Intro to Comparative Literature

CPLT 200 01

Course syllabus

Instructor: Meglena Z. Miltcheva (Professor Maggie)

Course pre-requisites: ENGL 110 or equivalent; one additional literature course recommended.
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Course syllabus

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Course description and goals

This course explores the aims of Comparative Literature and introduces the primary methods and concepts of the discipline. Students will discover new ways of thinking about literature as they investigate the many ways in which it represents the world and our ideas. We will consider works that thematize encounters with an “other”, in order to reflect on our own encounter with literature as comparatists.

This course will focus on representations of issues such as sexuality, civilization, identity, gender roles, fate and chance, individual and society, freedom and enslavement, boundaries and borders, and violence in literature. We will engage with a number of texts from a variety of different cultures and time periods. We will examine various approaches to the study of literature and the connections they allow us to make with other fields of knowledge. We will question the very nature of literature, what it does, how it works, and why we find it so endlessly fascinating.

Instructor contact information

1. Office: LONG 428
2. Phone: 843.953.1995
3. Email: mitchevam@cofc.edu
4. Class meeting times and location: TR 10:50 AM—12:05 PM, MYBK 207.
5. Office hours: MWF 12:00 - 12:30 PM; TR 10:50 AM-12:00 PM. Other hours by appointment.

Comparative Literature Program Mission Statement

The interdisciplinary minor affords students the opportunity to study various national literatures while stressing the historical, social and cultural context of primary sources. It differs however from what is commonly referred to as World Literature in that it introduces comparative methods to teach students on one hand, to identify the connections which exist between the literary phenomena of those different traditions and on the other hand to examine the relationship that exists between a national literature and other interdisciplinary fields such as music, theater or other art forms.
Textbooks

Everything provided by instructor. Below is a list of the literary works we will discuss. If you happen to have your own copy of any of these, please feel free to use it. The edition/translation, if different, will not impact our work.

1. The Song of Igor’s Campaign
2. The Art of War by Sunzi
3. The Raid by Leo Tolstoy
4. The House of Bernarda Alba by Federico Garcia Lorca
5. Tomboy by Nina Bouraoui
6. The Bacchae by Euripides
7. Of Cannibals by Michel de Montaigne
8. A Private Experience by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
9. Romeo and Juliet by William Shakespeare

General Education Student Learning Outcomes

This course meets the following General Education requirements for Humanities:

1. Students analyze how ideas are represented, interpreted, or valued in various expressions of human culture.
2. Students examine relevant primary source materials as understood by the discipline and interpret the material in writing assignments.

Both these outcomes will be assessed by an analytical essay and by weekly discussion posts online (OAKS).

Signature assignment part 1: analytical essay (text: Of Cannibals by Michel de Montaigne) Example topic: “Fear the Unknown: us and them” Write an analysis of this text. For this analysis, provide the following information:

1. Identify and/or describe the text.
2. Situate the text in terms of time, place, genre, and/or discipline.
3. Explain how the text represents the notion of the other for the ethnic groups which are described in the text and the complex emotions and reactions this notion creates for these ethnic groups.
4. Support your argumentation by contextualization and description.

Signature assignment part 2: Weekly online discussions. Questions based on the material covered in a specific unit will be posted by the instructor and students will in turn post their answers on the designated discussion board (OAKS discussion forum).

This measure will foster a sense of community by encouraging students to participate outside the traditional face-to-face teaching format and by ensuring that all students make steady progress in the reading of primary sources and analytical tools. In addition, it will help offset any potential loss of class time discussion due to unforeseen weather– or otherwise-related emergencies.

**Communication and Etiquette**

Email is for questions, concerns, or scheduling meetings. To receive a reply, your email must follow these guidelines:

1. It must be sent from your C of C account.
2. There must be a subject heading which gives me some idea of the nature of the message (e.g., “consultation”, “test question”).
3. You must sign off your message with your complete name.

I will respond to your email messages within 48 hours, frequently much sooner.

**My Expectations**

I *expect you* to contact me by email and/or voicemail if you are having problems with the course or encounter an emergency that interferes with your course work.

I *expect you* to attend all classes. Your grade will be reduced if you miss more than four classes without an excuse as follows: for every missed class I will deduct five percent (5%) from your final grade. You will be dropped from the course if you miss more than six classes without an excuse from the office of Student Affairs. To submit an absence memo, go to: [http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/services/absence.php](http://studentaffairs.cofc.edu/services/absence.php)

You are responsible for all material covered in class and all outside assignments.

I *expect you* to complete any reading before coming to class so that you can participate in the discussions. Since part of your grade will be determined by your class participation, if you miss a class
for some unexpected reason, hand in/email typed-up answers to the questions posed for the reading assignments for the class you missed.

**Statement on possible College-wide closings due to inclement weather**

If the College of Charleston closes and members of the community are evacuated due to inclement weather, students are responsible for taking course materials with them in order to continue with course assignments consistent with instructions provided by faculty. In cases of extended periods of institution-wide closure where students have relocated, instructors may articulate a plan that allows for supplemental academic engagement despite these circumstances.

**Your rights and responsibilities**

**You have the right to:**

- a competent education/instruction
- be treated fairly
- question content and process

**You are responsible for:**

- your own actions
- learning
- respectful treatment of classmates and professor

**Written Assignments**

During this course, you will submit several written assignments. All of those must be submitted electronically to the relevant Dropbox folder in OAKS on typed, double-spaced pages in 12-point Times New Roman font with one-inch margins. Writing should be free of any spelling and grammar errors. Cite any works that you reference using the MLA format (detailed information on formatting and citation can be found in the Orientation module in OAKS). Acceptable document formats for submission: Microsoft Word (2003 or later versions) and Adobe pdf. All submission deadlines use Eastern Time (New York time zone). **Note:** you must complete one attempt of the syllabus quiz to be able to upload to the dropboxes. You will not be graded on the syllabus quiz!

**Analytical paragraph:** the due date for the analytical paragraph is in the course schedule and on the course calendar. The goals of this type of assignment are to develop and communicate ideas about literature; to stimulate class discussion; and to establish an individual dialogue with students.
Students new to literary studies will be able to practice academic writing. Experienced students will be able to refine their style and complicate their argumentation.

**Analytical essay:** the due date for the analytical essay is in the course schedule and on the course calendar. The goals of this type of assignment are to assess the learning outcomes stipulated for this course.

**Five-page paper:** The paper will analyze one of the works considered in the course using one of the methodological approaches we have studied. It may develop an idea from the paragraph assignment.

**Ten-page paper (final exam):** The paper will compare two of the works considered in the course using two of the methodological approaches we have studied. It may develop an idea from the paragraph assignment, the analytical essay or the five-page paper.

**Feedback:** I will provide written comments and feedback on your assignments within 72 hours of the submission deadline; you can access those from the DropBox folder in OAKS where you made your original submission.

**Due dates:** all due dates are listed in the course schedule; please bear in mind that all dropboxes except for the final exam (ten-page paper) will close three days after the original due date. I do advise submitting all assignments either on or before the due date: for every day your assignment is late, your grade will drop a full mark (from A to B, from B to C, etc.) The final exam dropbox closes on the day of the due date.

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**Academic integrity**

I enforce **without exception** the College of Charleston’s Honor System and Classroom Code of Conduct as provided in the Student Handbook. By choosing to enroll in this course, you indicate that you understand the Honor Code and are going to abide by it. If you are not certain about the definition of plagiarism, ask me. Any student found in violation of the Honor Code will automatically receive an “F” for this course regardless of previous performance therein.

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**Disabilities**

If there is a student in the class who has a documented disability and has been approved to receive accommodations through SNAP Services, please feel free to discuss this with me either by phone or email.
Religious accommodations

The College of Charleston acknowledges that religious practices differ from tradition to tradition and that the demands of religious observance in some traditions may cause conflicts with student schedules. The College supports the concept of “reasonable accommodation for religious observance” in regard to class attendance, and the scheduling of examinations and other academic work requirements, unless the accommodation would create an undue hardship on the College. Examples include: rescheduling of an exam or giving a make-up exam for the student in question; altering the time of a student’s presentation; allowing extra-credit assignments to substitute for missed class work or arranging for an increased flexibility in assignment dates. Regardless of any accommodation that may be granted, students are responsible for satisfying all academic objectives, requirements and prerequisites as defined by the instructor and by the College.

Grading scale

A 96–100  A–91–95  B+87–90  B 83–86
B–80–82  C+76–79  C 73–75  C–70–72
D+68–69  D 66–67  D– 64–65  F <64

As they say in the military, no plan survives first contact, so I will be mindful of any unforeseen circumstances which require that we adjust due dates and other deadlines.

Final Grade Breakdown:

1. Class participation 10%
2. Weekly online discussion 10%
3. One one-page analytical paragraph 10%
4. One two-to-three-page analytical essay 10%
5. One five-page paper (midterm exam) 25%
6. One ten-page paper (final exam) 35%
Course Calendar at a Glance

- Thursday, January 9—first day
- Tuesday, February 4—analytical paragraph due
- Thursday, February 27—five-page paper due (midterm exam, online)
- Friday, March 6—midterm grades due at noon
- Friday, March 13—last day for students to withdraw with a grade of “W”
- Sunday, March 15 - Saturday March 21 - Spring Break
- Tuesday, March 31—analytical essay due
- Tuesday, April 21—last day
- Saturday, April 25—ten-page paper due (final exam, online)
- Monday, May 4—final grades due at noon
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<th>#</th>
<th>DAY/DATE</th>
<th>TOPIC</th>
<th>HOMEWORK</th>
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<td><strong>UNIT 1. FIRST STEPS</strong></td>
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### UNIT 2. PIVOTAL MOMENTS

|   |   | New criticism and Russian formalism | 1. *Art of War*  
|   |   | Only chapters I, IV, VI, and VIII will be discussed.  
| 5 | R 23 |   |   |
|   |   | Scripture as literature of crisis; *The Art of War* | [Link](https://web.cn.edu/kwheeler/chinese_taoism.html)  
[Link](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qgXpGEjVYiM)  
(watch the entire thing, it is only 22 minutes long) |
2. [Link](http://gutenberg.net.au/ebooks03/0300031h.html#C12)  
(The link above will take you to a collection of essays; you need “Modern Fiction” and read only the portion after footnote 1) |
| 7 | R 30 |   |   |

### UNIT 3. THE LIMIT

|   |   | Realism; *The Raid* and the wars in the Caucasus: boundaries and borders  
Analytical paragraph due. |
| 8 | Feb. T 04 |   |   |
|   |   | Prisoner of the Mountains  
Freedom and enslavement |
<p>| 9 | R 06 |   |   |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>UNIT 4. A WOMAN’S PLACE</th>
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<tr>
<td>12 T 18</td>
<td>Individual and society in <em>The House of Bernarda Alba</em></td>
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<th>UNIT 5. THE AWFUL TRUTH</th>
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<tr>
<td>15 R 27</td>
<td>Things fall apart: Post-everything 5-PAGE PAPER DUE</td>
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**Friday, March 6 - Full semester Mid Term grades due at noon.**

### UNIT 6. THE BARBARIAN NEXT DOOR

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<th>Lecture Title</th>
<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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| 18    | T 10 | *Of Cannibals* Civilization | Review VT lecture on Renaissance Humanism. 


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**Friday, March 13 - Last day to withdraw from full semester classes with a grade of “W”.

**Sunday, March 15 - Saturday March 21 - Spring Break.**

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<th>Reading/Notes</th>
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<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>T 24</td>
<td>Phenomenology, Hermeneutics, Reception theory</td>
<td>Review VT lecture on Queen Margot.</td>
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### UNIT 7. (IN)TOLERANCE

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<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>Day</td>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Assignments</td>
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2. [http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/approaches.htm](http://records.viu.ca/~johnstoi/eng366/approaches.htm)  
Begin topic search for 10-page paper. |
_PMLA_ 64.1 (1949): 208 - 220. |
| 25 R 09 |   | Romeo and Juliet | 1. Leon Botstein: Art Now (watch lecture on YouTube: [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6F-sHhmfrY](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j6F-sHhmfrY))  
Budget your time accordingly, the lecture is 60 minutes long.  
2. Botstein, Leon. “Music as the Language of Psychological Realism: Tchaikovsky and Russian Art.”  
_Tchaikovsky and his world_. Ed. Leslie Kearney.  
Contact me with possible topics for 10-page paper. |
| 26 T 14 |   | Repin, Surikov, Vasnetsov | Watch me on Kaltura!  
[https://cofc.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/ContextualizingTchaikovsky%27s+Romeo+and+Juliet/1_m87q63ep](https://cofc.mediaspace.kaltura.com/media/ContextualizingTchaikovsky%27s+Romeo+and+Juliet/1_m87q63ep)  
You will be prompted to enter your “MyCharleston” credentials when you go to the site. |
| 27 R 16 |   | Discovering Tchaikovsky’s _Romeo and Juliet_ | 1. Bassnett, Susan. “Beyond the Frontiers of Europe: Alternative Concepts of Comparative Literature.”  
2. Emerson, Caryl. “Answering for Central and Eastern Europe.”  
Submit an outline of 10-page paper. |
| 28 | T 21 | Conclusion: Comparative literature today In-class administration of course-instructor evaluations. |