COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (COML)

COML 1104 - FWS: Reading Films (3 Credits)
We live in an image-saturated world. How do we make sense of the moving image and its powerful roles in shaping culture and mediating our relationship with the world? This course will equip students with the tools to understand and decipher film language. It introduces and interrogates the basic notions, technologies, terminologies, and theories of film analysis. We will study visual and compositional elements, like mise-en-scene, cinematography, editing, and sound. Films we discuss will include different geographies, genres, major directors, schools, and film movements. Through writing, students will learn to analyze films with accurate, medium-specific vocabulary, develop informed and nuanced arguments, and critically reflect on the position of the viewer.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Fall 2025, Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1105 - FWS: Books with Big Ideas (3 Credits)
What do Frankenstein and Things Fall Apart have in common? What lies behind the fantastical stories of Aladdin? Do we have to like Garcia Marquez and Shakespeare? These texts and authors re-imagine the human experience at its most intriguing level. In this course, we will discuss human rights, intimacy, joy, isolation, and other controversies at the heart of these books. Throughout the semester, students will learn how to articulate an informed and nuanced position on these issues via formal practices in analytical readings, drafting, peer review, and self-editing. Actual selection of readings may vary depending on the instructor's focus.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Fall 2025, Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1106 - FWS: Robots (3 Credits)
In 2015, Japan's SoftBank Robotics Corporation announced the world's first robot with feelings. Many people were excited, many more disturbed. If robots are simply, as the dictionary suggests, machines designed to function in the place of a living agent, then what is so disturbing about them? Since robots are designed to replace human labor (first economic, and now also emotional), do they represent a threat as much as they do an aid? What happens when robots exceed their purpose, and become more humanlike? How do robots read, write, and feel? How do the activities of coding and writing, or decoding and reading differ? Students will be equipped with the vocabulary and writing strategies to rigorously analyze, compare, and debate the meaning of robots in the human imagination from different epochs, countries, languages, and media. In doing so, they will write in a variety of registers about works such as the play R.U.R. by Karel Capek, who invented the term robot. Other materials may include philosophical texts, fiction, videogames, films, graphic novels, and hip-hop concept albums.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1109 - FWS: The Rhetoric of Post-Racial America (3 Credits)
Race is a ubiquitous yet under-discussed subject in America. Typically debates on race and skin color flare up around incidents such as the latest police killings of black folks or the profiling of South Asian, Arab, or Latino-looking people at security checkpoints. This course offers opportunities to write about race and skin color outside of intimidating accusations of racism. Writing is not just a classroom subject but a tool to create realities and worlds. While improving your writing skills and participating in civic debates, you will have the opportunity to scrutinize your own assumptions on physicality. We will read fiction, blogs, journal and newspaper articles and watch feature films and documentaries. Writing assignments will include reading reflections, responses, summaries, critiques, and analytical and argumentative essays.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1119 - FWS: A Taste of Russian Literature (3 Credits)
Explore the culinary tradition and culture of Russia in broad historical, geopolitical and socioeconomic context through the lens of Russian folklore, short stories of Gogol, Chekhov, and Bulgakov, works of contemporary Russian-American writers, visual art, and international film. The literary journey will take you from the lavish tables of the 18th century aristocracy to the hardship and austerity of GULAG prison, to the colorful and savory regional fare of the former Russian Empire and Soviet Union, to the fridge and pantry staples in the everyday life of Russian family. Your writing assignments will help you develop critical thinking and argumentative skills, precision and clarity of expression, ability to write with discipline, creativity, and sense of style.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1127 - FWS: Cannibal Cultures (3 Credits)
The cannibal is always the other. And yet, the cannibal lives among us. In spite of real cases of cannibalism, most of these cannibals inhabit our reality only in books, films, songs, or art. This course investigates figures of the cannibal in different media and cultural contexts. Issues that will be at the center of our attention are cannibalism's use to mark cultural differences, as well as for political and ideological purposes, and its relation to sensationalism and (spectatorial) pleasure. We will use a wide range of texts, from novels to television series, from films to video clips, from art to philosophical reflections, as food for thought and as models and inspiration for different writing practices.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1134 - FWS: Reading Poetry (3 Credits)
In this course, we will work with poems of varied styles and traditions. You will learn to understand poetry through analytical writing and through the composition of your own poems.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2022, Spring 2022, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1139 - FWS: The Art of Criticism (3 Credits)
In this course, we will learn how to write criticism for a popular audience—in other words, how to write the kinds of book/film/music/art/fashion reviews you can read in magazines, newspapers, and digital media. We'll talk about what makes for a good work of criticism (even if it might be a negative review) and about the pleasures of reading and writing criticism. In assignments, you'll apply what we've learned by writing and revising your own reviews, often on topics of your own choice.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1140 - FWS: Animals and East European Film (3 Credits)
In this course, students will explore animal welfare, behavior, and conservation through East European cinema. We will discuss wildlife, companion, and farm animals in conjunction with human cultures, history, politics, and geography of Eastern Europe. The course will cover various animal species in fiction films, documentaries, and animation from the region. We might compare them with films from other parts of the world. We will also analyze film production techniques e.g., light, shots, angles, and moving camera shots. Each student will write film reviews, come up with a good research question, put together an annotated bibliography, and compose a research paper. The course includes field trips to the Cornell museum and barns. All movies are subtitled and available for streaming to be watched at home.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1141 - FWS: Animals in Global Cinema (3 Credits)
In this course, students will learn about animal welfare, behavior, and conservation through international films. We will discuss wildlife, companion, and farm animals in conjunction with human cultures, politics, and geography. The course will cover various animal species in fiction films, documentaries, and animated movies. In some motion pictures, animals will be central, and in others, peripheral. Students will learn how to compose film reviews and a film production analysis. All movies are streamed for students to watch in their free time. The course is listed as "sustainability inclusive" by the Cornell Campus Sustainability Office.
Distribution Requirements: (WRT-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1143 - FWS: Looking into Dostoevsky's "Devils" (3 Credits)
Is Dostoevsky's Devils (1872) the first novel about modern terrorism? Some readers think so. It is also a novel about parents and children, about generational misunderstandings and their consequences. To prepare for reading this complicated book, the class will begin with works by Dostoevsky's predecessors: Pushkin's tales (1830s) and Turgenev's Fathers and Sons (1862). You will do a lot of writing, guided by research in Cornell's libraries. Assignments will range from explorations of puzzling passages to narratives about your reading and investigative progress. What are your questions about Dostoevsky and his sometimes terrifying vision? You'll learn how to look for answers and how to explain your findings to others. The skills and resources you discover will be useful through your years at Cornell and beyond.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 1144 - FWS: Ways of Reading, Ways of Seeing (3 Credits)
What does it mean to approach a text critically? In this course, students will explore a range of primary texts (novels, stories, films) alongside critical texts that offer both interpretive frameworks and models of interpretation. Through a process of discussion, guided drafting, and revision, students will learn how to articulate an informed and nuanced position on a text. Readings will vary depending on the instructor's thematic focus; please consult the Knight Institute website and course syllabi for specific sections. Theoretical readings may include such writers as Lauren Berlant, Michel Foucault, Sigmund Freud, Donna Haraway, and Audre Lorde; fiction and film may include works by writers and filmmakers such as Octavia Butler, Han Kang, Franz Kafka, and Bong-Joon Ho.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2000 - Introduction to Visual Studies (3-4 Credits)
Crosslisted with VISST 2000, ARTH 2000, AMST 2000
This course provides an introduction to modes of vision and the historical impact of visual images, visual structures, and visual space on culture, communication, and politics. It examines all aspects of culture that communicate through visual means, including 20th-century visual technologies-photography, cinema, video, etc., and their historical corollaries. The production and consumption of images, objects, and events is studied in diverse cultures. Students develop the critical skills necessary to appreciate how the approaches that define visual studies complicate traditional models of defining and analyzing art objects.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Winter 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2003 - Sounding Literature in the World (3 Credits)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2006 - Punk Culture: The Art and Politics of Refusal (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with MUSIC 2006, AMST 2006, ENGL 2906, SHUM 2006
Punk Culture-comprised of music, fashion, literature, and visual arts-represents a complex critical stance of resistance and refusal that coalesced at a particular historical moment in the mid-1970s, and continues to be invoked, revived, and revised. In this course we will explore punk's origins in New York and London, U.S. punk's regional differences (the New York scene's connection to the art and literary worlds, Southern California's skate and surf culture, etc.), its key movements (hardcore, straight edge, riot grrrl, crust, queercore), its race, class and gender relations, and its ongoing influence on global youth culture. We will read, listen, and examine a variety of visual media to analyze how punk draws from and alters previous aesthetic and political movements. No previous experience studying music is necessary. (MUSIC-HC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2020, Fall 2018, Fall 2016
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2021 - Humans and Climate Change (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with EAS 2021, ROMS 2021
This course explores the human dimension of climate change, arguably the most significant crisis ever to confront humanity. The focus of this course will be narratives--the stories we tell ourselves as humans about the past, present and future in literature, art, science writing, and philosophy. We will address issues such as deep time; energy transitions; guilt and hope; justice and the future. No prior knowledge of atmospheric science or literary studies required. The course is open to anyone interested in thinking about the wicked problem that is climate change from various perspectives.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: Cornell Prison Education Program (CPEP) students.
Last Four Terms Offered: Summer 2024, Spring 2018, Fall 2015, Fall 2014
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2030 - Comparative Literature, Film, and Media (3 Credits)
Moving beyond national, linguistic, and disciplinary borders, what cutting-edge debates shape the "planetary" field of comparative literature, film, and media studies? Through a wide range of comparative projects, from those often cited as foundational to the discipline to those currently expanding its frames of reference, aims and aspirations, contexts and stakes across the globe, this course will explore how different genres, networks, platforms, and media evolve, engage, question, inform, and transform one another. Topics may include: methods of comparison and approaches to reading, listening and viewing, aesthetics and politics, large-language models and philosophy of language, critical and postcolonial theory, psychoanalysis, translation, poetics, economies, and ecologies, world literature, and the increasingly pervasive role of AI. Writing assignments will include analytical essays, weekly canvas postings, and two in-class presentations. The course can count as a required first-year writing seminar.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: first-years.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2032 - Contemporary Narratives by Latina Writers (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with LSP 2460, SPAN 2460, FGSS 2460, AMST 2460
This course will provide an introduction to some of the most important fictional work by US Latina writers, including short stories, novel, and film, with a particular focus on social justice, gender advocacy work, and work by Afro Latinx writers. We will begin with discussion of canonical figures like Gloria Anzaldua and Cherrie Moraga, to provide a basis for our focus on more recent writers like Angie Cruz, Elizabeth Acevedo, Linda Yvette Chavez, and Carmen Maria Machado.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, SCD-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (LAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2034 - Black Holes: Race and the Cosmos (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASTRO 2034
Co-taught by professors in Comparative Literature and Astronomy, this course will introduce students to the fundamentals of astronomy concepts through readings in Black Studies. We will experiment with what it means to engage with astrophysics concepts both inside and outside of the disciplinary framework of astronomy-for example, in genres like film, afrofuturist science fiction, and critical theory. Do astronomy concepts lose coherence outside of their scientific contexts, or do they acquire a different kind of sense? Why are humanities scholars everlastingly drawn toward the stars? In particular, what do artists and theoreticians of color gain from turning toward cosmological reflection? Texts will include works by authors like Octavia Butler and Dionne Brand, theorists like Sylvia Wynter and Denise Ferreira da Silva, and others. Astronomy concepts will include the electromagnetic spectrum, stellar evolution, and general relativity.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, PHS-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG, OPHLS-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2035 - Science Fiction (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with STS 2131, ENGL 2035, BSOC 2131
Science fiction is not merely a literary genre but a whole way of being, thinking, and acting in the modern world. This course explores classic and contemporary science fiction from Frankenstein to The Hunger Games alongside a rich array of fiction and films from Asia, Africa, Europe, and Latin America. Our discussions will position these works vis-?is seminal thinkers, ranging from Plato to Descartes and Donna Haraway to Paul Crutzen, who ask the same questions as science fiction does about our selves, our world, and our future.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: undergraduates.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Spring 2022, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2036 - Literature and the Elements of Nature (3 Credits)
Literature has long been understood as a window into the human condition, with nature serving as its mere backdrop. How would our relationship with literature change if we reversed this hierarchy? In an age when human activity has irreversibly transformed all four elements of nature -- air, water, earth, and fire - how do we rediscover the active role that the elements have always played in the constitution of the literary imagination? Through a journey with texts from six continents, this course offers a new model of world literature, one predicated not on social actors and cultural forces alone but on the configurations, flows, and disruptions of the elements. In the process, it addresses the place and work of literature in an increasingly threatened planet.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: undergraduates.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-SBY); (SAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2050 - Introduction to Poetry (3 Credits)
Could a meter have a meaning? Could there be a reason for a rhyme? And what is lost and gained in translation? We'll consider such questions in this introduction to poetry. We'll see how poems are put together and we'll learn how to figure them out. Poets may include Emily Dickinson, Thomas Hardy, Gerard Manley Hopkins, A. E. Housman, Robert Frost, Paul Laurence Dunbar, Robert Hayden, Frank O'Hara, Alexander Pushkin, Mikhail Lermontov, Anna Akhmatova. All reading is in English.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2051 - Writing about Poetry on Wikipedia (3 Credits)
The primary work of the course is researching and writing articles about poetry on Wikipedia. The course follows two related tracks: studying poetry and learning how to make it accessible to others. Verse analysis and research and writing skills will be emphasized. The semester project is one substantially edited Wikipedia article. As a background to our work, we will consider Wikipedia in the context of both the history of encyclopedias and the digital humanities. A particular focus of our reading and writing will be under-represented poets and poems. The goals of the course are to write about poetry with a broad audience in mind and to contribute to the world's body of knowledge about poetry.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2235 - New Visions in African Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 2235, ENGL 2935, PMA 2435
This undergraduate course introduces the formal and topical innovations that African cinema has experienced since its inception in the 1960s. Sections will explore, among others, Nollywood, sci-fi, and ideological cinema. Films include: Abderrahmane Sissako's Bamako, Mohamed Camara's Dakan, Djibril Diop Mambety's Touki-Bouki, Cheikh Oumar Sissoko's Finzan, Anne-Laure Folly's Women with Open Eyes, Ousmane Sembene's Camp de Thiaroye, Jean-Pierre Bekolo's Quartier Mozart. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2020, Fall 2019, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2241 - Game of Thrones: Multi-Media Fantasies (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 2241
In this course we will use the Game of Thrones series as a way of familiarizing ourselves with different tools of cultural analysis and approaches in literary theory (such as narratology, psychoanalysis, media studies, queer theory, disability studies, animal studies etc.). A strong emphasis will be placed on the different media avatars of the series: novels, TV series, graphic novels, spin-offs, fan fiction, blogs, fan art, etc.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2023, Spring 2022, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2251 - Poetry's Image (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2951
Where do we get our images of poets, and of poetry? Along with the images we find in poems themselves, how do poetry and poets figure in fiction and film, in music and popular culture? How do such figures inform both the images we find in poems and poetry's own image? What is poetry's relation to other genres and discourses, to self and language, history and politics? Exploring such issues in verse and prose, in fiction, film, and other media, including among others Blake, Wordsworth, Keats, Dickinson, Poe, Baudelaire, Mallarmé, Pound, Williams, Neruda, Parra, and Bolaño, the course will arc toward impactful recent interventions by such contemporaries as Claudia Rankine, Layli Long Soldier, Ilya Kaminsky, Jenny Xie, Young-Hae Chang Heavy Industries, and A.I.-generated poetry.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2271 - Reading for the End of Time (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2971
This course will explore how in the body of world literature, film and music humans have construed, narrated, imagined the end of time and of the world and sometimes its new beginning. Spanning from ancient epic through colonial narratives to twentieth century works and contemporary science fiction, we will inquire, through our reading: what is a world? How does the labor of the imagination construct a world or the world and deconstruct or undo worlds? Readings will range widely across time and world space and include authors such as St John of Patmos, Messiaen, Columbus, Beckett, Gibson, Marquez, Murakami, Alexievich, Liu.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2272 - Out of Line: Introduction to Narrative and Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2272
Why don?t we tell it straight? Narratives and media today are ?out of line.? No longer primarily sequential or episodic, stories branch out, jump back and forth, tie themselves into loops, provide alternative versions. What was once the terrain of the experimental is now true for many popular culture texts. In this course, we will explore a range of texts, films, and TV shows that are ?out of line.? While our focus will be on popular culture?from TV shows like Westworld to films like Nolan?s Inception or Kwan and Scheinert?s Everything Everywhere All at Once?we will also build a framework of narrative theory and take our inspiration from experimental literary texts such as those by Calvino, Perec, or Borges. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2282 - Speculative Asias (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 2282
This course explores Asian speculative literary fiction and cinema including early mythological influences, science fiction, and contemporary discourses of technoscientific progress. Students will examine the historical development of the broad genres in their specific contexts; the conceptual relations between realism, science, fantasy, and speculation; and ultimately, question past and future understandings of ? Asia? as speculative. (ASIAN-LL)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2400 - Introduction to U.S. Latinx Literature (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2400, LSP 2400, AMST 2401
Latina/os have always been part of U.S. history, yet the media often represents Latinx as only recent immigrants or as stereotypes that reduce rich cultures into a single, unified category or group of people. This practice hides the many unique and varied voices, stories, experiences, and ideas produced by Latinx expressive practices in forms ranging from novels and poetry to podcasts, tiktoks, films, theater, comics, memoirs, visual arts, and dance. This course will sample all of these forms while considering how artists meditate on their experiences of home, friendship, languages, love, migration, education, racialization, within the contexts of histories of colonization, discrimination, war, invasion, revolution, and ongoing activist organizing for resistance, sustainability, and thriving futures. In addition to common material, students will also have the chance to explore specific expressive practices that interest them. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-LOA, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2466 - Comparative Media Studies (3 Credits)
An introduction to media studies from a global, "planetary," comparatist perspective, at the intersection of languages, cultures, discourses, disciplines, and materials representing a range of contexts and approaches world-wide, this course will explore the historical and theoretical foundations of the current landscape of media economies and ecologies, and the ways that landscape continues to be shaped by contemporary developments in technology, culture, and politics. Among our topics and concerns will be the persistence of questions of genre in cinema, television, video, the film industry, journalism and digital media, the emergence and evolution of social media platforms and streaming services, and the increasing cultural, social, economic, and political impacts and implications of AI.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2512 - Contemporary World Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 2512, VISST 2512
Contemporary World Cinema offers an introduction to some of the most acclaimed international films of the 21st century. We will consider narrative, documentary, animation, and experimental films from multiple national and transnational contexts. We will examine both dominant and alternative forms of storytelling, how funding institutions, festivals, and awards shape the global circulation of films, how genres get transformed internationally, and how films intervene in how we think about specific social issues and political contexts. Specific films and case studies may vary from year to year. (PMA-HTC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2552 - From Black Bile to Digital Depression:The History of Melancholy in Medicine, Philosophy, Art, Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 2550
Throughout Western history, the nature of melancholy (aka depression, its modern counterpart) has both inspired and baffled philosophers, doctors, artists, and writers. Compared to other ailments, affects, or conditions, this mysterious sadness has provoked a proliferation of concepts, theories, therapies, and artworks. This seminar offers a comparative survey of discourses on melancholy/depression and their related ideological, social, aesthetic, and scientific issues, from the Ancient Greeks onwards. We will focus on the ways in which melancholy/depression has been theorized in medicine, theology, psychoanalysis, psychiatry, ethnography, philosophy, and ecology; on how its shifting forms are related to issues of politics, society, culture, race, and gender; and on the many modes through which it has been file and expressed in literature, visual art, music, and today's social media.
Distribution Requirements: (ETM-AS), (KCM-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2580 - Imagining the Holocaust (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2580, JWST 2580
How is the memory of the Holocaust kept alive by means of the literary and visual imagination? Within the historical context of the Holocaust and how and why it occurred, we shall examine major and widely read Holocaust narratives that have shaped the way we understand and respond to the Holocaust. We also study ethical and psychological issues about how and why people behave in dire circumstances. We shall begin with first-person reminiscences-Wiesel's Night , Levi's Survival at Auschwitz, and The Diary of Anne Frank-before turning to realistic fictions such as Kineally's Schindler's List (and Spielberg's film), Kertesz's Fateless, Kosinski's The Painted Bird, and Ozick's The Shawl. We shall also read the Kafkaesque parable of Appelfeld's Badenheim 1939 and the fantastic cartoons of Spiegelman's Maus books as well as W.G, Sebald's Austerlitz. We shall conclude with several episodes of the acclaimed 2009-2017 French TV series A French Village. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, SCD-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2591 - Introduction to Film Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 2591, PMA 2591
What is cinema? Does film represent the world, or does it create new ones? Does film help us understand how we see and think, or has it changed our very forms of perception? In this course, students contemplate cinema as a technology, an art form, a mass medium, and a mode of perception. We will explore a range of key debates in film theory, from the early twentieth century to the present. We will consider a variety of topics lying at the intersection of formal-aesthetic and socio-ideological approaches to film, including medium specificity, spectatorship, apparatus, realism, and questions relating to film ontology more generally. We will also consider how feminist, postcolonial, and black film criticism have restructured discourses about the image. The course will train students in the vocabulary of film analysis while introducing them to cinema as a central site for thinking about modernity, politics, aesthetics, and global visual culture.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2691 - Russian Revolutionary History (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with HIST 2691
This lecture course principally examines the writings and visual art of the Russian intelligentsia in relation to the idea of revolution (approximately from the 1820s to the 1920s). How did the intelligentsia constitute itself as the revolutionary force through its writings? What were the ways it imagined revolution, a revolutionary party, and a revolutionary people? What role did the intelligentsia play in Russian revolutionary history? And finally, how did modernization, revolution, war, and the construction of the world's first socialist society affect the intelligentsia's composition, political thought, literature, and art? We will examine the era's major politico-cultural trends (Nihilism, Anarchism, Populism, Terrorism, Bolshevism, Pacifism, etc.) and readings will include works of literature (e.g. Turgenev, Dostoevsky, Tolstoy, Bely, Mayakovsky) as well as classic pieces of political writing (e.g. Herzen, Bakunin, Lenin). (HIST-HEU)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2703 - Thinking Media (3-4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2703, PMA 2703, GERST 2703, MUSIC 2703, SHUM 2703
From hieroglyphs to HTML, ancient poetry to audiotape, and Plato's cave to virtual reality, Thinking Media offers a multidisciplinary introduction to the most influential media formats of the last three millennia. Featuring an array of guests from across Cornell, including faculty from Communication, Comparative Literature, German Studies, Information Science, Literatures in English, Music, and Performing & Media Arts, the course will present diverse perspectives on how to think with, against, and about media in relation to the public sphere and private life, archaeology and science fiction, ethics and aesthetics, identity and difference, labor and play, knowledge and power, expression and surveillance, and the generation and analysis of data. (MUSIC-HC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2721 - The Holocaust in Europe:A Victim-Centered History (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with JWST 2721, HIST 2701, GERST 2721
This course offers a new way of understanding both the Holocaust and the broader history of modern Europe—from the ground up. Moving from Greece to France, and from Amsterdam to Moscow, we explore how Jewish communities experienced dictatorship, occupation, and genocide between 1918 and 1948. Students gain a full introduction to World War II and the Holocaust while working directly with diaries, letters, and survivor testimonies to see history through the eyes of its victims. Bridging the disciplines that meet in Jewish Studies, the course examines how violence, belonging, and moral choice shaped everyday life in one of the most turbulent eras of Jewish and European history. Along the way, students build critical interpretive skills, deepen their historical literacy, and learn how historians analyze personal narratives to understand large-scale events. (HIST-HEU)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2723 - Digital Feminism and Race (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with VISST 2723, FGSS 2723, ASRC 2723
This course raises profound theoretical questions about embodiment, agency, power, and race in virtual spaces. How do digital identities in their intersection with something called race, interact with physical bodies and material conditions? What are the possibilities and limitations of digital technologies in creating emancipatory futures for raced life? In tackling these questions, the interdisciplinary course explores key dimensions of digital feminism, including activism and advocacy, community building, critique of digital culture, criticism of techno-capitalism, call for inclusive design, artistic and cultural productions.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2727 - AI Before AI: From Automata to Thinking Machines (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 2727, MEDVL 2737
This course introduces the prehistory of "artificial intelligence" (AI), from ancient automata through medieval combinatorics to early modern calculating machines. Putting contemporary debates into historical perspective, readings and discussions will engage with literary, cultural, philosophical, artistic, and technical sources, as well as contemporary scholarship in critical AI studies. Discussions and writing assignments will explore the sociocultural imagination of techniques and technologies and the history of concepts related to creativity, intelligence, and artificiality. Taught in English.
Enrollment Information: Primarily for: first-years and sophomores.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2750 - Introduction to Humanities (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 2750, HIST 2050, ENGL 2950, ARTH 2750, GOVT 2755, CLASS 2750, AMST 2751, ASRC 2750, ROMS 2750, VISST 2750, ARKEO 2750, FGSS 2750, BSOC 2750
These seminars offer an introduction to the humanities by exploring historical, cultural, social, and political themes. Students will explore themes in critical dialogue with a range of texts and media drawn from the arts, humanities, and/or humanistic social sciences. Guest speakers, including Cornell faculty and Society for the Humanities Fellows, will present from different disciplines and points of view. Students will make field trips to relevant local sites and visit Cornell special collections and archives. Students enrolled in these seminars will have the opportunity to participate in additional programming related to the annual focus theme of Cornell's Society for the Humanities and the Humanities Scholars Program for undergraduate humanities research. (ARKEO-COS)
Enrollment Information: Enrollment preference given to: students in the Humanities Scholars Program (HSP).
Exploratory Studies: (CU-SBY)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Fall 2025, Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2754 - Wondrous Literatures of the Near East (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 2754, JWST 2754, SHUM 2754, ENGL 2754
This course examines Near East's rich and diverse literary heritage. We will read a selection of influential and wondrous texts from ancient to modern times, spanning geographically from the Iberian peninsula to Iran. We will explore a range of ancient myths of creation and destruction. We will also trace encounters with otherness in travel narratives. Together we will read and discuss such ancient works as the The Story of Sinuhe and The Epic of Gilgamesh, as well as selections from the Hebrew Bible, New Testament and Qur'an. We will explore medieval works such as the Travels of Ibn Battuta, the Shahnameh of Ferdowsi, and The Arabian Nights. We will also read Orhan Pamuk's My Name is Red, and Sonia Nimr's Wondrous Journeys in Strange Lands, as well as excerpts from Yochi Brandes's The Orchard. Students will also have the opportunity to research and analyze primary source materials in the collections of Cornell Rare Books and Manuscript Collection, and the Johnson Art Museum. All material is in English translation.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL); (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2760 - Desire (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 2760, FGSS 2760, PMA 2680, LGBT 2760
Language is a skin, the critic Roland Barthes once wrote: I rub my language against the other. It is as if I had words instead of fingers, or fingers at the tip of my words. My language trembles with desire. Sexual desire has a history, even a literary history, which we will examine through an introductory survey of European dramatic literature from the Ancient Greeks to the present, as well as classic readings in sexual theory, including Plato, Freud, Foucault, and contemporary feminist and queer theory.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, SCD-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 2767 - Storytelling in the Ancient Middle East: Introduction to Egyptian and Mesopotamian Literature (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 2767
Literary forms were developed millennia ago in Egypt and Mesopotamia to teach, inspire admiration, produce consent, generate awe or pity, and move people to action. Students will read in English translation how such writing communicated with the living, the dead and the divine. Course readings include epics (such as those of Gilgamesh and Sinuhe), wisdom/proverbial literature, Hammurabi's law code, propaganda, magic spells, correspondence, philosophical musings, and love poetry. Reading and discussing these works will enrich students in terms of cultural and historical awareness, but also reveal common rhetorical devices that have remained useful, entertaining and inspiring to this day. The instructor assumes no familiarity with the history or languages of the ancient world. The only prerequisites are openness and curiosity.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3001 - Methods of Comparison (3 Credits)
What do comparatists do when we approach our objects of study? What enables or justifies comparison across different languages, different genres, different media, and different disciplines? Does all comparison assume a common ground of some kind (whether historical, formal, conceptual, or ideological), or is comparison inherently ungrounded, provocative, or political? We will explore these questions through examination of a wide range of comparative projects, from those often cited as foundational to the discipline and their most important critics to contemporary comparative projects that are reshaping the discipline and expanding it in new directions.
Enrollment Information: Primarily for: declared or intending to declare Comparative Literature majors and minors; non-majors by permission of instructor as space permits.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3006 - Race, Slavery, and Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 3691, FGSS 3693, ILRGL 3691
What does it mean to live in the aftermath of slavery? How has the human history of slavery contributed to the production of natural values that we take for granted-such as community, property, citizenship, gender, individuality, and freedom? This course explores the history of enslavement throughout the human past, from the ancient world to the modern era. We will pay particular attention to the relationship between slavery and the construction of racial blackness. We will explore various institutionalized forms of servitude throughout time and space, from the Indian Ocean to the Atlantic worlds, from eunuchism to concubinage, from slavery in the Roman Empire to modern slavery and sex trafficking. Readings will be in English and will engage a variety of dynamic sources: theoretical, historiographical, anthropological, religious, legal, literary and multimedia.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG), (ICE-IL, LH-IL)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2023, Spring 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3010 - Latinx Theatre Production (1-3 Credits)
Crosslisted with LSP 3010, LATA 3010, PMA 3010
In this course, we will develop a toolbox of performance techniques based on methods developed in the Spanish-speaking and Latinx contexts. These techniques will be used in preparing short, original, collectively-created or scripted plays for production and public presentation in the October 2024 regional microtheater festival in upstate New York and/or the annual downtown Ithaca holiday pastorela in December.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-CEL); (EUAREA, LAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3012 - Remembering Socialism: Literature and Film After the End of History (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3903, GERST 3612, HIST 3012
More than thirty years after the end of the Soviet Union, we have the distance needed to view the twentieth-century state socialist project from a historical perspective--even as Cold War tropes are revived amid another major confrontation with Russia. In this course, we will analyze memoirs, oral histories, historical fiction, films, and TV shows that look back at this period. How do the makers of these works use genre as a political as well as artistic tool? What are the political implications of comedy, cosplay, or melodrama when applied to communism? How does the portrayal of this period change as state socialism recedes into the distance? Texts from Russia, Ukraine, Germany, the Balkans, the UK, and the United States. All works will be in English. For an additional credit unit, students who can read Russian can (optionally) enroll in RUSSA 4491 for related practice in reading and discussions in Russian. (HIST-HEU)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2024, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3017 - Tattoo Cultures (3 Credits)
Images of tattooed, inscribed, and marked bodies abound in popular media, from television series to blogs, from performance art to popular literature. When the body becomes a canvas or text, this raises crucial questions about the definition and the reading of individual bodies and their ties to different categories, such as gender, race, culture, and society. This course we will pay particular attention to the shifting meanings of body modification in different cultural, theoretical, and historical contexts. Course material will include texts, films, and artwork by Michel de Certeau, Jacques Derrida, Georges Didi-Huberman, Lalla Essaydi, Peter Greenaway, Zhang Huan, Franz Kafka, Claude Levi-Strauss, Mirta Kupferminc, Christopher Nolan, Renata Salecl, Hortense Spillers, Qiu Zhijie, and others, as well as television series, internet forums, and other popular culture formats.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2025, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3021 - Literary Theory on the Edge (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3021, PMA 3421, FREN 3921
This course examines a range of exciting and provocative 20th- and 21st-century theoretical paradigms for thinking about literature, language and culture. These approaches provide differing, though often overlapping, entryways into theoretical analysis, including structuralism and post-structuralism, translation studies, Black studies, Afro-Diasporic Studies, postcolonial and decolonial studies, performance studies, media theory and cinema/media studies, the digital humanities, psychoanalysis and trauma theory, gender studies and queer studies, studies of the Anthropocene/environmental studies, and animal studies. Occasional invited guests, lectures and class discussions will provide students with a facility for close textual analysis, a knowledge of major currents of thought in the humanities, and an appreciation for the uniqueness and complexity of language and media.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG), (D-HA)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3029 - Revolutionary John Brown: As Figured by W.E.B. Du Bois (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 3029, AMST 3029
In his work "Black Reconstruction in America," Du Bois glosses over a key moment in American revolutionary thinking. Senator Wade of Ohio, among three Whig politicians impatient with Abraham Lincoln's acccommodationism in relation to the defeated South, proposes a certain radical policy. That is, the newly liberated slaves must be willing to act their former oppressors. Du Bois, in cursory parliamentary fashion, makes mention of Wade's radicalism but never engages it. However, in his biography of John Brown, we find Du Bois' thinking of a piece with Wade's. This course will chart the unfolding of Du Bois's critique: from his non-engagement to what we might take to be an almost full embrace of Wade's proposal through the radical actions of John Brown.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3050 - Introduction to Trauma Studies (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3513, ENGL 3051
This course provides an introduction to the theory of trauma, along with literary, artistic and clinical works that engage with traumatic experience. We will explore the enigmatic notion of an experience of catastrophe that is both deferred and repeated, that escapes immediate comprehension but insists on testimonial recognition. How does trauma require us to rethink our notions of history, memory, subjectivity, and language? Who speaks from the site of trauma, and how can we learn to listen its new forms of address? We begin with Freud's foundational studies and their reception across the 20th and 21st centuries, then examine a range of global responses reformulating individual and collective trauma in its social, historical and political contexts. Materials include theoretical, artistic, testimonial expression in various media.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3075 - Epic Form and the Inhuman (3 Credits)
What symbolic forms might be adequate to phenomena of such inhuman scale as the sixth extinction or the catastrophic climate change of the Anthropocene? Revisiting important literary theoretical discourses on the epic and the realist novel through the lens of Amitav Ghosh's argument that the realist novel actively occludes the realities of its time and that its form forecloses the non-human, this course will investigate the affordances of epic form, myth and fable for modes of apprehending and representating the inhuman. Materials will range from ancient and medieval epic to contemporary novels, films and anime with special attention to the challenging work of Guyanese writer Wilson Harris. Authors may include Homer, Dante, Han Kang, Flaubert, Miyazaki, Lukacs, Walter Benjamin, Benh Zeitlin and Wilson Harris.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3111 - Literature, Art and Environment (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3911
This course examines how philosophical, architectural, filmic, and literary practices shape our understanding of place and space, engaging with theories of mapping, spatiality, and the built environment. Does dwelling on this earth imply building? Is thinking itself an architectural act? What would it mean to undo this 'will to architecture'? What is the relation of the act to the environment? What does the situation of 'things and locations' mean for the possibilities of politics and thought? We will examine poetic and philosophical dimensions of place and site; modernity, nihilism, and its critique; belonging, the uncanny, and the stranger; utopia, dystopia, and the global built environment through readings, films, and artistic practices from figures and groups including Archigram, Bachelard, Badiou, Massimo Cacciari, Derrida, Heidegger, Isozaki Arata, Jameson, Karatani, Kiarostami, Henri Lefebvre, WG Sebald, Wallace Stevens, Superstudio, Manfredo Tafuri, Tarkovsky, Raymond Williams, and more.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2016, Fall 2010
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3113 - Imagining the Middle Ages: Films, Games, and Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3545, MEDVL 3545, PMA 3545, VISST 3545, SHUM 3545
Today, the legacy of the Middle Ages can be found everywhere, from the game of chess to Game of Thrones, the parliament to the university, the Crusades to the Vikings, the nostalgia for tradition to the very concept of modernity. This course explores the function of the medieval past through the lens of modern visual culture, as part of an emerging field known as “Medievalism.” Along with readings of classic theories of Medievalism (Huizinga, Balázs, Panofsky, Bazin, McLuhan, Eco), screenings will put auteur films (Dreyer’s Passion of Joan of Arc, Bergman’s Seventh Seal, Kurosawa’s Ran) in dialogue with popular culture (from Monthy Python to A Knight’s Tale) in order to raise the question of a Global Middle Ages. Taught in English.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3165 - Reinventing Love (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with RUSSL 3165, HIST 3165
This course will consider efforts to reinvent romantic love, marriage, and parenthood in the French, Russian/Soviet, and American traditions. We will study theoretical writing from influential utopian and feminist thinkers alongside works of literature and film that have imagined new modes of love and family relations, with special attention to the position of women and attitudes to love and marriage in revolutionary movements. Primary sources will be supplemented with scholarship on the history of revolutionary movements, utopian communities, and their aftermaths.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3195 - Theory of the Subject (3 Credits)
This seminar explores the concept of the subject in modern thought, interrogating its development since Nietzsche and its centrality to contemporary theory. We will examine theories of the subject from literary, genealogical, psychoanalytic, and political perspectives, focusing on post-1968 debates. Central to the seminar is understanding how the figure of the subject has shaped modernity and its ongoing crisis in thought today. Students will engage with key thinkers such as Nietzsche, Freud, Lacan, Derrida, Foucault, and others, exploring themes like political subjectivity, aesthetics, religion, and the literary. Our discussions will focus on the subject's historical evolution as a concept, its relation to social and political structures, its connection to truth and authenticity, and its engagement with its others-unconscious, the death drive, and the 'others' of Eurocentric modernity.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3240 - Blood Politics: Comparative Renaissance Drama (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3240
Blood is everywhere. From vampire shows to video games, our culture seems to be obsessed with it. The course examines the power of blood in the early modern period as a figure that continues to capture our imagination, not only as a marker of racial, religious, and sexual difference and desire, but also as a dramatic player in its own right. How does a politics of blood appear on stage when populations are being expelled and colonized for reasons (mis)understood in terms of blood? In the course of trying to answer this and other questions of blood, we will read plays by Shakespeare, Webster, Kyd, Cervantes, Lope de Vega, and Calder?e la Barca. Topics include honor, revenge, purity, the body, sexuality, conversion, and death. (ENGL-PRE)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2020, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3261 - Global Cinema and Media (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 3550, VISST 3175
Global Cinema and Media offers a survey of international film and media history from the late nineteenth century to today. Through a focus on key films and significant epochs, the course traces the evolution of form, style and genre, the medium's changing technologies and business models, as well as film and media's relation to broader cultural, social and political contexts. Screenings of narrative, documentary and experimental films and video will be accompanied by readings in film and media theory and history. (PMA-HTC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3264 - Poetics, Economies, Ecologies (3 Credits)
How have income inequality and climate change, two of the most urgent issues of our time, come to shape the contemporary imagination? What might a poetics of economies or ecologies, or an economical or ecological poetics, look like? What metaphors and semantic fields, networks, and webs of discursive and rhetorical choices, inform discourses of economy and ecology? How might economical and ecological tropes help us rethink poetics, and vice-versa? What are their protocols and conventions, constraints and regulations, possibilities and limitations? What tensions, and what imaginary solutions to real problems, do we find among them? Ranging across a variety of national and international contexts, this course will explore how such concerns figure in contemporary non-fiction, poetry, fiction, film, and electronic and digital media.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3300 - Political Theory and Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3550, PMA 3490
An introduction (without prerequisites) to fundamental problems of current political theory, filmmaking, and film analysis, along with their interrelationship. Particular emphasis on comparing and contrasting European and alternative cinema with Hollywood in terms of post-Marxist, psychoanalytic, postmodernist, and postcolonial types of interpretation. Filmmakers/theorists might include: David Cronenberg, Michael Curtiz, Kathryn Bigelow, Gilles Deleuze, Rainer Fassbinder, John Ford, Jean-Luc Godard, Marleen Gorris, Werner Herzog, Alfred Hitchcock, Allen & Albert Hughes, Stanley Kubrick, Fredric Jameson, Chris Marker, Pier-Paolo Pasolini, Gillo Pontecorvo, Robert Ray, Martin Scorsese, Ridley Scott, Oliver Stone, George Romero, Steven Shaviro, Kidlat Tahimik, Maurizio Viano, Slavoj Zizek. Although this is a lecture course, there will be ample time for class discussions. Weekly film screening, TBA. Taught in English.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2023, Fall 2021, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3310 - Afro-Asia: Futurism and Feminism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 3310, FGSS 3310, AAS 3312, LGBT 3310, SHUM 3310
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2020, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3314 - Korean Literature and Performance: From P'ansori to K-Pop (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 3314
This course examines Korean literature and performance traditions from the Choson dynasty (1392-1910) to the present. Through performance workshops, the course enables students to experience how Korean epic and lyric traditions were performed in the past and how they continue to flourish in the present across various media, including recorded music, written texts, and film. We will examine how Korean literature and performance traditions have transformed over time, with attention given to how these traditions speak to local and global audiences following the Korean Wave. The course concludes with recent developments in Korean popular music, including K-pop bands and K-hip-hop. Readings for the course will be in English or in English translation and no prior knowledge of Korean culture is necessary. (ASIAN-LL)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2022, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3327 - Jazz Fictions: Film, Literature, Music (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with MUSIC 3327
This course will survey the influence of jazz across multiple forms, including literature, poetry, and film. This influence was often reciprocal; as writers, playwrights, filmmakers and poets sought to think with and through jazz, so too did jazz musicians engage with and take inspiration from other forms. Through our engagement with these multiple mediums, we will develop a broader understanding of the social and political context for this music and the unique affordances and challenges of cross-media scholarship. No prior knowledge of jazz is required; the course is designed to function as a novel (excuse the pun) way of introducing the genre. In addition to reading and watching various forms of media, we will be listening to music throughout. (MUSIC-HC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, SCD-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3340 - Islamic Spain: Culture and Society (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 3539, JWST 3539, RELST 3539, SPAN 3539, MEDVL 3539
This course examines the culture and society of al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) from 711, when Islam arrived in Iberia, until 1492 and the demise of Nasrid Granada. Through extensive discussion and analysis of Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew primary documents and literary texts of various genres (in translation), the course challenges ideological bases of conventional thinking regarding the social, political, and cultural identity of medieval Spain. Among other things, the class investigates the origins of lyric poetry, the relationships among the various confessional and ethnic communities in al-Andalus and the problems involved in Mozarabic Christian and Andalusi Jewish subcultural adaptations of Andalusi Arabo-Islamic culture.
Distribution Requirements: (HA-AG), (HST-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL); (EUAREA, LAAREA)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3342 - Race, Class, Gender and Violence in the Enlightenment (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3340, ASRC 3340
Ideas change the world. Sometimes the same ideas can do tremendous good and also cause great suffering. In this course we will consider violence and revolutionary changes through the prism of European 17th- and 18th-century Enlightenment thought. Thinking through the writings of Mary Wollstonecraft, David Hume, Immanuel Kant, Catherine Macaulay, Rousseau and others, we will explore how African philosophers and writers such as Emmanuel Eze, Paulin Hotoundji and Chinua Achebe are in conversation with the enlightenment as well as African thought. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-PRE)
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG, D-AG, HA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2020, Fall 2017, Fall 2013
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3378 - Korean American Literature (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 3378, AAS 3378, AMST 3378
The rapidly growing literature of the Korean diaspora is one of the most significant developments in Korean literature since the 20th century. As Korean literature has circulated as world literature, it has become more widely recognized in the Anglophone world through translation and through narratives written by Korean American authors. This course will explore Korean American literature and creative transpacific exchanges between Korea and the US, addressing issues of identity, language, place, migration, race discrimination, citizenship, and the ways in which storytelling shapes community. We will examine the vibrant dialogue between works of fiction and poetry across the Pacific, reading the work of Korean American authors alongside the writing of Korean authors working in the Korean language. Increasingly, Korean American writers are creating narratives that remember and reconfigure Korean history and Korea?s relationship to the US, and we will explore narratives and poetry that offer new perspectives on the Japanese colonial period, the Korean War, and American imperialism such as Min Jin Lee?s Pachinko, Chang-rae Lee's The Surrendered, and Don Mee Choi's DMZ Colony. Readings for the course will be in English or in English translation and no prior knowledge of Korea is required. (ASIAN-LL)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3389 - The Revolutionary as Author: Autobiography and Political Myth (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with RUSSL 3389, ENGL 3989
In this course, we will read some of the most influential examples of a genre at the intersection of literature and history: the memoir of the revolutionary. Along the way, we will consider some of the fictional works (e.g. by Turgenev, Dostoevsky) that have been important in this nonfictional tradition, as well as poetry produced by the revolutionary currents we discuss. As we study the autobiographies of Russian, American, and German leftist political figures like Piotr Kropotkin, Emma Goldman, Ernst Toller, and Angela Davis, we will consider the literary methods these writers use to intertwine their own life stories with political history. How is life-writing a form of revolutionary self-fashioning? How have literary movements intersected with revolutionary writings? With special attention to the questions of gender, ethnicity, and race.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3414 - Arab Jews (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 3414, JWST 3414
What does it mean to be Jewish and Arab? In this course we will read and analyze representations of this contested identity in memoirs, essays, fiction, and film by and about Arab Jews. We will study the history of Arab Jewish communities as well as the causes and consequences of their displacement in the mid 20th Century. We will explore the identity politics of Arab Jews in diaspora communities in North America, Europe and Israel. Not all Jews from Arab contexts spoke Arabic or identified with Arab culture. We will examine the political, cultural, and philosophical differences among the terms Sephardi, Mizrahi, and Levantine. We will pay particular attention to the wide-ranging political philosophies of Arab Jews in Israel / Palestine, from the Israeli Black Panthers to the religious party Shas. We will conclude by examining the politics of memory in representations of Arab Jews produced in Arab countries.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3435 - Art, Nature, and Empire in Russian and Soviet Culture (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with RUSSL 3435, HIST 3415
How does the state draw political power from nature? What is the relationship between the environment and national and/or imperial identity? How does the environment resist political control, or support human resistance? This course will explore these questions from the perspective of Russian and Soviet culture. Analyzing literature, art, and film in historical context, we will consider the environment as worker and victim, refuge and rebel, commodity and national(ist) emblem, exploring the degrees of agency it is granted in different artistic depictions. With special attention to the history of Russian imperialism and Soviet ? internal colonization? and to non-Russian writers and artists of the Russian Empire and USSR, including Indigenous writers. All readings will be in English. (HIST-HEU)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3442 - Filming Migration (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 3452
What role should moving images play in debates about transnational migration, one of the principal factors re-shaping communities and communication today? Focusing on cinema from the late 20th and early 21st centuries, with primary examples drawn from Germany, France, the United States, Italy, Denmark?in relation to Algeria, Senegal, Iran, Mexico, Korea, China, Benin, Turkey, Syria?this course explores how film re-imagines the fabric of social life affected by migration. Seminar-style discussion of films are paired with contextual readings and readings from film studies. Key concepts such as borders and movement, ethnoscapes and citizenship, cityscapes and place-making, mediascapes and personhood, lawfulness and illegality, labor and leisure, language and speech, art and perception will guide our discussions of films and readings. (PMA-HTC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3474 - The Nobel Prize in Literature: Prestige and Politics (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3474
This course examines the Nobel Prize in Literature as one of the most influential—and contested—institutions in global culture. Moving beyond the laureates themselves, we investigate how the prize has shaped, and been shaped by, the politics of literary prestige. Through studies of prizes spanning continents, students explore the criteria behind the award, the cultural and geopolitical forces that influence selection, and the debates surrounding inclusion, exclusion, and controversy. Readings include works by selected laureates alongside critical scholarship on the prize, canon formation, and cultural diplomacy. By the end of the course, students will be able to analyze the Nobel Prize as a symbolic global arbiter of literary value, critique its role in constructing an international canon, and evaluate how power, ideology, and institutional authority inform what counts as "great literature."
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3485 - Cinematic Cities (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with SPAN 3485, FREN 3485, ITAL 3485, PMA 3485
Beginning in the early days of silent cinema, a rich tradition of what are called city films, combines technological innovation with the exploration of specific urban spaces. Students in this class will learn how to think about the possibilities of limits of cinema as a way of knowing a city and its cultures, including linguistic cultures. This course will be offered in English and is open to all students. The focus will be on the relationship between the cinema and the development of urban centers, including Madrid, Rome, Paris, Barcelona, Buenos Aires, Rio de Janeiro, and Venice.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2024, Fall 2019, Summer 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3524 - Humanities in the Time of AI (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with COGST 3524, FREN 3526, ROMS 3526
If humanistic research consists of finding consensus positions, articulating simple expressions, summarizing texts, standardizing identities, or doing passable translations, then this it: we arrived at the place where artificial intelligence is able to accomplish these missions to a convincing degree. However, we erred if we ever thought such tasks would constitute the humanities. Combining theory and practice, this interdisciplinary class aims to show what AI can generate, and capture… and what the humanities can create, and think. A critique of AI is essential, but it needs to be both scientifically sound and scholarly robust. Our course will look at key issues about language, cognition, textuality, or creativity, while taking advantage of ongoing research and editorial projects hosted by the Humanities Lab.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3541 - Introduction to Critical Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3620, GOVT 3636, ENGL 3920, SHUM 3636
Shortly after the 2016 election, The New Yorker published an article entitled ?The Frankfurt School Knew Trump was Coming.? This course examines what the Frankfurt School knew by introducing students to Critical Theory, juxtaposing its roots in the 19th century (i.e., Kant, Hegel, Marx, and Freud) with its most prominent manifestation in the 20th century, the Frankfurt School (e.g., Kracauer, Adorno, Benjamin, Marcuse) alongside disparate voices (Arendt) and radical continuations (Davis, Zuboff, Weeks) as they engage with politics, society, culture, and literature (e.g. Brecht and Kafka). Established in 1920s and continued in exile in the US during WWII, the interdisciplinary circle of scholars comprising the Frankfurt School played a pivotal role in the intellectual developments of post-war American and European social, political, and aesthetic theory: from analyses of authoritarianism and democracy to critiques of capitalism, the entertainment industry, commodity fetishism, and mass society. This introduction to Critical Theory explores both the prescience of these diverse thinkers for today?s world (?what they knew?) as well as what they perhaps could not anticipate in the 21st century (e.g., developments in technology, economy, political orders), and thus how to critically address these changes today. Taught in English. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2024, Fall 2021, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3542 - Fables of Capitalism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3610, GOVT 3606, ENGL 3916, SHUM 3610
This course examines the stories, literary examples, and metaphors at work in elaborating capitalist society and its ?hero,? the modern economic subject: the so-called ?homo oeconomicus.? We will examine the classic liberal tradition (e.g., Locke, Smith, Mill) alongside its later critiques (e.g., Marx, Nietzsche, Weber, Brecht) as well as more recent feminist, Black, and indigenous interventions (e.g., Federici, Davis, ?land-grab university? research). Throughout we will create a dialogue between texts, both across centuries (e.g., Locke on Property with Indigenous Dispossession; Balzac?s Pere Goriot with Piketty?s Capital in the 21st Century) as well as across genres (e.g., Nomadland with Geissler?s Seasonal Associate). At stake are the narrative and figurative moments in theoretical texts as well as crucial literary sources (novels, novellas, and plays) as they collectively develop the modern economic paradigms of industry, exchange, credit-debt, and interest ? as well as the people they often leave out: women, people of color, the working class. The seminar will include working with an archive, collection, or museum at Cornell. Taught in English. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2023, Fall 2018, Fall 2014
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3550 - Decadence (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3550, FGSS 3550, LGBT 3550
?My existence is a scandal,? Oscar Wilde once wrote, summing up in an epigram his carefully cultivated style of perversity and paradox. Through their celebration of ?art for art?s sake? and all that was considered exquisite, ironic, or obscene, the Decadent aesthetes of the late-nineteenth century sought to free the pleasures of language, beauty, spirituality, and sexual desire from their more conventional moral strictures. We will focus on the literature of the period, including works by Edgar Allan Poe, Charles Baudelaire, J.-K. Huysmans, and especially Wilde, and we will also consider related developments in aesthetic philosophy, painting, music, theater, architecture, fashion, and design, including music by Richard Wagner, Claude Debussy, and Richard Strauss and artworks by James McNeill Whistler, Aubrey Beardsley, and Gustave Moreau. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2024, Spring 2022, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3688 - Kafka's Worlds: Castles, Trials, and Tribulations (3-4 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 3800
This seminar will explore the unique “Kafkaesque” universe of metamorphoses, labyrinthine systems of law and (in)-justice, and uncanny societies of humans and animals. Focusing on Franz Kafka’s novels and tales, we will examine topics such as: the relationship between body and pain; society and the individual; authority and hierarchy; fathers and sons; writing and living; language and home; music and politics; and religion and persecution. Placing Kafka first within the socio-cultural context of Jewish-German-Czech Prague (and discussing problems of multicultural-lingual identity), we shall follow his literary journey to his vision of America (one of his novels). At the center of our discussions will be: the effect of his work on literature, film, and theatre. We shall also discuss the effects of his work on contemporary theories of psychoanalysis, law, performance, modernism, architecture, and literature. Texts include novels and novellas: the Trial, the Castle, America, the Penal Colony, Metamorphoses, the Judgment, the Country Doctor, The Burrow, Josephine the Singer, or the Mouse Folk. Films by the Coen brothers and David Lynch; theoretical readings by Camus, Lacan, Deleuze, Guattari, Bataille, Blanchot, Benjamin and others. Readings and discussions in English.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2017
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3702 - Desire and Cinema (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3702, FGSS 3702, VISST 3702, PMA 3702, LGBT 3702
The pleasure of the text, Roland Barthes writes, is that moment when my body pursues its own ideas-for my body does not have the same ideas I do. What is this erotics of the text, and what has it been up to lately at the movies? Are new movies giving our bodies new ideas? In the context of the changing art of the moving image in the 21st-century, how might we read and revise classic works of psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theory on erotic desire and cinema? We will focus especially on relatively recent metacinematic work, moviemaking about moviemaking, by such directors as Pedro Almod?, Olivier Assayas, Michael Haneke, Todd Haynes, David Lynch, Steve McQueen, and John Cameron Mitchell.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2016, Fall 2013
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3709 - Testimony and Technology: The Holocaust in the Age of AI (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with JWST 3709, GERST 3709, HIST 3709
The generative age of AI has arrived—and with it a profound question: what happens when machines begin to write the humanities? This seminar takes the most extreme case of modern violence, the Holocaust, to test the limits of memory, language, and empathy in the digital age. Each student works closely with one survivor testimony while engaging hands-on with digital tools, including text analysis, AI models, and media platforms. Through history, psychology, memory studies, and media theory, we will examine what AI can and cannot capture about human suffering, narrative, and truth. Drawing on history, psychology, memory studies, and media theory, the course confronts a core question of existence for the humanities: how to preserve the fractured, human voice that no machine can replicate. (HIST-HEU)
Distribution Requirements: (HST-AS, SCD-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3743 - Minorities of the Middle East (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 3655, JWST 3655, SHUM 3655
This course examines the historic diversity of the modern Middle East, exploring histories of inter-communal contact and conflict. We begin by investigating the legacy of the Ottoman Empire and the impact of its dissolution. We will focus our attention on commercial centers that fostered inter-communal relations, as well as investigating sites of strife and cases of minority repression. We will read histories, memoirs, and fiction, and view films that help us better understand inter-communal relations, tensions, and conflict. We will also interrogate the terms for exploring a range distinctions among majority and minority populations including: religious difference (Muslims, Christians, and Jews); divisions of religious rite (Sunni and Shi’a); entho-linguistic minorities (Armenians and Kurds); national identities (Israelis and Palestinians); cultures of origin (Mizrahi, Sephardi, and Ashkenazi Jews). We will explore how these divisions inform urgent current conflicts: the civil war in Syria and the refugee crisis; the civil war in Iraq and the campaign by ISIS against minorities; as well as tensions between Saudi Arabia and Iran.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2023, Spring 2021, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3744 - Modern Sephardi and Mizrahi Identities (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 3717, JWST 3717, SHUM 3717
This class examines modern articulations of identity by and about two distinct Jewish diasporas: Sephardic and Mizrahi Jews. Sephardic Jews trace their origins to the Iberian Peninsula prior to the end of the 15th century. Mizrahim are Jews who lived in the Middle East and North Africa until the mid-20th century, and their descendants. We will explore Sephardic and Mizrahi identities in works of fiction, memoirs, essays, poetry and films produced from the mid-twentieth century to the present. We will trace routes of migration across generations, paying particular attention to how texts construct identity in relation to language and place. Works will be drawn from wide geographic distribution including the Middle East, North Africa, Europe, and the Americas, and produced in Arabic, English, French, Hebrew, Ladino, and Spanish.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3750 - Humanities Scholars Research Methods (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 3750, ASIAN 3375, ANTHR 3950, NES 3750, ARTH 3755, CLASS 3850
This course explores the practice, theory, and methodology of humanities research, critical analysis, and communication through writing and oral presentation. We will study the work and impact of humanists (scholars of literature, history, theory, art, visual studies, film, anthropology, gender and sexuality studies), who pose big questions about the human condition. By reading and analyzing their scholarship-critiquing them and engaging their ideas-we will craft our own methods and voices. Students will refine their research methods (library research, note taking, organizing material, bibliographies, citation methods, proposals, outlines, etc.) and design their own independent research project.
Enrollment Information: Priority given to: students in the Humanities Scholars Program (HSP).
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3781 - Freud and Psychoanalysis (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 3560, STS 3651, FGSS 3651, GERST 3561, ROMS 3560
Psychoanalysis considers the human being not as an object of treatment, but as a subject who is called upon to elaborate an unconscious knowledge about what is disrupting her life, through analysis of dreams, symptoms, bungled actions, slips of the tongue, and repetitive behaviors. Freud finds that these apparently irrational acts and behavior are ordered by the logic of the fantasy, which provides a mental representation of a traumatic childhood experience and the effects it unleashes in the mind and body-effects he called drives. As unbound energies, the drives give rise to symptoms, repetitive acts, and fantasmatic stagings that menace our health and sometimes threaten social coexistence, but that also rise to the desires, creative acts, and social projects we identify as the essence of human life. Readings will include fundamental texts on the unconscious, repression, fantasy, and the death drive, as well as case studies and speculative essays on mythology, art, religion, and group psychology. Students will be asked to keep a dream journal and to work on their unconscious formations, and will have the chance to produce creative projects as well as analytic essays.
Distribution Requirements: (ETM-AS, SSC-AS), (KCM-AG, SBA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2021, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3791 - French Thought (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 3790, PHIL 2949
Readings in French and Francophone philosophy and theory, from the 16th century to today. Themes may vary each offering, but can include questions of: death and finitude, gender, existence, affect, literature, art, and aesthetic, humanism and posthumanism, ecology, responsibility, ethics politics, violence, slavery, education, capitalism,and colonialsim.Texts from numerous authors, such as: Montaigne, Derrida, Irigaray, Deleuze, Rousseau, Fanon, Pascal, De Beauvoir, Blanchot, Sartre, Levi-Strauss, Debord, Merleau-Ponty, Foucault, Levinas, Cixous, Mbembe, Descartes, Badiou, Latour, Althusser, Weil, and others.
Distribution Requirements: (ETM-AS), (KCM-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3800 - Poetry and Poetics of the Americas (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with AMST 3820, LATA 3800, SPAN 3800, ENGL 3910
As globalization draws the Americas ever closer together, reshaping our sense of a common and uncommon American culture, what claims might be made for a distinctive, diverse poetry and poetics of the Americas? How might we characterize its dominant forms and alternative practices? What shared influences, affiliations, concerns and approaches might we find and what convergences and differences emerge? Ranging across North and South America, Central America and the Caribbean, this course will place in conversation such figures as Poe, Pound, Stein, Williams, Neruda, Vallejo, Borges, Parra, Bola?Cesaire, Nourbese Philip, Hong, Long Soldier, Rankine, Lamar, Kaminsky, and Xie. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-LOA, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (AFAREA, LAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3811 - Introduction to Translation Studies (3 Credits)
The modern field of translation studies overlaps most closely with literary studies, but it intersects also with fields such as linguistics and politics. The intense work in translation studies in the last half century follows a long history of thinking about translation. The activity of translation has been viewed as betrayal, as an inferior form of literary production, as extending the life of the literary work, as a creative process equal to the original. In this course we will examine various approaches to the translation of literary texts, both prose and verse. We will read texts by theorists and by translators. We will also read and analyze translations of literary works, with a focus on classics of Russian literature. Practical translation work will illuminate theoretical readings. The modern field of translation studies overlaps most closely with literary studies, but it intersects also with fields such as linguistics and politics. The intense work in translation studies in the last few decades follows a long history of thinking about translation. The activity of translation has been viewed over many centuries as betrayal, as an inferior form of literary production, as extending the life of the literary work, as a creative process equal to the original. In this course we will examine various approaches to the translation of literary texts, both prose and verse. We will read texts by theorists and by translators, possibly including Cicero, Schleiermacher, Nabokov, Jakobson, Nida, Toury, Appiah, Derrida, Venuti, Bassnett, and others. We will also read and analyze translations of literary works, with a focus on classics of Russian literature. Practical translation work will illuminate theoretical readings.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3837 - Dawn of Art: Apes, Prehistory, Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 3837, ROMS 3837, COGST 3837, SHUM 3837
Is Homo sapiens the only species capable of producing visual art? Nonhuman great apes, especially, seem to be able to draw, paint, and enjoy such works. Our prehistoric ancestors are responsible for the adornment of the Lascaux, Altamira, or Chauvet caves. Our next of kin in the distant past (including Neanderthals) also displayed symbolic activity involving visual (re)presentation. Avant-garde or Aboriginal practices, “outsider art” concurrently challenge how we define the visual realm. Thus, the purpose of this interdisciplinary class is to revisit the contemporary debate on the dawn of art by bringing together research in paleoanthropology and primatology at the interface of aesthetics, cognitive science, and speculative theory. The course could also allow students to participate in related research projects undertaken in the Humanities Lab.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3891 - Occupied France Through Film (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 3840
The Second World War and the Occupation of France by German forces had a traumatic impact on the nation's identity. We will examine the way France has tried to deal with this conflicted period through a series of films that each deal, directly or indirectly with the major questions posed by history to French memory of the Occupation. What was the role of collaboration, resistance, anti-Semitism, of writers and intellectuals during this traumtic period? How has film helped to define and re-shape the ways in which France has come to terms with its conflicted past?
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3977 - Body Politics in African Literature, Cinema, and New Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 3977, ENGL 3977, FGSS 3977, FREN 3975, SHUM 3977
This course examines how writers, filmmakers, and content creators from Africa engage with and revise public images of bodies-specifically pleasure, queerness, sex strikes, etc. Our inquiry also surveys theorists' commitment to highlighting forms of self-fashioning and agency/responsibility in addition to troubling problematic tropes of pathologization and excess. These topical explorations will be achieved through analyses of storytelling, digitality, the aestheticization of violence, and social change theories. Through contemporary films, digital platforms, novels, and essays, we will reflect on the precarious yet empowering nature of the body. Public speaking (class discussions, student presentations) and deep attention to analysis and writing (reaction papers, an abstract, an annotated bibliography, and a final paper) will help you refine your understanding of body politics.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG, D-AG), (GLC-AS, SCD-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3985 - Literature of Leaving China (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 3329, CAPS 3329
Ever since the creation of the concept of a culturally and geographically stable center in China, people have been intentionally excluded from that center. Disgraced officials are sent to far-flung provinces, loyalists to past regimes hide out across China's borders, and dissidents have their entry visas revoked, making it impossible for them to return home. The experiences of these people, and the poems and stories they write, tell us a great deal about what it means and how it feels to be included and excluded. What is the difference between the way China looks from the inside and the way it looks from the outside? Who has the power to decide who gets to live in China, and how and why do they use it? What is the relationship between our identities and our homes? Texts studied will range from 300 BCE to the present; all will be read and discussed in English. (ASIAN-LL)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 3995 - Female Voices, Canonic Verses (3 Credits)
This upper-division literature course that explores poetry and poetics, with an emphasis on female poets who dialogue with, and reinvent how and what we understand to be the canon. Over the course of the semester, we will study a collection of voices from the poetic world, with diverse arrangements of form, method and style. Our engagement with contemporary female voices will draw from the modern and contemporary American, British, Spanish and Latin American literary traditions. The aim of our readings will be to contemplate what language is and how it functions - what language does, what it creates, how it works/acts/performs on us; how we, reciprocally, might work/act/perform and create things with it.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024, Fall 2020, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4002 - Versification: How Poetic Forms Are Made and Analyzed (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4002
This course provides an introduction to meter and rhyme and to the study of meter and rhyme Verse readings will be short poems written in English, with a particular focus on Shakespeare?s sonnets and the poems of Housman and Dickinson. Critical texts will include writings about prosody from the nineteenth through the twenty-first centuries. Non-Anglophone verse systems, particularly Russian, will be considered for a comparative perspective. (ENGL-PRE)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4015 - Passions and Literary Enlightenment (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4315
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4040 - Fictions of Dictatorship (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with AAS 4040, AMST 4040, SHUM 4040, PMA 4740
Fictions of dictatorship, as termed by scholar Lucy Burns, denote both the narratives and spectacles produced by authoritarian governments and the performances, events, and cultural objects that work against these states of exception. This course will critically examine histories of dictatorships, through both documentary & creative forms (i.e. novels, memoirs, and performance) and with a geographic focus on Asia and Latin America, in order to understand authoritarian returns in our present historical moment. (PMA-HTC)
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Exploratory Studies: (SEAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4060 - Modern Poetry in and out of World Systems (3 Credits)
How can we think modern lyric on a world scale? This seminar will attempt to articulate two world systems and one world republic: the idea of the modern capitalist world system as a dynamic political- economic entity consisting of centers and peripheries in Immanuel Wallerstein's sense, the modern imperial discursive world system that codified a hierarchy of human difference and finally the modern world republic of letters centered in 19th century Paris and for the purposes of this seminar, on Baudelaire's creation of modern lyric. We will ask: how have poets crafted their lyric modernity partly through a poetic engagement with those dimensions of European modernism and aestheticism that touch upon the civilizational and racial difference that fix them in their imperial peripheries? Poets may include Cavafy, Aime Cesaire, Derek Walcott, Miraji, W.B. Yeats, Langston Hughes.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4103 - Nabokov, Naturally (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENVS 4103, SHUM 4103
Vladimir Nabokov's legacy at Cornell is not limited to the world-famous literary works he produced here. The university's natural and built environments also provided powerful material for his lifelong pursuit of butterflies within their geo- and biodiverse ecosystems. In this project-oriented course on the writer-lepidopterist, we will read his words, look at his drawings, study his collections of insects and plants, and develop our own modes of engaging with place and planet through a lively science-art practice.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4110 - The National Question: Theory and Critique (3 Credits)
For critical theory, the nation and nationalism have always been vexed issues. How to consider the relation of the nation and capital? Is the nation merely an institution that serves to ideologically ground the labour market? Is it merely an apparatus to regulate and segment the bearers and guardians of labour power, and guide them to the sphere of exchange? Is it a real reflection of division amongst peoples? Is it an ancient entity, on par with the state, which persists into the modern era? And what should be the clarification of how the nation functions within the cycle of reproduction, in which capitalism must interact with elements exterior to its own cyclical movement in order to guarantee its social basis and persistence? In taking up the long history of theorizations of the nation and nationalism in the general orbit of contemporary theory, we will attempt to gain a holistic theoretical assessment of the limits and possibilities of this field of criticism.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4190 - Independent Study (1-4 Credits)
COML 4190 and COML 4200 may be taken independently of each other. Undergraduate student and faculty advisor to determine course of study and credit hours.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-UG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4196 - The Uncanny (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SPAN 4196, ROMS 4196
In the field of aesthetics, the uncanny refers to an affective state, most commonly the sensation of encountering something-an object, a place, a situation- as both familiar and strange a the same time. Such experience of the "strange-familiar" (unheimlich) produces a disquieting sense of uncertainty, uneasiness, or doubt and may even spark extreme feelings of alienation, anxiety, dread, horror, and repulsion. This seminar explores the philosophical origins and conceptual terrain of the uncanny in relation to 20th and 21st century cinematic production.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4200 - Independent Study (1-4 Credits)
COML 4190 and COML 4200 may be taken independently of each other. Undergraduate student and faculty advisor to determine course of study and credit hours.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-UG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Summer 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4224 - Writing for the Public: Adapting Academic Work for a General Audience (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ROMS 4324, GERST 4224
This workshop-style course will address the question of how to draw on academic research and expertise to write for a non-specialist audience. We will discuss the benefits of public-facing writing; how to select a publication to pitch; how to pitch an article; and how to draft and revise an article once a pitch has been accepted. These skills will be developed through practice. Students will develop real pitch ideas to use as a basis for articles that will be drafted and revised over the course of the semester. We will discuss questions such as selecting appropriate venues, adapting to a new writing style, sourcing, citation practices, and communicating with editors.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4225 - Arboreal Humanities: Ecology, Aesthetics, and Literature (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4225, ENGL 4225
An introduction to the arboreal humanities, this course examines the status of trees and forests at the intersection of ecological, aesthetic, artistic, and literary concerns. In addition to scientific texts and scholarly treatises, we will read popular accounts and literary works that examine the being of trees and forests in relation to and as conditions of possibility of human culture. Taught in English. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4229 - Culture, Cognition, Humanities (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with COGST 4150, PSYCH 4150
Seminar on the essential features and qualities of culture and how it impacts human endeavors. Because understanding culture necessarily requires interaction across multiple areas of study, this interdisciplinary seminar will be based on discussions of recent research at the interface of cognitive science and the humanities. Topics may include: animal cultures, the evolution of language, the symbolic revolution, knowledge acquisitions, play, rituals and the arts.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: juniors and seniors; others by permission of instructor.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2023, Fall 2021, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4242 - Metamorphoses in Renaissance Literature and Culture (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4240
Stories of transformation have been central to literary traditions for thousands of years, but these tales of shape-shifting took on a special life in the English Renaissance, when Ovid's Metamorphoses surged in popularity. This course will explore the fundamental connection between literary creativity and unstable identities - whether these narratives of metamorphosis show humans turning to beasts, trees, or stones, men changing into women, or inanimate objects coming to life and taking human form. Class readings draw on examples from Ovid, Shakespeare, and other Renaissance poets, as well as the re-imagining of these fantasies in modern science fiction and make-over shows. What do these stories of metamorphosis tell us about what it means to be human - or not?
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4243 - Psychoanalysis and Politics (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 4240, GOVT 4246
This seminar will explore some of the most important psychoanalytic approaches to politics and collective life. from Sigmund Freud's Mass Psychology and the Analysis of the Ego to works by Le Bon, Reich, Althusser, Fanon, Lacan, Safouan, Zizek and Dolar. Questions explored will include the relationship between mass and individual psychology; the role of unconscious identification (ideal ego, superego) in group formation, nationalism, xenophobia and racism; fantasy and politics; and the people considered as a subject and political actor. Events and contexts discussed will range from the French Revolution to the Nazi Reich to colonialization and contemporary authoritarianisms. Works of political theory by Rousseau, Kant, Marx, Arendt, Balibar and Ranciere will be put in dialogue with psychoanalytic readings.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4250 - Marx, Nietzsche, Freud (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4250, GOVT 4735
This is an introduction to the three 'master thinkers' who have helped determine the discourses of modernity and post-modernity. We consider basic aspects of their work: (a) specific critical and historical analyses; (b) theoretical and methodological writings; (c) programs and manifestos; and (d) styles of argumentation, documentation, and persuasion. This also entails an introduction, for non-specialists, to essential problems of political economy, continental philosophy, psychology, and literary and cultural criticism. Second, we compare the underlying assumptions and the interpretive yields of the various disciplines and practices founded by Marx, Nietzsche, and Freud: historical materialism and communism, existentialism and power-knowledge analysis, and psychoanalysis, respectively. We also consider how these three writers have been fused into a single constellation, 'Marx-Nietzsche-Freud,' and how they have been interpreted by others, including L. Althusser, A. Badiou, A. Camus, H. Cixous, G. Deleuze, J. Derrida, M. Foucault, H.-G. Gadamer, M. Heidegger, L. Irigaray, K. Karatani, J. Lacan, P. Ricoeur, L. Strauss, S. Zizek.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2022, Fall 2019, Spring 2017
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4251 - Existentialism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4210, GOVT 4015, ROMS 4210
The most intense public encounter between Existentialism and Marxism occurred in immediate post-WWII Europe, its structure remaining alive internationally. Existentialist questions have been traced from pre-Socratic thinkers through Dante, Shakespeare, and Cervantes onward; just as roots of modern materialism extend to Epicurus and Lucretius, or Leopardi. This course will focus on differing theories and concomitant practices concerned with "alienation," "anxiety," "crisis," "death of God," "nihilism," "rebellion or revolution." Crucial are possible relations between fiction and non-fiction; also among philosophy, theology, psychoanalysis, and political theory. Other authors may include: Althusser, de Beauvoir, Beckett, Büchner, Camus, Che, Dostoevsky, Fanon, Genet, Gide, Gramsci, O. Gross, Hamsun, Heidegger, Husserl, Jaspers, C.L.R. James, Kafka, Kierkegaard, Lagerkvist, Lacan, Lenin, Marx, Merleau-Ponty, Mishima, G. Novack, Nietzsche, Ortega, Pirandello, W. Reich, Sartre, Shestov, Tillich, Unamuno. There is also cinema. Taught in English.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2022, Spring 2020, Fall 2017
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4252 - Ecological Thinking: Philosophy, Ethics, and Politics Beyond the Human (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 4250
This course studies philosophical, literary, and scientific conceptions of nature and the ethics and politics of human-nonhuman relations. We will cover a wide array of texts and global issues-such as animal cruelty, indigenous ecological thought, climate justice, plant ecologies, and ecological sovereignty-while trying to trace a history of French and Francophone ecological thought, from the 16th century to today. Our readings will address a number of related questions: what is our responsibility to nonhuman beings? How must our conceptions of nature, humanity, ethics, and politics change to become more ecological? And are these issues contemporary or have they been with us for centuries, even millennia? Students will closely study and collectively discuss texts while undertaking assignments ranging from the analytic to the experimental.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG), (ETM-HA)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4281 - Human-Centered Design and Engaged Media (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4705
This StudioLab course connects critical design teams with researchers, NGOs, and nonprofits working on human rights, public health, and environmental and land rights in the US and abroad. Practicing methods of transmedia knowledge, critical design thinking, and strategic storytelling, students collaborate on projects with the Center on the Death Penalty Worldwide, Health Access Connect (Uganda), NYS 4-H, and SOOFA Ranch (GA). Consulting on partners' ongoing projects, teams study and practice processes from IDEO's Human-Centered Design Thinking and Stanford's Design for Extreme Affordability, as well as UX, tactical media, and activist organizing developed by ACT-UP, Black Lives Matter, Guerrilla Girls, and contemporary, multi-platform campaigns, presenting and sharing their collaborations via project site and other platforms. (ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4283 - Badiou: Politics and Thought (3 Credits)
This seminar offers a relatively comprehensive survey of the thought and political theory of Alain Badiou, from his engagement in Althusser's circle, to his political participation in May '68 and its aftermath, the experience of the UCFML and its successor, L'organisation politique, and his vast body of philosophical and political writing from the 1990s onwards. In direct readings from the whole of Badiou's body of work, we will trace key concepts such as the void, ontology as mathematics, the figure of the subject and its retrospective convocation, the event, fidelity, the suture, and more, explore the relationship of Badiou's work to figures such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Lacan, Heidegger, Deleuze, and others, along with examinations of Badiou's longtime collaborators Sylvain Lazarus and Natacha Michel.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4295 - Violence and the Left (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4295
Violence is on the rise across the political spectrum. While the left has a long tradition of pacifism, the prevalence of political violence today suggests that we can no longer equate leftism and nonviolence. This course expands understandings of violence beyond the state or military force to consider left-wing theories of political violence from assassinations and sabotage to guerilla warfare and revolutionary upheaval. We will cover major transnational movements including anarchism, anti-fascism, anti-colonialism, feminism, and Marxism, as well as key concepts such as expropriation, counter-violence, propaganda of the deed, and revolutionary defeatism. Taught in English.
Enrollment Information: Primarily for: juniors and seniors.
Distribution Requirements: (GLC-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4334 - Caribbean Worlds: Landscape, Labor and Climate Imaginaries (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with LATA 4334, ENGL 3934, FREN 4334, ROMS 4334
The seminar will explore relations between the tangible effects of climate on urban, infrastructural, and ecological landscapes in the Caribbean and lived experiences of climate as mediated through literature, film, and other expressive forms. Topics will range from historical accounts of climate as 'catastrophe' - the effects of hurricanes, volcanoes, and earthquakes- to colonial histories of coerced labor, to climate as a more general horizon in the constitution of Caribbean worlds. The seminar draws on the work of anthropologist Anna Tsing, interpreting the industrialized-urbanized ecological territory in terms of capitalist ruination which, nonetheless, holds possibilities for other modes of environmentality, as the hazards effected by climate change fundamentally disrupt and transform the very urbanity constituted through colonial and later resource extractive appropriations.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4353 - Race and Critical Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GOVT 4356
As a philosophical approach to culture and society emerging out of European contexts, critical theory has traditionally excluded questions about the history of racial difference. Yet critical theory's insights into processes of subject formation, social relations, mass culture, and general emancipatory drive continue to inform and be of value to scholars of race concerned with the everyday production and transmission of ideas about normative humanity. At the same time, in their engagement with theory's blindspots, scholars of race demonstrate the racialized histories, contexts, and assumptions that make up that for which "theory" cannot account, as well as that from which it has unquestioningly emerged. This course explores contemporary critical scholarship on race, as defined by its relationship to anti-positivist epistemologies, theories of the subject, critiques of traditional ontology and aesthetics, and engagement with the Black radical tradition, environmental humanities, psychoanalysis, and more. Some familiarity with key figures and ideas in postcolonial theory and Black studies is desirable though not absolutely necessary. Readings may include Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sylvia Wynter, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Rizvana Bradley, David Marriott, Rei Terada, Nahum Dmitri Chandler, Fred Moten, and others.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4354 - Media and Experience (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 4334
Continental philosophy fuels contemporary media theory. The connection runs so deep, critics have accused media theorists of producing nothing intellectually new. From Edmund Husserl's phenomenological experiments to Heidegger's reflections on technology and time, to Derrida's suspicions of immediacy, a clear philosophical lineage shapes the way media theory thinks about history, subjectivity, and experience. Through engagements with media theory and the inheritance that informs it, we explore the genealogy of thought on media and experience, reflecting on the technological shifts that could not have been anticipated by early 20th century philosophers: social media, and the digital's current saturation of all levels of human communication. We also explore those areas of thought that the Eurocentricism and presumed universality of Western philosophy rendered invisible or unthinkable: the relationship between media and race, media and gender and sexuality, geopolitical and cultural differences.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4364 - Negrismo, Negritude and Surrealism in the Caribbean (2 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 4151, ROMS 4151
Exploratory Studies: (LAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4368 - Reading Édouard Glissant (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 4368, ASRC 4368
This seminar will focus on the writings of the polymorphous Martinican poet and thinker, Edouard Glissant (1928-2011). We will attend to the historical context of French colonialism, particularly in the Caribbean, that gives his writing part of its impetus and to the anticolonial intellectuals with whom he engages (chiefly Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon) as well as to his major self-professed influences (William Faulkner, Saint-John Perse, Hegel) and to an array of interlocutors and fellow-travelers as well as a few dissenters. The seminar will examine the main preoccupations of Glissant's writing (world histories of dispossession and plantation slavery, creolization, Relation, opacity, flux, transversality, Caribbean landscapes as figures of thought, the All-World, etc.) but our focus will be on reading Glissant and attending carefully to the implications of his poetics and of his language for decolonial thought.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4372 - Captive Theory (3 Credits)
We experience our world (and the histories of our world) increasingly as a conglomerate of spaces of and for containment. These enclosed spaces are multiple, and their strategies of who and how they imprison are profoundly unequal. How does theory, or rather, different theoretical approaches, deal with structures and experiences of captivity? What captive figures are being used, how are they theorized, and what ways of escaping, opening up, or destroying spaces of captivity are envisioned? In this course, we will draw on a wide range of theoretical approaches to scrutinize an array of figures of captivity, such as the camp, the prison, the campus, the closet, the hold, the enclosure, the frame, the panopticon, the trap, the globe, the screen, for a comparative assessment. We will focus on captivity and its avatars in theory but also reflect on what makes theory itself captive, even complicit in imagining and structuring our reality by way of containment.
Distribution Requirements: (D-AG), (SCD-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4379 - The Medieval Senses (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SPAN 4380
The course will explore medieval culture through the five senses, emphasizing how the differences with our own knowledge and practice of the sensorium produce sets of questions and avenues for thought, attuning ourselves both to our sensorial environment and to the premodern imagination. Moving between theoretical texts-philosophy, cognition, theology, perception-and case studies-literature, but also architecture, music, stained glass, manuscripts, etc. - we will examine the conceptualization and interpretation of the sensorium and experiment with ways of reconstructing or refreshioning the medieval in the modern.
Prerequisites: SPAN 2095 or Cornell Advanced Standing Exam (CASE) score of Q++ or permission of instructor.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, FLOPI-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4380 - Imagining Utopia (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4380, FGSS 4380, ENGL 4380
Why is it easier to imagine the end of the world than the end of capitalism? At a time when reality appears dystopian, many are quick to dismiss utopian visions as naive or irresponsible. In this seminar, we take on the critical and imaginative task of considering what utopias can tell us about our pasts, presents, and possible futures. We encounter two centuries of utopias in which communes have displaced the family, mutual aid has taken the place of capitalist individualism, and sexuality is no longer linked to property rights. While these speculative times and places seek to overcome capitalism, imperialism, racism, sexism, homophobia, transphobia, and the climate crisis, they remain haunted by these figures. Our treatment of utopias in theory and literature therefore includes a range of ambivalent affects and genres, from critical and ambiguous utopias to philosophical treatises and manifestos.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4382 - Paul de Man (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4382, ENGL 4382
This course studies major works from the great 20th century literary theorist Paul de Man, one of the founders of deconstruction. We will read carefully works from across his career, including broader theoretical statements and texts more closely focused on literary and philosophical texts. The Rhetoric of Temporality, Semiology and Rhetoric, The Resistance to Theory, Autobiography as De-Facement, Shelley Disfigured, Aesthetic Formalization in Kleist, Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant, and works on Rousseau, Hegel, and others. We will include poetry and relevant sections of philosophical and theoretical material as appropriate.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4423 - The City: Asia (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 4423, FGSS 4504, PMA 4504
This course uses the lens of temporality to track transformations in notions of urban personhood and collective life engendered by recent trans-Asia economic shifts. We will develop tools that help unpack the spatial and cultural forms of density and the layered histories that define the contemporary urban fabric of cities such as Hanoi, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The course combines the investigation of the cinemas and literatures of the region with the study of recent writing on cities from Asian studies, film studies, queer theory, urban studies, political theory, religious studies, cultural geography, literary theory, and anthropology. (ASIAN-SC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (SAAREA, SEAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2019, Spring 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4429 - Walter Benjamin (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ANTHR 4413, JWST 4913, NES 4913, GERST 4413
This extraordinary figure died in 1941, and his death is emblematic of the intellectual depredations of Nazism. Yet since World War II, his influence, his reputation, and his fascination for scholars in a wide range of cultural and political disciplines has steadily grown. He is seen as a bridging figure between German and Jewish studies, between materialist critique of culture and the submerged yet powerful voice of theology, between literary history and philosophy. We will review Benjamin's life and some of the key disputes over his heritage; read some of the best-known of his essays; and devote significant time to his enigmatic and enormously rich masterwork, the Arcades Project, concluding with consideration of the relevance of Benjamin's insights for cultural and political dilemmas today.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2023, Spring 2020, Spring 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4451 - Gender and Sexuality in Southeast Asian Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 4451, FGSS 4451, PMA 4451, RELST 4451, LGBT 4451, SHUM 4451
Examines the new cinemas of Southeast Asia and their engagement with contemporary discourses of gender and sexuality. It pays special attention to the ways in which sexuality and gendered embodiment are at present linked to citizenship and other forms of belonging and to how the films draw on Buddhist and Islamic traditions of representation and belief. Focusing on globally circulating Southeast Asian films of the past 15 years, the course draws on current writing in feminism, Buddhist studies, affect theory, queer studies, postcolonial theory, and film studies to ask what new understandings of subjectivity might emerge from these cinemas and their political contexts. Films are drawn from both mainstream and independent cinema and will include the work of directors such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Danny and Oxide Pang, Yau Ching, Thunska Pansittivorakul, Garin Nugroho, and Jean-Jacques Annaud. (ASIAN-SC)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, SCD-AS), (CA-AG, D-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (SEAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4452 - Trauma Across Borders (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 3452
This course will begin with some of the earliest theoretical works on personal and historical trauma and pass through several traditions of interpretation (French, American, etc.). Then we will move to more recent attempts to rethink the theory of trauma as it crosses cultural and linguistic borders outside of Europe and the US. Among other questions we will consider the relations among personal, collective, and political trauma and address the imperatives and challenges of thinking trauma in a global context.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, GLC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4471 - Premodern-Postmodern (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 4471, MEDVL 4471
The premodern world played a crucial role in the formation of postmodern theory. 'Biblical exegesis', 'negative theology', 'inner experience', and other premodern concepts and practices were taken up by postmodern authors including Ingeborg Bachmann, Georges Bataille, Italo Calvino, Michel de Certeau, Jacques Derrida, Martin Heidegger, Jean-François Lyotard, and Robert Musil. Each week we will read one modern author in dialogue with one premodern author, such as Origen, Pseudo-Dionysius, Meister Eckhart, Angelus Silesius, Hildegard of Bingen, and Mechthild of Magdeburg, among many others. The aim of our comparisons will be to interrogate the legacy of what Bruce Holsinger calls the "premodern condition."
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, HST-AS), (CA-AG, HA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4485 - The Althusserian Legacy (3 Credits)
The work of Louis Althusser remains a central and canonical reference for contemporary theory, but also a historical reference of major importance for its intellectual history. Althusser not only taught or mentored an extraordinary range of intellectual figures in France (Badiou, Balibar, Derrida, Foucault, Macherey, Ranciere, etc), his basic concepts circulated through crucial social debates in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (humanism and anti-humanism, the articulation of modes of production, societies structured in domination). In his later years, Althusser's thought acknowledged surprisingly divergent filiations (Heidegger, Derrida) from the expected Marxian and psychoanalytic references, and his legacy became central to the foundations of Cultural Studies. This seminar will examine a wide range of developments and destinies for the theoretical legacies of Althusser and his close collaborators.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4488 - Islamic Mysticism and the West (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 4488, RELST 4488
Sufism, the mystical tradition in Islam, has exerted considerable influence on modern European and American thought. Much like the adoption of yoga and other Eastern spiritual practices in the modern West, Sufism has been shorn of much of its medieval and Islamic origins in its transmutation into broader Western neo-spiritual and theosophic frameworks for understanding the human's relationship to God, the world, the self and the body. In this course, we will explore Islamic mysticism through its adoption in modern Western literature. What about Sufism attracted Western spiritual seekers? How did they understand Sufi thought and ideas? How did they come to learn about Sufi practices and literature? In this course we will read deeply from the work of three significant Sufi-inspired authors. Beginning with the work of the extremely controversial Sufi psychologist Idries Shah, we will explore how Sufi stories were brought to bear on the field of psychotherapy and in European spiritualist circles. After this, we will explore the influence of Sufism on André Gide's phantasmic celebrations of earthly sensuality, before turning to Doris Lessing's speculative Sufi space fiction.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4511 - The Global South Novel and World Literature (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4511, ASRC 4512
The driving dialectic in post-colonial studies has been the colonizer/colonized, or the Third World vs. the West. But slowly the field is letting go of this arrested dialectic and in its place various triangulations are emerging: e.g. transnationalism, world literature, the global novel, and global south literary studies. Starting with a walk through the emerging theoretical concepts of world/global/transnational literature, we will primarily focus on a global south reading of African literature (itself a contested term), and perennial questions around language and translation. Specifically we will look at how writers such as Chimamanda Adichie, V.S. Naipul, NoViolet Bulawayo, and MG Vassanji challenge the post-colonial discourse and how a global south reading provides an uncomfortable conversation with transnational and world literature theories and concepts. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4522 - Experimental Screens: Mirrors, Memory, Media (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with SPAN 4520
Experimental media surfacing from different corners of the Iberian Peninsula, since the emergence of the avant-garde to the Internet age, has a long-standing history of exploring new modes of sensory perception-the relationship between technology and emotion, vision and time, abstract forms and concrete effects. In this course, we will study a range of audiovisual materials from photomontage and short animation, to surrealist cinema and video art. As we move through different registers, the goal will be to study the language of media, its aesthetic relation to literary forms, and its connection to poetry and philosophy.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS, ETM-AS, FLOPI-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4571 - Africa Writes Back: Colonizer and the Colonized (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4570, ASRC 4570
In this course, we shall be looking at the he said, she said of colonial/anti-colonial literature. In particular we shall look at texts where European and African authors have been in direct conversation, with the hope of developing a deeper understanding of what was at stake in the colonial projects, and how both the colonizer and colonized understood colonization and resistance ? and the contradictions in inherent in each. Looking at the works of Mannoni, Fanon, Nawal El Saadawi, Micere Mugo, Chinua Achebe, Joseph Conrad, and others, we shall try to paint a picture that engages the voices and vulnerabilities of both lion and hunter. (ENGL-GLS, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2013
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4627 - Freud in the Tropics: Psychoanalysis, Surrealism, and Colonialism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 4677
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4628 - Post-Conflict Justice and Resolution in Africa (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ROMS 4681, ASRC 4681, SHUM 4681
This course combines literature, film, and other artistic projects in order to explore African forms of collective justice and repair, following the numerous conflicts that have shaken the continent in the 20th and 21st centuries, from anti-colonial struggles to civil wars. We will look at aesthetic productions from post-independence Algeria and Ghana, post-apartheid South Africa and post-genocide Rwanda, among others, in order to reflect on multiple questions, including: How do aesthetic works and state institutions offer competing narratives of a traumatic past, and what ways of healing can they generate? How do they negotiate between the retributive and the restorative impulses of justice? Is justice sufficient for resolution to take place? And conversely, can repair ever be achieved in the absence of justice?
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4692 - Trance and Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 4692, NES 4696, PMA 4692
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4709 - Modeling between Numbers and Stories (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 4709, ENGL 4709
This course compares narrative method and statistical modeling historically, teaching the history of predictive data techniques from the 19th century to the present while reading short-form literature - Aesop, Gogol, Dickinson - to compare the stories the numbers tell to narrative itself. The intent is to illuminate the rhetorical forms that prediction uses while studying the development of its quantitative techniques.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4711 - Staffage: Figures for Scale, 1500-1850 (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ARTH 4361, ARKEO 4712, SHUM 4711, VISST 4711
"Staffage" is a term in the history of landscape painting. It refers to little figures who populate the scene, invariably dwarfed by their surroundings. The few critics who noticed them assigned them various roles: to illustrate "the benefits which nature affords to creatures living in the region" (Goethe, 1800); or, alternatively, "to lend the landscape its specific poetic character" (Fernow, 1806). From landscape, staffage migrated into archaeological documentation and architectural illustration. Here, tiny figures gain additional roles: to convey the scale of the monuments depicted, and the societies that inhabit them. Our study of staffage alternates between close looking at a wide range of pictures, and readings from the historical and theoretical literatures on the aesthetics and politics of landscape painting. (ARKEO-COS)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4809 - Global Networks (3 Credits)
One of the main justifications for work in the humanities hinges upon the importance of representation: We claim that we are telling better stories about some of the complex issues that face us today and that such stories can and will impact the fate of our planet and of humanity-politically, ethically, epistemologically, materially. But how do we narrate, represent, or theorize such complex networks and constellations-global circulations of peoples, objects, and labor information networks, large-scale social, economic, and political crises, vectors of contagion, or climate change and environmental degradation? In this seminar, we will bring together different types of texts and media as well as a range of theoretical approaches in order to critically investigate the forms that represent global networks as well as the possibilities for forging connections across the planet (and beyond). Possible texts include: Galloway's and Thacker's The Exploit: A Theory of Networks, Chirbes's On the Edge, Mezzadra's and Neilson's Border as Method, Chen Qiufan's The Waste Tide, Morton's Hyperobjects, Cloud Atlas (film and novel), Lowe's Intimacies of Four Continents, Bellott's Sexual Dependency (film), Nancy's Globalization, Pavic's Dictionary of the Khazars, Sch?ing's The Swarm, Wu Mingyi's Man with Compound Eyes.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4810 - Global Theory? (3 Credits)
What does it mean to make and read theory that is truly global? After decades of heightened global circulation, thinking theory and the global together still poses challenges. While we are rightly suspicious of theories that claim universality, theoretical work has to find new positionalities: ways of being attentive to cultural and contextual specificities while also offering insights on a more global scale. In this course we will approach the problem of global theory from different vantage points: We will scrutinize some key theoretical texts (of so-called Western theory) for their cultural and contextual politics and will put these in dialogue with theories of the global and globalization on the one hand and theories that position themselves (at least partly) outside of Western theoretical traditions. In a final movement, we will read relevant recent theoretical texts to sketch what the future of global theory might look like.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4815 - Reading (with) Judith Butler (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 4815, FGSS 4815
Judith Butler is one of today?s foremost theorists and cultural critics. Even though they are known, above all, for their work in gender studies and queer theory, their theoretical thought ranges widely. It also draws on a wide range of theoretical traditions, literary and filmic works, and political events. In this course, we will read widely from Butler?s work (from Gender Trouble to Who?s Afraid of Gender), as well as reading some of the key texts that Butler draws on. We will develop a critical understanding of Butler?s strategies for reading and writing to hone our own critical and theoretical skills. (ENGL-LOA, ENGL-PST)
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4825 - Literature and Science: Transfers in Poetics and Epistemology (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 4825, ROMS 4825, SHUM 4025
Part epistemology and part experimental humanities, this seminar looks at improbable encounters between the divergent regimes of thought and knowledge expressed by literature and the sciences. Our main concern is not the literary thematization of the scientific, nor is it an exploration of science fiction as a genre. Our reflexive focus is rather on the noetic and poetic transfers different modes of textuality could unfold, beyond their hiatus in terms of writing, apparatus, signification, and mental experience. Readings include scholars such as Foucault, Kuhn, Strabo, Haraway, or Hayles, and writers such as Homer, Rousseau, Shelley, or Borges. Several discrete disciplines, such as geometry, cognitive science, botany, primatology, or AI, could be analyzed. The seminar is also linked to the research activities of the Humanities Lab.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (ETM-AS), (CA-AG, KCM-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4836 - Transcultural Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 4836, ROMS 4836
Cultures are never monolithic, and they are very rarely impervious to foreign influences. Exchanges allow for the inception of individual cultures: the widespread process of dual integration and alteration of external behaviors, ideas, objects, texts, or practices is constitutive of the plasticity of group evolution. This research seminar will offer a critical inquiry on the rise of the concept of "culture" and of its prefixations (multi, inter, cross, trans), contrasting it with categories such as "global(ized)," "planetary," "universal," "cosmopolitics." We'll articulate literary theory with anthropology, experimental psychology with political theory, or ethics with biology ("animal culture" now forming a legitimate category). We'll additionally study some cases of transcultural circulations in the human context (science, literature and the arts), especially between Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4842 - Theories & Practices of Meaning: Literature, Semantics, AI (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with COGST 4842, FREN 4846, ROMS 4846
What is the "meaning of meaning," exactly? Are signification, significance, sense, and meaning one and the same? Is "semantics" a sub-branch of linguistics, or what GPT "does," or a path to poetry? This transdisciplinary research seminar will put to the test vastly different theories—and practices—of meaning, ranging from the display of signification in the verbal arts to the task of philosophical definition, from the technology of the dictionary to that of computerized word embedding, from the interplay between cognition and communication to the scholarly art of reading. Our scope will be broad and comparative, across disciplines, languages, historical periods, and genres. The course could also allow students to participate in related research projects undertaken in the Humanities Lab.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS)
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4861 - Genres, Platforms, Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 4461
How do questions of genre persist and evolve in the age of digital media and A.I.? To what extent do we choose our genres, and in what ways do they choose us? How do genres, platforms, and media intersect and inform one another? What hierarchies do they establish, and to what purposes? Moving among a range of genres and sub-genres, poetry, fiction, film, and multimedia, websites and streaming services, this course will explore the accelerating interplay of genres, platforms, and media, and the increasingly pervasive role of A.I., in contemporary culture and politics.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG), (GLC-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4902 - Environmental Humanities: Theories and Methods (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with STS 4902
The environmental humanities pose a radically different set of questions to texts, materials, and contexts that were previously approached in terms of human intentions and actions alone. This seminar explores the theoretical and methodological potentials of this rapidly emerging and constantly evolving field from the interdisciplinary, comparative perspective that it also axiomatically demands. Together we will discuss seminal works that tackle four foundational concepts imperative for reframing the traditional concerns of the humanities under the sign of anthropogenic planetary change – scale, form, matter/ energy, and distribution. The seminar will develop ways to configure these focal points to the theoretical and practical concerns of various disciplinary approaches and, especially, to participants' individual interests and research projects.
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2024, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4930 - Senior Essay (3 Credits)
Times TBA individually in consultation with director of Senior Essay Colloquium. Approximately 50 pages to be written over the course of two semesters in the student's senior year under the direction of the student's advisor. An R grade is assigned on the basis of research and a preliminary draft completed in the first semester. A letter grade is awarded on completion of the second semester, COML 4940.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-UG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4940 - Senior Essay (3 Credits)
Times TBA individually in consultation with director of Senior Essay Colloquium. Approximately 50 pages to be written over the course of two semesters in the student's senior year under the direction of the student's advisor. An R grade is assigned on the basis of research and a preliminary draft completed in the first semester.
Prerequisites: COML 4930.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-UG)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Fall 2025, Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4944 - Digital Biopolitics (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ROMS 4944, AMST 4944, FGSS 4944, LGBT 4944
This course is a theoretical exploration of digital biopolitics, a convergence of how digital technologies mediate, govern, and regulate life, particularly within frameworks of power and control. Extending the concept of biopolitics—the governance of populations through the imbrication of life processes into political calculations to enhance the former—the course foregrounds how computational systems, algorithms, and data practices shape and are shaped by cultural, political, and economic forces. The interdisciplinary course, linking political philosophy, media theory, and race studies, thinks with a wide range of scholars for whom digitality, as it encounters biopolitics, is generative for a deeper understanding of the datafied world. This exploration follows sections, including data as a resource, digital embodiment and corporeality, digital labor and necropolitics, and biopolitical resistance in digital spaces. Foundational to the course are inquiries about posthumanism and ethics, such as: How does the digital reconfigure traditional boundaries between human and non-human, self and other? As technology mediates biopolitical power, who holds systems accountable for harm and injustice?
Distribution Requirements: (ALC-AS), (CA-AG, LA-AG)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2019, Spring 2015
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 4948 - Pleasure and Neoliberalism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FGSS 4948, ROMS 4948, ENGL 4948, SHUM 4948
The comparative seminar explores pleasure and its relationship with neoliberalism. We will adopt an interdisciplinary approach and a historical trajectory, starting with the Ancient world through the contemporary. Our investigation of philosophical, literary, and filmic reflections on pleasure and neoliberalism will engage important concepts such as the market, subjectivity, race, gender, and queerness. We highlight and conceptualize how new/old media, literary, and other artistic productions facilitate the expression, the search for, and the achievement of pleasure. Through public speaking and deep attention to writing, you will refine your conceptual accounts of pleasure and neoliberalism and their mutual imbrication.
Distribution Requirements: (CA-AG, D-AG), (GLC-AS, SCD-AS)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Spring 2021, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6021 - Latinx Theatre Production (1-3 Credits)
Crosslisted with LSP 6020, LATA 6020, PMA 6010
In this course, we will develop a toolbox of performance techniques based on methods developed in the Spanish-speaking and Latinx contexts. These techniques will be used in preparing short, original, collectively-created or scripted plays for production and public presentation in the October 2024 regional microtheater festival in upstate New York and/or the annual downtown Ithaca holiday pastorela in December.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-CEL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6029 - Revolutionary John Brown: As Figured by W.E.B. Du Bois (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 6029, AMST 6029
In his work "Black Reconstruction in AMerica," Du Bois glosses over a key moment in American revolutionary thinking. Senator Wade of Ohio, among three Whig politicians impatient with Abraham Lincoln's acccommodationism in relation to the defeated South, proposes a certain radical policy. That is, the newly liberated slaves must be willing to act their former oppressors. Du Bois, in cursory parliamentary fashion, makes mention of Wade's radicalism but never engages it. However, in his biography of John Brown, we find Du Bois' thinking of a piece with Wade's. This course will chart the unfolding of Du Bois's critique: from his non-engagement to what we might take to be an almost full embrace of Wade's proposal through the radical actions of John Brown.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6060 - Modern Poetry in and out of World Systems (3 Credits)
How can we think modern lyric on a world scale? This seminar will attempt to articulate two world systems and one world republic: the idea of the modern capitalist world system as a dynamic political- economic entity consisting of centers and peripheries in Immanuel Wallerstein's sense, the modern imperial discursive world system that codified a hierarchy of human difference and finally the modern world republic of letters centered in 19th century Paris and for the purposes of this seminar, on Baudelaire's creation of modern lyric. We will ask: how have poets crafted their lyric modernity partly through a poetic engagement with those dimensions of European modernism and aestheticism that touch upon the civilizational and racial difference that fix them in their imperial peripheries? Poets may include Cavafy, Aime Cesaire, Derek Walcott, Miraji, W.B. Yeats, Langston Hughes.
Exploratory Studies: (EAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6159 - Literary Theory on the Edge (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 6421, ENGL 6021
This course examines a range of exciting and provocative 20th- and 21st-century theoretical paradigms for thinking about literature, language and culture. These approaches provide differing, though often overlapping, entryways into theoretical analysis, including structuralism and post-structuralism, translation studies, Black studies, Afro-Diasporic Studies, postcolonial and decolonial studies, performance studies, media theory and cinema/media studies, the digital humanities, psychoanalysis and trauma theory, gender studies and queer studies, studies of the Anthropocene/environmental studies, and animal studies. Occasional invited guests, lectures and class discussions will provide students with a facility for close textual analysis, a knowledge of major currents of thought in the humanities, and an appreciation for the uniqueness and complexity of language and media.
Exploratory Studies: (SAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6190 - Independent Study (1-4 Credits)
This course gives students the opportunity to work with a selected instructor to pursue special interests or research not treated in regularly scheduled courses. After getting permission of the instructor, students should enroll online in the instructor's section. Enrolled students are required to provide the department with a course description and/or syllabus along with the instructor's approval by the end of the first week of classes.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6196 - The Uncanny (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SPAN 6190, ROMS 6190
In the field of aesthetics, the uncanny refers to an affective state, most commonly the sensation of encountering something-an object, a place, a situation-as both familiar and strange at the same time. Such experience of the strange-familiar (unheimlich) produces a disquieting sense of uncertainty, uneasiness, or doubt and may even spark extreme feelings of alienation, anxiety, dread, horror, and repulsion. This seminar explores the philosophical origins and conceptual terrain of the uncanny in relation to 20th and 21st century artistic, literary, architectural and cinematic production. If the uncanny traditionally signals a blurring of categories (familiar/unfamiliar, truth/fiction, reality/imagination) resulting in a fundamental distrust of observed reality, then what might its contemporary iterations reveal about our age of pervasive suspicion?
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6200 - Independent Study (1-4 Credits)
This course gives students the opportunity to work with a selected instructor to pursue special interests or research not treated in regularly scheduled courses. After getting permission of the instructor, students should enroll online in the instructor's section. Enrolled students are required to provide the department with a course description and/or syllabus along with the instructor's approval by the end of the first week of classes.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6221 - Postcolonial Theory: Then and Now (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6221
All decolonization, wrote Frantz Fanon, is successful at the level of description. With a focus on the difference between description and critique and on the uneven relation between the academic project underlying the subfield of postcolonial studies and histories of colonialism and aspirations to decolonization across the twentieth century, this seminar will offer a retrospective survey on the assemblage of texts that has come under the name Postcolonial Theory and inquire into its purchase on this present with particular emphasis on questions of indigeneity and environmental crisis. Authors may include: Edward Said, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, Homi Bhabha, Frantz Fanon, Amilcar Cabral, Aime Cesaire, Edouard Glissant, Achille Mbembe, Sylvia Wynter, David Scott, Leela Gandhi, Marlene Nourbese Philip, Jason Moore, Glenn Coulthard, Dipesh Chakrabarty, Rob Nixon.
Exploratory Studies: (SAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2021, Spring 2020, Spring 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6224 - Writing for the Public: Adapting Academic Work for a General Audience (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6224, ROMS 6324
This workshop-style course will address the question of how to draw on academic research and expertise to write for a non-specialist audience. We will discuss the benefits of public-facing writing; how to select a publication to pitch; how to pitch an article; and how to draft and revise an article once a pitch has been accepted. These skills will be developed through practice. Students will develop real pitch ideas to use as a basis for articles that will be drafted and revised over the course of the semester. We will discuss questions such as selecting appropriate venues, adapting to a new writing style, sourcing, citation practices, and communicating with editors.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6283 - Badiou: Politics and Thought (3 Credits)
This seminar offers a relatively comprehensive survey of the thought and political theory of Alain Badiou, from his engagement in Althusser's circle, to his political participation in May '68 and its aftermath, the experience of the UCFML and its successor, L'organisation politique, and his vast body of philosophical and political writing from the 1990s onwards. In direct readings from the whole of Badiou's body of work, we will trace key concepts such as the void, ontology as mathematics, the figure of the subject and its retrospective convocation, the event, fidelity, the suture, and more, explore the relationship of Badiou's work to figures such as Kant, Hegel, Marx, Freud, Lacan, Heidegger, Deleuze, and others, along with examinations of Badiou's longtime collaborators Sylvain Lazarus and Natacha Michel.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6290 - Comparative Literature Proseminar (1 Credit)
Structured around guest and public lectures by field members and beyond, the proseminar provides a common experience for students and facilitates the exchange of approaches to theoretical problems and methodological orientations. Thus, the course introduces students to the work and methods that animate their faculty's original contributions to their respective fields while offering them a forum to ask said faculty how to navigate the various stages of research and publication processes.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: Comparative Literature (COML) majors, COML minors, and graduate students in contiguous disciplines.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2025, Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6314 - Korean Literature and Performance: From P'ansori to K-Pop (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6614
This course examines Korean literature and performance traditions from the Choson dynasty (1392-1910) to the present. Through performance workshops, the course enables students to experience how Korean epic and lyric traditions were performed in the past and how they continue to flourish in the present across various media, including recorded music, written texts, and film. We will examine how Korean literature and performance traditions have transformed over time, with attention given to how these traditions speak to local and global audiences following the Korean Wave. The course concludes with recent developments in Korean popular music, including K-pop bands and K-hip-hop. Readings for the course will be in English or in English translation and no prior knowledge of Korean culture is necessary. (ASIAN-LL)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2022, Fall 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6334 - Caribbean Worlds: Landscape, Labor and Climate Imaginaries (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with LATA 6334, FREN 6334, ROMS 6334
The seminar will explore relations between the tangible effects of climate on urban, infrastructural, and ecological landscapes in the Caribbean and lived experiences of climate as mediated through literature, film, and other expressive forms. Topics will range from historical accounts of climate as 'catastrophe' - the effects of hurricanes, volcanoes, and earthquakes- to colonial histories of coerced labor, to climate as a more general horizon in the constitution of Caribbean worlds. The seminar draws on the work of anthropologist Anna Tsing, interpreting the industrialized-urbanized ecological territory in terms of capitalist ruination which, nonetheless, holds possibilities for other modes of environmentality, as the hazards effected by climate change fundamentally disrupt and transform the very urbanity constituted through colonial and later resource extractive appropriations.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6353 - Race and Critical Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GOVT 6356
As a philosophical approach to culture and society emerging out of European contexts, critical theory has traditionally excluded questions about the history of racial difference. Yet critical theory's insights into processes of subject formation, social relations, mass culture, and general emancipatory drive continue to inform and be of value to scholars of race concerned with the everyday production and transmission of ideas about normative humanity. At the same time, in their engagement with theory's blindspots, scholars of race demonstrate the racialized histories, contexts, and assumptions that make up that for which "theory" cannot account, as well as that from which it has unquestioningly emerged. This course explores contemporary critical scholarship on race, as defined by its relationship to anti-positivist epistemologies, theories of the subject, critiques of traditional ontology and aesthetics, and engagement with the Black radical tradition, environmental humanities, psychoanalysis, and more. Some familiarity with key figures and ideas in postcolonial theory and Black studies is desirable though not absolutely necessary. Readings may include Denise Ferreira da Silva, Sylvia Wynter, Zakiyyah Iman Jackson, Rizvana Bradley, David Marriott, Rei Terada, Nahum Dmitri Chandler, Fred Moten, and others.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6354 - Media and Experience (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 6334
Continental philosophy fuels contemporary media theory. The connection runs so deep, critics have accused media theorists of producing nothing intellectually new. From Edmund Husserl's phenomenological experiments to Heidegger's reflections on technology and time, to Derrida's suspicions of immediacy, a clear philosophical lineage shapes the way media theory thinks about history, subjectivity, and experience. Through engagements with media theory and the inheritance that informs it, we explore the genealogy of thought on media and experience, reflecting on the technological shifts that could not have been anticipated by early 20th century philosophers: social media, and the digital's current saturation of all levels of human communication. We also explore those areas of thought that the Eurocentricism and presumed universality of Western philosophy rendered invisible or unthinkable: the relationship between media and race, media and gender and sexuality, geopolitical and cultural differences.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6364 - Marxism, Anarchism, Feminism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6365, FGSS 6365, GOVT 6465, PHIL 6494
In this seminar, we will draw connections between radical theories and movements from the nineteenth century to the present. Rather than identifying isolated trajectories of "Marxism" "anarchism" and "feminism," or distinct national traditions, we will focus on key concepts within internationalist thought: from the commune, the state, and the family to empire, colonization, revolution, and the strike. Focusing on the period before and after the 1917 Russian Revolution, we will witness Karl Marx and Mikhail Bakunin debate the role of the state, Emma Goldman and Rosa Luxemburg consider the benefits and limitations of reform, Vladimir Lenin and W.E.B. Du Bois address the function of the strike, and Silvia Federici, Cedric Robinson, and Andreas Malm interrogate the racialized, gendered, and extractive foundations of capital. Taught in English.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6368 - Reading Édouard Glissant (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6368, ASRC 6368
This seminar will focus on the writings of the polymorphous Martinican poet and thinker, Edouard Glissant (1928-2011). We will attend to the historical context of French colonialism, particularly in the Caribbean, that gives his writing part of its impetus and to the anticolonial intellectuals with whom he engages (chiefly Aime Cesaire and Frantz Fanon) as well as to his major self-professed influences (William Faulkner, Saint-John Perse, Hegel) and to an array of interlocutors and fellow-travelers as well as a few dissenters. The seminar will examine the main preoccupations of Glissant's writing (world histories of dispossession and plantation slavery, creolization, Relation, opacity, flux, transversality, Caribbean landscapes as figures of thought, the All-World, etc.) but our focus will be on reading Glissant and attending carefully to the implications of his poetics and of his language for decolonial thought.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6370 - Contemporary Aesthetic Theory and its Discontents (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6510, ARTH 6510, VISST 6500, GOVT 6517
After having been reduced to a mere ideological formation of bourgeois origin, aesthetics has recently made a strong comeback in the field of theory. This course probes the reasons for this historical change. From the arguments of the critics we will derive a catalogue of criteria for a viable aesthetics in order to examine how contemporary aesthetic theory relates to cognitive theories, the historicity of art and taste (including specific practices and institutions), and the emancipatory potentials of ethics and politics. Readings may include Adorno, Berger, de Bolla, Bourdieu, Noël Carroll, Cavell, Danto, Derrida, Dickie, Eagleton, Goodman, Guillory, Gumbrecht, Halsall, Luhmann, Lyotard, de Man, Walter Benn Michaels, Obrist, Ohmann, Scarry, Seel, Shustermann, Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Williams and others.
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2020, Fall 2014
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6372 - Captive Theory (3 Credits)
We experience our world (and the histories of our world) increasingly as a conglomerate of spaces of and for containment. These enclosed spaces are multiple, and their strategies of who and how they imprison are profoundly unequal. How does theory, or rather, different theoretical approaches, deal with structures and experiences of captivity? What captive figures are being used, how are they theorized, and what ways of escaping, opening up, or destroying spaces of captivity are envisioned? In this course, we will draw on a wide range of theoretical approaches to scrutinize an array of figures of captivity, such as the camp, the prison, the campus, the closet, the hold, the enclosure, the frame, the panopticon, the trap, the globe, the screen, for a comparative assessment. We will focus on captivity and its avatars in theory but also reflect on what makes theory itself captive, even complicit in imagining and structuring our reality by way of containment.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6382 - Paul de Man (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6382, GERST 6382
This course studies major works from the great 20th century literary theorist Paul de Man, one of the founders of deconstruction. We will read carefully works from across his career, including broader theoretical statements and texts more closely focused on literary and philosophical texts. The Rhetoric of Temporality, Semiology and Rhetoric, The Resistance to Theory, Autobiography as De-Facement, Shelley Disfigured, Aesthetic Formalization in Kleist, Phenomenality and Materiality in Kant, and works on Rousseau, Hegel, and others. We will include poetry and relevant sections of philosophical and theoretical material as appropriate.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6388 - Queer Utopia (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6388, FGSS 6388, LGBT 6388
What is the function of utopia in contemporary queer theory and practice? Initiated by José Esteban Muñoz, queer utopianism was originally a response to the so-called "anti-social turn" in queer studies that eschewed the responsibility of imagining a collective future. More than fifteen years later, we see a resurgence of utopianism in the framing of prison, family, and gender abolition as utopian projects that generate alternatives. This seminar expands the scope of queer utopia to include feminist, queer, and trans fiction and theory, from novels by Ursula K. LeGuin, Octavia Butler, and Jordy Rosenberg to the theory of Herbert Marcuse, Audre Lorde, and Gloria Anzaldúa. We will consider the many ways in which gender and sexuality have been reimagined within utopian literature, theory, and political practice, as well as the limits of these interventions.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students; juniors and seniors by permission of instructor.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6395 - Writing Revolution: France, Haiti, 1848 Europe, and the Paris Commune (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6395
This seminar explores the writing of revolutionary moments, when the course of history is interrupted and announces a new path, one that can be realized, betrayed, or compromised. What are the strategies for capturing, condensing, and making legible events that have an often unrecognized pre-history, an explosive moment, and various aftermaths? How do literary and theoretical strategies differ? After a quick look at the Peasants War and its theorizations by Bloch, Engels, and the Wu Ming collective, the course focuses on the long nineteenth century in Europe (including its colonies) and its series of revolutionary convulsions: the French Revolution (Buechner, Weiss, Kant, Hegel, Burke, Tocqueville), the Haitian Revolution (Kleist, CLR James, Hegel, Buck-Morss); the weavers uprising of 1844 (Hauptmann, Heine, Kollwitz); the 1848 revolutions (Marx, Flaubert, Tocqueville), and the Paris Commune of 1871 (Kristin Ross).
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students; juniors and seniors by permission of instructor.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6405 - Thinking Media Studies (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 6400, MUSIC 6400, GERST 6405, ANTHR 6400, ENGL 6400, STS 6400, ASIAN 6400
This required seminar for the new graduate minor in media studies considers media from a wide number of perspectives, ranging from the methods of cinema and television studies to those of music, information science, communication, science and technology studies, and beyond. Historical and theoretical approaches to media are intertwined with meta-critical reflections on media studies as an interdisciplinary field of inquiry. Close attention will be paid to media's role in shaping and being shaped by race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and other politically constructed categories of identity and sociality.
Exploratory Studies: (EAAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2026, Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6414 - Arab Jews (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 6414, JWST 6414
What does it mean to be Jewish and Arab? In this course we will read and analyze representations of this contested identity in memoirs, essays, fiction, and film by and about Arab Jews. We will study the history of Arab Jewish communities as well as the causes and consequences of their displacement in the mid 20th Century. We will explore the identity politics of Arab Jews in diaspora communities in North America, Europe and Israel. Not all Jews from Arab contexts spoke Arabic or identified with Arab culture. We will examine the political, cultural, and philosophical differences among the terms Sephardi, Mizrahi, and Levantine. We will pay particular attention to the wide-ranging political philosophies of Arab Jews in Israel / Palestine, from the Israeli Black Panthers to the religious party Shas. We will conclude by examining the politics of memory in representations of Arab Jews produced in Arab countries.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6424 - Beauty, Grief (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ROMS 6224, FREN 6424, ITAL 6224, SPAN 6224
This course is for anyone drawn to beauty-and anyone who, within the beautiful, finds the trace of a loss. What do we grieve, what do we miss, when we find ourselves in the presence of beauty? And what, in every retrospective, prospective or otherwise non-present beauty, do we nonetheless crave and nonetheless mourn? What is the beauty hidden within mourning? We'll take a look at thinkers, poets, and artists from both modern and premodern culture, potentially including Anne Carson, Augustine of Hippo, Fra Angelico, Gillian Rose, Herve Guibert, Pepe Espaliu, and others, as we try to sit with dual summons of beauty and grief: beauty or grief.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6452 - Trauma Across Borders (3 Credits)
This course will begin with some of the earliest theoretical works on personal and historical trauma and pass through several traditions of interpretation (French, American, etc.). Then we will move to more recent attempts to rethink the theory of trauma as it crosses cultural and linguistic borders outside of Europe and the US. Among other questions we will consider the relations among personal, collective, and political trauma and address the imperatives and challenges of thinking trauma in a global context.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6465 - Black Feminist Theories: Sexuality, Creativity, and Power (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASRC 6207, ENGL 6207, FGSS 6207
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Spring 2021, Spring 2019, Fall 2011
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6485 - The Althusserian Legacy (3 Credits)
The work of Louis Althusser remains a central and canonical reference for contemporary theory, but also a historical reference of major importance for its intellectual history. Althusser not only taught or mentored an extraordinary range of intellectual figures in France (Badiou, Balibar, Derrida, Foucault, Macherey, Ranciere, etc), his basic concepts circulated through crucial social debates in Asia, Africa, and Latin America (humanism and anti-humanism, the articulation of modes of production, societies structured in domination). In his later years, Althusser's thought acknowledged surprisingly divergent filiations (Heidegger, Derrida) from the expected Marxian and psychoanalytic references, and his legacy became central to the foundations of Cultural Studies. This seminar will examine a wide range of developments and destinies for the theoretical legacies of Althusser and his close collaborators.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6490 - Marx and Contemporary Theory (3 Credits)
This course is intended to familiarize graduate students with the intellectual history, background, and development of Marxist theory in relation to the contemporary literary and cultural-theoretical landscape. As the broad field through which numerous other directions in theory and research were formed, a knowledge of the Marxist tradition remains an essential backdrop to later developments - the analysis of modes of production, the sociology of labour, the politics of class formation, the developments and trends of postcolonial studies, the modern and contemporary forms of social thought, numerous currents of political thought, and so on. This course therefore fills a need for graduate students to familiarize themselves not only with the work of Marx, but also with central debates in twentieth century and postwar social theory. Rather than examine the work of major figures of the history of socialism as a political tendency, we will focus on the history of theoretical research in the Marxist tradition, with the goal of preparing students to critically apprehend the intellectual history of the principal debates, the major figures, and developments of this tradition in a broad and inclusive sense.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Spring 2024
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6511 - Illness as Metaphor (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6511
What is illness? What is health? The human body seems to vacillate between these dichotomous versions of its existence. This seminar traces the cultural/historical developments/traditions that define illness, disease, well-being, treatment, cure and approaches to death. We will approach the topic at the intersections of medicine, philosophy, psychology and literature. Authors will include: Herodot, Socrates, Aristotle, Plato, Galen, von Bingen, Burton, Paracelsus, Kant, Novalis, Herder, Hegel, Stifter, Dostojevskij, Tolstoj, Nietzsche, Rilke, Thomas Mann, Kafka, Freud, Foucault, Susan Sontag et al.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Spring 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6522 - Methods of Interpretation: Critical Approaches to Literature (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6522
This course will offer a survey of critical and interpretive approaches to literature. Based on works by Goethe, Kleist, Hoffmann, Tieck, Keller, Stifter, Rilke, Kafka, Celan, Beckett, Joyce, Woolf and others this course will discuss models of interpretation linked to various schools of thought like psychological, gender-specific, socio-economic, structuralist, philosophical or philological modes of analysis.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6539 - Islamic Spain: Culture and Society (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 6539, JWST 6539, RELST 6539, SPAN 6539, MEDVL 6539
This course examines the culture and society of al-Andalus (Islamic Spain) from 711, when Islam arrived in Iberia, until 1492 and the demise of Nasrid Granada. Through extensive discussion and analysis of Arabic, Latin, and Hebrew primary documents and literary texts of various genres (in translation), the course challenges ideological bases of conventional thinking regarding the social, political, and cultural identity of medieval Spain. Among other things, the class investigates the origins of lyric poetry, the relationships among the various confessional and ethnic communities in al-Andalus and the problems involved in Mozarabic Christian and Andalusi Jewish subcultural adaptations of Andalusi Arabo-Islamic culture.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL); (EUAREA)

Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6551 - Decadence and the Modern Novel (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6551, FGSS 6551
As Théophile Gautier said of Decadent aesthetics, “It is an ingenious, complex, learned style, full of shades and refinements of meaning, ever extending the bounds of language, borrowing from every technical vocabulary, taking colors from every palette and notes from every keyboard; a style that endeavors to express the most inexpressible thoughts, the vaguest and most fleeting contours of form, that listens, with a view to rendering them, to the subtle confidences of neurosis, to the confessions of aging lust turning into depravity, and to the odd hallucinations of fixed ideas passing into mania.” "Decadent" is an enduring term of political abuse, but also defines a canonical aesthetic movement ironically fascinated throughout the past two centuries with the style of empires in decline, including ours.
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2020, Spring 2010
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6600 - Visual Ideology (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6600, ARTH 6060
Some of the most powerful approaches to visual practices have come from outside or from the peripheries of the institution of art history and criticism. This seminar will analyze the interactions between academically sanctioned disciplines (such as iconography and connoisseurship) and innovations coming from philosophy, psychoanalysis, historiography, sociology, literary theory, mass media criticism, feminism, and Marxism. We will try especially to develop: (1) a general theory of "visual ideology" (the gender, social, racial, and class determinations on the production, consumption, and appropriation of visual artifacts under modern and postmodern conditions); and (2) contemporary theoretical practices that articulate these determinations. Examples will be drawn from the history of oil painting, architecture, city planning, photography, film, and other mass media.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2023, Fall 2019, Fall 2016
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6601 - Erotics of Visuality (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6600, FGSS 6610, PMA 6670, LGBT 6600
You didn't see anything, a woman in a movie says to her dubious lover. No one sees anything. Ever. They watch, but they don't understand. What is desire in a movie, and how do we know it when we see it or feel it? How do the images, sounds, and narratives of a cinematic event engage us erotically? How might we want to revise classic psychoanalytic, feminist, and queer theories of desire and cinema in light of the changing art of the moving image in the 21st century? We will focus especially on metacinematic work by Pedro Almod?, Olivier Assayas, Todd Haynes, David Lynch, Michael Haneke, Steve McQueen, and John Cameron Mitchell, among others.
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Fall 2016, Fall 2013, Spring 2009
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6610 - Feminist Pedagogy: What, Why, and How (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6440, FGSS 6441
This seminar will explore the both the intellectual grounding of and the nuts and bolts of feminist pedagogy. In what context did feminist pedagogy emerge and why? How have its practitioners variously defined it? What goals in teaching have they pursued? How might this work be useful to you as a teacher beginning or honing your teaching? Both theoretical and practical questions like these will be our subject.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6622 - Asia, Theory, Critique (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6622
To hone our skills in the analysis of topics in Asian studies, we will review critically a number of switchpoints that have produced conceptual difference in recent scholarly work. Asia scholars have laid claim to the historical, to modernity, coloniality, postcoloniality, religion, affect, temporality, race, capital, (mass) media, embodiment, the translocal, and the posthuman as the bases for producing conceptual difference. Each of these switchpoints has allowed for valuable interventions from Asian Studies into the humanities and social sciences. We will develop questions, criteria, and critiques to thoroughly test our tools of analysis and work toward yet other methods. Contemporary academia valorizes the production of conceptual difference. Thus, evaluation criteria routinely include originality and innovation. This is a valuable point of departure that allows us to ask, What kind of conceptual difference do we want to produce in our work? What kind of conceptual difference is intellectually rigorous? Asia as Question does not merely provide intellectual history but rather tests out?and creates?contemporary, critical approaches. As such, it interrogates especially notions of region and area; work on temporality; new ontologies; and current approaches to media ecologies. (ASIAN-SC)
Exploratory Studies: (SEAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6623 - The City: Asia (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6623, FGSS 6504
This course uses the lens of temporality to track transformations in notions of urban personhood and collective life engendered by recent trans-Asia economic shifts. We will develop tools that help unpack the spatial and cultural forms of density and the layered histories that define the contemporary urban fabric of cities such as Hanoi, Bangkok, Shanghai, and Hong Kong. The course combines the investigation of the cinemas and literatures of the region with the study of recent writing on cities from Asian studies, film studies, queer theory, urban studies, political theory, religious studies, cultural geography, literary theory, and anthropology. (ASIAN-SC)
Exploratory Studies: (SAAREA, SEAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2019, Spring 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6630 - Nietzsche and Heidegger (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6630
This graduate seminar provides a basic introduction to the thinking of Nietzsche and Heidegger, and to the latter's interpretation and appropriation of the former. A major concern is the articulation of philosophy and politics, particularly in the case of Heidegger. We are also interested in the types of argumentation and styles of writing of both thinkers, including in light of the hypothesis that they were working in the ancient tradition of prudent exotericism, viz. that they never wrote exactly what they thought and that they intended their influence to come slightly beneath the level of conscious apprehension. We also consider their impact on the long list of intellectuals across the 'Left-Center-Right' spectrum, including (depending on seminar-participant interest): Adorno, Agamben, Bataille, Badiou, Bourdieu, Butler, Derrida, Deleuze, Foucault, Gadamer, Irigaray, Klossowski, Löwith, Marcuse, Rorty, Leo Strauss, Vattimo, Zupancic. The readings are provided in German (and French or Italian in some cases) and in English translations, when these exist. Discussion and papers in English. Students from all disciplines are welcome.
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2022, Fall 2018, Spring 2017
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6651 - Gender and Sexuality in Southeast Asian Cinema (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6631, FGSS 6331, LGBT 6331, RELST 6631
Examines the new cinemas of Southeast Asia and their engagement with contemporary discourses of gender and sexuality. It pays special attention to the ways in which sexuality and gendered embodiment are at present linked to citizenship and other forms of belonging and to how the films draw on Buddhist and Islamic traditions of representation and belief. Focusing on globally circulating Southeast Asian films of the past 15 years, the course draws on current writing in feminism, Buddhist studies, affect theory, queer studies, postcolonial theory, and film studies to ask what new understandings of subjectivity might emerge from these cinemas and their political contexts. Films are drawn from both mainstream and independent cinema and will include the work of directors such as Apichatpong Weerasethakul, Danny and Oxide Pang, Yau Ching, Thunska Pansittivorakul, Garin Nugroho, and Jean-Jacques Annaud. (ASIAN-SC)
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Fall 2022, Fall 2021, Fall 2019
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6684 - The Labor of Images: Encountering the Collective in Visual Cultures (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 6684, ARTH 6684, PMA 6684, VISST 6684
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6685 - Literature of Leaving China (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6639
Ever since the creation of the concept of a culturally and geographically stable center in China, people have been intentionally excluded from that center. Disgraced officials are sent to far-flung provinces, loyalists to past regimes hide out across China?s borders, and dissidents have their entry visas revoked, making it impossible for them to return home. The experiences of these people, and the poems and stories they write, tell us a great deal about what it means and how it feels to be included and excluded. What is the difference between the way China looks from the inside and the way it looks from the outside? Who has the power to decide who gets to live in China, and how and why do they use it? What is the relationship between our identities and our homes? Texts studied will range from 300 BCE to the present; all will be read and discussed in English. (ASIAN-LL)
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2022, Spring 2015
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6686 - Literary Stricture (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ASIAN 6621
This course argues that modern literary strictures ? such as market forces, censorship, and new media forms ? are contiguous with and interpretable in the same way as more traditional literary strictures like meter, rhyme, and tonal regulation. It asks how we can come to a more thorough understanding of contemporary art by treating its sociological and political context as a source of generative restraint. Theoretical texts will range from Foucault to Vaclav Havel; primary texts will be drawn from contemporary Chinese fiction, poetry and film. All texts will be made available in English for non-Chinese speakers. (ASIAN-LL)
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6688 - Islamic Mysticism and the West (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with NES 6688, RELST 6688
Sufism, the mystical tradition in Islam, has exerted considerable influence on modern European and American thought. Much like the adoption of yoga and other Eastern spiritual practices in the modern West, Sufism has been shorn of much of its medieval and Islamic origins in its transmutation into broader Western neo-spiritual and theosophic frameworks for understanding the human's relationship to God, the world, the self and the body. In this course, we will explore Islamic mysticism through its adoption in modern Western literature. What about Sufism attracted Western spiritual seekers? How did they understand Sufi thought and ideas? How did they come to learn about Sufi practices and literature? In this course we will read deeply from the work of three significant Sufi-inspired authors. Beginning with the work of the extremely controversial Sufi psychologist Idries Shah, we will explore how Sufi stories were brought to bear on the field of psychotherapy and in European spiritualist circles. After this, we will explore the influence of Sufism on André Gide's phantasmic celebrations of earthly sensuality, before turning to Doris Lessing's speculative Sufi space fiction.
Exploratory Studies: (CU-ITL)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6692 - Trance and Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 6692, NES 6696, PMA 6692
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6707 - Surface Theories (3 Credits)
Contemporary theory has turned surface phenomena into the grounds and foundations for conceptual work: from moebius-strips to simulacra, from skin to screens, from folds to planes. But theory's superficial turn has led to radically different critical uses. What accounts for the pervasive fascination with surface imaginaries in theoretical thought? This course will engage us in a series of critical reflections on the deployment, as well as the folding and warping, of figures of superficiality, flatness, smoothness, transparence, and nakedness in contemporary theory, from deconstruction to biopolitics, from media studies to queer and transgender theory, from animal and environmental studies to phenomenology, from systems theory to aesthetics. Readings will include texts by Baudrillard, Deleuze and Guattari, Derrida, Han, Didi-Huberman, Foucault, Lyotard, Nancy, Serres, Sloterdijk and others.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2023, Spring 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6709 - Modeling between Numbers and Stories (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with SHUM 6709, ENGL 6709
This course compares narrative method and statistical modeling historically, teaching the history of predictive data techniques from the 19th century to the present while reading short-form literature - Aesop, Gogol, Dickinson - to compare the stories the numbers tell to narrative itself. The intent is to illuminate the rhetorical forms that prediction uses while studying the development of its quantitative techniques.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate and professional students.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6711 - Staffage: Figures for Scale, 1500-1850 (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ARTH 6361, ARKEO 6712, SHUM 6711, VISST 6711
"Staffage" is a term in the history of landscape painting. It refers to little figures who populate the scene, invariably dwarfed by their surroundings. The few critics who noticed them assigned them various roles: to illustrate "the benefits which nature affords to creatures living in the region" (Goethe, 1800); or, alternatively, "to lend the landscape its specific poetic character" (Fernow, 1806). From landscape, staffage migrated into archaeological documentation and architectural illustration. Here, tiny figures gain additional roles: to convey the scale of the monuments depicted, and the societies that inhabit them. Our study of staffage alternates between close looking at a wide range of pictures, and readings from the historical and theoretical literature on the aesthetics and politics of landscape painting.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6730 - Prophetic Realisms: Literature and the Shape of Things to Come, 1830-1930-2030 (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6730
"Prophetic Realisms" explores the notion that certain literary texts – those that are deeply embedded in the socio-economic totality of the world they build – not only provide insight into the present world, but also anticipate the shape of things to come: the tendencies and trajectories of coming historical formations. The latent is already manifest so that, strangely, one of the proving grounds of literature is history. This idea is very pronounced in Georg Lukacs' 1930s writing on Realism, but also shared by his antagonists in the 'Expressionist Debates,' such as Ernst Bloch: the one point they agree on is literature's ability to 'anticipate' historical developments. This idea is expressed, in a different way, by Erich Auerbach's 1937 essay "On the Serious Imitation of the Everyday" and 1938 essay "figura". In this course we will look at these 1930s writings, constellating them with the 1830s texts that harken back to as anticipating the direction of capitalism (Balzac, but also Stendahl), alongside the early 1900s novels anticipating the rise of fascism (Heinrich Mann, but also Fallada), and finally juxtaposing them with science fiction since the 1960s, including theoretical reflections on them with respect to 'prediction', such as Philip K Dick, Octavia Butler, and Margaret Atwood. We are interested in moments when historical time seems to become 'concentrated,' hence the axes of 1830/1930/2030.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6775 - Thinking Through Stories: Benjamin, Adorno, Freud, and Others (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6770
What does it mean to think through stories, especially when one's métier is theory? This seminar considers modes of non-conceptual thought as an essential practice of twentieth-century theory. Here the story takes precedence as evidence and argument – a mode of thinking in its own right – by mobilizing images, rhetoric, plot, and other literary devices to present and examine an idea. The seminar begins with classical precursors such as Plato, biblical parables, and Montaigne and then focuses on twentieth-century thinkers who aim to reinvigorate thought via storytelling. Authors include Sigmund Freud, Walter Benjamin, Theodor Adorno, Ernst Bloch, Hannah Arendt, Hans Blumenberg, and others. Taught in English.
Enrollment Information: Enrollment limited to: graduate students.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6784 - The Case of the Perversions (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6580
This seminar will offer a critical examination of the literature of perversion (sadism, masochism, fetishism), with readings drawn from major texts of the libertine or S/M traditions (Sade, Sacher-Masoch, Lautreamont, Reage, Flanagan), as well as recent works of philosophy that share with these writers an investment in what I will term writing the real. We will consider works of perversion not merely as literary or clinical cases, therefore, but as illuminating how the discourse of perversion, broadly understood, posits or constructs the real-its cases or modes of postulation or figuration. We will focus our attention on three modes of construction that purport to straddle the alleged gap between language and its real-figure, fetish, and formalization-considering in each case their relation to the problematic of the drive. In addition to the authors mentioned above, readings will include selections from Badiou, Freud, Deleuze, Ferenczi, Foucault, Lacan, Lyotard, Meillassoux, Perniola, and Zizek.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025, Spring 2020
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6791 - Acoustic Horizons (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6791
The course will explore the philosophy, psychoanalysis, and politics of sound along the artistic interface of cinema, video, performance, and new media art. From analysis of synchronization of sound and image in the talking movie to its discruption in experimental music, video, new media and sound art, we will consider the prominence of sound and noise as carriers of gender, ethnic and cultural difference. We also will explore the theory of sound, from tracts on futurism, feminism, new music, and sampling, to more recent acoustic applications of eco-theory in which sound merges with discourses of water and environment. In addition to studying a wide range of artistic production in audio, sound, new media, and screen arts, we will discuss the dialogical impact of theoretical discussions of sound in psychoanalysis and aesthetics, as well as the phenomenal growth of digital acoustic horizons in the Pacific Rim.
Exploratory Studies: (EUAREA)

Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2024, Fall 2020, Spring 2016, Spring 2009
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6793 - Theory and Analysis of Narrative (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6155
How do narratives work? What kinds of social functions do stories perform? And how can the theory and analysis of narrative help us to grasp and shape power relations? The course will introduce the history of classical narrative theory, from Aristotle and Lessing to Todorov and Genette, but it will focus especially on new trends in queer, critical race, and feminist narrative theory, and on the uses of narrative form across disciplines and social spaces. You will be expected to write a few short responses to the readings, practice giving a formal conference-style oral presentation, and write a final essay based on the conference paper.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025, Fall 2019, Fall 2014
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6809 - Global Networks (4 Credits)
One of the main justifications for work in the humanities hinges upon the importance of representation: We claim that we are telling better stories about some of the complex issues that face us today and that such stories can and will impact the fate of our planet and of humanity-politically, ethically, epistemologically, materially. But how do we narrate, represent, or theorize such complex networks and constellations-global circulations of peoples, objects, and labor information networks, large-scale social, economic, and political crises, vectors of contagion, or climate change and environmental degradation? In this seminar, we will bring together different types of texts and media as well as a range of theoretical approaches in order to critically investigate the forms that represent global networks as well as the possibilities for forging connections across the planet (and beyond). Possible texts include: Galloway's and Thacker's The Exploit: A Theory of Networks, Chirbes's On the Edge, Mezzadra's and Neilson's Border as Method, Chen Qiufan's The Waste Tide, Morton's Hyperobjects, Cloud Atlas (film and novel), Lowe's Intimacies of Four Continents, Bellott's Sexual Dependency (film), Nancy's Globalization, Pavic's Dictionary of the Khazars, Sch?ing's The Swarm, Wu Mingyi's Man with Compound Eyes.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2022
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6811 - Global Theory? (3 Credits)
What does it mean to make and read theory that is truly global? After decades of heightened global circulation, thinking theory and the global together still poses challenges. While we are rightly suspicious of theories that claim universality, theoretical work has to find new positionalities: ways of being attentive to cultural and contextual specificities while also offering insights on a more global scale. In this course we will approach the problem of global theory from different vantage points: We will scrutinize some key theoretical texts (of so-called Western theory) for their cultural and contextual politics and will put these in dialogue with theories of the global and globalization on the one hand and theories that position themselves (at least partly) outside of Western theoretical traditions. In a final movement, we will read relevant recent theoretical texts to sketch what the future of global theory might look like.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6815 - Reading (with) Judith Butler (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6816, FGSS 6815
Judith Butler is one of today's foremost theorists and cultural critics. Even though they are known, above all, for their work in gender studies and queer theory, their theoretical thought ranges widely. It also draws on a wide range of theoretical traditions, literary and filmic works, and political events. In this course, we will read widely from Butler's work (from Gender Trouble to Who's Afraid of Gender), as well as reading some of the key texts that Butler draws on. We will develop a critical understanding of Butler's strategies for reading and writing to hone our own critical and theoretical skills.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6825 - Literature and Science: Transfers in Poetics and Epistemology (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6825, ROMS 6825
Part epistemology and part experimental humanities, this seminar looks at improbable encounters between the divergent regimes of thought and knowledge expressed by literature and the sciences. Our main concern is not the literary thematization of the scientific, nor is it an exploration of science fiction as a genre. Our reflexive focus is rather on the noetic and poetic transfers different modes of textuality could unfold, beyond their hiatus in terms of writing, apparatus, signification, and mental experience. Readings include scholars such as Foucault, Kuhn, Strabo, Haraway, or Hayles, and writers such as Homer, Rousseau, Shelley, or Borges. Several discrete disciplines, such as geometry, cognitive science, botany, primatology, or AI, could be analyzed. The seminar is also linked to the research activities of the Humanities Lab.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6836 - Transcultural Theory (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6836, ROMS 6836
Cultures are never monolithic, and they are very rarely impervious to foreign influences. Exchanges allow for the inception of individual cultures: the widespread process of dual integration and alteration of external behaviors, ideas, objects, texts, or practices is constitutive of the plasticity of group evolution. This research seminar will offer a critical inquiry on the rise of the concept of "culture" and of its prefixations (multi, inter, cross, trans), contrasting it with categories such as "global(ized)," "planetary," "universal," "cosmopolitics." We'll articulate literary theory with anthropology, experimental psychology with political theory, or ethics with biology ("animal culture" now forming a legitimate category). We'll additionally study some cases of transcultural circulations in the human context (science, literature and the arts), especially between Europe, Asia, and the Caribbean.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6842 - Theories & Practices of Meaning: Literature, Semantics, AI (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6846, ROMS 6846, COGST 6842
What is the "meaning of meaning," exactly? Are signification, significance, sense, and meaning one and the same? Is "semantics" a sub-branch of linguistics, or what GPT "does," or a path to poetry? This transdisciplinary research seminar will put to the test vastly different theories—and practices—of meaning, ranging from the display of signification in the verbal arts to the task of philosophical definition, from the technology of the dictionary to that of computerized word embedding, from the interplay between cognition and communication to the scholarly art of reading. Our scope will be broad and comparative, across disciplines, languages, historical periods, and genres. The course could also allow students to participate in related research projects undertaken in the Humanities Lab.
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6861 - Genres, Platforms, Media (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with PMA 6461
How do questions of genre persist and evolve in the age of digital media and A.I.? To what extent do we choose our genres, and in what ways do they choose us? How do genres, platforms, and media intersect and inform one another? What hierarchies do they establish, and to what purposes? Moving among a range of genres and sub-genres, poetry, fiction, film, and multimedia, websites and streaming services, this course will explore the accelerating interplay of genres, platforms, and media, and the increasingly pervasive role of A.I., in contemporary culture and politics.
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2024, Spring 2023, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6902 - Environmental Humanities: Theories and Methods (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with STS 6902
The environmental humanities pose a radically different set of questions to texts, materials, and contexts that were previously approached in terms of human intentions and actions alone. This seminar explores the theoretical and methodological potentials of this rapidly emerging and constantly evolving field from the interdisciplinary, comparative perspective that it also axiomatically demands. Together we will discuss seminal works that tackle four foundational concepts imperative for reframing the traditional concerns of the humanities under the sign of anthropogenic planetary change -- scale, form, matter/ energy, and distribution. The seminar will develop ways to configure these focal points to the theoretical and practical concerns of various disciplinary approaches and, especially, to participants' individual interests and research projects.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2026, Spring 2024, Fall 2019, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6920 - Aesthetics and Politics of Touch (4 Credits)
Crosslisted with ENGL 6725, PMA 6920
The course will consider the aesthetics and politics of touch in dialogue with critical, artistic experimentation. Emphasizing interactivity and immersion in art and theory, the course will discuss renewed critical emphasis on the legacy of phenomenology (from Merleau-Ponty, Derrida, and Deleuze to affect theory) in dialogue with recent writings on global critical race and sexual theory (Glissant, Spillers, Mbembe, Ganguly, Lalu, Moten, Cardenas). Designed as an archive-based course, students will be invited to shape the second part of the syllabus around works featured in the Rose Goldsen Archive of New Media Art and in the 2022 CCA Biennial on Futurities, Uncertain with the aim of staging a final text/ exhibit/performance based on conceptual approaches to touch.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2022, Fall 2018
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6922 - Hegel's Aesthetics: On the Ideal, History, and System of the Arts (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GERST 6920, ARTH 6920
This course offers a systematic in-depth study of Hegel's Aesthetics, one of the towering monuments in the development of the discipline. In addition to Hegel's voluminous lectures, we will also consider more recent reactions to and critiques of it. Taught in English.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2025
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6943 - Aesthetics, Before and Beyond Kant (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with FREN 6945
Kant's third Critique is often read as a text that inaugurates aesthetic philosophy proper and confirms the essential connection between aesthetics and (the modern metaphysics of) the human subject. Challenging this humanist understanding of Kant, this seminar studies pre- and post-Kantian philosophy, literature, and theory so as to rethink aesthetic categories as modes of being, ones deeply consequential in a time of nascent posthumanist and environmental thought. Alongside ancient, early modern, and contemporary readings, we will study relevant cases in the arts (the grotesque; landscape; sketching; the non-finito; fragments; ruins) and in ecological theory (fungi; plants; monstrosity; spontaneity).
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6944 - Digital Biopolitics (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with ROMS 6944, GOVT 6946, FGSS 6944, LGBT 6944
This course is a theoretical exploration of digital biopolitics, a convergence of how digital technologies mediate, govern, and regulate life, particularly within frameworks of power and control. Extending the concept of biopolitics—the governance of populations through the imbrication of life processes into political calculations to enhance the former—the course foregrounds how computational systems, algorithms, and data practices shape and are shaped by cultural, political, and economic forces. The interdisciplinary course, linking political philosophy, media theory, and race studies, thinks with a wide range of scholars for whom digitality, as it encounters biopolitics, is generative for a deeper understanding of the datafied world. This exploration follows sections, including data as a resource, digital embodiment and corporeality, digital labor and necropolitics, and biopolitical resistance in digital spaces. Foundational to the course are inquiries about posthumanism and ethics, such as: How does the digital reconfigure traditional boundaries between human and non-human, self and other? As technology mediates biopolitical power, who holds systems accountable for harm and injustice?
Last Four Terms Offered: Spring 2026, Fall 2019, Fall 2017, Spring 2015
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)

COML 6948 - Pleasure and Neoliberalism (3 Credits)
Crosslisted with GOVT 6945, FGSS 6948, ROMS 6948
The comparative seminar explores pleasure and its relationship with neoliberalism. We will adopt an interdisciplinary approach and a historical trajectory, starting with the Ancient world through the contemporary. Our investigation of philosophical, literary, and filmic reflections on pleasure and neoliberalism will engage important concepts such as the market, subjectivity, race, gender, and queerness. We highlight and conceptualize how new/old media, literary, and other artistic productions facilitate the expression, the search for, and the achievement of pleasure. Through public speaking and deep attention to writing, you will refine your conceptual accounts of pleasure and neoliberalism and their mutual imbrication.
Last Four Terms Offered: Fall 2023, Spring 2021
Schedule of Classes (https://classes.cornell.edu/)