecology 243-299)</td>
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<td>Assignments:</td>
<td>* Submit Brief Reading Commentaries on Gauchospace by midnight 2 days before class</td>
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<td>* Conference of Student Work Today</td>
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<th>Wednesday, March 21, 2018</th>
<th>End of Seminar</th>
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<td>Assignments:</td>
<td>* Final Paper Due Today</td>
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(1) Disabled Students Program: accommodations for exams

Students with disabilities may request academic accommodations for exams online through the UCSB Disabled Students Program at http://dsp.sa.ucsb.edu/. Please make your requests for exam accommodations through the online system as early in the quarter as possible to ensure proper arrangement.

(2) Managing stress / Supporting Distressed Students

Personal concerns such as stress, anxiety, relationships, depression, cultural differences, can interfere with the ability of students to succeed and thrive. For helpful resources, please contact UCSB Counseling & Psychological Services (CAPS) at 805-893-4411 or visit http://counseling.sa.ucsb.edu/

If you encounter a student in distress, please contact 805-893-3030 immediately and/or consult the Responding to Distressed Student Protocol at http://www.sa.ucsb.edu/distressedstudentsguide or phone 893-3030.

(3) Responsible scholarship

Honesty and integrity in all academic work is essential for a valuable educational experience. The Office of Judicial Affairs has policies, tips, and resources for proper citation use, recognizing actions considered to be cheating or other forms of academic theft, and students’ responsibilities, available on their website at: http://judicialaffairs.sa.ucsb.edu. Students are responsible for educating themselves on the policies and to abide by them.

(4) Furthermore, for general academic support, students are encouraged to visit Campus Learning Assistance Services (CLAS) early and often. CLAS offers instructional groups, drop-in tutoring, writing and ESL services, skills workshops and one-on-one consultations. CLAS is located on the third floor of the Student Resource Building, or visit http://clas.sa.ucsb.edu