

DEPARTMENT OF MODERN LANGUAGES  
AND CULTURAL STUDIES

<https://uofa.ualberta.ca/modern-languages-and-cultural-studies>

2018-2019 C LIT 460 A1

*Fundamentals of Comparative Literature/ Theories of Comparative Literature*  
(Fall Term)

Instructor: Prof. Odile Cisneros  
Office: Arts 218-C  
E-mail: cisneros@ualberta.ca

Time: W 1:00-3:50 PM  
Place: T B - 65  
Office Hours: [TR 1:30-2:30 PM](#)  
Course Website: eClass under C LIT 460

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**Course Prerequisite:** None

**Course-based Ethics Approval:**

Yes       No, not needed, no such projects approved.

**Community Service Learning** component      Required      Optional       N/A

**Past or Representative Evaluative Course Material Available**

- Exam registry – Students' Union: <http://www.su.ualberta.ca/services/infolink/exam/>
- See explanations below
- Document distributed in class
- Other (please specify)
- NA

**Additional mandatory Instructional fees (approved by Board of Governors)**

Yes       No

**Course Description and Objectives:**

“Personally I wish we could simply speak of the study of literature or of literary scholarship and that there were . . . professors of literature just as there are professors of philosophy and of history.”  
--René Wellek

This course explores the history and methodology of Comparative Literature. Sometimes called a quixotic discipline, Comparative Literature attempts to cover not only the totality of literary production around the world but also the links between literature and such diverse fields as music, sculpture, painting, theatre, and film, to say nothing of history, sociology, anthropology, folklore, and genetics. In the process of tracing the evolution of this multifarious discipline, we will examine such issues as the definition(s) of Comparative Literature; the relation between national literatures and world literature, not the least how “national” texts enter world literature; the construction of literary and critical canons; and the role of translation in Comparative Literature. That is, is Comparative Literature’s heterogeneity a sign of the discipline’s utopian overreach or of its vitality? In particular, we will explore the new geographies of literary production in an attempt to incorporate historically excluded literatures and literary histories into Comparative Literature.

**Learning Outcomes:**

Successful students should be able to:

- Articulate the issues involved in the definition of Comparative Literature and give a tentative definition noting its merits and shortcomings
- Discuss the concepts of national and world literature and compare and contrast them, including the process of transformation of national literature into world literature

- Define the concept of canon and explain the process whereby canons of literature and criticism are constructed
- Elucidate the role of translation in Comparative Literature
- Give an overview of the current views regarding the state of the discipline of Comparative Literature perceived either as crisis or as opportunity

**Required texts** (available from the U of A Bookstore or Amazon.ca):

- Damrosch, David, Natalie Melas, and Mbongiseni Buthelezi, eds. *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature: From the European Enlightenment to the Global Present*. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2009. (PS)
- Other texts will be available through eClass

**Grade Distribution (see “Explanatory Notes”):**

Class participation:	10%	Ongoing
4 Reaction Papers (5% each):	20%	Due on day reading is listed on schedule
Joint presentation:	20%	To be assigned in the first two weeks of classes
Essay:	50%	3000 to 4000 words <b>due December 12</b>

**Date of Deferred Final Exam (if applicable): N/A**

**Explanatory Notes on Assignments:  
Class Participation, Reaction Papers, Presentation and Essay**

Class participation: This involves due preparation for individual meetings and active intervention in our conversation.

Reaction Papers:

These are your own reflections on the assigned readings for the course. They should **demonstrate you have read and understood the ideas in the reading and that you engage critically with them**. The reaction paper should be 1-2 typed, double-spaced pages. They are due the day the reading is listed on the reading schedule. You will receive a grade for them (each of a total of 4 counts 5% of your grade; no late papers will be accepted).

Presentation:

In pairs or small groups, students will be required to give one presentation, which must focus on a topic distinct from that of the essay. The presentation will be about 15 minutes long and will be delivered in class. At least two days before the presentation, the student must provide the instructor with a 200-word abstract and a 50-word biographical note. Then a week after the presentation, students must deliver to the instructor a written version of the presentation, including a comprehensive list of works cited.

Essay:

The essay will be between 3000 and 4000 words. It may deal with works discussed in the course or with other critical or creative texts that, in some way, address the nature of Comparative Literature. The essay topic must be discussed with and approved by the instructor in advance through the submission of a written abstract at a date posted on the eClass website.

**Required Notes:**

“Policy about course outlines can be found in the [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#) of the University Calendar.”

## **Student Responsibilities:**

### ***Academic Integrity:***

The University of Alberta is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect. Students are particularly urged to familiarize themselves with the provisions of the Code of Student Behaviour (online at <http://www.governance.ualberta.ca>) and avoid any behaviour which could potentially result in suspicions of cheating, plagiarism, misrepresentation of facts and/or participation in an offence. Academic dishonesty is a serious offence and can result in suspension or expulsion from the University.

All students should consult [the Academic Integrity website](#). If you have any questions, ask your instructor.

An instructor or coordinator who is convinced that a student has handed in work that he or she could not possibly reproduce without outside assistance is obliged, out of consideration of fairness to other students, to report the case to the Associate Dean of the Faculty. See the [Academic Discipline Process](#).

### ***Learning and Working Environment:***

The Faculty of Arts is committed to ensuring all students; faculty and staff are able to study and work in an environment that is safe and free from discrimination and harassment. It does not tolerate behaviour that undermines that environment. The Department urges anyone who feels that this policy is being violated to:

- Discuss the matter with the person whose behaviour is causing concern; or
- If that discussion is unsatisfactory, or there is concern that direct discussion is inappropriate or threatening, discuss it with the Chair of the Department.

For additional advice or assistance regarding this policy you may contact the [Office of the Student Ombuds](#). Information about the [University of Alberta Discrimination and Harassment Policy and Procedures](#) is described in [UAPPOL](#).

### ***Territorial Statement:***

"The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are located on Treaty 6 territory, and respects the histories, languages, and cultures of the First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and all First Peoples of Canada, whose presence continues to enrich our vibrant community." (*from the beginning of the Calendar*).

### ***University of Alberta Sexual Violence Policy:***

The Sexual Violence Policy was approved by GFC in June 2017. It plays a vital role in ensuring a safe and respectful learning and working environment.

As defined in the policy, **sexual violence** is any sexual act or act of a sexual nature, or act targeting sexuality, whether physical or psychological, committed without consent. **Sexual violence** is a complex and serious problem in society and on university campuses. Sexual violence can affect individuals of all gender identities, gender expressions, and sexual orientations, as well as those from all ages, abilities, racial, cultural and economic backgrounds. Through this policy, the University of Alberta recognizes its responsibility to reduce sexual violence in the University community. The university aims to do so by fostering a culture of **consent** and support through education, training and policy. The University recognizes the possible effects of trauma on those who have experienced sexual violence and supports the efforts of individuals to seek support and recover.

To read the policy in more detail, please visit:

<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/PoliciesProcedures/Policies/Sexual-Violence-Policy.pdf>

### ***Recording of Lectures:***

Audio or video recording of lectures, labs, seminars or any other teaching environment by students is allowed only with the prior written consent of the content author(s) or as a part of an approved accommodation plan. Student or instructor content, digital or otherwise, created and/or used within the context of the course is to be used solely for personal study, and is not to be used or distributed for any other purpose without prior written consent from the content author(s).

### ***Attendance, Absences, and Missed Grade Components:***

Regular attendance is essential for optimal performance in any course. In cases of potentially excusable absences due to illness or domestic affliction, notify your instructor by e-mail within two days. Regarding

absences that may be excusable and procedures for addressing course components missed as a result, consult sections [Attendance](#) and [Examinations](#) of the University Calendar. Be aware that unexcused absences will result in partial or total loss of the grade for the “attendance and participation” component(s) of a course, as well as for any assignments that are not handed-in or completed as a result.

Deferral of term work is a privilege and not a right; there is no guarantee that a deferral will be granted. Misrepresentation of facts to gain a deferral is a serious breach of the Code of Student Behaviour.

**In this course**, participatory attendance will count in sum for 10% of the grade. Please see course description, grade distribution, and explanatory notes on assignments above for details.

**Policy for Late Assignments:**

Students who consult in advance with an instructor regarding contingencies preventing the timely completion of an assignment may, at the discretion of the instructor, be granted an extension. Otherwise, assignments may be handed in one class-day after the stated deadline without penalty, with a 1%-per-class-day penalty assessed for each subsequent class-day of lateness.

**Disclaimer:**

Any typographical errors in this syllabus are subject to change and will be announced in class and posted on eClass. The date of the final examination is set by the Registrar and takes precedence over the final examination date reported in this syllabus.

**Student Resources:**

The best all-purpose website for student services is: <https://www.ualberta.ca/current-students>.

**Accessibility Resources:** (1 – 80 SUB)

The University of Alberta is committed to creating work and learning communities that inspire and enable all people to reach their full potential. Accessibility Resources promotes an accessible, inclusive, and universally designed environment. For general information to register for services visit the [Accessibility Resources](#) webpage.

**The Academic Success Centre:** (1-80 SUB)

[The Academic Success Centre](#) offers a variety of workshops on effective study and exam strategies. There are in-person and online sessions available for a modest fee.

**The Centre for Writers:** (1-42 Assiniboia Hall)

The [Centre for Writers](#) offers free one-on-one writing support to students, faculty, and staff. Students can request consultation for a writing project at any stage of development. Instructors can request class visits and presentations.

**Health and Wellness Support:** There are many health and community services available to current students. For more information visit the [Health and Wellness Support](#) webpage.

**Office of the Student Ombuds:**

The [Office of the Student Ombuds](#) offers confidential interviews, advice and support to students facing academic, discipline, interpersonal and financial difficulties.

**Grading:**

Assessment of the individual course components may be in the form of numerical marks or letter grades. The final letter grade will be based on "a combination of absolute achievement and relative performance in a class" (University Calendar, [Evaluation Procedures and Grading System](#)). The University Grading Procedure mandates that "a student's level of achievement of the goals/outcomes of a course, their grade, and the descriptor of that grade must be aligned" (<https://policiesonline.ualberta.ca/>). The following guidelines have been adopted by the Department of Modern Languages and Cultural Studies:

**“MLCS Undergraduate Grading Scale”**

Descriptor	Letter Grade	Grade Point Value	%

<b>Excellent.</b> A+, A or A- is earned by work which is superior in content and form and demonstrates an exceptional grasp of the subject matter. The grade of A+ designates work that far exceeds course expectations. Grades in the A range are normally achieved by a small number of students.	<b>A+</b> <b>A</b> <b>A-</b>	4.0 4.0 3.7	<b>97-100</b> <b>93-96</b> <b>90-92</b>
<b>Good.</b> B+, B or B- is earned by work that demonstrates a thorough comprehension of the course material and a good command of relevant skills. Grades in the B range are normally achieved by the largest number of students.	<b>B+</b> <b>B</b> <b>B-</b>	3.3 3.0 2.7	<b>87-89</b> <b>83-86</b> <b>80-82</b>
<b>Satisfactory.</b> C+, C or C- is earned by work that demonstrates an adequate grasp of the course material and relevant skills. Grades in the C range designate work that has met the basic requirements of the course.	<b>C+</b> <b>C</b> <b>C-</b>	2.3 2.0 1.7	<b>77-79</b> <b>73-76</b> <b>70-72</b>
<b>Poor/Minimal Pass.</b> D+ or D is earned by work that demonstrates minimal familiarity with the course material. Grades in the D range generally indicate insufficient preparation for subsequent courses in the subject matter.	<b>D+</b> <b>D</b>	1.3 1.0	<b>65-69</b> <b>60-64</b>
<b>Failure.</b>	<b>F</b>	0.0	<b>0-59</b>

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