Fall 2013 Course Descriptions

**LIT 323-001: Ethnic Literatures of the United States: Black Love**
With an emphasis on the situation and experiences of African American women, this course examines the unusually strong connection African American artists often portray between conceptions of love on one hand and ideals of political liberation on the other, especially since the civil rights movement. Putting the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. in conversation with contemporary theories of culture, gender and sexuality, we will interrogate the fraught assumptions and nostalgic principles behind the claim that versions of love are central to empowering cultural self-knowledge, egalitarian citizenship, and race-conscious leftist political radicalism. We will also consider the formal innovation through which these writers both adapt and resist traditional love story conventions in order to imagine alternative expressions of love, sexuality and justice. In short, we will investigate how certain African American writers seek to characterize the liberating love at the heart of the collective political resistance that Dr. King called the “beloved community.”

**LIT 346-001: National Cinema Study: Mexico**
What does it mean to ascribe a nationality to a cultural product, particularly in a “post-national” world? This course will examine different histories, approaches and methodologies related to the study of national cinema, tying in aspects of culture, politics, aesthetics and economics. Throughout the course, we will study the Mexican film traditions as a case study of how to do this kind of work; in additional, each student will select a different national cinema and develop a term-long research project. One mandatory screening accompanies the course. [research intensive]

**LIT 367-001: Topics in World Literature: Love and Revolution: Modern Chinese Literature**
This course investigates how themes of love and revolution converge in 20th and 21st century Chinese literature. Through short stories, graphic novels, martial art novels, and online literature, we will discuss issues including romance and nation-building, intimacy and revolt, queer diasporas and sexual politics of globalization.

**LIT 367-002: Topics in World Literature: Postcolonial Crime Fiction**
This course will explore crime fiction from Africa, South Asia, and the Middle East. We will discuss how social problems such as corruption, urbanization, failed democracy, and poverty lead to certain types of crimes and certain types of stories about those crimes. For instance, we will ask why fiction from the Global South so often takes the criminal’s point of view and rarely allows us to empathize with police or detectives. We will also explore ethical issues such as justice, revenge, and forgiveness and try to understand how they function in particular social and cultural contexts.

**LIT 440/640-001 Advanced Studies in 19th Century British and European Literature: Eliot and Hardy**
In addition to being among the most praised of Victorian novelists, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy also had in common an interest in the depiction of the complexities of normal states of
consciousness, controversial stances toward Victorian ethical and political beliefs, considerable experimentation with literary techniques central to nineteenth-century fiction and oddly, among all that innovation, depiction of English rural life, at times construed as an almost timeless background. Their interest in investing the novel with a political, ethical and philosophical range through their use of narrative voice also made their tones and stances similar enough so that one of Hardy’s early novels—published anonymously, was attributed to Eliot. We will read the major works of each novelist, including Middlemarch, Daniel Deronda, Tess of the d’Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure.

LIT-467/667-001: Classical Drama
Ancient drama continues to haunt the Western imagination, as playwrights and poets even today rework these archetypal stories of blood feuds, transgressive desire, and doomed individuals. In this seminar we will consider the enduring appeal of Greek tragedy, looking not only at the usual canonical texts, such as Oedipus the King, the Oresteia, and Antigone, but also reading equaling compelling plays such as Sophocles’ Philoctetes, Euripides’ Hippolytus, and Aeschylus’ Persians. We will read one or two instances of Greek “old” comedy by Aristophanes in addition to Hellenistic comedies by Menander and Terence. We will conclude with a Roman tragedy by Seneca. Selections from important theoretical readings will supplement primary texts and include such titles as Aristotle’s Poetics, Rene Girard’s Violence and the Sacred, Hegel’s lectures on tragedy, and Nietzsche’s Birth of Tragedy. In addition to these important texts, we will consider a variety of frameworks through which to think about ancient drama and theatre, ranging from performance to trauma theory.
Because this is a -400 level class, students will be expected to write a final project (12-15 pages) that incorporates secondary criticism. Requirements also include Blackboard posts as well as a short (5-6 page) essay and a take-home essay exam.

LIT 733-001: Special Topics: The Bunker Fantasy
This course will focus on two phenomena related to the cultural history of the bunker and the fantasies associated to it: ways in which the fallout shelter played a formative role in the definition of postwar American culture, and ways in which that definition was exported globally and adapted both within and outside the United States for a myriad of related but divergent purposes. Core texts will include fallout and post-apocalyptic literature from the 1950s and 1960s, from Dr. Strangelove and Fail-Safe to Mordecai Roshwald’s Level 7, Walter Miller’s A Canticle for Leibowitz, and writings by Philip Dick and J. G. Ballard, and from more recent engagements with that history, including Cormac McCarthy’s The Road, Don DeLillo’s Underworld, and George Romero’s Day of the Dead. The other principal component of the course will be a study of the legacy of the ‘bunker fantasy’: the way the end of the world is, simultaneously and paradoxically, something to dread and something to wish for. This legacy is especially evident in the repurposed sites of the Cold War now serving as movie sets, storage facilities, art museums, and tourist attractions, and in countries as diverse as Switzerland, Albania, and Taiwan. Finally, we will study the way the bunker fantasy works to frame current debates over immigration, free trade, drug trafficking, bio-security, and other topics that tend to
crystallize around the conception of fixed borders and fixed identities. Secondary reading will include cultural geography and space theory, underground studies, architecture, and history.

**LIT 736-001: Georgian Gender Trouble**
This graduate seminar will explore a variety of non-normative genders and sexualities throughout British literature and culture of the long eighteenth century. Over the course of the semester, we will encounter gender transgressors including 'mollies,' ‘tommies,’ ‘macaronis,’ and ‘fops’; sodomites and sapphists; and the ‘big-haired’ woman of fashion of the 1770s. Texts considered will include Henry Fielding’s *The Female Husband* (1746); Charlotte Charke’s *A Narrative of the Life of Mrs. Charlotte Charke* (1755); Sarah Scott’s *Millenium Hall* (1762); eighteenth-century caricatures and print culture; life-writings, and contemporary literary and visual representations of Bluestocking feminists, the Ladies of Llangollen, Horace Walpole, and Anne Lister; Jane Austen’s *Lady Susan* (c.1794); Matthew Lewis’s *The Monk* (1796); and Maria Edgeworth’s *Belinda* (1801).