Proseminar Description

What does it mean to read and study literatures and cultures from comparative perspectives, across geographical and linguistic boundaries, through historical periods/layers, along other print or visual media? In this pro-seminar in Comparative Literature, we will pursue this multi-pronged question and address comparative literature as an evolving discipline (or indiscipline), from the early nineteenth century to the present. First using *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature* (henceforth *PSCL*), we will read essays and theoretical works that have shaped and are currently reshaping “comparative literature” from Western as well as non-Western vantage points. Essays in contemporary critical theory will help us frame our discussions on the tools and goals of comparative literary studies. Second, reading Emily Apter’s *The Translation Zone* (thereafter *TZ*), we will deal with translation and translation theory as support for new literary cartographies. In the final section of the pro-seminar, we will read reports from the American Comparative Literature Association (from 1965 to 2004) and will examine issues pertaining to world literatures as well as to the material conditions and interpretive practices of literary inquiries in the age of globalization.

Bibliography (on reserve at Davidson Library)

**Required purchase:**

**At Davidson Library:**
Requirements

✓ Careful preparations and critical readings will support strong intellectual conversations and informed participation.
✓ You will write short assignments on assigned readings, with a one-page reaction paper and 2 to 3 well-focused, engaging questions. I will forward more explicit guidelines.
✓ Each of you will do 2 short presentations on the assigned readings.
✓ Attendance and participation are mandatory, and you are to engage in active and informed discussions. The quality of this graduate seminar will depend on your sustained preparation for and engagement in all our discussions.

Grading

30% Active and focused participation in proseminar discussions
40% 2 short presentations (15 mn each)
30% 6 short writing assignments as described above (one page, single-space, with 2 to 3 questions)

Schedule of Readings

10/2 PSCL: discussions of excerpts from Part I: Origins (Herder, Staël, Goethe-Eckermann, Nietzsche)
10/8 Lisa Swanstron’s Lecture on the digital humanities and sustainability, noon-1:30pm, Phelps 5316
10/9 PSCL: discussions of excerpts from Part II: The Years of Crisis (Lukács, Hideo, Bakhtin, Curtius, Auerbach, Adorno, Paz, Wellek)
10/16 PSCL: Part III: The Theory Years (Barthes, Kristeva, De Man, Johnson)
10/23 PSCL: Part III: The Theory Years (Glissant, Said, Thiong’o)
             Guest presentation by Lacey Smith on her paper: “The Disciplines and the Humanities: The Singular Plural as a New Humanities”
10/30 PSCL: discussions from Part IV: Contemporary Explorations (all except Apter’s & Venutti’s)
11/6 TZ: Introduction; Part I & part II
11/13 TZ: Parts II-III & essay by Venutti from PSCL.
11/20 CLAM: The Levin Report, the Greene Report, the Bernheimer Report & essays by Appiah, Pratt, Chow, Higonnet, and Lionnet
11/27 CLAG: essays by Saussy, Damrosch, Kadir, Ferris, Lionnet, Braider
             Guest lecture by Silvia Ferreira, “Globalizing Comparative Literature: Pasts, Presents, and Futures.”
12/4 CLAG: essays by Trumpener, Emerson, Greene, Longxi, Culler
             Synthesis for our proseminar

[No writing due on 10/2 and 12/4]