

# COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

## The Institute for Comparative Literature and Society:

Department website: <https://icls.columbia.edu/>

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Office contact: 212-854-8850, [icls@columbia.edu](mailto:icls@columbia.edu)

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Tadas Bugnevicius, [tb2333@columbia.edu](mailto:tb2333@columbia.edu)

Director of Medical Humanities: Rishi K. Goyal, [rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu)

Undergraduate Administrator: Tomi Haxhi, [th2666@columbia.edu](mailto:th2666@columbia.edu)

## Comparative Literature and Society and Medical Humanities majors

The major in Comparative Literature and Society (CLS) 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. 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. Students will 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; the law and the humanities; and studies of space, cities, and architecture.

ICLS also offers a major in Medical Humanities (MedHum). At the level of the individual patient, medicine and medical systems diagnose and treat disease to prolong life and to diminish the suffering that accompanies illness. But in many societies, the reach of modern biomedicine far exceeds the intimate zone of patient and caregiver encompassed by this model. From climate change and food activism to city planning and public housing, from family planning and surrogacy to gendered and racial identities, the biomedical model of health now underwrites national and supra-state policies, corporate ventures, targets of social and political activism and modes of individual engagement. Students enrolled in the Medical Humanities major work at the intersection of these different forces and discourses, examining the many factors, from the biological to the social, economic, political and aesthetic, that influence health and shape our perceptions of physical and psychological well-being.

Both majors require an application. Please see the admissions details on [our website](#).

## Student Advising

Director of Undergraduate Studies: Tadas Bugnevicius, [tb2333@columbia.edu](mailto:tb2333@columbia.edu)

Director of Medical Humanities: Rishi K. Goyal, [rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu)

Undergraduate Administrator: Tomi Haxhi, [th2666@columbia.edu](mailto:th2666@columbia.edu)

## Consulting Advisers

Students intending to seek admission to the Comparative Literature and Society major are encouraged to speak as soon as possible to the Director of Undergraduate Studies (DUS), Tadas Bugnevicius ([tb3111@columbia.edu](mailto:tb3111@columbia.edu)). Students intending to seek admission to the Medical Humanities major are encouraged to speak as soon as possible to the Director of Medical Humanities, Rishi Goyal, ([rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu](mailto:rkg6@cumc.columbia.edu)) and the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Tadas Bugnevicius ([tb3111@columbia.edu](mailto:tb3111@columbia.edu)).

Students enroll in either major at the beginning of the spring semester of the sophomore year by completing the admissions form that can be found on [our website](#) and submitting the completed form along with a transcript and one-page statement of academic interests.

In the fall semester, students are invited to attend a Meet-n-Greet, an informal discussion with current and prospective majors, our DUS and our Director of Medical Humanities.

## Enrolling in Classes

The ICLS majors require that you take the Intro course (CPLS V3900) in the spring semester of your sophomore year, and the Senior Seminar (CPLS V3991) in the fall semester of your senior year. Enrollment in the Intro course requires that you have already applied to the major or concentration. When it comes time to register, add the course to your waitlist and you will be admitted by a member of the ICLS team.

## Preparing for Graduate Study

CLS majors often apply to PhD programs and occasionally to MA programs in Humanities and Social Sciences. All students should meet with the Director of Undergraduate Studies, Tadas Bugnevicius, to discuss their plans for graduate studies as early as they can.

Medical Humanities majors often pursue graduate studies. Students apply to medical school, master's programs in public health and PhD programs in the Sciences, Humanities and Social Sciences. Premedical students should meet with their pre-medical advisor. All students should meet with the Director of Medical Humanities, Rishi Goyal, to discuss their plans for graduate studies as early as they can.

## Coursework Taken Outside of Columbia

Coursework in fulfillment of a major or minor must be taken at Columbia University unless explicitly noted here and/or expressly permitted by the Director of Undergraduate Studies of the program. Exceptions or substitutions permitted by the Director of Undergraduate Studies should be confirmed in writing by email to the student.

## Advanced Placement

ICLS does not accept any advanced placement credit toward courses in our curriculum.

## Barnard College Courses

Barnard courses 3000-level and above are considered for this major with the exception of the Barnard Introduction to Comparative Literature. That course cannot be substituted for our required Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society. Students should consult with the

DUS on their course schedule to ensure the courses they choose will meet their course requirements.

## Transfer Courses

When students transfer to Columbia from other institutions, their coursework at their previous institution must first be considered by their school in order to be evaluated for degree credit (e.g., to confirm that the courses will count toward the 124 points of credit that every student is required to complete for the B.A. degree). Only after that degree credit is confirmed, departments may consider whether those courses can also be used to fulfill specific degree requirements toward a major at ICLS.

## Study Abroad Courses

Classes taken abroad through Columbia-led programs (i.e., those administered by Columbia's Center for Undergraduate Global Engagement and taught by Columbia instructors) are treated as Columbia courses, equivalent to those taken on the Morningside Heights campus. If they are not explicitly listed by ICLS as fulfilling requirements in the major, the DUS will need to confirm that they can be used toward requirements in the major.

Classes taken abroad through other institutions and programs are treated as transfer credit to Columbia and are subject to the same policies as other transfer courses. There will be a limit on the number of courses taken abroad that can be applied to the major, and they must be approved by the DUS.

## Summer Courses

Summer courses at Columbia are offered through the School of Professional Studies. Courses taken in a Summer Term may be used toward requirements for the major only as articulated in department/institute/center guidelines or by permission of the Director(s) of Undergraduate Studies. More general policies about summer coursework can be found in the Academic Regulations section of this Bulletin.

# Undergraduate Research and Senior Thesis

## Undergraduate Research in Courses

The ICLS majors teach students critical theory and interdisciplinary thinking that are applicable to many areas of knowledge. The required Intro course (CPLS V3900) introduces students to theoretical and interdisciplinary methods. The required Senior Seminar (CPLS V3991) introduces students to contemporary theoretical debates and is based on current research interests of ICLS faculty. Students are also given an opportunity to develop an independent research project. The optional Senior Thesis workshop (CPLS 3995) is fully dedicated to advanced independent research.

## Senior Thesis Coursework and Requirements

The senior thesis is optional. If you want to be considered for departmental honors, it is required. It is a piece of scholarly research, the model for which is an academic journal article. A translation or a piece of creative work, such as a piece of creative writing, can be submitted with the prior approval of the DUS, and must be accompanied by an explanatory introduction or foreword of no less than 5000 words in length.

Students interested in writing a senior thesis will submit a thesis proposal in the spring semester of their junior year. Students who decide to write a thesis will enroll in a year-long course (CPLS3995) starting

in the fall of their senior year. Detailed information can be found on [our website](#).

# Department Honors and Prizes

## Department 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. Please note that the senior thesis is not required for the major. Please keep in mind that, according to Columbia College rules, no more than 10% of the majors graduating in a department or program in a given year may be awarded Departmental Honors.

## Academic Prizes

Each year, ICLS presents one to two seniors with the Catherine Medalia Johannet Memorial Prize in Comparative Literature and Society. These prizes were created by family and friends in memory of Catherine Medalia Johannet, a Medicine, Literature and Society major, CC'15, consistent with Catherine's interest in literature and its use in effecting change in society.

One to two prizes will be awarded annually to a Comparative Literature & Society or Medical Humanities major who has written a distinguished senior thesis that demonstrates the highest academic rigor, creativity and engagement with ethical questions. The winner will be chosen by a faculty committee consisting of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, the Director of the Medical Humanities major and two other faculty members associated with ICLS.

CLS majors in the School of General Studies for the John Angus Burrell Memorial Prize for distinction in English and Comparative Literature.

# Other Important Information

**CLS Foreign Language Requirement:** Since students are expected to be able to conduct basic research in a foreign language they must, by the time they apply, meet the following foreign language requirement:

**Foreign Language #1:** you must have taken or be taking in the spring semester of your sophomore year, at least one advanced course in a foreign language. The course should be taken at Columbia, Barnard or a peer institution. 'Advanced' signifies a course at the 3000- or 4000-level that is not a conversation course. The course does not have to be conducted in the target language but most of the readings must be in the language.

**Foreign language #2:** you must have completed or be completing in the spring semester of your sophomore year, the equivalent of least 4 semesters of a foreign language. This can be satisfied by either 4 semesters in one language or 2 semesters each in 2 different languages. These four semesters may be taken at Columbia or reflected in AP scores, summer program credits, etc. Native and heritage speakers must take a placement test to confirm their level unless they have completed high school in the foreign language.

**MedHum Foreign Language Requirement:** Students must have taken at Columbia or be taking during the spring semester of the sophomore year at least one advanced course in a foreign language. 'Advanced' signifies a course at the 3000- or 4000- level that is not primarily a language training course. Note that the course does not have to be conducted in the language but most of the readings must be in the language. An

additional advanced language course will be required as part of your major course requirements.

**Executive Committee of ICLS** Nadia Abu El-Haj (Anthropology, Center for Palestine Studies) Tadas Bugnevicius (French and ICLS) Bruno Bosteels (Latin American and Iberian Cultures) Claudia Breger (Germanic Languages) Souleymane Bachir Diagne (French and Romance Philology) Madeleine Dobie (French and Romance Philology) Brent Hayes Edwards (English and Comparative Literature, Jazz) Matthew Engelke (Religion) Kevin A. Fellezs (Music) Stathis Gourgouris (Classics, English and Comparative Literature) Rishi Kumar Goyal (Emergency Medicine) Seth Kimmel (Latin American and Iberian Cultures) Adam Leeds (Slavic Languages) Lydia H. Liu (East Asian Languages and Cultures) David B. Lurie (East Asian Languages and Cultures) Anupama P Rao (History, Barnard) Pamela Smith (History and Center for Science and Society) Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (University Professor of the Humanities) Dennis Tenen (English and Comparative Literature)

## Guidance for Undergraduate Students in the Department

### Program Planning for all Students

Students who entered Columbia (as first-year students or as transfer students) in or after Fall 2024 may select from a curriculum of majors and minors. The requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree, and role of majors and minors in those requirements, can be found in the Academic Requirements section of the Bulletin dated the academic year when the student matriculated at Columbia and the Bulletin dated the academic year when the student was a sophomore and declared programs of study.

Students who entered Columbia in or before Fall 2023 may select from a curriculum of majors and minors and concentrations. The requirements for the Bachelor of Arts degree, and the role of majors and minors in those requirements, can be found in the Academic Requirements section of the Bulletin dated the academic year when the student matriculated at Columbia and the Bulletin dated the academic year when the student was a sophomore and declared programs of study.

Students should consult the Admissions information on the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society website for details on the application requirements. Students are also encouraged to attend the annual Undergraduate Meet-n-Greet held in October. Consult the events page of our website or contact [icls@columbia.edu](mailto:icls@columbia.edu) for details on this meeting which is open to all prospective majors.

### Course Numbering Structure

Courses at the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society have the subject code CPLS - Comparative Literature and Society, or CLPS - Comparative Literature and Psychoanalytic Study. Additionally, the Institute cross-lists courses from our affiliated faculty each semester. These courses can be found on the Directory of Classes under our departmental page. For our majors, all coursework should be 3000-level or above. Lectures at the 2000-level are only accepted within coursework with special permission from the DUS. All coursework in these interdisciplinary majors should be approved by the DUS prior to the end of the change period.

### Guidance for First-Year Students

Prospective majors should focus their efforts on meeting the language requirements for our major.

For Comparative Literature and Society Majors:

Foreign Language #1: you must have taken or be taking in the spring semester of your sophomore year, at least one advanced course in a foreign language. The course should be taken at Columbia, Barnard or a peer institution. 'Advanced' signifies a course at the 3000- or 4000-level that is not a conversation course. The course does not have to be conducted in the target language but most of the readings must be in the language.

Foreign language #2: you must have completed or be completing in the spring semester of your sophomore year, the equivalent of at least 4 semesters of a foreign language. This can be satisfied by either 4 semesters in one language or 2 semesters each in 2 different languages. These four semesters may be taken at Columbia or reflected in AP scores, summer program credits, etc. Native and heritage speakers must take a placement test to confirm their level unless they have completed high school in the foreign language.

#### For Medical Humanities Majors:

Foreign Language Requirement: Students must have taken at Columbia or be taking during the spring semester of the sophomore year at least one advanced course in a foreign language. 'Advanced' signifies a course at the 3000- or 4000- level that is not primarily a language training course. Note that the course does not have to be conducted in the language but most of the readings must be in the language. An additional advanced language course will be required as part of your major course requirements.

For less commonly taught languages, students should consult with the DUS to determine how to meet the advanced language course requirement.

### Guidance for Transfer Students

Transfer students should consult with the DUS upon arrival at Columbia University to prepare their application for the major. They should not wait until the usual application period. The Introduction to Comparative Literature and Society course (CPLS UN3900) should be taken during their first spring term at Columbia University.

## Undergraduate Programs of Study

### Required Coursework for all Programs

The ICLS majors require that you take the Intro course (CPLS UN3900) in the spring semester of your sophomore year, and the Senior Seminar (CPLS UN3991) in the fall semester of your senior year. Enrollment in the Intro course requires that you have already applied to the major or concentration. When it comes time to register, add the course to your waitlist and you will be admitted by a member of the ICLS team.

### 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. Courses fulfilling major requirements must be advanced, discussion-based seminars. Language courses in the Beginner I to Intermediate II stream cannot be counted to fulfill any major requirement. With the exception of courses taken to satisfy the global core requirement, double counting of courses to the CPLS major and another program or university requirement must be pre-approved by the DUS.

1. Introduction to ICLS (CPLS UN3900), taken in the spring of the sophomore year (3 points)
2. 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)
3. 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)
4. Two courses requiring readings in a language other than English. (The two courses cannot be taken in the same foreign language) (6-8 points)
5. Two courses focusing on a specific national or regional literature or culture, chosen from any discipline (The two courses may focus on the same nation/region) (6-8 points)
6. One elective course reflecting the student's intellectual interests. Additional foreign language study may also be counted with DUS approval (3-4 points)
7. Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society (CPLS UN3991).

The senior seminar is taken in the 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 Global Racisms, Literary Cultures, Digital Humanities, and Medical Humanities.

1. (Optional) Senior Thesis (CPLS 3995) (3 points)

Students who decide to write a thesis will submit a proposal in the spring term of their junior year and enroll in a year-long course (CPLS UN3995) starting in the fall of their senior year. This year-long, 3-credit course (1 credit in Fall, 2 credits in Spring) will allow students to receive academic credits for their thesis, and to count the thesis towards completion of their major requirement when necessary (Requirement #10 of the CLS Course Chart).

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 majors 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.

## Major in Medical Humanities

The major in Medical Humanities consists of a minimum of 33 points or 11 courses, distributed as follows.

1. Introduction to Comparative Literature & Society (CPLS UN3900): 3 points

This course introduces important methodologies and areas of disciplinary reflection in contemporary comparative literature. It is taken jointly with comparative literature and society majors taken in the spring semester of a student's sophomore year. In addition to units on narrative, authorship and the history and practice of comparative and world literature it includes units relating to science, health and medicine, race, gender and sexuality that are directly relevant to MedHum majors.

1. 1 course with a CPLS or CL- course identifier: 3-4 points

Students choose from among the wide range of courses sponsored by the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society or cross-listed between ICLS and other departments. These offerings change every semester and are listed on the ICLS website.

2. 1 course with readings in a language other than English: 3-4 points

Students may either take a course that is taught wholly or partially in a foreign language, or a course taught in English for which they have received approval to do most of the reading in a foreign language.

3. 3 courses that form the disciplinary/methodological nexus of the student's interests: 9-12 points

Students will develop an individualized course of study at the nexus of health, society and the humanities in discussion with the DUS (Some example of prior constellations include but are not limited to: Literature and Medicine; Narrative Medicine; Medical Anthropology; History of Medicine; Comparative Public Health; Disability studies; Neuroscience; Biopolitics; Bioethics.)

4. 2 required core courses in Medical Humanities: 6 points

The core courses in medical humanities are designated as any course taught by faculty on the medical humanities advisory board that emphasizes the content, methods, theories, and approaches of the medical humanities. Please confirm with the Director of Medical Humanities if you have any questions

5. 2 classes in the biological or biochemical sciences: 6-8 points

Students in the MedHum major should be versed in contemporary and classical debates and knowledge in the biological sciences. Students may take any two biology or biochemistry classes that relate to fundamental concepts in human biology.

6. Senior Seminar at ICLS: 3 points

The senior seminar is taken in the 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 Global Racisms, Literary Cultures, Digital Humanities, and Medical Humanities.

7. Senior Thesis (optional): 3 pts

Students who decide to write a thesis will submit a proposal in the spring semester of their junior year and enroll in a year-long course (CPLS UN3995) starting in the fall of their senior year. This year-long, 3-credit course (1 credit in Fall, 2 credits in Spring) will allow students to receive academic credits for their thesis, and to count the thesis towards completion of their major requirement when necessary.

The specific course of study must be approved by the DUS.



## For students who entered Columbia in or before the 2023-24 academic year

### Concentration in Comparative Literature and Society

PLEASE NOTE: this information is for students already in the program. The concentration is no longer accepting new students as of Fall 2024.

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. Courses fulfilling concentration requirements must be advanced, discussion-based seminars. Language courses in the Beginner I to Intermediate II stream cannot be counted to fulfill any concentration requirement. With the exception of courses taken to satisfy the global core requirement, any double counting of courses to the CPLS concentration and another program or university requirement must be approved by the DUS.

1. Introduction to ICLS (CPLS UN3900), taken in the spring of the sophomore year (3 points).
2. 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)
3. 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)
4. Two courses requiring readings in a language other than English (the two courses cannot be taken in the same foreign language) (6-8 points)
5. One course focusing on a specific national or regional literature or culture, chosen from any discipline (3-4 points)
6. Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society (CPLS UN3991)

The senior seminar is taken in the 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 Global Racisms, Literary Cultures, Digital Humanities, and Medical Humanities.

#### 7. (Optional) Senior Thesis (CPLS UN3995) (3 points)

Students who decide to write a thesis must submit a proposal spring semester of their junior year and enroll in a year-long course (CPLS3995) starting in the fall semester of their senior year. This year-long, 3-credit course (1 credit in Fall, 2 credits in Spring) will allow students to receive academic credits for their thesis, and to count the thesis towards completion of their requirements when necessary.

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 2025 Courses

### CPLS UN3800 Justice Now. 4.00 points.

This lecture course, accompanied by its weekly recitation, examines the meaning of justice by exploring theoretical questions, ideas, and debates associated with contemporary movements that have shaped political discourse in the United States over the past decade. The course begins with John Rawls's seminal work *A Theory of Justice* and a set of critiques from feminist and communitarian philosophers that direct our attention to specific contexts and identities that are relevant to any attempt to envision a just society. From there, the course turns to a study of social justice in three areas: economics, the environment, and race, with a corresponding focus on such contemporary movements as democratic socialism, environmentalism, and Black Lives Matter. Each of these units offers competing perspectives from liberal, communitarian, and post-Marxist philosophers, as well as critical theorists, which will enable students to consider the philosophical dimensions of these issues, their connections with one another, and the approaches of movements that are now working to address them. A final unit on praxis explores strategies that movements use to build solidarity and achieve change, ranging from voting to literature and the arts. Throughout each unit, students will have the opportunity to explore not only philosophical ideas, but also stories, images, sounds, and other cultural works that are being created by activists. The course will include guest speakers from the movements being studied, and will also feature class outings. Justice Now serves as a bridge from the Columbia Core Curriculum to contemporary social justice issues and the work of the Eric H. Holder Jr. Initiative for Civil and Political Rights. As such, the course builds on the texts and ideas that students encounter in Literature Humanities and Contemporary Civilization, and will also include some analysis of music and visual art. Prior completion of Core courses is not necessary, as students will be provided with relevant background material in lectures and recitation meetings

Fall 2025: CPLS UN3800

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3800	001/14909	M W 4:10pm - 5:25pm Room TBA	Larry Jackson	4.00	4/22

**CPLS UN3991 SENIOR SEM-COMP LIT # SOCIETY. 3.00 points.**

Prerequisites: CPLS UN3900

Prerequisites: CPLS UN3900 The senior seminar is a capstone course required of all CLS/MedHum majors and CLS concentrations. Only ICLS students may register. 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

Fall 2025: CPLS UN3991

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3991	001/10173	T 4:10pm - 6:00pm Room TBA	Bruno Bosteels	3.00	0/20
CPLS 3991	002/10174	W 12:10pm - 2:00pm Room TBA	Tadas Bugnevicius	3.00	0/20

**CPLS GU4275 Introduction to Narrative Medicine. 3.00 points.**

Narrative competence is a crucial dimension of health-care delivery, the capacity to attend and respond to stories of illness, and the narrative skills to reflect critically on the scene of care and its contexts. Narrative Medicine explores and builds the clinical applications of literary knowledge. The objectives of this foundations course include furthering close reading skills, and exploring theories of self-telling and relationality. At the center of this project is the medical encounter. In examining the complexities of this exchange, to help clinicians to fulfill their "receiving" duties more effectively, we will turn to narrative theory, autobiographical theory, psychoanalytic theory, trauma scholarship and witnessing literature. Classwork integrates didactic and experiential methodologies to develop a heightened awareness of self and others and build a practical set of narrative competencies. Readings will include works by Toni Morrison, W.G. Sebald, Lucy Grealy, Kazuo Ishiguro, Alison Bechdel, Arthur Frank, Paul Ricoeur, Jonathan Shay and Jens Brockmeier

Fall 2025: CPLS GU4275

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4275	001/14306	T 12:10pm - 2:00pm Room TBA	Mary Sormanti	3.00	11/20

**CPLS GU4325 Abolition Medicine: Medical Racisms and Anti-Racisms. 3.00 points.**

In 1935, WEB Dubois wrote about abolition democracy: an idea based not only on breaking down unjust systems, but on building up new, antiracist social structures. Scholar activists like Angela Davis, Ruth Gilmore and Mariame Kaba have long contended that the abolition of slavery was but one first step in ongoing abolitionist practices dismantling racialized systems of policing, surveillance and incarceration. The possibilities of prison and police abolition have recently come into the mainstream national consciousness during the 2020 resurgence of nationwide Black Lives Matters (BLM) protests. As we collectively imagine what nonpunitive and supportive community reinvestment in employment, education, childcare, mental health, and housing might look like, medicine must be a part of these conversations. Indeed, if racist violence is a public health emergency, and we are trying to bring forth a "public health approach to public safety" – what are medicine's responsibilities to these social and institutional reinventions? Medicine has a long and fraught history of racial violence. It was, after all, medicine and pseudoscientific inquiry that helped establish what we know as the racial categorizations of today: ways of separating human beings based on things like skin color and hair texture that were used (and often continue to be used) to justify the enslavement, exclusion, or genocide of one group of people by another. Additionally, the history of the professionalization of U.S. medicine, through the formation of medical schools and professional organizations as well as and the certification of trained physicians, is a history of exclusion, with a solidification of the identity of "physician" around upper middle class white masculinity. Indeed, the 1910 Flexner Report, whose aim was to make consistent training across the country's medical schools, was explicit in its racism. From practices of eugenic sterilization, to histories of experimentation upon bodies of color, medicine is unfortunately built upon racist, sexist and able-ist practices. This course is built on the premise that a socially just practice of medicine is a bioethical imperative. Such a practice cannot be achieved, however, without examining medicine's histories of racism, as well as learning from and building upon histories of anti-racist health practice. The first half of the semester will be dedicated to learning about histories of medical racism: from eugenics and racist experimentation to public health xenophobic fear mongering. The second half of the semester will be dedicated to examining medical and grassroots anti-racist practices: from the free health clinics and hospital takeovers of the Black Panther and Young Lords Parties, to environmental activism in Flint and the Sioux Rock Reservation to antiracist AIDS and COVID activism

Fall 2025: CPLS GU4325

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4325	001/10323	Th 12:10pm - 2:00pm Room TBA	Sayantani DasGupta	3.00	16/20

**CPLS GU4399 Introduction to Media and Cultural Studies. 3.00 points.**

This course serves as an introduction to key texts, concepts, and thinkers in Media and Cultural Studies. Rather than presenting a reductionist, linear narrative that uncritically traces the triumphs of Western technological innovations and genius individuals, this course instead explores media as organizational and management devices that produce particular kinds of knowledge and power, including by influencing our understanding of social issues and social justice. We will explore how media, as vehicles of knowledge production, are intimately connected to meaning-making, policing, and exclusion practices. At the same time, media can be repurposed as instruments for liberation struggles and emancipatory imaginaries of all kinds. Throughout the course, we will learn about these themes both through the lens of a critical history of the present, emphasizing the long-standing value struggles that underpin media environments and inform practices of re-mediation and cultural production, and also through being in conversation with recent trends in media studies and contemporary social issues

Fall 2025: CPLS GU4399

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4399	001/13338	W 2:10pm - 4:00pm Room TBA	Irina Kalinka	3.00	11/20

**CPLS GU4685 Theory from the South. 4.00 points.**

Typically, a course in social theory or political philosophy might be taught with two different emphases—as intellectual history, or as a theoretical tradition. In the first approach canonical texts are examined in relation to their political, social, economic and cultural contexts. In the second approach “classic” texts are systematically compared to one another to show both similarities and differences in their approach, and to place them in some developmental sequence. In either case, the textual corpus tends to focus on the historical experiences of the North Atlantic as both normative and universal. Instead, this seminar focuses not merely on the placement of social theory in global contexts but rather, has as its explicit focus texts generated by thinkers who seek to theorize the geohistorical complexities of modern worldmaking through social forms and lifeworlds that stand askew to dominant approaches to the study of capitalist modernity. The South is conceived here as a set of relations and not as a place, less as a geographical location than a heuristic tool that might reorient discussion on fundamental questions about equality and difference, politics and personhood as these have taken shape as world historical questions of our time. The seminar is particularly interested in the interface between subaltern and minority pasts as these confront material contexts of resource extraction and labor exploitation, and the distinctive manner by which embodied difference intersects social inequality. That is, we will think about the relationship between historical identities and their material substrate. Broadly speaking, the seminar will bring into conversation work generated in the Americas, especially African American scholarship that engages questions of slavery and subjectivity, black vitality, and Afropessimism together with approaches addressing problems of anticolonial politics, postcolonial sovereignty, ideas of Islamic universality, and global Marxisms. That is, we seek to direct the energies of social thought toward questions of translation, alterity, and historical comparison. A broad familiarity with colonial histories, anticolonial thought, and/or with canonical texts of social theory would be helpful, but not necessary. The seminar will focus on key concepts such as anticolonial thought; racial capitalism, primitive accumulation; caste-race comparison; political aesthetics; and left and right populism. Readings for the seminar will include a mix of recent texts of social theory and political philosophy, and monographs in history, sociology, and anthropology

Fall 2025: CPLS GU4685

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4685	001/15045	W 4:10pm - 6:00pm Room TBA	Anupama Rao	4.00	2/20

**CLPS GU4200 A Comprehensive Introduction to Sigmund Freud's Theories: The Origins of Psychoanalytic Thought. 4.00 points.**

This course offers a comprehensive understanding of the origins, foundations and evolution of Freud's psychoanalytic theorizing during the four decades following 1895. Via close readings of his texts, with neither worship nor condescension, we will situate the development of psychoanalysis as a theory of mind within historical context, and explore its applications to education, society, culture, and the humanities

Fall 2025: CLPS GU4200

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CLPS 4200	001/10319	W 12:10pm - 2:00pm Room TBA	W. Tomlinson, Adele Tutter	4.00	20/20

**CLPS GU4275 TRAUMA AND PLEASURE. 4.00 points.**

Can the words “trauma” and “pleasure” be put in the same sentence? If trauma epitomizes suffering and pleasure represents enjoyment, is there any relation between these experiences? And yet, how else to explain that people seem endlessly addicted to negative experiences, or that traumatized people often try to recreate the damage they endured? We are living in an age of endless trauma, and everywhere we go, we hear that trauma is destructive, anathema to pleasure, that it destroys our sense of self, our security, our stability, and identity. We are taught to avoid trauma at all costs because it is harmful and inimical to flourishing. New statistics routinely confirm that we are living through a trauma epidemic in which ordinary people experience symptoms of extreme distress, flashbacks, intrusive thoughts, nightmares, and difficulty sleeping. Every year, new memoirs are published in which protagonists detail their endless battles with traumatic adversity and most television shows, across a variety of genres, include trauma as a subplot to character development (Ted Lasso, Euphoria, True Detective, to name a few). Referring to its growing pervasiveness, the New Yorker critic Parul Sehgal wrote a controversial essay, “The Case Against the Trauma Plot” (2021) in which she criticizes our culture’s overreliance on trauma as a primary trope of character development, forcing us to ask: is trauma really as widespread as we think? how did trauma become such a popular ‘identity’? what work is trauma doing for us, as individuals and as a culture? Is it possible to recognize the ubiquity of trauma while also acknowledging that we often seek situations which are harmful, even traumatizing, that we might be attracted to suffering for reasons we don’t yet understand? This course examines the complex relationship between trauma and pleasure by familiarizing students with the clinical and theoretical concepts at the core of contemporary trauma and critical theory. We will focus specifically on the topics of: sexuality, perversion, trauma, identity, relationality, narcissism, gender and attachment in order to explore how these concepts work today. Delving into theoretical writing by Foucault, Bersani, Edelman, Berlant, Butler, Dean and Preciado, as well as clinical writing by major psychoanalysts, Freud, Laplanche, Loewald, Lacan, Laplanche and Winnicott, we will redefine contemporary debates by exploring their clinical meaning. In addition to offering a comprehensive outline of how psychoanalysis and critical theory relate, this course will expose students to a wide range of contemporary clinical thinking in order to facilitate a deeper engagement with the practical, lived dimension of psychoanalysis

Fall 2025: CLPS GU4275

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CLPS 4275	001/10320	T 10:10am - 12:00pm Room TBA	Gila Ashtor	4.00	22/22

## Spring 2025 Courses

**CPLS UN3900 INTRO TO COMP LIT # SOCIETY. 3.00 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 who have applied for and declared a major in Comparative Literature and Society or Medical Humanities

Spring 2025: CPLS UN3900

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3900	001/13847	M 12:10pm - 2:00pm 401 Hamilton Hall	Tadas Bugnevicius	3.00	17/20
CPLS 3900	002/13848	T 12:10pm - 2:00pm 301m Fayerweather	Rishi Goyal	3.00	12/20

**CPLS UN3931 Life at the End of Life: Palliative Care and Service. 4.00 points.**

Life at the End of Life (LATEOL) is a seminar designed to provide opportunities for readings and reflections on the experience of volunteer service work. Students will learn how to critically reflect on their experiences working with patients in the context of questions raised in the texts read in the seminar. Students will develop the skills necessary to critically reflect on the significance of emotional care as a medical practitioner, as well as form a deeper understanding of the role of palliative care and comfort care in a life cycle of care. The fieldwork component of the course is met by the student’s continued direct service work during the course itself. Students participating in the seminar will volunteer weekly at Terence Cardinal Cooke Health Care Center. Through this, students will provide emotional support and assistance, and serve as a consistent presence for someone experiencing chronic illness, disability, or the end of life. At the core of this framework is the patient; however, it is important to consider the impact this volunteer service will have on the student and Columbia. Therefore, the following specific goals and objectives are outlined to benefit each individual and group involved in this service relationship

Spring 2025: CPLS UN3931

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3931	001/13836	Th 4:10pm - 6:00pm 522c Kent Hall	Ashley Moyse	4.00	17/20

**CPLS UN3951 Narratives for Living: Planetary. 3.00 points.**

Is it possible to read literature in such a way as to be coherent with the requirements for the environmental disaster that seems to be upon us? This course will attempt to answer this question through 4 novels dealing with planetary and climate change. This is a restricted course by interview only. ICLS students will read the Bengali and/or French texts in the original. Students are required to write a 1 page response to the text to be read the next day by midnight the previous day. Class discussions will be constructed on these responses. There will be a colloquium at the end of the semester, requiring oral presentation of a research paper that will engage the entire class

Spring 2025: CPLS UN3951

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3951	001/13842	W 4:10pm - 6:00pm 201 80 Claremont	Gayatri Spivak, Deeva Gupta	3.00	1/12



**CPLS UN3995 SENIOR THESIS IN COMP LIT/SOC. 1.50 point.**

This year-long, three-credit course is mandatory for students who will be writing their Senior Thesis in Comparative Literature and Society or in Medical Humanities. Students who wish to be considered for Departmental honors are required to submit a Senior Thesis. The thesis is a rigorous research work of approximately 40 pages, and it will include citations and a bibliographical apparatus. It may be written in English or, with the permission of the Director of Undergraduate Studies, in another language relevant to the students scholarly interests. Although modeled after an independent study, in which core elements of the structure, direction, and pace of the work are decided together by the student and their faculty thesis supervisor, students are nonetheless expected to complete certain major steps in the research and writing process according to the timeline outlined by the ICLS DUS

**Spring 2025: CPLS UN3995**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3995	001/13850		Tadas Bugnevicius	1.50	16/22

**Fall 2025: CPLS UN3995**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 3995	001/10397			1.50	14/25

**CPLS GU4162 Transnational Feminisms-China and Beyond. 3.00 points.**

This is an interdisciplinary seminar for graduate students and advanced undergraduates to explore transnational feminisms, gender politics in China, and the movement of feminist (and anti-feminist) ideas across borders. We will read some translations of primary works by Chinese writers, as well as feminist scholarship in English to gain insight into the following areas: social movements; gender, race, ethnicity and class; global capitalism and inequalities; sexualities; identities; digital activism; nationalisms; marriage and families; and the politics of reproduction. Although the course has no formal prerequisites, it assumes some basic knowledge about Chinese history and intersectional approaches to gender. If you have never taken a course on China before, please ask me for guidance on whether or not the course is suitable for you

**Spring 2025: CPLS GU4162**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4162	001/17392	W 2:10pm - 4:00pm 302 Alfred Lerner Hall	Leta Hong Fincher	3.00	18/20

**CPLS GU4356 Critical Cartographies. 3.00 points.**

"Los cuatro puntos cardinales son tres: el norte y el sur," the Chilean poet Vicente Huidobro wrote with sharp humor in *Altazor o el viaje en paracaídas* (*Altazor or the Voyage in a Parachute*): "The four cardinal points are three: North and South." The North/South division is not the only marker of spatial, geopolitical, economic, or ideological inequalities; several other divides compete with it as the axis around which our global order is structured: West/the rest, center/periphery, urban/rural, public/private, land/sea, common/enclosed, developed/developing, colonial/postcolonial, without forgetting the old ideological divisions of First, Second, Third, and Fourth Worlds. In response to such spatial divides, this course will explore a range of critical attempts in art, literature, the social sciences and the theoretical humanities to map out the unequal organization of the current world order. Studying concepts of so-called "primitive" or "originary" accumulation, land appropriation, dispossession, uneven development, real abstraction, and neo-extractivism with a particular focus on Latin America, we will circle back to the question of how to imagine a cartography that might be critical of the current hegemonies without increasing the worldwide zones of invisibility and inequality that sustain them

**Spring 2025: CPLS GU4356**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4356	001/19148	T 4:30pm - 6:20pm 201 Casa Hispanica	Bruno Bosteels	3.00	4/15

**CPLS GU4375 The Poetics of Social Forms: The Legacy of Fredric Jameson. 3.00 points.**

Fredric Jameson was the foremost Marxist thinker of the United States in the post-War period. His dialectical presentation of European thought set the terms of reception and debate of many of the European figures, ideas, and approaches that instigated a tumultuous rethinking of the humanities in U.S. academia from the 70s to the 90s. Amid that reception, he developed his own enormously influential approach to criticize the modern and postmodern cultural logics of capitalism and late capitalism. Although his oeuvre sprawls, it spirals through a series of themes: ideology and mass culture, narrative and History, the triad of realism, modernism, and postmodernism, periodization and cultural revolution, temporality and Utopia. This seminar charts one path through his prodigious theorizing

**Spring 2025: CPLS GU4375**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4375	001/17394	W 2:10pm - 4:00pm B-100 Heyman Center For Humanities	Adam Leeds	3.00	11/20

**CPLS GU4545 Wittgenstein in the Machine. 4.00 points.**

This seminar explores the intersections between Ludwig Wittgenstein's philosophy and key developments in artificial intelligence. We will examine how Wittgenstein's later philosophy challenges contemporary debates about the capabilities and limitations of machine intelligence. We will also learn how AI practitioners actively engage with Wittgenstein's ideas, developing innovative methods in machine translation, semantic networks, or natural language processing (NLP) in general

**Spring 2025: CPLS GU4545**

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4545	001/13852	T 4:10pm - 6:00pm 405 Kent Hall	Lydia Liu	4.00	11/15

**CPLS GU4565 Motherhood and Technology: From Conception to Birth. 3.00 points.**

This seminar will explore how technological innovations have radically transformed the experience of biological motherhood, from (pre-)conception to pregnancy and birth. The twenty-first century has seen rapid advances in genomic and reproductive care, the circulation of new family and kinship structures, the entrenchment of existing global networks of power and privilege, and the politics of contested bodily sites. But while technology might seem to be the main driver of these changes, the revolution in motherhood is as much a product of transformation in other domains: ethics, social structures, aesthetics, and experience. Together, we will work to understand how medical technologies have changed—and have been changed by—the experience of biological motherhood in a global context. We will encounter technologies for regulating and shaping biological motherhood: for instance, contraceptive devices, pregnancy tests, genetic editing tools, egg freezing and cryogenic storage for embryos, prenatal tests and scans, gestational surrogacy and its global commercial markets, and new frontiers of technology which enable novel forms of biological parentage (e.g. gestational parenthood for trans men; babies with the DNA of two fathers). At every turn, we will consider not only the positive and liberating affordances of such technologies, but also the (sometimes unexamined) burdens that trail their imbrication in the lives of mothers and parents. The seminar will particularly suit students who are interested in the medical humanities, in pre-medical studies, in literary memoir, and in bioethics and critical theory

Spring 2025: CPLS GU4565

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4565	001/17677	M 10:10am - 12:00pm 401 Chandler	Arden Hegele	3.00	20/22

**CPLS GU4876 1001 Nights, Then and Now. 4.00 points.**

This course explores the origins, performance, reception, adaptation, and translation of *The Thousand and One Nights*, one of the most beloved and influential story collections in world literature. An authorless collage built up over centuries, it is an “ocean” of narratives that has much to teach us about how stories work, whether they must come to an end, and our apparently bottomless desire to hear them. In addition to reading the tales themselves and studying their themes and devices, we will delve into the very real history of this curious work and its eccentric interpreters, translators, and readers. Finally, we will consider how the *Nights* puts pressure on ideas of authorship and originality and enlarges our notion of what a book is – and might be

Spring 2025: CPLS GU4876

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4876	001/18145	T 2:10pm - 4:00pm 302 Alfred Lerner Hall	Yasmine Seale	4.00	11/15

**CPLS GU4997 INDEPENDENT STUDY. 1.00-3.00 points.**

Spring 2025: CPLS GU4997

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CPLS 4997	001/17996		Bernard Harcourt	1.00-3.00	4/5
CPLS 4997	002/20527		Bernard Harcourt	1.00-3.00	1/5

**CLPS GU4201 BASIC CONCEPTS-POST-FREUD THGT. 4.00 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

Spring 2025: CLPS GU4201

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CLPS 4201	001/17740	W 10:10am - 12:00pm 311 Fayerweather	Adele Tutter	4.00	13/20

**CLPS GU4420 The Creative Self: Autofiction, Psychoanalysis, Neuroscience. 4 points.**

Fictional autobiography, or autofiction, forces us to question our assumptions about the links between creativity, truth, and authenticity. Can one invent, or create, one's own story? It is possible to write the truth of our selves, by creating it? Intriguingly, a process much like autofictional writing is at the heart of modern psychoanalytic technique – and research in neuroscience increasingly suggests that the human brain's potential to morph and adapt might be instrumental to human mentation as we know it. Might it be possible, then, to invent our way to a healthier narrative, to a different life of the mind, or even, perhaps, to a different neural life? This course explores creativity and self-alteration broadly in three parallel but distinct domains: autofiction, object-relations psychoanalysis and neuroscience. At one level, this is a course about the theories of creativity revealed and implied by the peculiar art-form of autofictional writing, by contemporary psychotherapeutic techniques, and by discoveries pertaining to neural plasticity. At another level, this is a course about interdisciplinary itself. We will seek to understand when and how these three disciplines can be used together to create a rich and multilayered understanding of the problem of human creativity, without resorting to simplistic mergers and crude forms of reductionism. Literary readings to include Wilfred Bion, Christine Brooke-Rose, Marguerite Duras, Chris Kraus, Maggie Nelson, Luisa Passerini and others.

Spring 2025: CLPS GU4420

Course Number	Section/Call Number	Times/Location	Instructor	Points	Enrollment
CLPS 4420	001/17678	Th 10:10am - 12:00pm 1102 International Affairs Bldg	Valerio Amoretti	4	19/25