

# WORLD LITERATURES

## **WLT 100cw Topics: Introduction to World Literatures-Cannibals, Witches, Virgins (4 Credits)**

An examination of the rewritings and adaptations of the three iconic figures of Shakespeare's *The Tempest*—Caliban the demi-devil savage other, Sycorax the devil-whore, and Miranda the virgin-goddess—by writers from different geographies, time periods and ideological persuasions. Using texts such as Aimé Césaire's *A Tempest*, Rachel Ingalls' *Mrs. Caliban*, Lemuel Johnson's *Highlife for Caliban*, Gloria Naylor's *Mama Day* and Michelle Cliff's *No Telephone to Heaven*, the class seeks to understand how postcolonial, feminist and postmodern rewritings of *The Tempest* transpose its language and characters into critiques of colonialism, nationhood, race, gender and difference. Restrictions: WLT 100 may be repeated once with a different topic. {L}  
**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WLT 150 The Art of Translation: Poetics, Politics, Practice (2 Credits)**

Translations are everywhere: on television news, in radio interviews, in movie subtitles, in international bestsellers. But translations don't shift texts transparently from one language to another. Rather, they revise, censor and rewrite original works, to challenge the past and to speak to new readers. The course explores translation in a range of contexts by hearing lectures by experts in the history, theory and practice of translation. Knowledge of a foreign language is useful but not required. S/U only. Can be taken concurrently with FRN 295. {L}  
**Spring**

## **WLT 177dp Colloquium: Topics in World Literatures-Dwelling Poetically (4 Credits)**

To introduce the pleasures of poetry, this course travels through poems on themes of journeying and dwelling, voyage and return, travel and home, wandering, war and immigration. Reading ancient Chinese songs and Greek epic to contemporary docupoetry and rap, the course explores key elements of poetic art (voice, metre, tropes, image and suggestion). Students encounter less concrete effects as they confront ambiguity, develop interpretive imagination, and surmise poetry's powers and stakes. What is a poem? How and when does poetry affect the world? The class also considers the art, ethics and politics of translation, and students compose and translate short poems. Restrictions: WLT 177 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 20. {L}  
**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WLT 177ew Colloquium: Topics in World Literatures-Epic Worlds (4 Credits)**

A comparison of the first literary works to emerge from oral storytelling traditions among several ancient, medieval, and modern peoples to express their highest ideals and sense of collective identity: the Mesopotamian "Gilgamesh," the Indian "Mahabharata," the Old Irish "Táin Bó Cúailnge," the Medieval Welsh "Four Branches of the Mabinogi," the Finnish "Kalevala" and the Nyanja (Congolese) "Mwindo." The course explores these epics as sites of cultural formation and moral contest, and especially seeks to understand their world-views, value systems, and trajectory of human history through time as these are revealed in the life-struggles of vividly imagined heroes and heroines. Restrictions: WLT 177 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 20. WI {L}  
**Spring, Variable**

## **WLT 177gs Colloquium: Topics in World Literatures- The Global Short Story (4 Credits)**

This course focuses on the short story as a genre in a number of texts from around the globe, analyzing the function of literary elements through close reading, and critical and creative writing. The course cultivates skills in textual analysis through engagement with students' own critical and creative writing processes. Students have opportunities to rewrite a short story and write their own. Attention is given to the ways in which cultural context influences the representation of human experience and the effects that cultural, historical, gendered, racial, socio-political and economic factors have on a text and its interpretation(s). Restrictions: WLT 177 may be repeated once with a different topic. Enrollment limited to 20. (E) {L}  
**Fall, Spring, Variable**

## **WLT 178/ SPN 178 Naughty Fictional Translators (4 Credits)**

Offered as WLT 178 and SPN 178. This course focuses on fictional portraits of iconoclastic translators and interpreters. The first two months are devoted to a (relatively) "slow reading" of Don Quijote as a pioneer text in terms of attributing a central role to a fictional translator. The third month is devoted to international films and short stories—largely, but not exclusively, from the Spanish-speaking world, which has experienced a remarkable upsurge of "transfictions" (i.e., fictions about translators) since the '90s. Taught in English. {L}  
**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

## **WLT 202/ ENG 202 Western Classics in Translation I: Homer to Dante (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 202 and WLT 202. Considers works of literature, mostly from the ancient world, that have had a significant influence over time. May include: epics by Homer and Virgil; tragedies by Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides; Plato's *Symposium*; Dante's *Divine Comedy*. Enrollment limited to 20. WI {L}  
**Fall**

## **WLT 203/ ENG 203 Western Classics in Translation II (4 Credits)**

Offered as WLT 203 and ENG 203. Considers works of literature from different linguistic and cultural traditions that have had a significant influence over time. Posits that the emergence of a modern literary tradition might be understood as a sustained exploration of the relationship between fiction and reality, as tracked through major artistic movements like realism, romanticism, naturalism, expressionism, and existentialism. Interrogates the category of "the classic," the idea of "the west," and the meaning of reading "in translation." Includes works by major writers from Cervantes to Sartre. Enrollment limited to 20. WI {L}  
**Spring**

## **WLT 204fl Topics: Writings and Rewritings-Running with the Devil: The Faust Legend (4 Credits)**

What is a soul and what is it worth? Why are humans fascinated by the forbidden? What would a person be willing to sacrifice to unlock the secrets of the universe? For over five hundred years writers have returned to the story of Faust, the scholar-magician-charlatan who sold his soul to the devil, to explore such questions. Each retelling provides a window into the struggles and ambitions of its age, revealing what it means to be human in turbulent times. This course examines the Faust legend in a variety of forms (novels, short stories, poetry, dramas, films) from a variety of periods, ranging from 1587 to 2020. Works from Marlowe, Calderón, Goethe, Berlioz, Turgenev, Alcott and more. Restrictions: Not open to students who have taken FYS 187. Enrollment limited to 30. (E) {L}  
**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 205 Contemporary African Literature and Film (4 Credits)**

A study of the major writers and diverse literary traditions of Africa, with emphasis on the historical, political, social and cultural contexts of the emergence of writing, reception and consumption. The course pays particular attention to several questions: in what contexts did modern African literature emerge? Is the term "African literature" a useful category? How do African writers challenge Western representations of Africa? How do they articulate the crisis of postcoloniality? How do women writers reshape our understanding of gender and the politics of resistance? Writers include Achebe, Ngugi, Dangarembga, Bâ, Ndebele and Aidoo. Films: Tsotsi, Softie and Blood Diamond. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 212/ POR 212 Author, Authority, Authoritarianism: Writing and Resistance in the Portuguese-Speaking World (4 Credits)**

Offered as WLT 212 and POR 212. Introducing translated works by celebrated Portuguese-language writers, this course explores themes of resistance, including resistance to dictatorship, patriarchy, slavery, racism and colonialism, but also more ambivalent postures of resistance toward authority assumed within particular forms of expertise and knowledge production and deployment. Discussing fiction by Machado de Assis and Clarice Lispector (Brazil), Mia Couto and Paulina Chiziane (Mozambique), Grada Kilomba (Portugal/Germany), and Nobel laureate José Saramago (Portugal), students consider historical contexts, how their work resonates with our contemporary world, literature and fictionality as sites of resistance and the sometimes fraught dynamics they reveal between authorship and authority. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 214 Moonlit Lovers and Bloodstained Kings: Premodern Indian Literature (4 Credits)**

Lovers meet in a moonlit grove, away from prying eyes. Kings dripping with blood loom over battlefields strewn with fallen enemies. Narratives full of intrigue and pathos abound in the premodern literatures of India and in this class students become saḥdayas ("those with heart")—sensitive readers and connoisseurs of these compelling tales. The course uses Indian literary and poetic theory to build a critical toolbox to analyze readings. Primary sources range from the fifth century BCE until the sixteenth century CE in a variety of India's languages including Sanskrit, Tamil, Telugu, Kannada, and Rajasthani. Though the focus is on premodern materials, the course explores these texts' enduring legacies in contemporary art, culture, and politics. (E) {L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 218 Holocaust Literature (4 Credits)**

What is a Holocaust story? How does literature written in extremis in ghettos, death camps or in hiding differ from the vast post-war literature about the Holocaust? How to balance competing claims of individual and collective experience, the rights of the imagination and the pressures for historical accuracy? Selections from a variety of genres (diary, reportage, poetry, novel, graphic novel, memoir, film, monuments, museums) and critical theories of representation. All readings in translation. No prerequisites. {H}{L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 231 Contemporary Arabic Literature (4 Credits)**

Explores contemporary Arabic literature and culture, from the second half of the 20th century to the present. The course examines Arabic literature as it struggles to comprehend and, at times, redefine itself in the wake of the Arab defeat in the 1967 war. While texts emerge from discrete national identities, the course also focuses on their transnational concerns, paying attention to the sociopolitical and historical contexts that give rise to them. Discussions explore how literature provides a window into Bedouin life, the Palestinian experience, life in advanced petroeconomies, and contemporary Arab women's experiences. (E) {L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 232/ EAL 232 Modern Chinese Literature (4 Credits)**

Offered as WLT 232 and EAL 232. Can literature inspire personal and social transformation? How have modern Chinese writers pursued freedom, fulfillment, memory and social justice? From short stories and novels to drama and film, this course explores class, gender and the cultures of China, Taiwan, Tibet and the Chinese diaspora. Readings are in English translation and no background in China or Chinese is required. Open to students at all levels. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 240 Imagining Black Freedom: African, Caribbean and African American Literature (4 Credits)**

An examination of race, identity, and resistance in African, Caribbean, and African American literatures through the lens of coming-of-age novels. This course will enable students to critically engage the political and aesthetic imperatives of black writing by interrogating the thematics and legacies of slavery, colonialism, and racism. How do writers of Africa and the African diaspora appropriate the Bildungsroman as a literary form in their constructions of identity, freedom, and citizenship? What makes this genre particularly useful for the liberatory project of black imagination? Writers include Ngugi, Dangarembga, Wicomb, Cliff, Kincaid, Morrison and Wright. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 264/ RES 264 Dostoevsky (4 Credits)**

Offered as RES 264 and WLT 264. Focuses on close reading of the major novels, short fiction and journalism of Dostoevsky, one of the greatest writers in modern literature. Combining penetrating psychological insight with the excitement of crime fiction, Dostoevsky's works explore profound political, philosophical and religious issues, in a Russia populated by students and civil servants, saints and revolutionaries, writers and madmen. In a close reading of his fiction and nonfiction, the class traces the development of Dostoevsky's style and ideas, considering how these texts engage with issues specific to nineteenth-century Russia, as well as the broader traditions of European literature and intellectual history. In translation. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 266md Colloquium: Topics in South African Literature and Film-Modern (4 Credits)**

A study of South African literature and cinema from apartheid era to the present. The course focuses on the ways in which the political, economic and cultural forces of colonialism and apartheid have shaped culture and politics in contemporary South Africa. The course also pays attention to the ways in which literature and film helps us visualize the relationship between power and violence in apartheid and post-struggle South Africa. Enrollment limited to 18. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 266ss Colloquium: Topics in South African Literature and Film-Saints, Saviors and Traitors: The Private and Public Lives of Nelson and Winnie Mandela (4 Credits)**

The private and public lives of Winnie and Nelson Mandela as icons the struggle against apartheid transformed them into symbols of the dreams and aspirations of an entire nation. Adored as beloved father/mother of a nation, they were/are revered and reviled, loved and hated, adored and vilified, in equal measure. This course looks at the enduring, shifting, and often contradictory (self) representations of the Mandelas in memoirs, (auto)biographies, films and documentaries. We focus on how their lives became emblematic of the black South African experience during the apartheid and post-apartheid years and the ways in which gender complicated the legacies of both. Enrollment limited to 18. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 270 Colloquium: Health and Illness: Literary Explorations (4 Credits)**

From medieval Chinese tales to memoirs about SARS and COVID-19, this cross-cultural literary inquiry explores how conceptions of selfhood and belonging inform ideas about well-being, disease, intervention and healing. How do languages, social norms and economic contexts shape experiences of health and illness? From depression and plague to aging, disability and death, how do sufferers and their caregivers adapt in the face of infirmity or trauma? Our study will also consider how stories and other genres can help develop resilience, compassion and hope.

Enrollment limited to 20. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 271 Writing in Translation: Bilingualism in the Postcolonial Novel (4 Credits)**

A study of bilingualism as a legacy of colonialism, as an expression of exile, and as a means of political and artistic transformation in recent texts from Africa and the Americas. We consider how such writers as Ngugi wa Thiong'o (Kenya), Assia Djebar (Algeria), Patrick Chamoiseau (Martinique) and Edwidge Danticat (Haiti/U.S.) assess the personal and political consequences of writing in the language of a former colonial power, and how they attempt to capture the esthetic and cultural tensions of bilingualism in their work. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 272/ ENG 171 Composing a Self: Chinese and English Voices (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 171 and WLT 272. Is the self a story? How do we translate ourselves into multiple personas in different locations and contexts? How do we speak to others with diverse beliefs or ourselves at new times? To learn, students read and compose short texts in Chinese, translate them into English, and consider the art and politics of translation. Working in public-facing genres (memoir, narrative nonfiction, journalism, short stories, social media and multimedia projects), students develop their creative writing in both Chinese and English, as well as understandings of Chinese cultures and of literary and cultural translation. Discussion in Chinese and English. Chinese fluency required. One WI course highly recommended. Enrollment limited to 16. {F}{L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 273/ RES 273 Cosmic Cold War: Russian and Western Science Fiction in Political Context (4 Credits)**

Offered as RES 273 and WLT 273. How did the "final frontier" of space become a "front" in the Cold War? As the US and USSR competed in the Space Race, science fiction reflected political discourses in literature, film, visual art and popular culture. This course explores Russian and Western science fiction in the contexts of twentieth-century geopolitics and artistic modernism (and postmodernism), examining works by Bogdanov, Kubrick, Tarkovsky, Butler, Haraway, Pelevin and others. The survey considers science fiction's utopian content and political function, as well as critical and dystopian modes of the genre. No prerequisites or knowledge of Russian required; first-year students are welcome to enroll. Enrollment limited to 40. {A}{H}{L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 276 #MeToo: Sex, Gender and Power Across Cultures (4 Credits)**

When it comes to sex and gender, how do power dynamics promote or thwart freedom, belonging and love? As #MeToo and other movements challenge cultures of oppression, how do such struggles relate to the ecological, capitalist and humanitarian crises that threaten everyday life? Learning from feminisms, this course questions persistent structural binaries: mind/body, human/animal, man/woman, culture/nature. Drawing on literature, philosophy and journalism, the class examines how social constructions of gender, class, race and disability coalesce with material bodies, spaces and conditions to form habits of subjectivity and patterns of life. Enrollment limited to 40. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 277 Jewish Fiction (4 Credits)**

What is the relationship between the homeless imagination and imagined homecomings, political upheaval and artistic revolution, the particularity of national experience and the universality of the Jew? Focuses on four masters of the 20th-century short story and novel: Franz Kafka's enigmatic narratives of modern alienation; Isaac Babel's bloody tales of Revolution; Isaac Bashevis Singer's Yiddish demons and Nobel prize laureate S. Y. Agnon's neo-religious parables of loss and redemption. All readings in translation; open to any student with a love of great literature. {L}

**Spring, Variable**

**WLT 280/ ENG 280 Historical Memory and the Global Novel (4 Credits)**

Offered as ENG 280 and WLT 280. This course explores the relationship between history and memory in a series of post-WW2 "global" novels, texts that somehow straddle or transcend national traditions and marketplaces. This course interrogates how art might ethically engage with—or seek refuge from—historical "events" such as colonial and post-colonial violence, total/nuclear war, authoritarian military coups, global terrorism, trans-Atlantic slavery and the Holocaust. Major course themes include the relationship between the personal and the historical, the national and the global, the generational transfer of trauma, feelings of guilt and complicity, and the idea of historical memory itself. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Alternate Years**

**WLT 300 Foundations in Contemporary Literature Theory (4 Credits)**

This course presents a variety of practices and positions within the field of literary theory. Approaches include structuralism, poststructuralism, psychoanalysis, Marxism, gender and queer studies, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. Emphasis on the theory as well as the practice of these methods, their assumptions about writing and reading and about literature as a cultural formation. Readings include Freud, Lacan, Levi-Strauss, Barthes, Derrida, Foucault, Bakhtin, Gramsci, Bhabha, Butler, Said, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Zizek. The class is of interest to all students who wish to explore a range of approaches and methodologies within the humanities as well to students who plan to go to graduate school in literature programs. Enrollment limited to 25. {L}

**Fall**

**WLT 330/ TSX 330 Capstone Seminar in Translation Studies (4 Credits)**

Offered as WLT 330 and TSX 330. The capstone seminar brings together a cohort of concentrators to discuss a final translation project that each student undertakes with the guidance of their adviser in the concentration and to situate the project within the framework of larger questions that the work of translation elicits. The readings focus on renowned practitioners' reflections on the challenges, beauties and discoveries of translating. Students compare how translations transform the original novel and question the concept of original text as it interacts with the culture and the language into which it is translated. Open to students in the Concentration in Translation Studies and World Literatures. Prerequisite: WLT 150. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {L}

**Spring**

**WLT 340md Seminar: Topics in World Literatures-Media of Dissent (4 Credits)**

What is the art of dissent? How have dissident writers, musicians, artists and activists pursued justice and repair? How do social movements use artistic media to voice resistance and make demands? To confront violence, exploitation and existential risks, the class looks at art, fiction, poetry, film, music and social media. Students practice visual analysis, close reading, historicization, scholarly research and debate, public writing and making their own media of dissent. Works from China and France, Russia, the United States and beyond. Restrictions: Juniors and seniors only. Enrollment limited to 12. Instructor permission required. {L}

**Fall, Spring, Variable**

**WLT 400 Special Studies (1-4 Credits)**

Readings in the original language (or in certain cases translations) of literary texts read in or closely related to a course taken with a faculty member appointed in comparative literature. Students are encouraged to contact the instructor during the prior semester. Instructor permission required.

**Fall, Spring**

**WLT 430D Honors Project (4 Credits)**

Prerequisites: Requirements for the major. This course is a thesis to be written in both semesters of the senior year. A full draft of the thesis is due the first Friday of March. The final draft is due mid-April, to be followed by an oral presentation and discussion of the thesis. For more detailed requirements, see the WLT website, at the end of the list of courses. Department permission required.

**Fall, Spring**