

Friends of Comparative Literature

"BURNISHED DAY, CONCH OF THE VOICE..."
by Odysseus Elytis

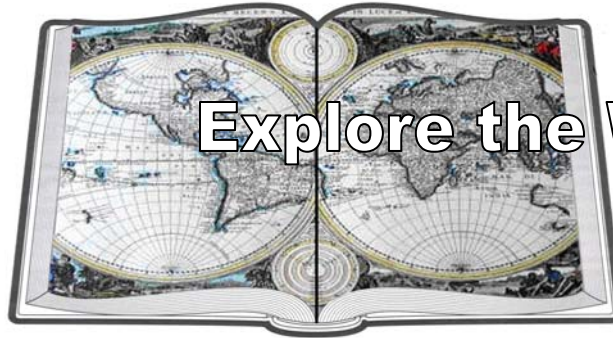
Burnished day, conch of the voice that fashioned me
Naked, to step through my perpetual Sundays
Between the shores' cries of welcome,
Let your wind, known for the first time, blow freely
Unfold a lawn of tenderness
Where the sun can roll his head
Can enflame the poppies with his kiss
Poppies nourished by men so fine
That the sole mark on their bare chests
Is the blood of defiance that annuls sorrow
And attains the remembrance of liberty.

I spoke of love, of the rose's health, of the ray
That by itself goes straight to the heart,
Of Greece that steps so surely on the sea
Greece that carries me always
Among naked snow-crowned mountains.

I give my hand to justice
Diaphanous fountain, sublimest spring,
My sky is deep and changeless
All I love is incessantly reborn
All I love is always at its beginning.

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(Editor: Daniel Russell)



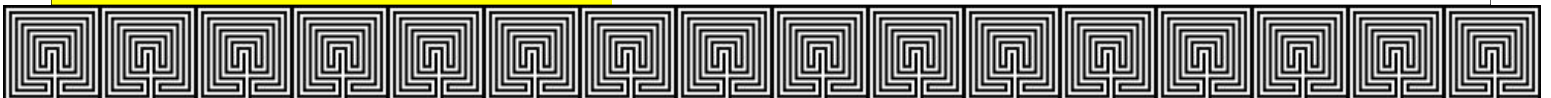
Explore the World

From the Coordinator, Jian Xu

In this time of economic recession, public higher education, the liberal arts in particular, is regarded by government officials as more reducible, if not more expendable, than other institutions. As higher education faces drastic cuts out of proportion with its budgetary share, literature and languages are often given the onus to shrink before any other discipline. The faculty's decision-making capacity is greatly enfeebled as universities throughout the country are being



corporatized. The humanities are depreciated against an all-enveloping technical rationality. But precisely at this technological age and in this corporate climate, literature becomes indispensable. It is indispensable because it keeps our vision of a freer and more fulfilling life alive. It reminds us of what we really need and desire. It provides a space in which human imagination can yet chart futures away from the mediocrity of our utilitarian present. We are thankful to those who have always supported Comparative Literature. We salute our students who choose the experience of literature, that is, the experience of being challenged by emotional complexities, moral ambiguities, or political dilemmas, rather than ideological certainty. They will become the true thinkers, I believe, of a new generation. It is in the boundless possibilities of their future that lies the value of literature.



Comparative Literature News and Announcements

Peter Paik was invited to attend the first-ever Film Studies conference held in conjunction with the Busan International Film Festival. Now in its sixteenth year, the Busan festival is the largest film festival in Asia, screening 307 films from 70 countries. Peter met the Korean film director Lee Chang-dong, whose film *Poetry* was shown last semester at UWM, and Apichatpong Weerasethaskul, whose *Uncle Boonmee Who Can Recall His Past Lives* won the Palme d'Or at Cannes last year. Peter gave a talk on the controversial South Korean thriller *Oldboy*, reading the film through the lens of Nietzsche's concept of self-overcoming and Freud's myth of the primal father. Although the conference took up much of his time, Peter did have the opportunity to watch five films: the South Korean films *Persimmon*, *Jesus Hospital*, and *Pink*; the German-Kazakh production, *Baikonur*; and the Japanese film *Himizu*, about which he wrote a blog post, to be found here: <http://pypaik.wordpress.com/2011/10/10/have-a-dream-no-flower-is-ordinary-thoughts-on-himizu/>

Caroline Seymour-Jorn will be presenting a paper at the American Anthropological Association in Montreal in the panel entitled: "The Poetic Structure of the World". Her paper is entitled: "Poetry, Marginality and Madness in the Fiction of Egyptian Novelist Miral al-Tahawy."

Caroline will also be traveling to Egypt to interview novelist Ebtihal Salem in about her novel, "A Small Box in the Heart," which she is translating from Arabic to English as part of her sabbatical project. The interview, concerning the subject of the novel and Egypt's recent revolution, will contribute material for the introduction to the translation.

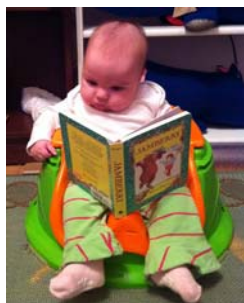
Caroline is currently collaborating with Geography Professors Anna Mansson McGinty and Kristin Sziarto on the Muslim Milwaukee Project, which comprises a series of surveys and interviews with members of the community to find not just basic demographics, but also to understand the personal experience of living as a Muslim in the Metro area.

Drago Momcilovic attended the Burdick-Vary Symposium: "Holocaust Testimony and its Reception: Cultural Transformations and Pedagogical Issues" in October. The symposium was sponsored by the UW-Madison Institute for Research in the Humanities.

Drago presented a paper at the Midwest Popular Culture Association/American Culture Association conference in Milwaukee in October. His paper was entitled "Lady of the Manor: Habitation and Appropriation in Madonna's Britain".

He and Katherine Wilson are organizing a seminar for the ACLA annual conference to be held in the spring at Brown University, entitled "World Literature and Atrocity." There he will present a paper, "Burning Skies, Shifting Grounds: Japanese Dislocation and the 'Worlding' of Traumatic Memory in Joy Kogawa and Kazuo Ishiguro".

Drago has also edited a collection essays: *Resounding Pasts: Essays in Literature, Popular Music, and Cultural Memory* (Cambridge Scholars Publishing). This ties nicely in to the Rock'N'Roll Narratives class he is teaching in the Spring.



Matthew Russell attended the annual conference of the North American Society for the Study of Romanticism last August in Park City, Utah. He chaired a panel entitled, "William Godwin: Equality, Politics, and the Politics of Genre." He also presented a paper, "Falling into Lethe: Charlotte Smith and the Poetics of Self-Forgetting," on a panel entitled, "Romantic Receptions."

He will chair a panel on John Clare at the annual conference of the Modern Language Association in Seattle this January, and will present a paper entitled, "Decompositions: Decay and Forgetting in Charlotte Smith and John Clare." He has also submitted an essay on William Godwin for review to the journal, *European Romantic Review*.

Congratulations to **Kristin Pitt** and Dav Odrsic on the arrival of their daughter, Milena, on August 9th.

Condolences to **Jay Xu**, on the death of his wife, and to his son, Jared, on the loss of his mother.

Joshua Hren, a former Comp Lit TA, will be defending his dissertation on December 16th. It comprises several of his short stories. It is wonderful to know a budding author. We wish Joshua the best defense.

Comparative Literature Events

–Drago Momcilovic hosted the "Conversation over Lunch" on October 21st. His conversation was "Devoted to Food – Culinary Journeys through the Balkans and Japan." Drago explored the intersections between food, hospitality, and community in various literary and culinary practices from former Yugoslavia and Japan.

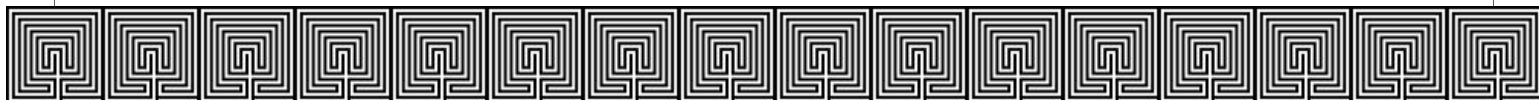
–Christiane Ehrenreich will host the next "Conversation over Lunch," in the spring of 2012. Her topic will be "A literary menu, across culture and languages." She will explore nourishment and sustenance, a most basic need common to all human beings. Excerpts from a dozen texts will be arranged in a "menu," beginning with "gathering the ingredients," then cooking, and the different stages of eating. Bring a sandwich and come to converse over lunch.

–Our Department of French, Italian and CompLit will be hosting an end of the semester party for Majors and Minors on December 14th from 4-6pm in Curtin Hall, room 766.

Comparative Literature at UWM on Facebook



The Comparative Literature Program is now on Facebook! Like Comparative Literature at UWM to keep connected with the program and receive information about news and upcoming events from your faculty and staff. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Comparative-Literature-at-UWM/167470999945006>



Student Spotlight



Brienna Cordonier and Kayla Buska- Bre and Kayla met in the Fall 2010 semester in a CompLit 230 class. As they attended study sessions and classes, they became closer friends. As of now, you can bet where to find them: sitting next to each other in CompLit, or busily coordinating their CompLit classes for next semester to overlap. They have also been known to mutually arrive a few minutes (no more than five) late to class Tuesday and Thursday mornings or to be found texting each other about the ridiculous Virginia Woolf category that they discovered on Jeopardy. It is good to major or minor with friends.

Steve Heimerl, a CompLit minor, hit the Journal/Sentinel as one of the “Faces of Hope” which focuses on Milwaukee-area people who need a hand and organizations that are helping them. Steve is part of Energy Service Corps, a conservation movement that teaches “...Wisconsinites that a healthy environment and a sustainable future is in everyone’s best interest.” Steve says, “I have an opportunity to make a real change.” Good luck, Steve!



John Roberts, a CompLit major, has directed a short film, *The Wheel*, which won the Best Film (audience award) at the Milwaukee Film Festival, and has been invited to screen at Sundance. *The Wheel*, filmed at Milwaukee’s historic Iron Horse Hotel, is a steampunk fantasy about a young man, who is given charge of overseeing the device that keeps the world running in good order, and his mischief-making sister, who wants to give the machine a whirl (here’s a link to the trailer: <http://vimeo.com/15887897>). John credits the close analysis of texts in his CompLit courses with helping him create a winning and whimsical tale.

Alumna- Jaye Berman

Jaye Berman, PhD, lives in Philadelphia, where she is self-employed as a marketing communications consultant, specializing in financial services and higher education.



“October 24, 2011, was the kind of crisp, sunny day I still think of as ‘back to school weather,’ though I haven’t been back to school in a long time. A *really* long time. Yet here I was, on my way to hear the idol of my undergraduate years, Professor Emeritus Roy Arthur Swanson, discuss his recently published first novel, *Rain and Darkness*. I had flown in from Philadelphia for the lecture and book signing, which had been arranged by two of his former students, Anne Bahringer and Nick Poulos. My parents, Mark and Kaye Berman, were ferrying Professor Swanson and another of my idols, Professor Emerita Rachel Skalitzky, to the event.

There I was, squeezed between my two favorite professors in the back seat—a scenario I never could have imagined back in 1972, when I was admitted to UWM at age 16 through the Experimental Program in Higher Education. During my first semester, a classmate in Philosophy 101 told me about a charismatic professor who would be teaching Existentialism the following semester. I signed up and found both Professor Swanson and the readings inspirational and life changing. Another student in the class decided I should be a Comparative Literature major. She dragged me to the department office one day after class, announcing, ‘I have a new major for you.’ She did me a great service.

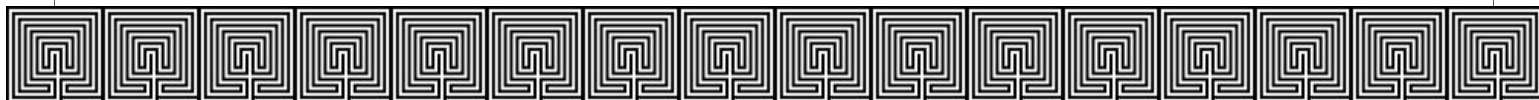
It had been more than 30 years since I’d last heard Professor Swanson lecture, but he was as brilliant and enlightening as always. The entire room—friends, family, and past and present members of the UWM community—fell under his spell as he took us on a journey that began with the origins of Western civilization and arrived at the present lack of civility between our political parties. He spoke of his novel’s attempted retrospective of the 20th century as depicted through three boyhood friends, who grow up and grow wise through the elevating interventions of the Female Force made manifest through the novel’s female characters.

A unifying theme of Professor Swanson’s talk was sadness, and he enabled us to see something familiar in new ways by speaking of sadness as something we need to navigate, and pointing out that *sad* and *sated* aren’t opposites (as we ordinarily assume) but mean the same thing, as evidenced by their common etymology. Professor Swanson ended his talk by noting the dynamic tension of opposites, each part requiring its opposite to exist in full. He began by speaking of sadness and ended with fullness, navigating us through a one-hour demonstration of how they are, indeed, one and the same.

Another former student who was present, Joe DiFrances, has described Professor Swanson’s teaching and writing as ‘the gift he continues to give us,’ and I’m sure all who were present at his lecture will continue to benefit from what he graciously shared with us.”

Invitation to Consider a Comparative Literature Major or Minor

Comparative Literature is a discipline that will complement whatever course of study students choose and will be an impressive addition to any Résumé. The skills learned in Comparative Literature classes will benefit beyond reading literature for enjoyment to reading and analyzing journals, history, etc. We would invite you to consider CompLit as a Major (36 Credits of CompLit courses) or Minor (18 Credits of CompLit courses). For more information, talk with your instructor or ask the staff in Curtin 772.



Favorite Literary Quotes

Aristotle- "Dignity does not consist in possessing honors, but in deserving them."

Bhagavad Gita- "If you want to see the brave, look for those who can forgive. If you want to see the heroic, look at those who can love in return for hatred."

Italo Calvino- "A Classic is a book that has never finished saying what it has to say."

Albert Camus- "Autumn is a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

Teihard de Chardin- "Only love can bring individual beings to their perfect completion, as individuals, by uniting them one with another, because only love takes possession of them and unites them by what lies deepest within them."

Oscar Wilde- "If one cannot enjoy reading a book over and over again, there is no use in reading it at all."

Comparative Literature Reading List for Fall 2011

- Islamic Mystical Poetry: Sufi Verse from the Early Mystics to Rumi
- The Norton Anthology of World Literature
- The Year of the Flood Margaret Atwood
- Millennium People J.G. Ballard
- Joan of Arc, In Her Own Words, Narrow Road to the Deep North and Other Travel Sketches Matsuo Bashō
- The World Must Know Michael Berenbaum
- The Terezin Requiem Joseph Bor
- The Aleph & Other Stories Jorge Luis Borges
- World War Z Max Brooks
- Like Water for Chocolate Laura Esquivel
- Playing for Time Fania Fenelon
- Eating Animals Jonathan Safran Foer
- Comedian Harmonists Douglas Friedman
- Siddhartha Herman Hesse
- Illuminations Hildegard of Bingen
- The Possibility of an Island Michel Houellebecq
- The Book of Margery Kempe Margery Kempe
- A World Made by Hand James Howard Kunstler
- The Golem Gustav Meyrink
- Batman: The Dark Knight Returns Frank Miller
- Exit Wounds Rutu Modan
- Jasmine Bharati Mukherjee
- Samskara U.R. Anatha Murthy
- Wide Sargasso Sea Jean Rhys
- Apricots on the Nile: A Memoir with Recipes Colette Rossant
- Season of Migration to the North Tayeb Salih
- The Complete Persepolis Marjane Satrapi
- Chicken with Plums Marjane Satrapi



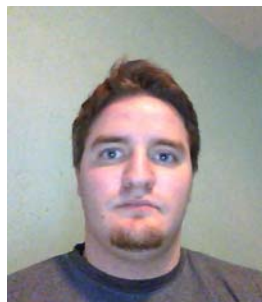
- Maus I: A Survivor's Tale Art Spiegelman
- The Pianist Wladyslaw Szpilman
- Alice in Sunderland Bryan Talbot
- The Arrival Shaun Tan
- Metropolis Osamu Tezuka
- The Alice B. Toklas Cookbook Alice B. Toklas
- The Broken Commandment Shimazaki Tosen
- The Palm-Wine Drinkard Amos Tutuola
- Eat, Drink, and Be Merry: Poems about Food and Drink Peter Washington, ed.
- Mendelssohn is on the Roof Jiri Weil

Roy Arthur Swanson Comparative Literature Scholarship Winners



Roy Arthur Swanson,
Professor Emeritus

We would like to congratulate these Comparative Literature majors and minors who received the 2011-12 RASCL Scholarship in recognition of excellence (*αρετή*) in their studies.



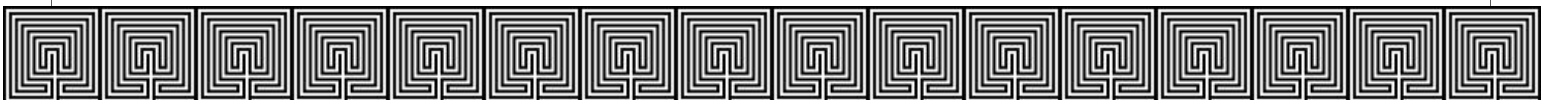
Tim Frohmader



Roger Bergeron



David Schiff



Spring 2012 Course Offerings

133 Contemporary Imagination in Literature and the Arts 3cr (U)

Class Number 34689 Lec001 MWF 11-11:50am (Fountain)

Class Number 37188 Lec202 ONLINE (Fountain)

The goal of this course is to present the student with basic knowledge of the literary movements, authors, and texts of the 20th Century.

This course will introduce Comparative Literature as a discipline. The students will define basic terms used in the study of the Humanities, practice literary analysis/criticism, and gain an appreciation for the problems involved in literary translation. Requirements will include reading the assigned material, class attendance, participation and assignments.

135 Experiencing Literature in the 21st Century 3cr(U)

Class Number 37187 Lec201 ONLINE (Momcilovic)

Topic: The "Undead" (Vampires, Monsters and Ghosts) in Literature and Film

This online course is a cross-cultural exploration of some of the most haunting, fascinating, sadistic, and suspenseful narrative depictions of the "undead" in the 19th, 20th, and 21st centuries. We will take a panoramic view of some of the most unforgettable, archetypal figures that blur the distinction between the living and the dead in modern, post-modern, and contemporary literature and the visual arts - including Central European vampires, Egyptian mummies, Japanese ghosts, and Haitian zombies. We will also consider the ways these narratives about agonizing and precarious life "after" death enable societies to conceptualize and cope with oppressive socio-economic, political, and cultural realities, as well as metaphysical anxieties about suffering, creativity, memory, eroticism, death, and salvation.

208 World Literature in Translation: The 17th to the 21st Century 3cr (U)

Class Number 34690 Lec201 ONLINE (Russell)

This is a survey of critical readings representing a wide range of literary genres written by authors from different nations who have been recognized as part of the literary canon. Students will learn and practice cross-disciplinary analyses in the traditional comparatist manner, e.g. individuals struggling in society, political and the environment. Focusing primarily on the Romantic period, modernism and postmodernism, and postcolonialism, we will discuss the ways in which the artist develops a relation to his/her world and created text.

In addition, we will consider also the student as reader and a necessary element in the art of "doing" Comparative Literature. The objective will be to advance the students' knowledge of world literature, to practice the discipline of the comparative method of reading and critically analyzing texts through class discussion and written assignments.

230 Literature and Society 3cr(U)

Class Number 37587 Lec001 MWF 10-10:50am (Fountain)

Topic: Narratives of Shelter in WWII Italy

The fact that the Nazis succeeded in killing fewer than twenty percent of Italian Jews was attributed not merely to geography or population size but to the consequences of the historical development that made the Jews an integral part of the Italian society and culture. This course will examine Italy during the Hitler years and compare Italy and Germany. Italy was united about the same time as Germany. Both countries had a Jewish community that was highly assimilated and emancipated. Both countries were under fascist rule. But Italy protected the Jews and Germany sought to kill them. This course will examine through literature and film the narratives of refuge in Italy during the Nazi occupation.

230 Literature and Society 3cr(U)

Class Number 42289 Lec002 TR 11am-12:15pm (Momcilovic)

Topic: Rock'N'Roll Narratives

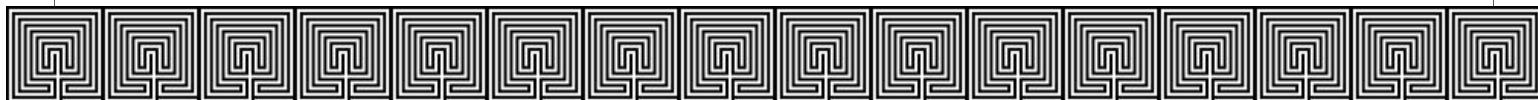
"Rock'N'Roll Narratives" is a candid exploration of 50 years of popular music and its development in both literary texts and social groups and formations around the world. We will read novels and stories that reflect on the meaning of musical composition, taste, canonization, technology, genre, performance, and iconicity. We will also look at "hybrid" musical texts, including albums and videos, that rely on narrative patterning and the literary imagination to structure our view of the social world. We will look, in particular, at the way rock'n'roll straddles the overlapping worlds of literature and music and helps shape our generational identities, our sense of place, our different protest cultures, our mainstream and alternative lifestyles, our most guarded and overwrought fantasies, and our views of disability, addiction, abjection, and enmity.

231 Literature and Religion 3cr(U)

Class Number 41975 Lec001 TR 12:30-1:45pm (Williams)

Topic: The New Testament

Who wrote the New Testament? How is it structured and when was it written? How has it been interpreted? The Introduction to the New Testament course is designed to answer these and other questions from a literary-historical perspective. For this reason, it will avoid confessional or doctrinal perspectives, focusing instead on issues of authorship, dating, theology, literary genre, and other special topics related to the scholarly or academic study of the New Testament. While this course is designed to be a survey of the New Testament literature, there will be some engagement with literature outside of the canonical New Testament; but only as it relates to special issues and topics in New Testament interpretation.



Spring 2012 Course Offerings

231 Literature and Religion 3cr(U)

Class Number 42093 Lec002 TR 9:30-10:45am (Fountain)

Topic: The Seven Deadly Sins: Literature, Art and Film

The investigations into the Seven Deadly Sins and their Contrary Virtues have given scholars subject matter for research and publication since the 4th century. During the Middle Ages the subject matter permeated all the arts as is evident in the Morality Plays, Dante's *Divine Comedy* and the paintings of the Last Judgment. The theme has endured even though it may have lost much of its religious context. This course will investigate the fascination we hold to the subject of Sin although we may secularize it by naming it differently to divorce it from religious affiliation.

233 Literature and Film 3cr(U)

Class Number 41422 Lec001 TR 11am-12:15pm (Xu)

Topic: The Gangster Film in the East and West

This class will study the gangster film as a genre originating in America and how after traveling to other parts of the world, especially Asia, it undergoes interesting changes while retaining important generic features. Although as in other continents the genre has been frequently bent, hybridized, or parodied to fit the cultural needs of the local, its transplant has also made it truly global. By comparing Asian gangsters with their Western counterparts in theme, style, visual content, and social function, we want to find out what common qualities bind them. A good knowledge of how this popular cultural form travels and finds home in the East may lead to a deepened understanding about the processes of global modernity that has been inexorably transforming the spatial and temporal structures of our lives. Our objectives are to learn to analyze film texts from different parts of the world with a comparative approach, and to learn to construct interpretive arguments that are clear, coherent, persuasive, and well organized. The course satisfies the Humanities GER.

233 Literature and Film 3cr(U)

Class Number 42290 Lec002 MW 2-3:15pm (Momcilovic)

Topic: Existentialism from Page to Screen

How do we find individual and collective meaning in a universe that has been described in alternating turns as meaningless, Godless, or absurd? What kinds of responsibilities fall onto our shoulders, and what kinds of desires do we follow, when we acknowledge and embrace the human realities of despair, boredom, angst, sleeplessness, and alienation of modern life? How do these ideas develop alongside painful historical traumas, and how faithfully can they be transported across cultural borders? This course explores these and other issues through a wide range of writings and films, and we will look at the development and transposition of these themes in more contemporary filmic media - including selected episodes of the TV series *Mad Men* and music videos by American (Lady GaGa, Madonna), British (Radiohead), Icelandic (Bjork, Sigur Ros), and French (Air) musical acts.

350 Topics in Comparative Literature 3cr(U/G)

Class Number 42291 Lec001 MW 12:30-1:45pm (Momcilovic)

Topic: The Modern European Novel

This course examines the relationship between creativity and violence in the modern European novel. We will look at the ways "major" and "minor" European novelists like Fyodor Dostoevsky, Franz Kafka, Albert Camus, Jose Saramago, Dubravka Ugresic, Milan Kundera, W. G. Sebald, and Orhan Pamuk react to and make sense of an entire century of political traumas, existential crises, bureaucratic apathy, and debilitating disease. We will also consider the extent to which their engagements with trauma, loss and dislocation allow them to re-imagine a "new" European landscape populated with the voices of the dead and the forgotten.

464 Seminar in Comparative Literary Criticism 3cr (U/G)

Class Number 41325 Sem001 TR 2-3:15pm (Xu)

Topic: Allegory and Allegoresis

The history of allegory and allegorical interpretation extends from antiquity to contemporary times. This course will highlight some important moments of this history and examine in particular allegory's modern vicissitudes, focusing on its fall in the Romantic age and its twentieth-century ascension. We'll study how allegory in our time has exceeded its conventional capacity as a figure of speech and come to function as a critical concept of negation and a historical way of thinking. We shall work on visual and verbal forms of allegory, getting to know a variety of their signifying processes. We'll also examine how allegory and allegorical interpretation work cross-culturally in postcolonial and postmodern settings. The course includes a research component in which students will work in depth on a work of allegory of their own choosing, either verbal or visual, and form their own critical ideas about its meaning and function. The course satisfies the international requirement of the College of Letters and Science.

707 Seminar in Methods of Literary Analysis 3cr(G)

Class Number 41326 Sem001 R 6-8:20pm (Paik)

How do we read texts? How do works of literature, film, and new media relate to the history of ideas and to sociopolitical conditions? What kinds of theoretical approaches remain most promising and meaningful today, when some leading scholars have declared that theory has become exhausted, while others seek to ground humanistic study in the concerns of ecology or technology? This seminar will provide a survey of literary and cultural theory, as well as examine recent trends and developments, such as neoliberalism, cyberculture, and environmentalism.

