COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

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http://icls.columbia.edu

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Established at Columbia in 1998, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society (ICLS) (http://icls.columbia.edu) promotes a global perspective in the study of literature and its social context. Committed to cross-disciplinary study of literary works, the Institute brings together the rich resources of Columbia in the various literatures of the world, in the social sciences; in art history, architecture, and media; and in the medical humanities.

The major program at ICLS allows qualified students to study literature, culture, and society with reference to material from several national traditions, or in combination of literary study with comparative study in other disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. Under the guidance of the director of undergraduate studies, students select courses offered by participating departments.

The program is designed for students whose interest and expertise in languages other than English permit them to work comparatively in several national or regional cultures. The course of study differs from that of traditional comparative literature programs, both in its cross-disciplinary nature and in its expanded geographic range, including not just European, but also Asian, Middle Eastern, African, and Latin American cultures.

The program includes course work in the social sciences, and several core courses are jointly taught by faculty from different disciplines. Students thus explore a variety of methodological and disciplinary approaches to cultural and literary artifacts in the broadest sense. The cross-disciplinary range of the program includes visual and media studies; law and the humanities; medicine and the humanities; and studies of space, cities, and architecture. As a major or concentration, this program can be said to flow naturally from Columbia’s Core Curriculum, which combines literature, art, philosophy, and social thought, and consistently attracts some of Columbia’s most ambitious and cosmopolitan students.

Students can choose to complete the major in Comparative Literature and Society (CLS) or the major track in Medicine, Literature, and Society (MLS). Currently, the MLS track is not available for the concentration.

Given the wide variety of geographic and disciplinary specializations possible within the major and concentration, students construct their course sequence in close collaboration with the director of undergraduate studies. All students, however, share the experience of taking the course CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society in their sophomore year, as well as the required senior seminar in the fall of their last year in the program. The ICLS major and concentration are designed for students interested in the cross-disciplinary and cross-cultural study of texts, traditions, media, and discourses in an increasingly transnational world.

Students planning to apply for admission to the CLS major, the MLS major track, or the CLS concentration should organize their course of study in order to complete the following prerequisites by the end of the sophomore year:

1. Preparation to undertake advanced work in one foreign language, to be demonstrated by completion of two introduction to literature courses, typically numbered 3333-3350.
2. Completion of at least four terms of study of a second foreign language or two terms in each of two foreign languages.
3. Enrollment in CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society in the spring semester of the sophomore year.

Information about admission requirements and application to the major or concentration can be found at http://icls.columbia.edu/programs/undergraduate-admissions/. Students are advised to meet with the director of undergraduate studies before submitting the statement of purpose for the application. Applications are due in early January of the sophomore year.

Departmental Honors

To be eligible for departmental honors, students must have a minimum grade point average of 3.6 for courses in the major. Departmental honors will be conferred only on students who have submitted a superior senior thesis that clearly demonstrates originality and excellent scholarship. Note that the senior thesis is not required for the major. For information on the honors program, see http://icls.columbia.edu/programs/departmental-honors/.

Executive Committee of ICLS L. Maria Bo (English and Comparative Literature) Bruno Bosteels (Latin American and Iberian Cultures) Souleymane Bachir Diagne (French and Romance Philology) Madeleine Dobie (French and Romance Philology) Brent Hayes Edwards (English and Comparative Literature, Jazz) Matthew Engelke (Religion) Stathis Gourgouris (Classics, English and Comparative Literature) Rishi Kumar Goyal (Emergency Medicine) Bernard Harcourt (Columbia Law School) Gil Hochberg (Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies and IRWGS) Lydia H. Liu (East Asian Languages and Cultures) David B. Lurie (East Asian Languages and Cultures) Anupama P Rao (History, Barnard) Felicity Scott (Architecture) Oliver Simons (Germanic Languages) Joseph Slaughter (English and Comparative Literature) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (University Professor of the Humanities) Dennis Tenen (English and Comparative Literature) Jesus R. Velasco (Latin American and Iberian Cultures)

Guidelines for all ICLS Majors and Concentrators

Requirements for the major and concentration in Comparative Literature and Society were updated in February 2019; please contact the director of undergraduate studies with any questions. An application worksheet can be found on our website (http://icls.columbia.edu/programs/
undergraduate-admissions). Applications are due in early January of a student's sophomore year. At the time of application, students interested in the major (including the major track in Medicine, Literature, and Society) or concentration must have met these requirements:

1. Foreign language 1: four semesters of language training (or equivalent) and two semesters of introductory literature courses, typically numbered 3330-3350;
2. (CLS Majors only) Foreign language 2: four semesters of one language or two semesters of two languages;
3. CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society, usually taken in the spring of the sophomore year;
4. A focus statement, 1-2 pages in length. The focus is a period, theme, problem, movement, etc., that is explored from an interdisciplinary and/or a comparative perspective. Faculty understand that this statement is a work in progress, but that it serves as a useful guide to students' academic pursuits and course selection.

Major in Comparative Literature and Society

The major in Comparative Literature and Society consists of a minimum of 33 points or 11 courses, distributed as follows. Courses taken to fulfill the application requirements do not count toward the major. With the exception of courses taken to satisfy the global core requirement, double counting of courses to the major and another program or university requirement must be approved by the DUS. Requirements for the major and concentration in Comparative Literature and Society were updated in February 2019; please contact the director of undergraduate studies with any questions.

1. CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society, required for all majors and normally taken in the spring of the sophomore year;
2. Advanced courses as follows (please note that one course may be used to fulfill two of the advanced course requirements):
   - Two courses with a CPLS designator. CLxx courses, i.e. courses cross-listed between ICLS and other departments, may also be counted toward this requirement (6-8 points)
   - Two seminars in a humanities or social science discipline other than literature (e.g. Architecture, Anthropology, Art History, Economics, Gender & Sexuality Studies, History, Law, Linguistics, Music, Political Science, Race & Ethnicity Studies, Sociology...). The two courses must be grounded in the same disciplinary approach but don't have to be offered by the same department or program (6-8 points)
   - Two courses requiring readings in a language other than English. (The two courses don't have to be in the same foreign language) (6-8 points)
   - Two courses focusing on a specific national or regional literature or culture, chosen from any discipline (The two courses should focus on the same nation/region) (6-8 points)
   - Two elective courses reflecting the student's intellectual interests. The senior thesis may be counted toward this requirement. Additional foreign language study may also be counted with DUS approval (6-8 points)
3. CPLS UN3991 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society

Major Track in Medicine, Literature, and Society

The major track in Medicine, Literature, and Society requires 39 points (15 courses.) Note that language courses taken to fulfill the application requirements 1 above do not count toward the required points for the major. Students interested in the track are strongly encouraged to fulfill their science requirement with classes in human biology (e.g., Human Species, Genes and Development) or human psychology (e.g., Mind, Brain, and Behavior).

1. CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society, required for all ICLS majors and normally taken in the spring of the sophomore year
2. Advanced courses as follows (please note that one course may be used to fulfill two of the advanced course requirements):
   - Three courses with a CPLS designator, or courses designated as comparative in nature by the various language-literature or social science departments (i.e., CL- courses)
   - Three courses within a given department/discipline that address the student's focused interest (Literature and Medicine; Medical Anthropology; History of Medicine/Public Health) but most importantly develop the methodological skills of that discipline
   - Two courses requiring readings in a language other than English, preferably conducted in the target language and for which written assignments are composed in the language as well
   - Four courses in interdisciplinary studies that address the nexus of the student's interests (Literature and Medicine; Medical Anthropology; History of Medicine/Public Health) OR an individual area of specialization (e.g., Disability Studies; Neuroscience and the Human; Technology Studies; Discourses of the Body; Biopolitics; Bioethics; etc.)
   - One course of engaged scholarship/service learning/ independent project (this may be fulfilled by appropriate study abroad and/or study elsewhere in the US)
3. CPLS UN3992 Senior Seminar in Medicine, Literature, and Society or CPLS UN3991 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society

Concentration in Comparative Literature and Society

The concentration in Comparative Literature and Society consists of a minimum of 27 points or 9 courses, distributed as follows. Please note that courses taken to fulfill the application requirements do not count toward the major. With the exception of courses taken to satisfy the global core requirement, any double counting of courses to the major and another program or university requirement must be approved by the DUS. Requirements for the major and concentration in Comparative Literature and Society were updated in February 2019; please contact the director of undergraduate studies with any questions.

1. CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society, normally taken in the spring of the sophomore year;
2. Advanced courses as follows:
• Two courses with a CPLS designator. CL-- courses, i.e. courses cross-listed between ICLS and other departments, may also be counted toward this requirement (6-8 points)
• Two seminars in a humanities or social science discipline other than literature (e.g. Architecture, Anthropology, Art History, Economics, Gender & Sexuality Studies, History, Law, Linguistics, Music, Political Science, Race & Ethnicity Studies, Sociology…). The two courses must be grounded in the same disciplinary approach but don't have to be offered by the same department or program (6-8 points)
• Two courses requiring readings in a language other than English (the two courses don’t have to be in the same foreign language) (6-8 points)
• One course focusing on a specific national or regional literature or culture, chosen from any discipline (3-8 points)
• Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society (CPLS V3991)

The senior seminar is taken in fall semester of the senior year. Students explore three areas of contemporary reflection in the field of comparative literature and society. Topics change yearly and are aligned with current ICLS research projects. Recent examples include: Bandung Humanism; Global Language Justice; A Safer Online Public Square

• (Optional) Senior Thesis (CPLS 3995) (3 points)

Students sign up for thesis credits (CPLS 3995) in the spring semester of the senior year but should begin to prepare in the fall semester. They work with an adviser from the Columbia/Barnard faculty who oversees the project and assigns the final grade. The DUS of ICLS is the second reader for all projects. The thesis must be a minimum of 35 pages double-spaced and must include footnotes and a bibliography. Translations, creative work and multi-media projects can be submitted with the prior approval of the DUS. These must be accompanied by an introduction that situates the project intellectually. The thesis should be written in English unless a student receives permission from the DUS to write in another language. Note that the completed thesis is submitted before the end of the spring semester, usually by April 15. The thesis is considered as a 3-point course. It may be counted in lieu of a course taken to meet requirements 2, 3, 4, or 5.

Students should consult frequently with the DUS to ensure that their program of study develops in consonance with the intellectual project described in the focus statement that was presented as part of the admissions process. The faculty understands that this statement is itself a work in progress, but also that it serves as a useful guide to the student's academic pursuits and course selection.

Comparative Literature and Society concentration students should also consider the Barnard College course offerings in Comparative Literature. They are also strongly encouraged to avail themselves of the opportunity to study abroad.

FALL 2019 COURSES

CPLS UN3991 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society. 3 points.
Prerequisites: CPLS UN3900
The senior seminar is a capstone course required of all CLS/MLA majors. The seminar provides students the opportunity to discuss selected topics in comparative literature and society and medical humanities in a cross-disciplinary, multilingual, and global perspective. Students undertake individual research projects while participating in directed readings and critical dialogues about theory and research methodologies, which may culminate in the senior thesis. Students review work in progress and share results through weekly oral reports and written reports.

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CPLS GU4111 World Philology. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement
Philology, broadly defined as the practice of making sense of texts, is a fundamental human activity that has been repeatedly institutionalized in widely separated places and times. In the wake of the formation of the modern academic disciplines in the nineteenth century and their global spread, it became difficult to understand the power and glory of older western philology, and its striking parallels with other pre- and early modern forms of scholarship around the globe. This class seeks to create a new comparative framework for understanding how earlier generations made sense of the texts that they valued, and how their practices provide still-vital models for us at a time of upheaval in the format and media of texts and in our scholarly approaches to them. Students will encounter key fields of philology—textual criticism, lexicography, grammar, and, above all, commentary—not in the abstract but as instantiated in relation to four foundational works—the Confucian Analects, the Rāmāyaṇa of Vālmīki, the Aeneid, and the Tale of Genji—and the scholarly traditions that grew up around them. We are never alone when we grapple with the basic question of how to read texts whose meaning is unclear to us. Over the course of the semester, this class will foster a global understanding of the deep roots and strange parallels linking contemporary reading and interpretation to the practices of the past.

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CPLS GU4145 Fascism: Aesthetics and Politics . 4 points.
The election of President Donald Trump has renewed interest in the examination of fascism- as an ideology, as a political movement and as a form of governance. Our inquiry into the nature of fascism will primarily focus on Western European cases- some where it remained an intellectual movement (France), and others such as Italy and Germany where it was a ruling regime. Fascism will be discussed in many dimensions- in its novelty as the only new “ism” of the twentieth century, in its relation to nascent technology (radio and film), its racial and gendered configurations, in its relation to (imperialist) war. We will explore the appeal of this ideology to masses and to the individual. Who becomes a fascist? What form of inquiry provides the best explanations? Can art- literature and film- somehow render what social science cannot? Can fascism outlive the century in which it was born and occur in the 21st century?

CLPS GU4251 Global Freud. 3 points.
Prerequisites: Prior study of Freudian theory and psychoanalysis. While there is a general familiarity with the history of psychoanalysis’s spread from Vienna throughout Europe, and from the European centers of psychoanalysis to the US, less is known about its broader internationalization. This course explores the globalization of Freudian theory, and the varying ways it has been read and deployed by intellectuals, artists, and political activists– among others– in various parts of the world. Whether its central appeal was to pre-Revolution Russian intellectuals, who wished to assert their cosmopolitanism and kinship with Europe; to Mexican judges, who employed it to analyze criminal defendants; or to Egyptian experts in dreams, who added this tool to their analytic toolkit, psychoanalysis lent itself to novel, and often contrasting, interpretations and uses.

In this class, we will examine how Freud’s universal model of the mind and theory of the subject were refashioned and repurposed to address specific social problems and to advance particular political projects, and how they were revised to conform to local concepts of emotion and the self. We will consider how a system of thought grounded in secularity and individualism was adapted for faith-based and communitarian societies. In addition, we will look into the ways Freudian notions of the unconscious intersected with existing philosophical traditions, and how other cornerstones of psychoanalytic thought were blended with local interpretive practices. Finally, we will address a number of issues that have arisen in the global transmission of psychoanalysis, including problems in the translation of Freudian theory from the original German, and the formation and ongoing conflicts of the International Psychoanalytic Association.

Fall 2019: CPLS GU4145

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PORT UN3601 Race, Medicine and Literature in 19th-Century Brazil. 3 points.
Not offered during 2019-20 academic year.

Prerequisites: Knowledge of Portuguese
We will read and discuss how racial ideologies like “whitening,” “miscegenation” and “racial democracy” played critical roles in Brazil’s transition to a republic. We will examine movements such as romanticism, naturalism and positivism in literary and visual works. Throughout, we will analyze literature, illustrations and photography that constructed a relationship between race, science, and medicine to better understand the role that scientific racism played in constructing discourses about national identity. We will read abolitionist writings and anti-racist works that contested these ideologies. We will discuss these issues through the lenses of migration, religion, urbanization, gender, sexuality, and class. Course texts include a range of materials including literature, chronicles, short stories, vaudeville, carnival parades, songs, music, photography, and newspaper articles. Throughout, students will gain a vivid picture of Brazilian society in the early stages of nation building, which will provide new ways of understanding and addressing contemporary challenges in Brazil and beyond.

The course will be taught in Portuguese.
ITAL UN3660 Terrorism in Literature and Film: Cultural Reflections between Italian Red Brigades & 9/11. 3 points.

How does the experience of terrorism impact artworks both aesthetically and thematically? And how do artworks that thematize terrorism reveal underlying issues and inner dynamics of contemporary society? In this interdisciplinary course, we will treat novels and films that use the theme of terrorism as a rich resource for understanding the consequences of terrorist violence and the trauma it produces at an individual and social level. To do so, we will compare the cultural reflections on the attack on the Twin Towers in Manhattan on 9/11 to Italy’s years of lead, which was the most disruptive case of domestic terrorism in a Western democracy prior to 2001. We will explore issues such as: the representation of the body of the terrorist and his/her victims; memory and trauma; women’s role in or vis a vis a terrorist associations; children’s perspective on terrorist violence; terrorism and its effect on the nuclear family; the perspective of the Other and postcolonialism; martyrdom and sacrifice. As a result of our close analysis of films and novels on terrorism, we will be able to discover the specificity of 9/11 and the Italian years of lead, and the way in which art not only works as a therapeutic device, but also as analytic tool for political change. This is thus a course that would also be of interest for students of Comparative Literature, Film and Media Studies, English, and Political Science. 

(No previous knowledge is required. All course materials will be in English.)

SPRING 2019 COURSES

CPLS UN3333 East/West Frametale Narratives. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

A study of frame tale collections from India, Persia, the Middle East, and Western Europe from the 5th century C.E. through the 17th century. We will trace the development of short story/novella from their oral traditions and written reworkings, studying such texts as 1001 Nights, Kalila wa-Dimnah, Scholar’s Guide, and the works of Boccaccio, Marguerite de Navarre, Cervantes, and María de Zayas. This is a Global Core course. Application Instructions: E-mail Professor Patricia E. Grieve (peg1@columbia.edu) no later than November 17, with the subject heading “Application: E/W Frametale Narratives.” In your message, include basic information: your name, school, major, year of study, and relevant courses taken, along with a brief statement about why you are interested in taking the course. Applicants will be notified of decisions within a week.

CPLS UN3900 Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society. 3 points.

Introduction to concepts and methods of comparative literature in cross-disciplinary and global context. Topics may include: oral, print, and visual culture; epic, novel, and nation; literature of travel, exile, and diaspora; sex and gender transformation; the human/inhuman; writing trauma; urban imaginaries; world literature; medical humanities. Open only to students intending to declare a major in Comparative Literature and Society or Medicine, Literature, and Society in Spring 2017.

SPRING 2019 COURSES

CPLS UN3995 Senior Thesis on Comparative Literature and Society. 3 points.

Students who decide to write a senior thesis should enroll in this tutorial. They should also identify, during the fall semester, a member of the faculty in a relevant department who will be willing to supervise their work and who is responsible for assigning the final grade. The thesis is a rigorous research work of approximately 40 pages (including a bibliography formatted in MLA style). It may be written in English or in another language relevant to the student’s scholarly interests. The thesis should be turned in on the announced due date as hard copy to the Director of Undergraduate Studies.

CPLS 3997 Independent Study-Undergrad. 1-3 points.

Independent Study (set up for MLS service learning)

CLPS GU4201 Post-Freud. 4 points.

This course examines psychoanalytic movements that are viewed either as post-Freudian in theory or as emerging after Freud’s time. The course begins by considering the ways Freud’s cultural and historical surround, as well as the wartime diaspora of the European psychoanalytic community, shaped Freudian and post-Freudian thought. It then focuses on significant schools and theories of psychoanalysis that were developed from the mid 20th century to the present. Through readings of key texts and selected case studies, it explores theorists’ challenges to classical thought and technique, and their reconfigurations, modernizations, and total rejections of central Freudian ideas. The course concludes by looking at contemporary theorists’ moves to integrate notions of culture, concepts of trauma, and findings from neuroscience and attachment research into the psychoanalytic frame.

Comparative Literature and Society 5
psychoanalysis and literature in order to un-think these questions? differently facing the mirror of thinking mothers? Do we have to resort to invent in order to imagine it? Where can we find room to speculate a little death, like two rivaling twins outside of themselves in a womb we have to of mothers? Are mothers and thinkers engaged in a struggle for life and matricidal? Does the essence of mothers lie in not thinking the essence supposed to share? Does the mother not allow us to think? Is thinking and every single one, by thinking that essence which they all would be singular (mother) in relation to a singular (progeny), kill the mothers, each mothers in their supposed essence as giving birth, bringing to life, as a singular (mother) in relation to a singular (progeny), kill the mothers, each and every single one, by thinking that essence which they all would be supposed to share? Does the mother not allow us to think? Is thinking matricidal? Does the essence of mothers lie in not thinking the essence of mothers? Are mothers and thinkers engaged in a struggle for life and death, like two rivaling twins outside of themselves in a womb we have to invent in order to imagine it? Where can we find room to speculate a little differently facing the mirror of thinking mothers? Do we have to resort to psychoanalysis and literature in order to un-think these questions?

CLPS GU4320 Marginalization in Medicine: A Practical Understanding of the Social Implications of Race. 4 points.

There is a significant correlation between race and health in the United States. People of color and those from underserved populations have been mortality rates and a greater burden of chronic disease than their white counterparts. Differences in health outcomes have been attributed to biological factors as race has been naturalized. In this class we will explore the history of the idea of “race” in the context of changing biomedical knowledge formations. We will then focus on the impact that social determinants like poverty, structural violence, racism and geography have on health. Ultimately, this course will address the social implications of race on health both within the classroom and beyond. In addition to the seminar, there will also be a significant service component. Students will be expected to volunteer at a community organization for a minimum of 3 hours a week. This volunteer work will open an avenue for students to go beyond the walls of their classrooms while learning from and positively impacting their community.

CLPS GU4520 Thinking Mothers – Philosophical, Psychoanalytic, and Literary Speculations. 4 points.

Is it reassuring that no philosophical treatise ‘On the Mother’ seems to have been written in the history of occidental thought? Should we be relieved that nothing this violently direct, obscene, on the mother, seems have been produced? Or should we rather be disturbed that ‘thinking mothers’ has not been a declared task for the mostly male-bonding and father-bound trans-generational band called ‘thinkers’? Would thinking, as philosophical thinking which in one of its traditional senses calls for thinking the essence of ‘a thing’, not require to think motherhood, maternity, or the Mother as the essence of mothers? Would thinking mothers in their supposed essence as giving birth, bringing to life, as a singular (mother) in relation to a singular (progeny), kill the mothers, each and every single one, by thinking that essence which they all would be supposed to share? Does the mother not allow us to think? Is thinking matricidal? Does the essence of mothers lie in not thinking the essence of mothers? Are mothers and thinkers engaged in a struggle for life and death, like two rivaling twins outside of themselves in a womb we have to invent in order to imagine it? Where can we find room to speculate a little differently facing the mirror of thinking mothers? Do we have to resort to psychoanalysis and literature in order to un-think these questions?

CLEN GU4550 Narrative and Human Rights. 3 points.

(Lecture). We can’t talk about human rights without talking about the forms in which we talk about human rights. This course will study the convergences of the thematics, philosophies, politics, practices, and formal properties of literature and human rights. In particular, it will examine how literary questions of narrative shape (and are shaped by) human rights concerns; how do the forms of stories enable and respond to forms of thought, forms of commitment, forms of being, forms of justice, and forms of violation? How does narrative help us to imagine an international order based on human dignity, rights, and equality? We will read classic literary texts and contemporary writing (both literary and non-literary) and view a number of films and other multimedia projects to think about the relationships between story forms and human rights problematics and practices. Likely literary authors: Roberto Bolaño, Miguel de Cervantes, Assia Djebar, Ariel Dorfman, Slavenka Drakulic, Nuruddin Farah, Janette Turner Hospital, Franz Kafka, Sahar Kalifeh, Sindiwe Magona, Maniza Naqvi, Michael Ondaatje, Alicia Partnoy, Ousmane Sembène, Mark Twain . . . . We will also read theoretical and historical pieces by authors such as Agamben, An-Na‘im, Appiah, Arendt, Balibar, Bloch, Chakrabarty, Derrida, Douzinas, Habermas, Harlow, Ignatieff, Laclau and Mouffe, Levinas, Lyotard, Marx, Mutua, Nussbaum, Rorty, Said, Scarry, Soyinka, Spivak, Williams.
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<td>The World Responds to the Greeks: Greece Faces East</td>
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<td>CLEN GU4201</td>
<td>POETRY OF THE AFRICAN DIASPORA</td>
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<td>CLEN UN3775</td>
<td>Narrating Rape: Testimony, Gender and Violence</td>
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