

Introduction to Comparative Literature
Fall 2004

Wednesdays and Fridays 2:30-3:45 pm

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This course will introduce students to the field of Comparative Literature through a study of three compelling and representative works of theory, three works of short fiction and two works of poetry. The course is divided into three sections designating three main approaches within the field of Comparative Literature. These include theory, literature and the other arts, and translation. We will read texts from several literary traditions, analyzing them from a variety of perspectives. Identical to ENGL 275. Diversity. WL. Prerequisites: An introductory literature course in any language. Note: Comparative Literature majors must take this course by the junior year.

Required texts (available at the Oberlin bookstore):

Barthes, Roland. S/Z. Farrar, Strauss, Giroux ISBN 0374521670
Eagleton, Terry. Literary Theory: An Introduction. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996. ISBN: 081661251X
Mann, Thomas. Death in Venice and other Tales. Trans. Joachim Neugroschel. New York: Penguin, 1998 ISBN: 0141181737.
Rilke, Rainer Maria. Sonnets to Orpheus. Norton, 1992. ISBN 0393309320.
Sijie, Dai. Balzac and the little Chinese Seamstress. Trans. Ina Rilke. New York: Random House, 2002. ISBN 0385722206
Whincup, Greg, trans. The Heart of Chinese Poetry. New York: Doubleday, 1987. ISBN 038523967X
Zizek, Slavoj. The Fright of Real Tears. Krzysztof Kieslowski between Theory and Post-theory. London: British Film Institute, 2001. ISBN 0851707548.

Schedule of assignments:

Section One:	THEORY
September 3:	Introduction
September 8 & 10:	Perloff “‘Literature’ in the Expanded Field” and Derrida “This Strange Institution Called Literature” First short paper due Thursday.
September 15 & 17:	Eagleton <u>Introduction to Literary Theory</u>
September 22 & 24:	Eagleton <u>Introduction to Literary Theory</u> . Second short paper due Thursday.
Sept. 29 & Oct. 1:	Balzac “Sarrasine” (in Barthes <u>S/Z</u>)
October 6 & 8:	Barthes <u>S/Z</u>
October 13 & 15:	Barthes <u>S/Z</u> . Third short paper due Tuesday.
October 20 & 22:	Fall Break
October 27 & 29:	Sijie <u>Balzac and the Little Chinese Seamstress</u>
Section Two:	TRANSLATION

November 3 & 5:	Selections from <u>Theories of Translation. An Anthology of Essays from Dryden to Derrida</u>
November 10 & 12:	<u>The Heart of Chinese Poetry.</u> Fourth short paper due Tuesday.
November 17 & 19:	Rilke <u>Sonnets to Orpheus</u>
Section Three:	LITERATURE AND THE OTHER ARTS
November 24 & 26:	Zizek <u>The Fright of Real Tears</u> No class Friday (Thanksgiving)
December 1 & 3:	Zizek <u>The Fright of Real Tears.</u> Last short paper due Tuesday.
December 8 & 10:	Zizek <u>The Fright of Real Tears</u>
December 15:	Catch-up Day. FINAL LONG PAPER DUE.

Grading:

Class participation:	15% (This includes attendance.)
5 writing exercises:	10% each. Each essay should be 1-2 pages long.
1 Oral presentation:	10%. Guidelines given in class.
1 Final paper:	25% (6 pages minimum.) Guidelines given in class.

You must write *at least one* of each of these kinds of exercise (5 in all):

- 1) Theory exercise. Analyze and comment on a segment of a text of theory we've studied. Or, relate a segment of theory to a literary text we've been reading.
- 2) Translation exercise. Possibilities include: a) Translate a literary text from one language into another, or from one dialect/register/style of language into another. If you choose this option you must attach a commentary on your translation; b) compare two published translations of a literary work; c) comment on a theoretical work on translation that we've been studying; d) analyze some of the issues that arise when "translating" between different expressive forms and/or media.
- 3) Exercise in literature and the other arts. Choices include: a) compare a literary work to a related work of music, visual art, film, etc; b) Analyze a segment of film as it relates to Zizek's or another theorist's set of ideas.

Please note that to participate in this class you must adhere to Oberlin's Honor Code. It is your responsibility to familiarize yourself with the Code.

Note also that attendance is mandatory; unexcused absences lower your grade. If you miss class, you must 1) turn your work in on time anyway; and 2) learn the material you've missed—including the progress we've made in class discussion—before the next class period. Late assignments are reduced one full letter grade per day.