Course Description:

Beginning in the 16th century, two “myths of the modern individual” (Ian Watt) emerged: Faust, the academic, who in his thirst for knowledge and experience of the world sold his soul to the devil; and Don Juan, the ultimate seducer of women, who would rather go to hell than deny his carnal pleasures. The representations and variations of these figures down through the ages tell us something about modern Western culture. If nothing else, these myths show that modernity in the West has been driven by fantasies of unbridled desire. One might say that these fantasies helped motor the rise of such phenomena as the scientific and industrial revolutions, consumer capitalism, and other political -isms. By reading comparing texts across traditions we can see both influence and limitations of these myths. The kinds of questions we will be posing are: Why are we so fascinated by such heroes as Faust and Don Juan, despite (or because) of the fact that they lead such damnable lives? How can their stories be used at different times to depict essential aspects of a period and place? What do these figures, and their variations, relate to us about human desires, contradictions, moralities, and art? How do these figures get used in political contexts?

However, since this is also an introduction to the field of Comparative Literature, we will use the discussions of these texts to thematize this discipline. Here we will consider: What does it mean to compare texts across national boundaries and traditions? What role does “translation”—both literally and figuratively—play in this process of comparison? What kinds of theoretical approaches have developed for literary study?

We will address these questions by looking at versions of the Faust and Don Juan stories in late 16th century (the original Faustbook), early 17th-century, i.e. Renaissance, England (Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus), French Classicism of the 17th century (Molère’s Dom Juan), late 18th -early 19th-century, i.e. Enlightenment and Romantic, Germany (Mozart’s opera Don Giovanni and Goethe’s Faust, Part I ), 19th-century post-Idealist, philosophy (a selection from Kierkegaard’s Either/Or), Weimar and Nazi Germany (Murnau’s silent film and Klaus Mann’s Mephisto), and the Soviet Union under Stalinism (Bulgakov’s The Master and Margarita). For your final project, you will read (or view) a more contemporary version and present it to the class.
Pedagogical Goals:

By the end of this course students should have attained
-- a command of basic methods of Comparative Literature,
--an grasp of different literary genres,
--an overview of major trends in modern Western cultural history,
--techniques of literary analysis.
--the ability to discuss and write critically

Required Assignments:

1. Discussion: Because knowledge does not flow like information from one source (teacher) to an empty vessel (students) but, rather, comes about through interaction in dialogue, active participation in class discussion—which means listening to others, asking questions, and seeking helpful answers—is expected. Thus, class attendance is mandatory. You cannot participate if you are not there. Grade deductions will occur for unexcused absences.

2. Announced and unannounced quizzes on the readings will be given in class.

3. Short response papers on each of the texts. Essays must be typed and handed in at the beginning of class period. Late essays will not be accepted.

4. In the final week of class each student will have to make a short presentation in which he/she discusses some other (recent) version of the Faust/Don Juan story (e.g. a Hollywood film or a comparable tale from another tradition). I will provide a handout on this project in the course of the semester. The presentation should then be submitted in writing (approx. 3-4 pages).

5. A short formal essay due in the middle of the semester. Topic and form to be explained during the semester.

Grading percentages:

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<th>Assignment</th>
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<tr>
<td>Nine short writing assignments: 5% each</td>
<td>45%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class final presentations</td>
<td>10%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and discussion: 1% per class</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Quizzes: 5 quizzes @ 3% each</td>
<td>15%</td>
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NOTE: YOU ARE EXPECTED TO FAMILIARIZE YOURSELVES WITH—AND TO FOLLOW—THE UNIVERSITY GUIDELINES ON ACADEMIC HONESTY. BY SIGNING UP FOR THIS COURSE YOU ARE COMMITTING YOURSELVES TO SUBMIT ONLY WORK WHICH YOU HAVE YOURSELVES WRITTEN USING SOURCES THAT YOU APPROPRIATELY DOCUMENT.
Required Texts:

Title: Faust First Part  
Author: Johann Wolfgang von Goethe  
Publisher: Random House  
ISBN: 0553213482

Title: Don Giovanni  
Author: Wolfgang Mozart  
Publisher: Dover Publications (October 1, 1985)  
Language: Italian, English  
ISBN-10: 0486249441  

Title: Either/Or: A Fragment of Life  
Author: Kierkegaard  
Publisher: Penguin Classics  
ISBN: 0140445773

Title: The Tragedy of Dr. Faustus and the Faustbook  
Author: Christopher Marlowe  
Editor: David Wootten  
Publisher: Hackett Publishing  

Title: Mephisto  
Author: Klaus Mann  
Publisher: Penguin  
ISBN: 0140189181

Title: The Master and Margarita  
Author: Mikhail Bulgakov  
Publisher: Vintage  
ISBN: 0-679-76080-6
SYLLABUS

Tuesday, 9/11: Introduction. How might we define “modernity”? What kinds of changes in society took place with the breakdown of the medieval world? How might the figures of Faust and Don Juan fit into those changes? Also: What is “Comparative Literature”?

   Reading: Look at the webpage for the Department of Comparative Literature, Princeton University
   Writing: No written assignment; print out and bring in this syllabus

Thursday, 9/13: The Reformation’s Faust

   Reading: Faustbook (in Dr. Faustus)
   Writing: One-paragraph response to the question: How are Faust’s exploits described and what lesson are we to take from his fate?

Note, for your interest:
Faustbuch in German:
http://www.hs-augsburg.de/~harsch/germanica/Chronologie/16Jh/Faustus/fau_df0.html

Tuesday, 9/18: The Reformation continued

   Reading: Marlowe’s Dr. Faustus

Thursday, 9/20: Marlowe continued

   Reading: finish Dr. Faustus
   Writing: One-paragraph response to the question: Why does the play unite comic and tragic elements?

Tuesday, 9/25: French a “wicked nobleman” in the ancien regime

   Reading: Molière, Dom Juan or the Stone Guest
   Internet:
http://archive.org/stream/molireaffectedm00pagegoog#page/n124/mode/2up
(set little hand at 111/441)

Thursday, 9/27 Ancien regime cont’d

   Reading: Molière: Dom Juan or the Stone Guest
   Writing: One-paragraph response paper on the question: How does Dom Juan use language seductively and is that Molière’s criticism of his society?
Tuesday, 10/2  Enlightenment

Reading: Mozart, *Don Giovanni*

Thursday, 10/4: Enlightenment continued

Reading: *Don Giovanni*
Writing: One-paragraph response to the question: How are we to evaluate Don Giovanni?

Tuesday, 10/9: Enlightenment continued

Finish discussing and listening to *Don Giovanni*
Reading: ON COMPARATIVE LITERATURE (TBD)

Thursday, 10/11: A Hero born of crisis

Reading: Goethe’s *Faust I* (up through the scene “Night 2”)  
Writing: One-paragraph response to the question: What does Mephistopheles offer Faust and what does Faust want from him?

Tuesday, 10/16: A Hero in crisis

Reading: *Faust* (note: You can skip Walpurgis Night’s Dream)

Thursday, 10/18: Contradictions of the Modern World

Reading: Finish *Faust*
Writing: Prepare one paragraph to defend your stance in class on the question: Is Faust saved or damned at the end of the drama?

Tuesday, 10/23: A Philosophical Perspective

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*—“The Immediate Erotic Stages or The Musical Erotic”

Thursday, 10/25: A Philosophical Perspective

Reading: Kierkegaard, *Either/Or*
Writing: What does Kierkegaard view as the greatness and limitation of *Don Giovanni*?

Tuesday, 10/30: A different philosophical perspective

Reading: Fyodor Dostoyevsky, “The Grand Inquisitor” (on internet)
Thursday, 11/1: A Political Allegory of the Soviet Union

Reading: Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*

**WEDNESDAY, 11/7 -- NOTE!!!!**

Writing: Three-page essay due by 5 p.m. -- TOPIC TBD

Tuesday, 11/6: A Political Allegory of the Soviet Union

Reading: Mikhail Bulgakov, *The Master and Margarita*

**Thursday, 11/8:** Political allegory continued

Reading: *Master and Margarita* conclusion
Writing: A one-page response paper on either (1) How does Bulgakov transform the figure of Gretchen to Margarita? or (2) What is the status of the artist under Stalinism? or (3) What kind of “Mephistopheles” figure is appropriate for Stalinism?

**Tuesday, 11/13:** Faust and Fascism

Reading: Klaus Mann, *Mephisto*

**Thursday, 11/15:** Faust and Fascism

Reading: Klaus Mann, *Mephisto*

**Tuesday, 11/20:** Faust and Fascism

Reading: *Mephisto* conclusion
Viewing: In class, Murnau’s 1926 silent film, *Faust*
Writing: Answer either of the questions: (1) Apart from biographical reasons, why did Mann choose to frame his story around the Faust myth? (2) What is Mann’s critique of the modern artist?

**Thursday, 11/22 -- NO CLASS**

**Tuesday, 11/27, and Thursday, 11/29:** In-class presentations on Faust/Don Juan adaptations