

COMPARATIVE AND WORLD LITERATURE

College of Liberal & Creative Arts

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Department of Comparative and World Literature

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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.

Professor

DANE JOHNSON (1995), *Professor of Comparative and World Literature*; B.S.F.S. (1985), Georgetown University; Ph.D. (1993), Stanford University.

PERSIS KARIM (2017), *Professor of Comparative and World Literature, Neda Nobari Distinguished Chair, Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies*; M.A. (1993) and Ph.D. (1998), University of Texas at Austin.

Associate Professor

SHIRIN A. KHANMOHAMADI (2005), *Associate Professor of Comparative and World Literature*; B.A. (1991), Brown University; M.A. (1996), The University of Texas at Austin; 4 M.A. (1998), Columbia University; Ph.D. (2005), Columbia University.

CHRISTOPHER S. WEINBERGER (2009), *Associate Professor of Comparative and World Literature*; B.A. (1996), Williams College; M.A. (1999), Ph.D. (2009), University of California, Berkeley.

Major

- Bachelor of Arts in Comparative and World Literature (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/liberal-creative-arts/comparative-world-literature/ba-comparative-literature/>)

Minor

- Minor in Comparative and World Literature (<http://bulletin.sfsu.edu/colleges/liberal-creative-arts/comparative-world-literature/minor-comparative-literature/>)

Masters

- Master of Arts in Comparative Literature (<http://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 216 Telling Stories: How the World Writes "You" (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: GE Area A2* with a grade of C- or better.

Our world is made of stories. The news we read, the ideas we share, and our senses of selfhood all take shape through stories. Study writing from around the world to see how stories reflect and construct personal and cultural identities. Apply tools of literary analysis to texts encountered in everyday life, to examine how narrative forms shape understandings of identity and invite readers to adopt different values. Practice communicating effectively and persuasively to different audiences while exploring how such work can lead to personal and professional success.

Course Attributes:

- E: Lifelong Learning Develop
- Global Perspectives

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:

- C2: Humanities
- C3 or C2: Humanities/Lit.
- 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:

- C2: Humanities
- C3 or C2: Humanities/Lit.
- Global Perspectives

CWL 250 Fables and Tales (Units: 3)

Development from folklore and parable of fables and tales. Narrative forms such as the animal fable, fairy tale, and remarkable voyage. Exploration of central themes and techniques in the tradition of didactic and fantastic fiction.

Course Attributes:

- C2: Humanities
- C3 or C2: Humanities/Lit.
- Global Perspectives

CWL 260 Myths of the World (Units: 3)

Investigation of different mythologies including their interpretation and significance to world literature.

Course Attributes:

- C2: Humanities
- C3 or C2: Humanities/Lit.
- 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:

- C2: Humanities
- C3 or C2: Humanities/Lit.

CWL 400GW Approaches to Comparative and World Literature - GVAR (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: GE Area A2.

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: Upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

Comparison of literary texts from multiple linguistic traditions through thematic, theoretical, chronological, and/or formal connections. Topics to be specified in the Class Schedule. May be repeated when topics vary.

CWL 421 Celtic Literature (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

Literary traditions of the 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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

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: Medieval Literature and Contemporary Adaptations (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

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

CWL 424 Multicultural Middle Ages (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

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 426 Literary Orient and Orientalisms, Classical to Contemporary (Units: 3)

Prerequisite: Upper-division standing or consent of the instructor.

Survey of the image of the Orient and the East in western representation from the Ancient Greeks to contemporary culture, examining not only literature but also art history, film, television, and other media. Investigation of the nature and diversity of these images in relation to the influential theory of Orientalism set forth by Edward Said. Consideration of the theory's ongoing relevance and permutations in the discourse of the Orient across major epochs.

(This course is offered as CWL 426 and HUM 426. Students may not repeat the course under an alternate prefix.)

Course Attributes:

- Global Perspectives

CWL 430 Heroic Tales of the Mediterranean (Units: 3)

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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better; ENG 216 or ENG 218 or equivalent; or consent of the instructor.

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: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

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; the 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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the 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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

Explores the 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
- Am. Ethnic & Racial Minorities
- Global Perspectives

CWL 452 Forster, Durrell, and Cavafy (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

Examination of English novelists and travel writers E. M. Forster and Lawrence Durrell and 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: Restricted to English (Creative Writing or English Education) majors.

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)

Prerequisites: GE Areas A1*, A2*, A3*, and B4* all with grades of C- or better or consent of the instructor.

Survey of the works of modern Jewish writers throughout Europe between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. The 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)

Prerequisite: 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, doppelgangers, déjà vu, repetition, and automatism.

CWL 520 Modern Prose of the Americas (Units: 3)

Prerequisites: Upper-division standing; 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:

- 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: CWL 400GW or another GWAR course is recommended.

A comparative reading of three major 20th-century novelists including William Faulkner, Gabriel Garcia 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 majors and consent of the 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 the 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 the 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 the 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 the instructor.

Research seminar that compares literary texts from multiple traditions through thematic, theoretical, chronological, and formal connections. Topics to be specified in the 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 majors or minors or consent of the department.

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 the 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 the 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 the 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 demonstrated ability to do independent work. Enrollment by petition (form available in the department office). May be repeated for a total of 6 units.