

# Fundamentals of Comparative Literature 1 (CL 9501A)

## Fall 2016

**Instructor:** Prof. Luca Pocci

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**Description:** After presenting the status and politics of the least “disciplined” of disciplines, Comparative Literature, the course sets out to explore and apply its basics to the study of the origin, evolution and transformation of the defining genre of modernity and post-modernity, the novel. This exploration will be conducted through the lens of a representative number of critical works that pertain or relate to the ever shifting corpus of Comparative Literature. One of the main goals of the course is to chart the process that leads to a phenomenon which, by way of slight exaggeration, we might call the contemporary novelization of literature, with the novel that has come to occupy a central, even hegemonic, place in today’s literary space.

### **Course Requirements:**

Class participation 30%

Class presentation 20%

Research paper 50% (due at the end of December)

### **Seminar Meetings:**

Mondays, 5:30 – 8:30

Classroom, STVH 1119

### **Course Materials:**

All the texts indicated in the course schedule are required. They are available at the University bookstore and on reserve at Weldon.

### **Readings:**

You are expected to do all the required readings for each class; in turn, expect to be asked questions regarding the readings.

### **Class Presentation:**

In consultation with the instructor, you will choose an oral presentation topic. The delivery should take approximately 20 minutes and you need not submit a written version of the presentation.

### **Research Paper:**

Due at the end of December, it should be approximately 20 double-spaced pages. You should consult with the instructor in advance to determine the topic. Do your utmost to avoid incompletes.

# Course Schedule

## September 12 **Beyond Compare: What Is (Not) Comparative Literature?**

Susan Bassnett, *Comparative Literature: A Critical Introduction*. Oxford UK & Cambridge USA: Blackwell, 1993. "Introduction" and Chapters 1, 2, 3, 4.

## September 19 **Beyond Compare: What Is (Not) Comparative Literature?**

Haun Saussy (Ed.), *Comparative Literature in An Age of Globalization*. Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins U P, 2006; Chapters 1, 2, 3, 6, 16; Gayatri Spivak, *Death of a Discipline*. New York: Columbia U P, 2003.

## September 26 **Before the Novel: *The Decameron***

•Boccaccio, *The Decameron*. Trans. G.H. McWilliam. London: Penguin, 2003. (Preface and Introduction; Day I, tale 1; Day II, tale 5; Day IV, tale 2, Day V, tale 8; Day V, tale 9, Day VI, tale 1; Day VIII, tale 2; Day VIII, tale 7; Day X, tale 10.

•Erich.Auerbach, "Frate Alberto." In *Mimesis: The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Princeton: Princeton U P, 2003, pp. 203-231.

## October 3 **The Birth of the Novel: *Don Quijote***

•Cervantes, *Don Quixote de la Mancha* (vol. I, Preface to the reader, book I (43-96), book II (97-108); vol. II, book II (702-758). *Don Quixote*. Trans. T. Smollett. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.

• M.M. Bakhtin, "Discourse in the Novel." *The Dialogic Imagination: Four Essays by M.M. Bakhtin*. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1981: 259-422.

## October 10 **Thanksgiving**

## October 17 **The Birth of the Novel: *Don Quijote***

•Cervantes, *Don Quixote*, vol. I, book IV (407-448), vol. II, book IV (1055-1090);

•Catherine Gallagher, "The Rise of Fictionality." In Franco Moretti, Ed. *The Novel. Vol. 1. History, Geography and Culture*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2006: 336-363.

## October 24 **The Bildungsroman**

•Franco Moretti, *The Way of the World: The Bildungsroman in European Culture*. London: Verso, 1987; Each student will have to choose a novel belonging to this genre and briefly (i.e., in no more than 15 minutes) introduce it to the class.

## October 31 **The Coming of Age of the Novel**

•G. Flaubert, *Madame Bovary* (Trans. J. Hall. London: Penguin Classics, 2002).

•Peter Brooks, Chapt. I, II, VII from *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Cambridge & London: Harvard U P, 1984.

•Reinhard Kuhn, *The Demon of Noontide: Ennui in Western Literature*. Princeton:

Princeton UP, 1976: 3-64; 101-127; 331-74.

**November 7**                            **Long Story Short: Short novels**

- H. Melville, *Bartleby* (In H. Melville, *Billy Budd and Other Stories*. London: Penguin, 1986).
  
- J. Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (London: Penguin, 1989).
  
- Peter Brooks, “An Unreadable Report: Conrad’s Heart of Darkness.” In *Reading for the Plot: Design and Intention in Narrative*. Cambridge & London: Harvard U P, 1984.
  
- Edward Said, “Two visions in Heart of Darkness.” In *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage Books, 1994.

**November 14**                           **Strange Fictions**

- J. L. Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote”, “The Library of Babel”, “The Garden of Forking Paths”, “Funes, His Memory”, “Averroës’ Search”. In *Collected Fictions*. Trans. A. Hurley. London: Penguin, 1998.
  
- I. Calvino. *Invisible Cities*. Trans. W. Weaver. New York: Harcourt Brace, 1974.

**November 21**                           **Hybrid Narratives**

- W. G. Sebald, *Austerlitz*. Trans. A. Bell. New York: The Modern Library, 2001.
  
- Roger Luckhurst, “The Genealogy of a Concept”, 19-76; “Trauma in Narrative Fiction”, 87-116. In *The Trauma Question*. London: Routledge, 2008.

**November 28**                           **Class presentations**

**December 5**                            **Class presentations**

## **Academic Offences**

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at the following Web site:

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic\\_discipline\\_grad.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/handbook/appeals/scholastic_discipline_grad.pdf)