

Graduate courses with a Renaissance / early modern focus offered in the Fall of 2016

REN-R501 The Culture of the Renaissance (4 cr.) will be taught by Sarah Van der Laan and will meet with CMLT-C 525 — Tuesday 4-6:30pm in BH 221

The early modern period in European history begins in the late Middle Ages and arrives at the threshold of the Enlightenment, encompassing the birth of humanism, the Renaissance, the Reformation, the European wars of religion, and the scientific revolution. This course will chart both historical continuity and cultural change to ask how this rich, paradoxical, and often contradictory age remains profoundly distant from our own yet laid the foundations of the modern world. The course will be organized as a series of interlocking investigations into the forces that shaped the early modern world: courts and court culture, book and print culture, networks of knowledge, humanism, neostoicism. It will explore the impact of those forces across national and disciplinary boundaries, drawing on both primary texts and secondary readings. Blending cultural history and literary criticism, this course will introduce students to a wide range of methodological and theoretical approaches to studying the distant past.

ART HISTORY

ARTH-A 580: “Playing With Pictures”
Taught by Bret Rothstein
MW 11:15A-12:30pm, FA 005

This course will survey the transformation of painting from a political and religious instrument into a self-aware art form and, as such, quintessentially “modern” medium. Of particular importance will be discourses of materiality and its relationship to interpretation (in essence, painting as theoretical inquiry); the intellectual claims of manual labor; the rise of print as a supposedly rival medium; and changing forms of attention over the course of the long fifteenth century. As part of our analysis, we also will talk about changes in the form and function of portraiture, about the origins of landscape as a genre, and about the shifting status of artists in the early northern European Renaissance.

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

CMLT-C 525: “The Culture of the Renaissance”

Taught by Sarah Van der Laan
Tuesday 4-6:30, BH 221

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ENGLISH

L740/ L610: "Premodern Ecologies"
Taught by Shannon Gayk
Monday 1:00-4:00pm

In this seminar, we will consider the modes and stakes of writing nature before the age of "nature writing." What do early literature and art have to offer contemporary discussions about environmental issues? How do early texts figure the status of the human within a larger ecology? How do early texts represent the relation between human, animal, plant, and element? Between microcosms and macrocosms? Between nature and art? To what extent is nature gendered in premodern representations and why does this matter? (How) does the scientific revolution and /or humanism affect the understanding, experience, and representation of nature, environment, or ecology? These questions and others will guide this seminar's discussions as we chart a critical and theoretical genealogy of nature and ecology from ancient cosmography, through premodern poetry, philosophy, and scientific texts, to the recent shift away from thinking about "nature" to exploring "ecology" in ecocriticism and the environmental humanities. The primary goals of the course will be twofold: on the one hand, we will think carefully about how texts represent and engage with nature, environment, and ecology across a various periods; and on the other we will think about what is at stake (aesthetically, historically, socially, politically) in ecologically-oriented modes of reading. In so doing, we will also consider recent theoretical approaches that often influence or compliment work in the environmental humanities (especially posthumanism, actor network theory, and new materialism) and explore the assumptions and conditions that undergird these critical approaches.

Primary readings will include selections from Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, Bernard Silvestris's *Cosmography*, Alain of Lille's *Complaint of Nature*, Chaucer's "Former Age" and *Parliament of Fowls*, Langland's *Piers Plowman*, and excerpts from Gower's *Confessio Amantis*, from medieval drama, and early modern pastoral poetry, as well as a range of images in manuscript and print from before 1700. Critical readings will include selections from recent premodern ecocriticism, as well as work by Carolyn Merchant, Greg Garrard, Lawrence Buell, Timothy Morton, Jane Bennett, Rob Nixon, and others. The course will be open-ended, and the direction we take in the final weeks will be based in part on the interests of students. Assignments will include an in-class presentation and an article-length (20-25 page) paper.

L730 / L611: *Early Modern Aesthetics: Engaging the Sensible, the Ethical, the Political*
Taught by Joan Pong Linton
Tuesday 1-4pm, BH 147

Although aesthetics has been a staple of early modern studies, recent scholarship has turned to engagements of the aesthetic "as a self-conscious preoccupation in literary and visual work" (Christopher Pye, *The Storm At Sea*). In addressing the study of early modern aesthetics, this course will recapitulate traditional scholarship as a basis for understanding the import of recent developments; it will also focus primarily on literary and dramatic engagements of the aesthetic. The term "early modern" is meant to narrow down an extensive field of inquiry, the better to facilitate contextualized readings of texts. The objective is both to track the ways in which the aesthetic in these texts is responsive to historical change, and to provide an anchor for more broadly transhistorical engagements with theories of aesthetics.

Specifically, course inquiry will be organized around the aesthetic in relation to the sensible, the ethical, and the political, three interrelated and co-implicated terms that indicate the emphasis taken in any given approach. Thus an emphasis on the aesthetic as non-foundational, hence self-grounding, poses the question of autonomy most directly related to the political (sovereignty, law, and the state), while an emphasis on the aesthetic as relational poses the question of self and other most directly related to the ethical (friendship, hospitality). Finally, insofar as the aesthetic emphasizes embodiment, it opens a sensorium that, in one sense, relates to technological change (as in the pleasure-driven sensationalism of prose romances) and, in another sense, locates the human within a broader ecology of animal, vegetal, and mineral connections.

Primary readings include selected poems, prose romances, Shakespeare's *The Winter's Tale*, and his coauthored play with Middleton, *Timon of Athens*. Readings in theory will range from classical (including Plato, Aristotle, Cicero) and early modern (Montaigne, Bodin, Hobbes) to recent (Agamben, Butler, Latour, Levinas, Ranciere, et al). In addition to 1 or 2 in-class presentations, participants will write a research paper: conference length (10-12 pages) for L611 participants and article length (20-25 pages) for L730 participants.

FRENCH AND ITALIAN

GERMAN

HISTORY

H620: The French Revolution
Taught by Rebecca Spang
Monday 3:35-5:30pm, AC C101

For over two centuries, the French Revolution has been a crucial topic of both historical and historiographical debate. Its origins have been traced to low literature and high politics; its effects have been detected in everything from economic theory and hair styles to family dynamics and the map of Europe. From the Revolution, we get our contemporary notions of political Left and Right, as well as the word “terrorist”; from the Revolution, France got départements, the “rights of man,” and the metric system.

After an introductory section on eighteenth-century culture, politics, and society, this course will concentrate on the revolutionary 1790s. Metropolitan France will provide our primary focus, but we will also consider the meaning of revolution in France’s Caribbean colonies and across much of Western Europe. In April 1792, revolutionary France declared war against the kings of central Europe; war continued, almost uninterrupted, until 1815. To study the Revolution is to study ideas of liberty and equality; it is also to study practices of war and empire.

There are no prerequisites for this course and all required readings will be in English. Students who have not studied this period before are encouraged to read Colin Jones, *The Great Nation: France from Louis XV to Napoleon* in the first few weeks of the semester.

HISTORY AND PHILOSOPHY OF SCIENCE & MEDICINE

X506 SURVEY OF SCIENCE UP TO 1750
Taught by Nico Bertoloni Meli
Tuesday 2-4pm, BH 108

This class has several purposes: to acquaint you with some basic “textbook” notions in the history of science; to gain some familiarity with the types of problems and

questions historians face; to learn to read research articles published in professional journals; to become aware of the problems involved with reading primary sources from different periods; to learn how to structure an elementary research paper. Evaluation is based on oral participation, class presentations, a few simple tests, and a final essay (approximately 25-30 pages). For each week I provide general readings (the first items) that are required, and additional optional readings for those giving presentations or with special interests.

MUSICOLOGY

SPANISH AND PORTUGUESE

HISP-S 558 Colonial Spanish American Literature
Taught by Kathleen Myers
TR 1:002:15pm, AC C107

Through a study of canonical texts from Colonial Spanish America this course will focus on the development of colonial discourse and on theories about it. First we will examine the chronicles of exploration, conquest and colonization (ca. 1492 – 1600), focusing in particular on the foundation of European concepts about the “New World” (Columbus, Cortés, Bernal Díaz, Las Casas). We will then study indigenous and mestizo authors who draw on these concepts but combine them with local indigenous systems to create a dynamic re-interpretation of colonial processes (Sahagún, El Inca Garcilaso, Guaman Poma). Lastly, we will study the formation of a “barroco de Indias” during the mid-colonial period (ca. 1600-1750) and its flowering in a variety of poetic and dramatic texts (Catalina de Erauso, Ercilla, Balbuena, and Sor Juana). We will study primary sources from the period in conjunction with recent critical works to help us reformulate traditional paradigms about conquest and colonialism. As an extension of our work on primary texts, students will conduct archival research on first editions and manuscript materials at the Lilly Library.

HISP-S 628 Topics in Early Modern Spanish Literature
Taught by Steven Wagschal
Wednesday 4:00- 6:30pm, WH 205

Reflecting on time spent in the tower library of his Château, Michel de Montaigne wrote famously that “I only look to books to give me pleasure through honest amusement” (*Essays* II.10), although he went on to explain other goal-directed ways

that he read as well. The private library, as a dedicated room for collecting books and for the solitary and silent reading of those books, rose in prominence throughout the sixteenth century and became an increasingly common possession for the highly privileged by the time that Francisco de Quevedo wrote his well-known sonnet about book-reading from his own tower.

Charting the rise of this practice among figures of far less power and authority than either Montaigne or Quevedo, Cervantes depicts a rural *hidalgo* who keeps a private library, locked with key. Upon entering the room, the priest, barber, housekeeper and niece “found more than a hundred great volumes, extremely well bound, and a good many smaller ones too. . . .” (I.6). The narrator describes the contents specifically in the pages that follow, as the reader learns that this collection is organized by genre. Books of chivalry abound of course, as do volumes of all kinds of poetry, all, that is, but one: There is a conspicuous absence in Don Quixote's library of devotional poetry and hagiography. This lack is key to understanding the character's use for reading: as Edward Baker has noted, like Montaigne's "pleasure" and "amusement," these books are meant for Don Quixote's *entretenimiento*. Much critical emphasis has been placed on the continuation in Renaissance Spain of medieval practices of aural reading, epitomized, it is argued, by the scene at the Inn where the “Novella of Foolish Curiosity” is read aloud. But clearly Don Quixote's keeping of a private library points to the emergence in the mid-sixteenth century of new types of reading practices that coincide with developments in bookmaking technologies, the increased humanist interest in vernacular poets (e.g. Francisco Sánchez de las Brozas' lengthy commentary on the Castilian poetry of Garcilaso de la Vega), and importantly, the development of a notion of what we now call “leisure time,” time in which the reader was not seeking to cultivate a skill or improve morally, but to find pleasure and amusement.

In this course, we will examine the expansion of the modern concept of leisure time in the context of the History of the Book, as we read volumes meant for *entretenimiento*. The texts we will read include many that were found among the hundred tomes in Cervantes' fictional library, as well as books collected and read by historical readers in their actual private libraries. In addition to historiographical and theoretical readings on leisure and book collecting, primary texts will include at least one chivalric novel (e. g. *Amadís de Gaula*, *Tirant Lo Blanc*, and/or *Belianís de Grecia*), lyric poems by Ausiàs March and/or Garcilaso, and a pastoral novel (e. g. *La Diana*).

Criticism and theoretical texts will be in English and Spanish. Primary readings will be in Spanish and Catalan.

Catalan Minor Credit: The course will include at least 30% of its primary content in Catalan and may be counted toward the PhD Minor in Catalan. Catalan primary texts—e. g. Martorell's *Tirant Lo Blanc* and Ausiàs March's *Cants d'amor*—may be read in translation by those not seeking this minor.