COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE

College of Liberal & Creative Arts
Dean: Andrew Harris

Department of Comparative and World Literature
Humanities Building, Room 377
Phone: (415) 338–2068
Email: wclit@sfsu.edu

Interim Chair: Dane Johnson
Undergraduate Advisors: D. Johnson, S. Khanmohamadi, E. Peel, C. Weinberger
Undergraduate Coordinator: Dane Johnson
Graduate Coordinator: Shirin Khanmohamadi

Program Scope
Comparative Literature is a way of studying world literature. It is a literary discipline designed to go beyond the chronological, geographic, and linguistic boundaries of individual national literatures.

Undergraduate Program
The Bachelor of Arts and Minor in Comparative and World Literature are interdisciplinary programs that provide students with a global perspective through the reading and analysis of literatures from multiple traditions. Students develop a university-level understanding of what different cultures have in common as well as what makes each culture unique. The study of comparative literature also seeks to establish relationships between literature and other fields, from the arts and sciences to folklore and religion. In addition to taking courses in comparative literature and various national literatures (in the original languages and translation), students also learn methods and techniques of literary analysis and comparison.

Graduate Program
The Master of Arts in Comparative Literature combines the objectives of graduate study in foreign languages and literature with an emphasis on the intercultural and international aspects of literature. The goal of the program is to provide graduate training in subjects common to more than one national literature. Research work in the program is directed toward the problems of literary theory and analysis, genre studies, and literary history.

Career Outlook
The B.A. and Minor in Comparative and World Literature are designed for students who wish to gain an interdisciplinary and broad liberal arts education. The undergraduate degree also provides a sound foundation for students who wish to continue work in literature at the graduate level or to pursue graduate study in other areas. Students find that the program provides a rich background for teaching in English, foreign languages and literature, the humanities, and liberal arts, as well as for other varied careers.

The graduate degree in Comparative Literature is of particular value for students who intend to pursue a doctoral degree in comparative literature, English, foreign language and literature, interdisciplinary humanities, or who plan to teach at the middle school, high school, or community college levels.

Professors
Johnson, Peel

Associate Professors
Khanmohamadi, Weinberger

Major
• Bachelor of Arts in Comparative Literature (bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/liberal-creative-arts/comparative-world-literature/ba-comparative-literature)

Minor
• Minor in Comparative Literature (bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/liberal-creative-arts/comparative-world-literature/minor-comparative-literature)

Masters
• Master of Arts in Comparative Literature (bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/liberal-creative-arts/comparative-world-literature/ma-comparative-literature)

CWL 214 Second Year Written Composition: Comparative and World Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 114 or equivalent with a grade of CR or C- or better. Flexible reading and writing skills for academic inquiry and engaging with social issues through comparative and interdisciplinary approaches; world literature readings integrated with a variety of sources; varied composing and revising skills; critical analysis and self-reflection, with special attention to rhetorical variation; fine-tuning research. (Plus/minus ABC/NC, CR/NC allowed)
Course Attributes:
• A4: Written English Comm II

CWL 220 Reading Beyond Boundaries: An Introduction to Comparing Literatures (Units: 3)
Reading literature from diverse times and places to discover the relevance of literary representation for contemporary life. Covers basics of literary analysis, examination of genres, and comparative methodology to uncover the significances and effects of literary representation. [Formerly CWL 210]
Course Attributes:
• C3: Humanities: Literature
• Global Perspectives

CWL 230 World Literature (Units: 3)
Literary classics of the world, their cultural backgrounds, and their place in the history of ideas, from a variety of genres and national literatures.
Course Attributes:
• C3: Humanities: Literature
• Global Perspectives
CWL 250 Fables and Tales (Units: 3)
Development from folklore and parable of the fable and the tale. Narrative forms such as the animal fable, fairy tale, and remarkable voyage; central themes and techniques in the tradition of didactic and fantastic fiction.
Course Attributes:
• C3: Humanities: Literature
• Global Perspectives

CWL 260 Myths of the World (Units: 3)
Different mythologies, their interpretation, and significance to world literature.
Course Attributes:
• C3: Humanities: Literature
• Global Perspectives

CWL 270 Fantasy and Fiction: Exploring Parallel Worlds (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 114 or equivalent.
Exploration of dreams, parallel worlds, and alternate realities in fiction and media from a variety of traditions and cultures; development of critical reading skills to examine the intersection of fantasy and reality in literary representation.
Course Attributes:
• C3: Humanities: Literature

CWL 400GW Approaches to Comparative and World Literature - GWAR (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent with a grade of C- or better.
Gateway to undergraduate study in comparative literature. Active comparison of texts from multiple literary traditions and genres using a variety of methods. Introduction to the discipline and critical theory. Writing intensive. (ABC/NC grading only)
Course Attributes:
• Graduation Writing Assessment

CWL 420 Studies in Comparative Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.
Comparison of literary texts from multiple linguistic traditions through thematic, theoretical, chronological, and/or formal connections. Topic to be specified in Class Schedule. May be repeated when topics vary.

CWL 421 Celtic Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.
Literary traditions of culturally diverse Celtic world from earliest legends of gods, heroes, warriors, and saints to modern literature; texts may include traditions such as Irish, Welsh, Scottish, Breton, and Manx.
Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities

CWL 422 Imagining the Constructed Body: From Statues to Cyborgs (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.
How diverse cultures, through literature, have imagined "constructing bodies"—conceptualizing, creating, or enhancing the body: sex, gender, sexuality, self-referential literary representations plus relevant literary theories. [Formerly CWL 420 - Variable Topic]
Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 423 Going Medieval: Comparative Medieval European Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: CWL 214 or ENG 214 or equivalent.
A survey of the major genres of Medieval European vernacular writing in translation, including epic, romance, tale collections, and lyric poetry. (This course is offered as CWL 423 and HUM 423. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)
Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 424 Multicultural Middle Ages (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: CWL 214 or ENG 214 or equivalent.
A survey of medieval European representations of the Islamic world, as reflected in the major genres of epic, romance, tale collections, travel writing, and lyric poetry. (This course is offered as CWL 424 and HUM 424. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)
Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities

CWL 430 Heroic Tales of the Mediterranean (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.
Heroic narratives, in poetry and prose, provide the means for examining aspects of the ancient, medieval, and modern cultures of the eastern Mediterranean and Near East.
Course Attributes:
• Global Perspectives

CWL 432 From Ghost Stories to Short Stories: Japanese Fiction in Comparative Contexts (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.
Examination of formal transformations in Japanese prose fiction through comparison with other literary traditions; focus on questions of tradition, influence, genre, and translations. (This course is offered as CWL 432 and HUM 532. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)
Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives
CWL 437 Holocaust and Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214.

Fiction and non-fiction Holocaust literature by Saul Bellow, T. Borowski, Etty Hillesum, I.B. Singer, and Elie Wiesel.

(This course is offered as JS 437, ENG 533, and CWL 437. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives
• Social Justice

CWL 440 "Typical American" Narratives of Multiculturalism in the Americas from 1492 to the Present (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: ENG 214 or CWL 214 or equivalent; CWL 400GW or other GWAR course is recommended.

Understanding the Americas through historical and hemispheric comparison of multicultural literary texts; interaction of race, ethnicity, class, and gender with other constructions of group identity in narratives; interplay between community and individual identity from 1492 to the present.

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 450 Literary Crossings (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Upper division standing or consent of instructor.

Examination of the theme and forms of literary crossings in comparative literature, among them transnationalism, migration, and second-language writing; literature crossing lines of race, gender, sexuality, class, or the boundary between human and non-human; generically hybrid literatures.

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 451 Jewish Literature of the Americas (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.

Explores literature of the Americas through the lens of Jewish identity and tradition. Texts in translation from Latin America, Canada, and the US reveal how Jewish writers have rethought modernity’s intersection with Jewish traditions.

(This course is offered as JS 451, CWL 451, and ENG 451. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 452 Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.

Examination of English novelists and travel writers E. M. Forster and Lawrence Durrell and of their connection to Alexandrian poet C. P. Cavafy. Discussion includes their collective interest in Alexandria as an alternative literary and ideological topos.

(This course is offered as MGS 452, CWL 452, and ENG 452. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 465 Modern Greek Poetry in Comparative Perspective (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or equivalent.

Survey of Greece’s prominent modern poets in comparison with major Anglo-American and European poets. Poets to be studied can include Cavafy, Seferis, Elytis, Mastoraki, Yeats, Eliot, Pound, and Rich.

(This course is offered as MGS 465, CWL 465, and C W 465. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

CWL 480 European Jewish Writers (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or CWL 214 or equivalent.

Survey of the works of modern Jewish writers throughout Europe between the nineteenth- and twentieth-centuries; influence of the Jewish Enlightenment on modern Jewish literature.

(This course is offered as JS 480 and CWL 480. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives
• Social Justice

CWL 515 The Uncanny in World Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: ENG 214 or equivalent, CWL 400GW recommended.

Examination of the uncanny— the aesthetic quality of literary texts that provokes eerie, unsettling reactions— in works from a variety of places and times. Focus on the living dead, doppelgängers, déjà vu, repetition, and automatism.

CWL 520 Modern Prose of the Americas (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: ENG 214 or CWL 214 or equivalent, CWL 400GW or other GWAR course recommended.

Exploration of the creation and representation of modern "American" identities through comparison of prose fiction from Latin America (in translation) and the United States; focus on two periods: 1920s-1940s and 1960s-1980s.

Course Attributes:
• UD-C: Arts and/or Humanities
• Global Perspectives

CWL 525 The Partial Magic of Metafiction (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 214 or consent of instructor.

Exploration of literary self-reflection in contemporary world metafiction. Why do some novels dispel their illusions of realism? What happens when characters realize they are mere fictions? How do we make our way through these literary labyrinths?
CWL 540 Faulkner, García Márquez, and Morrison (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: ENG 214 or CWL 214 or equivalent, CWL 400GW or other
GWAR course is recommended.

Comparative reading of three major 20th century novelists: William
Faulkner, Gabriel García Marquez, and Toni Morrison. These authors
provide a vantage point for exploring representation in the Americas, the
modern novel, and literary value.

CWL 690 Editing and Publishing the Comparative Literature Journal
(Units: 1-3)
Prerequisite: Major or minor in comparative literature or department
consent.

Supervised experience in editing and production of a journal of student
work. Credit not applicable to major or minor fields in comparative
literature. CWL 690 and CWL 890 may be repeated for a combined total of
6 units. (CR/NC grading only.)

CWL 697 Honor’s Thesis (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Comparative Literature major and consent of department.

Tutorial leading to an honor’s project or thesis on special research topic
to be determined jointly by student and faculty member. (CR/NC grading
only)

CWL 699 Independent Study (Units: 1-3)
Prerequisite: Consent of the department chair and instructor.

Projects requiring critical study and analysis of advanced material
adapted to individual needs and interests. May be repeated for a total of
6 units.

CWL 746 Seminar: Opera and Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: ENG 741 (may be taken concurrently) or consent of
instructor.

Literary aspects of the creation, composition, production, and
interpretation of opera. Literary texts that inspire operas will be
interpreted critically along with the operas they inspired. Opera libretti
will be examined as literature interactively with opera’s musical, dramatic,
and performative elements.
(This course is offered as ENG 746 and CWL 746. Students may not
repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

CWL 800 Introduction to Graduate Study in Comparative Literature
(Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Methodology and definitions of comparative literature; critical theory of
literature as it relates to comparative studies.

CWL 815 Seminar: Topics in Critical Theory (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Research seminar examines a major subject area in critical and literary
theory. Topic to be specified in Class Schedule. May be repeated for a
total of 9 units when topics vary.

CWL 820 Topics in Comparative Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: Graduate standing or consent of instructor.

Research seminar compares literary texts from multiple traditions
through thematic, theoretical, chronological, and/or formal connections.
Topic to be specified in Class Schedule. May be repeated for a total of 9
units when topics vary.

CWL 825 Advanced Study in Comparative Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisite: CWL 800 or consent of instructor.

Synthesizing prior knowledge about theory and practice of comparative
literature; developing scholarly and professional skills for culminating
experience and beyond; exploring post-M.A. paths.

CWL 890 Editing and Publishing the Comparative Literature Journal
(Units: 1-3)
Prerequisite: Comparative Literature major or minor or department
consent.

Supervised experience in editing and production of journal of student
work. Credit not applicable to major/minor fields in comparative
literature. CWL 690 and CWL 890 may be repeated for a combined total of
6 units. (CR/NC grading only)

CWL 896 Directed Reading in Comparative Literature (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Approved ATC and culminating experience proposal.

Supervised study based on departmental reading list and student’s
specialty area in preparation for the Comprehensive Oral Examination.
Not open to M.A. candidates selecting the thesis option. (CR/NC grading
only)

CWL 896EXM Culminating Experience Examination (Units: 0-3)
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor, committee chair, and approval of
Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) and Culminating Experience (CE) forms
by Graduate Studies. ATC and Proposal for Culminating Experience
Requirement forms must be approved by the Graduate Division before
registration.

Enrollment in 896EXAM required for students whose culminating
experience consists of an examination only. Not for students enrolled in
a culminating experience course numbered CWL 898 (or in some cases,
courses numbered CWL 890 - see program’s graduate advisor for further
information). (CR/NC, RP)

CWL 898 Master’s Thesis (Units: 3)
Prerequisites: Consent of instructor; recommendation of major adviser;
and approval of Advancement to Candidacy (ATC) for the Master of
Arts and Culminating Experience (CE) forms by Graduate Studies. ATC and
Proposal for Culminating Experience Requirement forms must be
approved by the Graduate Division before registration. (CR/NC grading
only)

CWL 899 Independent Study (Units: 1-3)
Prerequisite: Consent of graduate major adviser and supervising faculty
member.

Study is planned, developed, and completed under the direction of
a member of the department. Open only to graduate students of
manifested ability to do independent work. Enrollment by petition
(form available in the department office). May be repeated for a total of 6
units.