COMPARATIVE LITERATURE AND SOCIETY

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Established at Columbia in 1998, the Institute for Comparative Literature and Society (ICLS) 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 programs at ICLS allow 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 in Medical Humanities (MedHum). Currently, the MedHum major is not available for the concentration.

Given the wide variety of geographic and disciplinary specializations possible within the majors 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 INTRO TO COMP LIT # SOCIETY in their sophomore year, as well as the required senior seminar in the fall of their last year in the program. The ICLS majors 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 MedHum major, 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 INTRO TO COMP LIT # SOCIETY in the spring semester of the sophomore year.

Information about admission requirements and application to the majors or concentration can be found at https://icls.columbia.edu/undergraduate-program/admissions-to-the-majors-or-concentration/. Students are advised to meet with the director of undergraduate studies before submitting the statement of purpose for the required 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/.

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. 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 in Medical Humanities) or concentration must have met these requirements:

1. Foreign language 1: four semesters of language training (or equivalent) and one introductory literature course, typically numbered 3339-3350;
2. (CLS Majors and Concentrations only) Foreign language 2: four semesters of one language or two semesters of two languages;
3. CPLS UN3900 INTRO TO COMP LIT # 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. 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 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 INTRO TO COMP LIT # SOCIETY, required for all majors and normally taken in the spring of the sophomore year (3 points)
2. Advanced courses as follows:
   • 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)
   • One elective course 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 (3-4 points)
3. CPLS UN3991 Senior Seminar in Comparative Literature and Society
4. CPLS UN3995 Senior thesis (optional). (3 points) year-long course
5. Students sign up for thesis credits as a year-long course (CPLS 3995) in the fall and spring semester of the senior year. Please see our detailed thesis guide on our website. 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 11,000 and 15,000 words in length, 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 with 1 credit earned in the Fall and 2 credits earned in the Spring. 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.

Major in Medical Humanities

The major in Medical Humanities requires 33 points (11 courses). Note that language courses taken to fulfill the application requirements 1 above do not count toward the required points for 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. Students interested in the major 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 INTRO TO COMP LIT # 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):
   • 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.
   • 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 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
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. 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, any double counting of courses to the CPLS 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 INTRO TO COMP LIT # 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) year-long course

Students sign up for thesis credits as a year-long course (CPLS 3995) in the fall and spring semester of the senior year. Please see our detailed thesis guide on our website. 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 11,000 and 15,000 words in length, 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 with 1 credit earned in the Fall and 2 credits earned in the Spring.

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 2022 COURSES

BIOL UN1360 Science and Society. 3.00 points.
This course, which has been given at another institution for the past five years, uses a seminar discussion format to examine the relationship between science and society from numerous perspectives, using examples from many fields of science, mostly biology and medicine, including the Covid-19 pandemic. We welcome undergraduates from all classes who are concentrating in any field of sciences, humanities, or the arts; there are no prerequisites, other than an interest in how the scientific enterprise works. The course addresses a wide array of topics: why do people choose a scientific career; why do governments and other funders support scientific work; how does science fail; why is there widespread skepticism about science; how is it represented in the arts; how are results disseminated, evaluated, and legally protected; and many other subjects. Assignments—mainly short articles (from newspapers and journals) and book chapters, but also a few films and novels—will be provided for each class, and every student will undertake a term project of their own choosing, after consultations with the instructor.

RELI UN2670 Magic and Modernity. 3 points.
Not offered during 2022-23 academic year.
This course introduces students to the cultural history of magic: as an idea, as a practice, and as a tool with which to wield power and induce wonder. Magic, as we will explore, is a modern concept, the contours of which have been shaped by its relations with religion and science, always against larger backdrops—of the Enlightenment, Romanticism, (post) colonialism, and (post) secularism. Readings are drawn from philosophy, anthropology, religious studies, sociology, drama, literature, history, history of science, and political theory.

HIST UN2978 Science and Pseudoscience: Alchemy to AI. 4.00 points.
During the 2020 US presidential election and the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, science and “scientific truths” were fiercely contested. This course provides a historical perspective on the issues at stake. The course begins with an historical account of how areas of natural knowledge, such as astrology, alchemy, and “natural magic,” which were central components of an educated person’s view of the world in early modern Europe, became marginalized, while a new philosophy of nature (what we would now call empirical science) came to dominate the discourse of rationality. Historical developments examined in this course out of which this new understanding of nature emerged include the rise of the centralized state, religious reform, and European expansion. The course uses this historical account to show how science and pseudoscience developed in tandem in the period from 1400 to 1800. This historical account equips students to examine contemporary issues of expertise, the social construction of science, pluralism in science, certainty and uncertainty in science, as well as critical engagement with contemporary technologies.

HIST UN2979 Science and Pseudoscience: Alchemy to AI - DISC. 0.00 points.
Required discussion section for HIST UN2978 lecture.
CLM W3450 How to do things with Queer Bodies. 3.00 points.
Homosexuality, as a term, might be a relatively recent invention in Western culture (1891) but bodies that acted and appeared queer(ly) existed long before that. This course will focus on acts, not identities, in tracing the evolution of writing the queer body from antiquity until today. In doing so it will explore a number of multimodal materials – texts, vases, sculptures, paintings, photographs, movies etc. – in an effort to understand the evolution of the ways in which language (written, spoken or visual) registers these bodies in literature and culture. When we bring the dimension of the body into the way we view the past, we find that new questions and new ways of approaching old questions emerge. What did the ancient actually write about the male/female/trans* (homo)sexual body? Did they actually create gender non-binary statues? Can we find biographies of the lives of saints in drag in Byzantium? How did the Victorians change the way in which we read Antiquity? How is the queer body registered in Contemporary Literature and Culture? Can one write the history of homosexuality as a history of bodies? How are queer bodies constructed and erased by scholars? How can we disturb national archives by globalizing the queer canon of bodies through translation? These are some of the questions that we will examine during the semester. The course surveys texts from Homer, Sappho, Aeschylus, Euripides, Plato, Theocritus, Ovid, Dio Chrysostom, Lucian, Walt Whitman, Oscar Wilde, Arthur Symonds, Dinos Christianopoulos, Audre Lorde, Larry Kramer, Tony Kushner etc., the work of artists such as Yiannis Tsarouchis, Robert Mapplethorpe, Dimitris Papaioannou, Cassils, movies such as 120 battements par minute, and popular TV shows such as Pose.

Fall 2022: CLGM W3450

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<td>CLGM 3450</td>
<td>001/12573</td>
<td>T 2:10pm - 4:00pm Room TBA</td>
<td>Nikolas Kakkoufa</td>
<td>3.00</td>
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CPLS 3454 Blood/Lust: Staging the Early Modern Mediterranean [in English]. 4 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

This course examines, in sixteenth and seventeenth century Spain and England (1580-1640), how the two countries staged the conflict between them, and with the Ottoman Empire; that is, how both countries represent national and imperial clashes, and the concepts of being “Spanish,” “English,” or “Turk,” as well as the dynamic and fluid identities of North Africa, often played out on the high seas of the Mediterranean with Islam and the Ottoman Empire. We will consider how the Ottoman Empire depicted itself artistically through miniatures and court poetry. The course will include travel and captivity narratives from Spain, England, and the Ottoman Empire.

Fall 2022: CPLS 3454

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<td>CPLS 3454</td>
<td>001/11066</td>
<td>Th 12:10pm - 2:00pm Room TBA</td>
<td>Patricia Grieve</td>
<td>4</td>
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CLME UN3928 Arabic Prison Writing. 3 points.
CC/GS/SEAS: Partial Fulfillment of Global Core Requirement

This course studies the genealogy of the prison in Arab culture as manifested in memoirs, narratives, and poems. These cut across a vast temporal and spatial swath, covering selections from the Quran, Sufi narratives from al-Hallaj oeuvre, poetry by prisoners of war: classical, medieval, and modern. It also studies modern narratives by women prisoners and political prisoners, and narratives that engage with these issues. Arabic prison writing is studied against other genealogies of this prism, especially in the West, to map out the birth of prison, its institutionalization, mechanism, and role. All readings for the course are in English translations.

Fall 2022: CLME UN3928

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<td>CLME 3928</td>
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<td>Muhsin Al-Musawi</td>
<td>3</td>
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CPLS UN3951 Narratives for Living: Planetarity. 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 planetarity 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.

Fall 2022: CPLS UN3951

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<td>Gayatri Spivak</td>
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CPLS UN3965 Precision Medicine: Biological, Social, and Ethical Implications. 3.00 points.

This course will cover the scientific foundations of precision medicine, its social dimensions, alongside fundamental humanistic questions and challenges raised by this discipline. It is designed as an introduction to precision medicine, particularly for the non-scientist student, but will also explore issues relevant to students who are planning a career in science or medicine.

Fall 2022: CPLS UN3965

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<td>M W 10:10am - 11:25am Room TBA</td>
<td>Rachel Adams, Gill Eyal, Samuel Sternberg</td>
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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 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

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CLPS GU4200 FREUD. 3.00 points.
Clinic, Culture, Cruelty: With these three terms one could indicate both the wide range of Freud's work and the specific force it kept addressing without shying away from the theoretical and practical consequences that came with it. In Civilization and its Discontent Freud develops—in part openly, in part secretly—a peculiar, paradoxical and abyssal logic in order to formalize how culture (or civilization) is in a mortal battle with itself. Even more so, culture is this battle; and civilization is the result of a violence the sole aim and source of which is the destruction of civilization. The determining factors of this logic form the proper object of psychoanalysis which had developed out of clinical concerns; and what occurs here as “violence," or “destruction," as it does in several texts whose themes are cultural, historical, or sociological, is given multiple other names in all of Freud's work or is linked to such names: the unconscious, the drive, libido, Eros, Thanatos, sexuality, narcissism, masochism, even hysteria, obsession and psychosis. All these terms mark instances of the same logic in which what we call the “sexual” and “language" are entangled with a “cruelty" that is neither the opposite of pleasure nor can be derived from any supposedly natural ground. In this seminar, we will trace this logic as well as its material in its reiterations, displacements, and reinventions from Freud's clinical writings, through his constructions and theories of the "psyche," to his analyses and speculations in civilization and history. Freud's text will be read closely, with the attention to details that he himself performed as a virtue and a method. No previous acquaintance with Freud or psychoanalysis is required—only a mind as open as possible to the surprises over what they have to offer today

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Comparative Literature and Society

CLPS GU4515 RADICAL PSYCHOANALYSIS: INTRODUCING LAPLANCHE. 3.00 points.
The increasing attention to topics at the heart of popular discourse – race and gender, sexuality and consent, sociality and autonomy – have brought to light some of the longstanding limitations of traditional psychoanalysis. While many critics in literary and critical theory are calling for the end of psychoanalysis, others are calling for a renewed investment in psychoanalytic ideas. How do we navigate this contemporary scene? Is it better to dismiss the Freudian enterprise tout court or should we simply reaffirm our faith in Freud's original ideas? The French philosopher and psychoanalyst Jean Laplanche (1924-2012) offers a bold and original way to engage with these debates by offering a “third way.” A close reader of Freud who advocates for an idiosyncratic approach of “faithful infidelity,” Laplanche offers one of the most exhaustive critiques of the field from Freud into the present. Leaving no stone unturned in his quest to isolate the problematic moments in psychoanalytic theory, Laplanche develops a rigorous critique of psychoanalysis’ self-centeredness. Once a student and patient of Lacan, Laplanche demonstrates that there is a deep and abiding resistance to acknowledging the role of actual other people in the constitution of our private psychic lives, and until we grasp the true rule of otherness in ourselves, psychoanalysis will never manage to be truly radical. This course introduces Laplanche by situating his thinking in the context of contemporary literary and critical theory. We will draw specifically on affect and queer theory to amplify the radical dimensions of Laplanche’s thought. Delving into Mary Gaitskill’s novel, Bad Behavior, John Cameron Mitchell’s play, Hedwig and the Angry Inch and Esme Weijun Wang’s The Collected Schizophrenias, alongside the critical theories of Judith Butler, Paul Preciado, and Adam Phillips, we will discover how Laplanche offers new ways to approach some of our most urgent concerns. In addition to offering a comprehensive outline of Laplanche’s oeuvre, this course will focus on several major concepts that Laplanche introduces as the future foundations of a radical psychoanalytic theory: sexuality, seduction, translation and the enigmatic signifier.

Spring 2022 Courses

HIST UN2978 Science and Pseudoscience: Alchemy to AI. 4.00 points.
During the 2020 US presidential election and the years of the COVID-19 pandemic, science and “scientific truths” were fiercely contested. This course provides a historical perspective on the issues at stake. The course begins with an historical account of how areas of natural knowledge, such as astrology, alchemy, and “natural magic,” which were central components of an educated person’s view of the world in early modern Europe, became marginalized, while a new philosophy of nature (what we would now call empirical science) came to dominate the discourse of rationality. Historical developments examined in this course out of which this new understanding of nature emerged include the rise of the centralized state, religious reform, and European expansion. The course uses this historical account to show how science and pseudoscience developed in tandem in the period from 1400 to 1800. This historical account equips students to examine contemporary issues of expertise, the social construction of science, pluralism in science, certainty and uncertainty in science, as well as critical engagement with contemporary technologies.

Fall 2022: CLPS GU4515

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Spring 2022: HIST UN2978

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Fall 2022: HIST UN2978

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CPLS UN3231 Rhetoric of Science: The roles of metaphor and narrative in the scientific enterprise. 3.00 points.

This course is intended as a general introduction to the discipline known as Rhetoric of Science, which, in its simplest form, aims to apply the tools of rhetorical inquiry to the various modes of scientific discourse. Special attention will be given to examining the roles that metaphor and narrative play in that effort. A significant part of this course will be devoted to the feminist critique and analysis of science, in terms of both theory development and science communication. We will begin the course with a review of the perceived dichotomies and polarizing viewpoints that undergird and inform much of the scholarship. Using C.P. Snow’s seminal Rede Lecture The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution as background, we will go on to discuss some of the significant changes in the philosophy of science that gave rise to the “interpretive turn” and post-empiricist philosophies of science—in particular, Thomas Kuhn’s epoch-making The Structure of Scientific Revolutions, which will be read in its entirety. We will then consider the ways that Kuhn’s work lays the foundations for the emergence of Rhetoric of Science as a discipline, especially his emphasis on the roles that language, argument, and persuasion play in the development, communication, and acceptance of scientific theory and knowledge. The course will then focus on some of the foundational work in the field of Rhetoric of Science as the discipline attempts to carve out a place for itself as distinct from the philosophy or sociology of science. From that point we will move to a discussion of metaphor and analogy in the scientific enterprise, and consider the ways scientists use storytelling as the vehicle for communication. The course will end with a close study of the alternatives proposed by feminist scholars on two important fronts. The first begins with the groundbreaking work of scientist/philosopher Evelyn Fox Keller and her reflections on the role of gender in the practice and development of science, and continues with the work of philosophers such as Sandra Harding and Donna Haraway and the critique of objectivity and development of standpoint epistemologies. We will then move on to feminist approaches to science communication and the ways that gendered language can skew our understanding of both gender and the world. An important outcome of this course will be an understanding of the importance that language plays in the lives of both scientists and non-scientists alike, and how an awareness of rhetorical devices—whether or not they are consciously employed—can enhance our understanding and practice of science, as well as help bridge the divide between science and humanistic inquiry.

ENGL UN3385 PLAYING WITH GENDER IN THE MIDDLE AGES. 4.00 points.

What kind of flexibility and play does gender signify in medieval literature? How was gender enacted and how did it impact identity, sexuality, shape-shifting, intimacy and empowerment? How does it echo in our ideas of queerness, closeness, and sexual identity as understood today? This class will look at how a kind of power associated with gender and sexuality figures in medieval literature and is echoed in contemporary poetics and theory. This course takes the idea of _play_—seriously (despite the paradoxical nature of this statement), discerning how gender embodies a form of discursive and non discursive play in premodern works. In doing so, we will examine how the definition of gender is implicated in theological, cultural, and scientific discourses on the nature of the body and sexuality, how it links to the role of the liminality in discourses of power, and how poetic play and gender figure in contemporary contexts, both literary and theoretical. We begin by looking at representations and attitudes towards gender in the Middle Ages via literary and non-literary texts, examining the role of gender in relation to rhetoric, philosophy, representations of Christ, Old Norse mythology, and more. We will then look at how medieval texts play with gender and speak to modern times. Often, medieval texts and modern theoretical work will be paired together to “dialogue” with one another. And, since dialogue is a trans-historical pedagogical form of play, we will see where our discussions take us, possibly modifying the syllabus, letting our course transform along the way.

CLIA UN3685 Regarding the Medieval Other: Inhibition, Individuality, and Identity. 3.00 points.

White supremacists have attempted to coopt the iconography of the Middle Ages in their campaign to legitimize their hateful agendas, glorifying the medieval period for its supposed racial and cultural homogeneity. Yet literary, artistic, and historical sources from the period indicate that the Middle Ages were, in fact, far more diverse than many presume. This course offers a correction to the notion of a homogenous Middle Ages by focusing on the role and status of the Other in this period. We will examine those at the margins of medieval society, including women, enslaved persons, Muslims, Jews, queer folk, people of color, the impoverished, and the disabled. The course will ultimately nuance students’ potential preconceived notions of the Middle Ages, demonstrating the degree to which medieval society defies modern assumptions of both its uniformity and stratification. Our primary focus on Italian literary and historical sources will be supplemented as appropriate by other medieval European perspectives, by critical theory, and by literature from the period. In English
PHIL UN3756 Critical Philosophy of Race: What is Race?. 3 points.
This course is a philosophical examination of the meaning and significance of the concept of race. The course will chiefly aim to answer: What do we mean by the term "race"? And why is it often tied to the existence of racism? From where does the concept come? And what role did "race" play in the philosophical thought and the culture of Western modernity? Among the questions that can be asked are, How do concepts of race contribute to the formation and justification of various economic, political, and social institutions and practices, such as slavery, colonialism, and segregation? However, we will also inquire at the end of the course whether "race" is always a destructive concept, or whether it can be re-defined as part of a liberation project centered on racial identity: the appreciation and celebration of racial difference and solidarity.

CPLS 3995 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.

PHIL UN3852 PHILOSOPHY AND LITERATURE. 3.00 points.
Introduction to central concepts in narrative theory: plot, archetype, myth, story vs. discourse, Freudian analysis, history and narrative, chronotype and personal narrative. These are explored in the context of sustained investigation of a particular plot device: the time loop. Examples come from Russian modernist fiction, Soviet and American science fiction, and film. We compare being stuck in a time loop with being lost in space - a theme found in personal narratives shared orally and online, as well as in literary fiction. Students develop a final paper topic on time loop narrative of their choice.

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.

CLRS GU4111 Narrative and Repetition: Circling in Time and Space. 3.00 points.
An introduction to central concepts in narrative theory: plot, archetype, myth, story vs. discourse, Freudian analysis, history and narrative, chronotype and personal narrative. These are explored in the context of sustained investigation of a particular plot device: the time loop. Examples come from Russian modernist fiction, Soviet and American science fiction, and film. We compare being stuck in a time loop with being lost in space - a theme found in personal narratives shared orally and online, as well as in literary fiction. Students develop a final paper topic on time loop narrative of their choice.

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.
The idea of utopia, from its earliest pre-modern examples, involves the question of proper governance, the ideal relations between a state and its peoples, and the responsibilities owed between individuals. In all of its forms, Utopias create borders and insist on degrees of isolation. In this class, we explore the pressures that plague and other catastrophes place on the ideals of utopia, especially in terms of how social relations are imagined. We will study the relationship between utopia and dystopia; how science fiction and reality converge; and how we might harmonize individual and collective interests. The problem of isolation and utopia pierces the very heart of the novel as a genre. Literary pleasure, both within and outside of the text, involving both the work of the reader and writer, is often figured in terms of isolation. The rise of the novel as a genre tracks with the rise of peaceful, solitary time. But against this pleasure in isolation, we can see the frustrations and loneliness highlighted by the contested contemporary public health interventions of social distancing and lockdown. In thinking about utopia, we will examine the role that isolation plays in its production. In a review of a novel by Margaret Atwood, Frederic Jameson suggested that, “the post catastrophe situation in reality constitutes the preparation for the emergence of Utopia itself.” This antagonism will drive our study of isolation, individuation and collective futures. The first half of the class will focus on classical depictions of utopia, dystopia and catastrophe while the second half will look at contemporary imaginings. We will read novels by Daniel Defoe, Mary Shelley, Octavia Butler, and Ling Ma among others, alongside classic social contract theory, political philosophy and public health history to explore the intersections of biopolitics and the imagination. Throughout we will seek to imagine the possibility of emerging more together out of catastrophe.
CLPS GU4510 Jacques Lacan: An introduction to his work. 4 points.

Jacques Lacan (1901 – 1981) was without any doubt the most influential psychoanalyst since Sigmund Freud. A meticulous yet inventive reader of the founder of psychoanalysis, he opened himself up to a panoply of sciences, philosophies, and other discourses as well as to political events and social phenomena in order to attain psychoanalysis not only to its own internal exigencies but also to those that he considered to be the ones of his time.

We will read Lacan according to this double exigency: to formalize anew its own logic, methodology, and construction of objects, which proceed “sui generis” as Freud said; and to put them in friction with some of the phenomena and structural determinants of what seems to impose itself on us today: the erosion of discourse as social bond in a time of an ever increasing number of displaced people; a radical change of the status of speech and the “letter”—as well as literature—in the hyper-digitalized world; the renewed enigma of sex and bodily enjoyment in the context of a tele-techno-medical science becoming increasingly autonomous; the status of “nature” as that what might survive only in being destroyed. In short: What concepts are needed to think the “unconscious” today?

The course will proposed as an introduction to Lacan for which no previous acquaintance with his work is required. It will cover texts and seminars from all the periods of his work with a focus on the those from the 1970s.

Spring 2022: CLPS GU4510

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CPLS GU4802 Contradictions of Care: From Intimacy to Institution. 3.00 points.

Care is central to the interpersonal claim that is made by the other. It is a response that recognizes and satisfies a need. Care can be motivated by pain and sorrow, but also by desire and the desire for recognition. But while care is a fundamental aspect of healing, it can also be a demand by pain and sorrow, but also by desire and the desire for recognition. But care is an ambiguous concept that always already contains or is determined by its oppositions; we will begin by analyzing the concept of care itself, drawing on resources from the history and philosophy of medicine as well as literary sources. Ideals of care that many of us have for our loved ones are difficult to render at scale, and are often in tension with the for-profit motivations behind the development of medications, the administration of healthcare services, and the distribution of goods. We will consider the sorts of compromises that are made every day through readings in literature, history, political science and philosophy and also through first-person experience in the form of a practicum that will run parallel to the course.

Spring 2022: CPLS GU4802

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HIST GU4962 Making and Knowing in Early Modern Europe: Hands-On History. 4.00 points.

This course introduces undergraduate and graduate students to the materials, techniques, contexts, and meanings of skilled craft and artistic practices in early modern Europe (1350-1750), in order to reflect upon a series of topics, including craft knowledge and artisanal epistemology; the intersections between craft and science; and questions of historical methodology in reconstructing the material world of the past. The course will be run as a “Laboratory Seminar”, with discussions of primary and secondary materials, as well as hands-on work in a laboratory. The first semester-long course to use the published Edition of Fr. 640 as its focus, it will test the use of the Edition in a higher education classroom to inform the development of the Companion. This course is associated with the Making and Knowing Project of the Center for Science and Society at Columbia University. The first semester-long course to use the published Edition of Fr. 640 as its focus, it will test the use of the Edition in a higher education classroom to inform the development of Phase II of the Making and Knowing Project - a Research and Teaching Companion. Students’ final projects (exploratory and experimental work in the form of digital/textual analysis of Ms. Fr. 640, reconstruction insight reports, videos for the Companion, or a combination) will be published as part of the Companion or the Sandbox depending on content and long-term maintenance considerations.

Spring 2022: HIST GU4962

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SOCI GR5001 Freedom: Personal, Political and Academic. 4 points.

Though this is a graduate seminar, undergraduate juniors and seniors are permitted to enroll. There are no pre-requisites for the course. The fourteen weeks of the course will consist of a combination of 1) lectures by the instructors followed by discussions, 2) discussions with guest visitors who are distinguished scholars in the field and whose work will be pre-circulated to the seminar, and 3) presentations by students on the readings on the syllabus.

Requirements: Strictly regular attendance, prior reading of weekly texts, and a term paper at the end of term of roughly 20-25 pages.

General Description:

The concept of freedom is analytically complex and has a long and varied intellectual history. This course will focus on the concept as it emerged in the modern period (roughly since the seventeenth century in Europe) and focus in particular on three aspects of freedom. Though the primary interest of the seminar will be on political and academic freedom, it will be useful to begin with a very brief discussion of the most abstract dimension of freedom by asking what notion of freedom might individual human subjects be said to possess given the determinism that seems to be everywhere indicated by the comprehensive explanatory power of modern science.

Spring 2022: SOCI GR5001

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