The subjects listed below are arranged in three graduated categories or tiers:

1) Introductory subjects (21L.000[J]-21L.048[J]) all carry HASS Distribution and Communications Intensive (CI-H or CI-HW) credit.
2) Samplings (21L.310-21L.339, 21L.345-21L.355) are 6-unit subjects that provide both an alternative route into literary study and a less intensive means for students to sustain a commitment to reading and textual interpretation. Their focus is on critical exploration, comprehension, and group discussion, with less sustained attention to analytic writing skills. Students can combine two 6-unit Samplings subjects to count as a HASS subject in the Humanities category and the equivalent of a subject in the Intermediate tier. See the HASS Requirement website [http://web.mit.edu/hassreq/petitions.html] or contact Literature Headquarters for details.
3) Intermediate subjects (21L.430-21L.512) explore literary and visual forms in greater depth and center on historical periods, literary themes, or genres; others focus on media studies, comparative cultural studies, or national literatures.
4) Seminars (21L.616[J]-21L.715) are more advanced and are often communication intensive.

A supplement to this catalog, available online and from the Literature Section offices, offers more detailed descriptions of all literature subjects and includes specific information about required texts, writing assignments, and examinations.

## Introductory Subjects

### 21L.000[J] Writing About Literature
Same subject as 21W.041[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW

Intensive focus on the reading and writing skills used to analyze literary texts such as poems by Emily Dickinson, Shakespeare or Langston Hughes; short stories by Chekhov, Joyce, or Alice Walker; and a short novel by Melville or Toni Morrison. Designed not only to prepare students for further work in writing and literary and media study, but also to provide increased confidence and pleasure in their reading, writing, and analytical skills. Students write or revise essays weekly.

*I. Lipkowitz*

### 21L.001 Foundations of Western Literature: Homer to Dante
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Studies a broad range of texts essential to understanding the two great sources of Western conceptions of the world and humanity’s place within it: the ancient world of Greece and Rome and the Judeo-Christian world that challenged and absorbed it. Readings vary but usually include works by Homer, Sophocles, Aristotle, Plato, Virgil, St. Augustine, and Dante.

*A. Bahr*

### 21L.002 Foundations of Western Literature: From Shakespeare to the Present
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Complementary to 21L.001. A broad survey of texts, literary, philosophical, and sociological, studied to trace the growth of secular humanism, the loss of a supernatural perspective upon human events, and changing conceptions of individual, social, and communal purpose. Stresses appreciation and analysis of texts that came to represent the common cultural possession of our time.

*J. Buzard*

### 21L.003 Reading Fiction
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Introduces prose fiction, both stories and novels. Emphasizes historical context, narrative structure and close reading.

*Fall: J. Buzard*
*Spring: D. Thorburn, I. Lipkowitz*

### 21L.004 Reading Poetry
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Emphasis on poetry in various forms (lyric, epic, and dramatic), chiefly in English-speaking countries. Syllabus usually includes works by Shakespeare, Milton, Donne, Keats, Dickinson, Frost, Eliot, Langston Hughes, Lowell, and Plath.

*A. Kibel*
21L.005 Introduction to Drama
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A; CI-H
A study of the history of theater art and practice from its origins to the modern period, including its roles in non-Western cultures. Special attention to the relationship between the literary and performative dimensions of drama, and the relationship between drama and its cultural context.

Staff

21L.006 American Literature
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Studies the national literature of the United States since the early 19th century. Considers a range of texts - including, novels, essays, films, and electronic media - and their efforts to define the notion of American identity. Readings usually include works by such authors as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson, Flannery O’Connor, William Faulkner, Sherman Alexie, and Toni Morrison.
S. Alexandre

21L.007 World Literatures
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Introduces students to a coherent set of textual and visual materials drawn from different geographical regions, languages, artistic genres, and historical periods. The focus may vary but usually cuts across national boundaries. Includes non-English works read in translation and examines different kinds of writing, both fiction and nonfiction. Pays special attention to such issues as identity formation, cultural contact, exploration, and exile. Previously taught topics include contemporary writing from Africa and South Asia, the impact of the discovery of the New World, and Caribbean literature.

Staff

21L.008[J] Black Matters: Introduction to Black Studies
Same subject as 24.912[J], 21H.106[J], 21W.741[J], WGS.190[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A; CI-H
See description under subject 24.912[J].
S. Alexandre, M. Degraff

21L.009 Shakespeare
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Focuses on the close reading of six to eight of Shakespeare plays, as well as their adaptation for stage and/or film. Selected texts cover the range of genres in which Shakespeare wrote (i.e., history, comedy, tragedy, and romance). Special emphasis in some terms on performances and adaptions of Shakespearean drama around the world. Plays studied vary across sections and from term to term, and have recently included Henry IV Part 1, Hamlet, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, King Lear, Othello, and The Tempest.
Fall: P. Donaldson, S. Raman
Spring: P. Donaldson

21L.010[J] Writing with Shakespeare
Same subject as 21W.042[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-HW
Focuses on writing and speaking using Shakespeare as a model and means for mastery of English language skills. Emphasizes the development of students’ ability to write clearly and effectively in a range of genres with an awareness of audience. Designed to increase students’ confidence and pleasure in verbal communication and analysis of language. Students write frequently, give and receive feedback, improve their work through revision, and participate actively in class discussions and presentations. Enrollment limited.
D. Henderson

21L.011 The Film Experience
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-A; CI-H
Concentrates on close analysis and criticism of a wide range of films, including works from the early silent period, documentary and avant-garde films, European art cinema, and contemporary Hollywood fare. Through comparative reading of films from different eras and countries, students develop the skills to turn their in-depth analyses into interpretations and explore theoretical issues related to spectatorship. Syllabus varies from term to term, but usually includes such directors as Coppola, Eisentein, Fellini, Godard, Griffith, Hawks, Hitchcock, Kubrick, Kurosawa, Tarantino, Welles, Wiseman, and Zhang.
Fall: D. Thorburn
Spring: E. Brinkema
21L.012 Forms of Western Narrative  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Examines a wide assortment of narrative forms, from Homer to the present, and considers why and how stories are told. Focuses on the close reading of literary and cultural issues, the emergence of different narrative genres, and how different media affect the construction and interpretation of narratives. Syllabus varies by term, but usually includes materials such as epics, novels, tales, short stories, films, television programs, graphic novels, and interactive games.  
S. Frampton

21L.013[J] The Supernatural in Music, Literature and Culture  
Same subject as 21M.013[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-A, HASS-H; CI-H  
See description under subject 21M.013[J].  
C. Shadle, M. Fuller

21L.014[J] Empire: Introduction to Ancient and Medieval Studies  
Same subject as 21H.007[J]  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
See description under subject 21H.007[J].  
W. Broadhead, S. Frampton, E. Goldberg

21L.015 Children’s Literature  
Prereq: None  
U (Fall)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Analyzes children’s literature from a variety of eras and genres, taking even the most playful texts seriously as works of art and powerful cultural influences. Considers the types of stories adults consider appropriate for children, and why; how opinions about this subject have changed over time and across cultures; and the complex interplay of words and images in children’s books.  
M. Gubar

21L.017 The Art of the Probable  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Examines literary texts and/or films in relation to the history of the idea of probability. Traces the growing importance of probability as a basic property of things and the world, as well as a measure of the reliability of our ideas and beliefs. Connects the development and use of probabilistic reasoning (e.g., in the lottery and in statistics) with literary and cultural concerns regarding the rationality of belief, risk and uncertainty, free will and determinism, chance and fate. Discussion of the work of scientific and philosophical pioneers of probabilistic thought (e.g., Pascal, Leibniz, Bernoulli, Laplace) in conjunction with works by Shakespeare, Voltaire, H. G. Wells, Pynchon and Stoppard, among others.  
S. Raman

21L.018 Introduction to English Literature  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Examines the rich heritage of English literature across genre and historical period. Designed for students who want to know more about English literature or about English culture and history. Studies the relationships between literary themes, forms, and conventions and the times in which they were produced. Explores (for instance) Renaissance lyrics and drama, Enlightenment satires in word image, the 19th-century novel, and modern and contemporary stories, poems and film.  
S. Tapscott

21L.019 Introduction to European and Latin American Fiction  
Prereq: None  
U (Spring)  
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H  
Studies great works of European and Latin American fiction. Attention to a variety of forms including: the picaresque, epistolary, realist, naturalist, and magical realist fiction. Emphasizes ways in which the unique history of each country shaped the imaginative responses of its writers. Authors include Cervantes, Laclos, Goethe, Mann, Dostoevsky, Flaubert, Zola, Unamuno, Wolf, García Márquez, and Allende. Taught in English.  
M. Resnick
21L.020[J] Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-Between
Same subject as 21G.076[J]
U (Fall)
3-0-6 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Examines the cultural paradoxes of contemporary globalization. Studies the cultural, linguistic, social and political impact of globalization across international borders and on specific language communities. Students analyze contending definitions of globalization and principal agents of change, and why some of them engender backlash; learn to distinguish what is considered new, hybrid, and traditional; identify the agents, costs and benefits of global networks; and explore how world citizens preserve cultural specificity. Students also develop cultural literacy through study of second language and culture, research, development of virtual materials, and interactions with MIT’s international students. Students cannot receive credit without simultaneous completion of a 9-unit language subject.
M. Resnick

21L.021 Comedy
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Surveys a range of comic texts in different media, the cultures that produced them, and various theories of comedy. Authors and directors studied may include Aristophanes, Shakespeare, Moliere, Austen, Wilde and Chaplin.
S. Frampton

21L.022[J] Darwin and Design
Same subject as 21W.739[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
In The Origin of Species, Darwin provided a model for understanding the existence of objects and systems manifesting evidence of design without positing a designer, and of purpose and mechanism without intelligent agency. Texts deal with pre-Darwinian and later treatment of this topic within literature and speculative thought since the 18th century, with some attention to the modern study of feedback mechanism in artificial intelligence. Readings in Hume, Voltaire, Malthus, Darwin, Butler, Hardy, H. G. Wells, and Freud.
A. Kibel

21L.023[J] Folk Music of the British Isles and North America
Same subject as 21M.223[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-1-8 units. HASS-A; CI-H
See description under subject 21M.223[J].
G. Ruckert, R. Perry

Same subject as 21G.044[J], WGS.235[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
Not offered regularly; consult department
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
See description under subject 21G.044[J].
E. Teng

21L.048[J] International Women’s Voices
Same subject as 21G.022[J], WGS.141[J]
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Introduces students to a variety of fictional works by contemporary women writers. International perspective emphasizes the extent to which each author’s work reflects her distinct cultural heritage and to what extent, if any, there is an identifiable female voice that transcends national boundaries. Uses a variety of interpretive perspectives, including sociohistorical, psychoanalytic, and feminist criticism, to examine texts. Authors include Mariama Ba, Isabel Allende, Anita Desai, Maxine Hong Kingston, Toni Morrison, Doris Lessing, Alifa Riyaat, Yang Jiang, Nawal Al-Saadawi, and Sawako Ariyoshi. Taught in English.
M. Resnick

21L.301[J] Doing Right
Same subject as 24.190[J]
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
Not offered regularly; consult department
2-0-4 units
Examines how literary fiction dramatizes a variety of ethical issues, such as self-protection and altruism, lawfulness and justice, and gender and race. Discussions focus on unpacking the ethical implications of literary texts and the literary means by which these implications are communicated. Students are encouraged to attend the Technology and Culture public forums whenever relevant to the text at hand.
R. Perry
Samplings

21L.310 Bestsellers
Prereq: None
U (Spring; first half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Focuses on works that caught the popular imagination in the past or present. Emphasizes texts that are related by genre, theme or style. Books studied vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs.
J. Paradis

21L.315 Prizewinners
Prereq: None
U (Spring; first half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Examines the work of major prize-winning writers or filmmakers. Texts and authors are chosen that have won such prestigious literary awards as the Nobel Prize, the Booker Prize, or the National Book Award, or films that have been feted at major international film festivals. Authors and works vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if the specific works studied differ.
Staff

21L.320 Big Books
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of a single major literary work or a very small set of related literary works. Emphasizes texts that encourage close analysis in a way that cannot easily be integrated into the regular literature curriculum. The Big Books taught in previous terms include Moby-Dick, Canterbury Tales, and the Faerie Queene. May be repeated once for credit if the works studied differ.
M. Fuller

21L.325 Small Wonders
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring; second half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Close examination of a coherent set of short texts and/or visual works. The selections may be the shorter works of one or more authors (poems, short stories or novellas), or short films and other visual media. Content varies from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if the works studied differ.
Fall: D. Thorburn
Spring: N. Jackson

21L.338 Reading in the Original
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Close examination of literary texts in their original languages. Language and texts studied vary from term to term. May be repeated once for credit if content differs.
S. Ostrow

21L.339 Literary Translation
Prereq: None
U (Spring; second half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Studies the practices and theory of moving literary texts from one language to another. Student proficiency in other language(s) welcome but not required. May be repeated once for credit if content differs.
Staff

21L.340 Pleasures of Poetry
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP)
3-0-3 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Strengthens writing and reading comprehension skills. Students attend all public sessions of the Pleasures of Poetry readings and discussions as well as several additional classes. The poems chosen by the various moderators range across the history of literature, from ancient Chinese lyrics to contemporary texts. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
Staff
21L.345 On the Screen
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines works of film, television or other screen-based media, with emphasis on texts that are related by genre, time period, style, or director. Works studied vary from term to term. May be repeated for credit once with permission of instructor.
A. Kibel

21L.350 Science and Literature
Prereq: None
U (Spring; first half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines intersections and channels of influence between the sciences and forms of imaginative literature. Topics, historical periods, and syllabi will vary. May be repeated once for credit if content differs.
N. Jackson

21L.355 Literature in the Digital Age
Prereq: None
U (Spring; second half of term)
2-0-4 units
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines how emerging computational methods and tools are transforming practices of reading and writing in the present. Topics may include the exploration of experimental literary forms and digital media practices (hypertext, Twitter fiction, etc.) or focus on the use of digital tools for analyzing literature (GIS mapping, data mining, etc.). May be repeated once for credit if content differs.
W. Kelley

Intermediate Subjects

Genres and Themes

21L.430 Popular Culture and Narrative
Subject meets with CMS.920
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines relationships between popular culture and art, focusing on problems of evaluation and audience, and the uses of different media within a broader social context. Typically treats a range of narrative and dramatic works as well as films. Previously taught topics include Elements of Style; Gender, Sexuality and Popular Narrative. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
Staff

21L.431 Shakespeare on Film and Media
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Examines the adaptation, performance and interpretation of Shakespearean plays on film and video. Focus varies from term to term, to include films such as the Olivier and Almereyda versions of Hamlet and Baz Luhrmann’s Romeo & Juliet; “spin-offs” such as Kurosawa’s Throne of Blood and Shakespeare in Love; or theatrical videos of English language and international productions.
P. Donaldson

21L.432 Understanding Television
Subject meets with CMS.915
Prereq: One subject in Literature or Comparative Media Studies
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
A cultural approach to television’s evolution as a technology and system of representation. Considers television as a system of storytelling and mythmaking, and as a cultural practice studied from anthropological, literary, and cinematic perspectives. Focuses on prime-time commercial broadcasting, the medium’s technological and economic history, and theoretical perspectives. Considerable television viewing and readings in media theory and cultural interpretation are required. Previously taught topics include American Television: A Cultural History. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
D. Thorburn
21L.433 Film Styles and Genres
Prereq: 21L.011 or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Close study of one or more directors, genres, periods, artistic movements, or national cinemas which have been of major significance in the history of film. Previously taught topics include Hollywood and Hong Kong, and Movie Realists: Chaplin, Renoir, Neorealism, Truffaut. May be repeated for credit by permission of instructor.
Staff

21L.434 Science Fiction and Fantasy
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Traces the history of science fiction as a generic tradition in literature, media, and popular culture. Considers formal ideological and cultural approaches to the analysis and interpretation of science fiction and fantasy texts.
M. Gubar

21L.435 Literature and Film
Subject meets with CMS.840
Prereq: One subject in Literature or Comparative Media Studies
U (Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Investigates relationships between the two media, including film adaptations as well as works linked by genre, topic, and style. Explores how artworks challenge and cross cultural, political, and aesthetic boundaries. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments.
M. Bronstein

21L.449 Literature and the Environment
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
A brief history of conflicting ideas about mankind’s relation to the natural environment as exemplified in works of poetry, fiction, and discursive argument from ancient times to the present. Examines views about the overall character of the natural world and whether mankind’s relation to it is one of stewardship and care or hostility and exploitation. Readings include Aristotle, The Book of Genesis, Shakespeare, Descartes, Robinson Crusoe, Swift, Rousseau, Wordsworth, Darwin, Thoreau, Faulkner, and Lovelock’s Gaia.
A. Kibel

21L.450 Leadership, Ethics, and Literature
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Examination of literary works to explore competing ethical concepts and the ethical implications of certain actions and commitments. Topics include origins of morality, ideals of justice, the nature of the virtues, notions of responsibility, ethics and politics, and the ethics of extreme situations. Philosophic texts by Plato, Aristotle, Machiavelli, Hobbes, and Kant. Narrative and dramatic texts by Sophocles, Shakespeare, Swift, Ibsen, Shaw, Dostoyevsky, and Conrad, as well as some Biblical materials.
A. Kibel

21L.451 Literary Theory
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Examines how we read texts and the questions that we, as readers, ask of them. Introduces different critical approaches to literature by examining the relationship between readers and text, between different texts, and between text and context. Topics vary but usually include reader-response theory, structuralism and semiotics, post-structuralism and post-modernism, historicism, psychoanalysis, intertextuality, cultural criticism, and media theory.
S. Raman

Periods of World Literature

21L.455 Classical Literature
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Explores the classical roots of Western civilizations through a close examination of the social and cultural contexts in which selected literary texts were first produced, the influence of political structures and ideologies, the function of rhetorical forms, the purpose and significance of ancient mythologies, and the relation of literature to shared developments in art, architecture, and religion. Texts taught in translation, but direct readings in the original languages are encouraged. Authors include Livy, Lucretius, Cicero, Julius Caesar, Virgil, Horace, and Ovid. Texts and topics vary from year to year, and subject may be repeated once for credit, as long as specific topic is different.
S. Frampton
21L.458 The Bible
Prereq: None
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
An introduction to major books from both the Hebrew Bible and the New Testament. Particular attention given to literary techniques, issues resulting from translation from the original Hebrew and Greek, and the different historical periods that produced and are reflected in the Bible.
I. Lipkowitz

21L.460 Medieval Literature
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Covers readings in European literature between the years 800 and 1500, with particular focus on the English and French literary traditions. Addresses themes such as the complex relationship between love and war; the differences between the medieval and modern understandings of character, psychology, and authorship; and the particular role of women (as both characters and authors) in the Middle Ages. May be repeated for credit with instructor’s permission when subject content differs; previous topics include Arthurian legends and Geoffrey Chaucer. Approved for credit in Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.
A. Bahr

21L.471 Major Novels
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Studies important examples of the literary form that, from the beginning of the 18th century to the present day, has become an indispensable instrument for representing modern life, in the hands of such writers as Cervantes, Defoe, Richardson, Sterne, Burney, Austen, Scott, Dickens, the Brontes, Eliot, Balzac, Stendhal, Flaubert, Hardy, Conrad, Woolf, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Proust, and others. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
Fall: A. Kibel
Spring: I. Lipkowitz

21L.473[J] Jane Austen
Same subject as WGS.240[J]
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
An examination of Jane Austen’s satire in her seven complete novels, several fragments, and juvenilia. Students read these texts in relation to her letters and other biographical and historical information.
R. Perry

21L.475 Enlightenment and Modernity
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines selected topics in 18th- and 19th-century English/European literature and culture from the restoration of the English monarchy in 1660 to the end of Queen Victoria’s reign in 1901. Topics vary by term; authors may include Jonathan Swift, Laurence Sterne, William Blake, William Wordsworth, Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, Lewis Carroll, Oscar Wilde, and Arthur Conan Doyle, among others. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
J. Buzard

21L.485 Modern Fiction
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Credit cannot also be received for 21L.285
Tradition and innovation in representative fiction of the early modern period. Recurring themes include the role of the artist in the modern period; the representation of psychological and sexual experience; and the virtues (and defects) of the aggressively experimental character. Works by Conrad, Kipling, Babel, Kafka, James, Lawrence, Mann, Ford Madox Ford, Joyce, Woolf, Faulkner, and Nabokov.
J. Buzard
21L.486 Modern Drama
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

Explores major modern plays with special attention to performance, sociopolitical and aesthetic contexts, and the role of theater in the contemporary multidimensional landscape. Includes analysis of class, gender, and race as modes of performance. Typically features Beckett and Brecht, as well as some of the following playwrights: Chekov, Churchill, Deavere Smith, Ibsen, Fornes, Friell, Kushner, O'Neil, Shaw, Stoppard, Soyinka, Williams, Wilson.

D. Henderson

21L.487 Modern Poetry
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Study of major modern texts and manifestos from the late 19th century through the 20th century. Examines works written in English, with attention to Modernist texts from other cultures and other languages as well. Poems by T.S. Eliot, W.C. Williams, Langston Hughes, Robert Frost, Pablo Neruda, Hilda Doolittle, Charles Baudelaire, and others.

S. Tapscott

21L.488 Contemporary Literature
Prereq: One subject in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Study of key themes and techniques in prose, poetry, and drama since the 1970s. Recent topics include postmodernism, globalization, new British and Irish writing, and literature and development.

Staff

21L.489[J] Interactive Narrative
Same subject as 21W.765[J]
Subject meets with CMS.845
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-A

See description under subject 21W.765[J].

N. Montfort

American Literature

21L.006 American Literature
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H

Studies the national literature of the United States since the early 19th century. Considers a range of texts - including, novels, essays, films, and electronic media - and their efforts to define the notion of American identity. Readings usually include works by such authors as Nathaniel Hawthorne, Henry David Thoreau, Frederick Douglass, Emily Dickinson, Flannery O'Connor, William Faulkner, Sherman Alexie, and Toni Morrison.

S. Alexandre

21L.501 The American Novel
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Works by major American novelists, beginning with the late 18th century and concluding with a contemporary novelist. Major emphasis on reading novels as literary texts, but attention paid to historical, intellectual, and political contexts as well. Syllabus varies from term to term, but many of the following writers are represented: Rowson, Hawthorne, Melville, Twain, Wharton, James, and Toni Morrison. Previously taught topics include The American Revolution and Makeovers (i.e. adaptations and reinterpretation of novels traditionally considered as American "Classics"). May be repeated for credit with instructor’s permission so long as the content differs.

Staff

21L.504[J] Race and Identity in American Literature
Same subject as WGS.140[J]
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Questions posed by the literature of the Americas about the relationship of race and gender to authorship, audience, culture, ethnicity, and aesthetics. Social conditions and literary histories that shape the politics of identity in American literature. Specific focus varies each term. Previously taught topics include Immigrant Stories, African American Literature, and Asian American Literature. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor if the content differs.

S. Alexandre
21L.512 American Authors
Prereq: One subject in Literature, permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.
Examines in detail the works of several American authors selected according to a theme, period, genre, or set of issues. Through close readings of poetry, novels, or plays, subject addresses such issues as literary influence, cultural diversity, and the writer’s career. Previously taught topics include American Women Writers, American Autobiography, American Political Writing, and American Short Fiction. Approved for credit in Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program. May be repeated for credit with instructor’s permission so long as the content differs.

Staff

21L.518 Literature from Anywhere
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP, Spring)
2-0-7 units. HASS-E
Provides students studying abroad the opportunity to study a literature topic and interact with their peers on campus through feedback and discussion. Begins with an intensive on-campus seminar during IAP that introduces tools, background, and context for the readings; covers goals, methods, and logistics for the work students will conduct independently over the spring; and discusses the assigned text, films, etc. During the spring term, students synthesize and record their questions and understandings of the literature, producing materials for use and comment by peers enrolled in a six-unit, on-campus class that covers the same content (e.g., 21L.320 Big Books). Topics vary from year to year.
M. Fuller

International Literatures

21L.007 World Literatures
Prereq: None
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Introduces students to a coherent set of textual and visual materials drawn from different geographical regions, languages, artistic genres, and historical periods. The focus may vary but usually cuts across national boundaries. Includes non-English works read in translation and examines different kinds of writing, both fiction and nonfiction. Pays special attention to such issues as identity formation, cultural contact, exploration, and exile. Previously taught topics include contemporary writing from Africa and South Asia, the impact of the discovery of the New World, and Caribbean literature.

Staff

21L.020[J] Globalization: The Good, the Bad and the In-Between
Same subject as 21G.076[J]
U (Fall)
3-0-6 units. HASS-H; CI-H
Examines the cultural paradoxes of contemporary globalization. Studies the cultural, linguistic, social and political impact of globalization across international borders and on specific language communities. Students analyze contending definitions of globalization and principal agents of change, and why some of them engender backlash; learn to distinguish what is considered new, hybrid, and traditional; identify the agents, costs and benefits of global networks; and explore how world citizens preserve cultural specificity. Students also develop cultural literacy through study of second language and culture, research, development of virtual materials, and interactions with MIT’s international students. Students cannot receive credit without simultaneous completion of a 9-unit language subject.
M. Resnick

21L.611 Latin I
Prereq: None
U (Fall; first half of term)
3-0-3 units
Introduces rudiments of Latin to students with little or no prior knowledge of the subject. Aimed at laying a foundation to begin reading ancient and/or medieval literary and historical texts. Latin I and Latin II may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS Elective.

Staff

21L.612 Latin II
Prereq: 21L.611 or permission of instructor
U (Fall; second half of term)
3-0-3 units
Introductory Latin subject for students with some prior knowledge of basic grammar and vocabulary. Intended to refresh and enrich ability to read ancient and/or medieval literary and historical texts. May be taken independently of Latin I with permission of instructor. Latin I and Latin II may be combined by petition (after completion of both) to count as a single HASS Elective.

Staff
21L.616[J] Introduction to Contemporary Hispanic Literature and Film
Same subject as 21G.716[J]
Prereq: One intermediate subject in Spanish or permission of instructor
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Studies important 20th- and 21st-century texts and films from both Spain and Latin America. Readings include short stories, theater, the novel, and poetry, as well as some non-fiction. Students acquire skills necessary for a serious examination of literary and cultural issues in the Spanish-speaking world. Conducted entirely in Spanish. Emphasis on active participation of students in class discussion.

M. Resnick

21L.617[J] Introduction to Spanish Culture
Same subject as 21G.717[J]
Prereq: One intermediate subject in Spanish or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2016-2017: U (Fall)
Acad Year 2017-2018: Not offered
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Studies the major social, political, and aesthetic modes which have shaped Spanish civilization. Coordinates the study of literature, film, art, and architecture with the historical evolution of Spain. Readings and discussions focus on such topics as: the coexistence of Christians, Moors, and Jews; Imperial Spain; the First and Second Republics; and the contemporary period as background for the emergence of distinctively Spanish literary and artistic movements. Taught in Spanish.

M. Resnick

21L.638[J] Literature and Social Conflict: Perspectives on Modern Spain
Same subject as 21G.738[J]
Prereq: One intermediate subject in Spanish or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Considers how major literary texts illuminate principal issues in the evolution of modern Spanish society. Emphasizes the treatment of such major questions as the exile of liberals in 1820, the concept of progress, the place of religion, urbanization, rural conservartism and changing gender roles, and the Spanish Civil War. Authors include Perez Galdos, Pardo Bazan, Unamuno, Ortega y Gasset, Salinas, Lorca, La Pasionaria, and Falcon. Taught in Spanish.

Staff

Same subject as 21G.739[J]
Prereq: One intermediate subject in Spanish or permission of instructor
Acad Year 2016-2017: Not offered
Acad Year 2017-2018: U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Studies new paradigms of cultural exchange that have shaped Latin America in the 20th and 21st centuries. Examines how globalization is rapidly changing the identity of peoples and cultures in Spanish-speaking nations. Spotlights debates about human rights. Materials studied include film, fiction, essay, architectural archives, music and art. Students complete a research project about a specific aspect of Hispanic culture that has been shaped by contemporary forces in the global economy. Taught in Spanish with required readings and writing in Spanish.

J. Terrones

Seminars

Same subject as 21G.740[J]
Prereq: One intermediate subject in Spanish or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H

Deals with the vast changes in Spanish social, political and cultural life that have taken place since the death of Franco. Topics include new freedom from censorship, the re-emergence of strong movements for regional autonomy (the Basque region and Catalonia), the new cinema including Almodovar and Saura, educational reforms instituted by the socialist government, and the fiction of Carme Riera and Terenci Moix. Special emphasis on the emergence of mass media as a vehicle for expression in Spain. Considers the changes wrought by Spain’s acceptance into the European Community. Materials include magazines, newspapers, films, fiction, and Amando de Miguel’s Los Españoles. Taught in Spanish.

M. Resnick
21L.701 Literary Methods
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Introduces practice and theory of literary criticism. Seminar focuses on topics such as the history of critical methods and techniques, and the continuity of certain subjects in literary history. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Previously taught topics include Virginia Woolf’s Shakespeare, Theory and Use of Figurative Language, and Text, Context, Subtext, Pretext. Approved for credit in the Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets requirements for subjects in that program.

A. Bahr

21L.702 Studies in Fiction
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of a range of texts by a single author or by a limited group of authors whose achievements are mutually illuminating. Some attention to narrative theory and biographical and cultural backgrounds. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Previously taught topics include Stowe, Twain, and the Transformation of 19th-century America, and Joyce and the Legacy of Modernism. Approved for credit in Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.

W. Kelley

21L.703 Studies in Drama
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of an important topic or period in drama. Close analysis of major plays, enriched by critical readings and attention to historical and theatrical contexts. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication through student presentations and research essays. Previously taught topics include: Renaissance Drama; Shakespeare with his Contemporaries; Oscar Wilde; and Stoppard and Company.

S. Raman

21L.704 Studies in Poetry
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of a body of poetry, raising questions of form, authorship, poetic influence, social context, and literary tradition. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Previously taught topics include: Does poetry Matter?, Poetry and the Science of Mind; Songs, Sonnets and the Story of English; Virgil, Spenser, Milton; and The Image: Poetry, Photography, and Technologies of Vision. Approved for credit in Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.

N. Jackson

21L.705 Major Authors
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature
U (Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Close study of a limited group of writers. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Previously taught topics include John Milton and his Age, Chaucer, Herman Melville, Toni Morrison, and Oscar Wilde and the ‘90s. Approved for credit in Women’s and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.

J. Buzard

21L.706 Studies in Film
Subject meets with CMS.830
Prereq: 21L.011, one subject in Literature or Comparative Media Studies; or permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
3-3-6 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Intensive study of films from particular periods, genres, or directors. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication provided. Previous topics include Film Analysis, Remixes, Film Narrative, and Heroic Cinema. Students taking graduate version complete different assignments.

E. Brinkema
21L.707 Problems in Cultural Interpretation
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature or permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Studies the relation between imaginative texts and the culture surrounding them. Emphasizes ways in which imaginative works absorb, reflect, and conflict with reigning attitudes and world views. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Previously taught topics include Women Reading/Women Writing; Poetry, Passion, and the Self; and Race, Religion and Identity in Early Modern America. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.
R. Perry

21L.709 Studies in Literary History
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature or History
U (Fall, Spring)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Close examination of the literature of a particular historical period. Instruction and practice in oral and written communication. Syllabi vary. Previous topics include Britons Abroad in the 18th Century; Modernism: From Nietzsche to Fellini; and Make it New: Manifestos and the Invention of the Modern.
Fall: P. Donaldson
Spring: M. Fuller

21L.715 Media in Cultural Context
Subject meets with CMS.871
Prereq: Two subjects in Literature or Comparative Media Studies; or permission of instructor
U (Fall)
3-0-9 units. HASS-H
Can be repeated for credit.

Seminar uses case studies to examine specific media or media configurations and the larger social, cultural, economic, political, or technological contexts within which they operate. Organized around recurring themes in media history, as well as specific genres, movements, media, or historical moments. Previously taught topics include Gendered Genres: Horror and Maternal Melodramas; Comics, Cartoons, and Graphic Storytelling; and Exploring Children's Culture. Students taking graduate version complete additional assignments. Approved for credit in Women's and Gender Studies when content meets the requirements for subjects in that program.
S. Frampton

Special Subjects, Research, and Thesis

21L.900 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified students who wish to pursue an independent study with members of the Literature faculty. Normal maximum is 6 units, though exceptional 9-unit projects are occasionally approved. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
Staff

21L.901 Independent Study
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified students who wish to pursue an independent study with members of the Literature faculty. Normal maximum is 6 units, though exceptional 9-unit projects are occasionally approved. May be repeated for credit with permission of instructor.
Staff

21L.S88 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (IAP)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.S89 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.S90 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.S91, 21L.S92 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.
21L.S93, 21L.S94 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.S95 Special Subject in Literature
Prereq: Permission of instructor
U (Fall, IAP, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Covers topics in Literature that are not provided in the regular subject offerings. Units vary depending on the number of class meetings, readings and assignments. May be repeated for credit if the subjects are different.

Staff

21L.S96 Special Subject in Film and Media
Prereq: Two subjects in Film and Media; permission of the director of Comparative Media Studies
U (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.S97 Special Subject in Film and Media
Prereq: Two subjects in Film and Media; permission of director of Comparative Media Studies
U (Fall, Spring)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

Open to qualified students who wish to pursue special projects with film and media studies faculty. Individual or small group projects encouraged. Usually limited to 6 credits. May be repeated for credit with additional permission of the instructor.

Staff

21L.THT Literature Pre-Thesis Tutorial
Prereq: None
U (Fall, Spring)
1-0-5 units
Can be repeated for credit.

Definition of and early-stage work on thesis project leading to 21L.THU. Taken during the first term of the student’s two-term commitment to the thesis project. Student works closely with an individual faculty tutor. Required for students in Course 21L when the thesis is a degree requirement.

Staff

21L.THU Literature Thesis
Prereq: 21L.THT
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Completion of work on the senior major thesis under supervision of a faculty tutor. Includes oral presentation of thesis progress early in the term, assembling and revising the final text, and meeting at the close with a committee of faculty evaluators to discuss the successes and limitations of the project. Required for students in Course 21L when the thesis is a degree requirement.

Staff

21L.UR Undergraduate Research
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged [P/D/F]
Can be repeated for credit.

21L.URG Undergraduate Research
Prereq: None
U (Fall, IAP, Spring, Summer)
Units arranged
Can be repeated for credit.

Individual participation in an ongoing research project. For students in the Undergraduate Research Opportunities Program.

Consult with Section UROP Coordinator