



## Graduate Course Descriptions: 2012–13

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### **COLT 510    Experimental Course: “Tokyo Cyberpunk”**

Steven Brown

Introducing the history, forms, and discourses of Japanese “cyberpunk” in contemporary anime and film, this course explores the urban dreams (and nightmares) that constitute cyberpunk’s posthumanist vision of Neo-Tokyo. Viewed not as a reflection of contemporary Japanese society but rather as its defamiliarization, Japanese forms of cyberpunk are investigated alongside Western examples of posthumanism as sites of contestation for competing ideologies and the delineation of new possibilities of existence, new forms of being, at the intersection between carbon- and silicon-based forms of intelligence and data-processing.

Treating Japanese cyberpunk not merely as a literary movement or aesthetic style but more importantly as a philosophical discourse with distinctive questions and premises—i.e., as a philosophical “problematic” with its own sociohistorical specificities and transnational trajectories—we will investigate the cyberpunk city as an “abstract machine,” the cyborg’s “organs without a body,” and the rhizomatic processes of cyberculture.

Issues discussed include:

- The status of subjectivity in posthumanism: fabricated, virtual memories and fractured identities.
- The human body and its interfaces with technology: cyborg implants, prostheses, replacement parts, and bio-tech hybridities.
- Post-apocalyptic visions of class, race, gender, and sexuality.
- The individual and her relation to the city: new modes of spatiality and habitation, new forms of community, new ways in which individuals circulate and are contained, as well as new forms of surveillance and policing.
- Acts of resistance: the politics of cyber-terrorism and other forms of subversion.

[4 credits]

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### **COLT 510    Experimental Course: “Japanese Horror Cinema”**

Steven Brown

Contemporary Japanese horror cinema has spawned so many imitators, in terms of subject matter, style, and cinematic technique, that J-horror has practically become a movement unto itself. During the course of our investigations, we will consider everything from vengeful ghost stories to serial killer thrillers, from found-footage horror to techno-horror.

Questions discussed include:

- What does J-horror owe to traditional folklore and forms of visual art?
- How is modernity problematized in J-horror? How are socioeconomic structures and

institutions depicted? How is the family represented? What other institutions appear? How does ideology enter into the horror film?

- What is the phenomenology of horror? What makes us afraid? How does horror elicit feelings of dread, suspense, terror, shock, and fear? If horror is a “guilty pleasure,” what is so pleasurable about it? What is the sociological function served by arousing such affective states? What is the status of the body in horror? How is the body fragmented, transformed, mutated, violated?
- How does the space in which horror occurs (e.g., a haunted house, hospital, warehouse, or desolate urban landscape) contribute to its visualization and narrativization?
- What sort of power relations exist between the victims of horror and its agents (monsters, ghosts, demons, and so forth)? How is their characterization marked in terms of gender, sexuality, and race?

[4 credits]

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## COLT 550 Comparative Studies in Cinema: “Film and Architecture”

Kenneth Calhoon

This seminar will concentrate on the role that architecture plays in determining filmic space as well as the syntax of cinematic narrative. Emphasis will be on films in which architectural topoi, such as the ruin, the palace, the resort, the garden, the hotel, the apartment building, even the cinema itself, serve as conspicuous structuring elements. Readings by Freud, Foucault, Vidler, Kracauer and others.

Films: Akira Kurosawa's *Rashomon*, Billy Wilder's *The Apartment*, Alfred Hitchcock's *North By Northwest*, Stanley Kubrick's *The Shining*, Peter Greenaway's *The Draftsman's Contract*, Matteo Garrone's *Gomorra*, Alain Resnais' *Last Year at Marienbad*, Alexandr Sukarov's *The Russian Ark*, Hideo Nakata's *Dark Water*, and Ming-liang Tsai's *Goodbye Dragon Inn*. [Fall] [4 credits]

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## COLT 562 Cultural Intersections: “Revolution and Exile: French Literature in the United States”

Gordon Sayre

This course is a study of French writers who travelled to and wrote about LOWINUS (the lands of what is now the United States) before and after the epochal revolutions of 1776-1793. Texts will be available in both French and English.

When the French colony of Louisiana was purchased by the United States during Thomas Jefferson's administration, it doubled the landmass of the country, and brought thousands of French-speaking residents along the Mississippi a new citizenship. But when *la Louisiane* had been founded a century earlier, the colony struggled to survive amidst Indian uprisings, insubordinate soldiers, criminal transportees and renegade slaves. In the earliest major work of French literature set in Louisiana, the *Histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* (1731), Prévost portrayed New Orleans as a miserable backwater where a disgraced call girl and her loyal lover could find a refuge for their forbidden love. We will also read the *Mémoire* of Lieutenant Dumont de Montigny, a French officer in Louisiana from 1719-1737 who lived in the world that Prévost conveyed to French readers in fiction. Prof. Sayre has edited this text and translated it into English.

Later in the 1700s, many of the leading thinkers of the French Enlightenment such as Diderot and Raynal saw the English American colonies, particularly Pennsylvania, as utopian spaces of equality, tolerance and opportunity. The French emigrant Crèvecoeur, who came to America to fight against the English and Anglo-Americans in the Seven Years War and subsequently settled in New York, elaborated this utopian vision but also showed its dystopian horrors during the American Revolution, when colonists turned against one another in war.

The French Revolution forced many aristocrats into exile, and a number of them fled to the United States, where they wrote about the democratic republic founded a decade earlier. For

Chateaubriand and others influenced by the Enlightenment ideal of Romantic Primitivism, the American Indians were the noble and rightful possessors of America who had been violently displaced by the vulgar Anglo-American revolutionaries. In his epic *Les Natchez* and the novellas *Atala* and *René* excerpted from it, Chateaubriand proposed an historical allegory of rebellion and dispossession connecting the French ancien régime to the Natchez nation, who had risen up and massacred French colonists in 1729. For his fiction he drew on the history by Dumont de Montigny. Other French exiles such as the Marquise de la Tour du Pin found the United States to be more welcoming. Her memoir includes her life on a dairy farm near Albany in the early 1790s. A gentlewoman farmer who had once been close to Marie Antoinette was now happy to churn her own butter. [4 credits]

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## **COLT 613 Translation Pedagogy**

Karen Emmerich

Disciplines across the university—including history, philosophy, anthropology, comparative literature, and even “national” literature departments—are constantly encountering the problem of translation, since key texts are often taught in translation, particularly at the undergraduate level. Yet few of us, from first-year undergraduates to senior professors, have been trained to discuss translated materials as translations. If each translation embodies a particular interpretation of an original, how does this affect our own work of interpretation as we engage critically with texts in translation? Can, or should, we perform close readings of translations as if they were “originals”? What is an “original,” anyhow? How is translation similar to and distinct from other forms of rewriting, such as edition-making, anthologization, and literary criticism? This course tackles such questions head-on, on the premise that a nuanced understanding of the problem of translation is essential for the responsible teaching of texts in translation.

The course will deploy both theoretical and practical approaches: we will study theories of translation, but will also work collaboratively on issues arising in the classroom. [Fall] [5 credits]

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## **COLT 540 Experimental Course: “Asian Horror”**

Steven T. Brown

Since the late 1990s, fans of Asian cinema have witnessed a renaissance of films in the horror genre. Directors such as Nakata Hideo, Kurosawa Kiyoshi, Miike Takashi, and Shimizu Takashi from Japan, Herman Yau, Fruit Chan, and the Pang Brothers from Hong Kong, Kim Ki-duk, Kim Dong-bin, Park Chan-wook, and Bong Joon-ho from South Korea, Kelvin Tong from Singapore, Songyos Sugmakanan from Thailand, and Yam Laranas from the Philippines have contributed in distinctive ways to the new Asian Horror that emerged in the late 90s and continues to enjoy critical and box-office success today. The fact that nearly a dozen Hollywood remakes of Asian horror films have been released in the past decade—including remakes of *The Ring*, *The Grudge*, *Dark Water*, *Pulse*, *One Missed Call*, *The Eye*, *A Tale of Two Sisters*, and *Shutter*—suggests that Asian Horror has finally received the recognition it deserves as a movement that may be as significant to global cinema as the French New Wave was in the late 1950s and early 60s. By investigating the styles, techniques, and conventions associated with Asian horror cinema, this seminar endeavors to help students become more critical viewers of the genre as opposed to merely passive consumers of popular culture. [Winter] [4 credits]

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## **COLT 510 Experimental Course: “Surrealist Cinema”**

Steven T. Brown

When one hears the term “Surrealist cinema,” most students of film history will automatically think of Luis Buñuel and Salvador Dalí’s quintessentially Surrealist film *Un chien andalou* (An Andalusian Dog). Despite its brevity—only sixteen minutes in length—*Un chien andalou* quickly became one of the most influential films to come out of Surrealism when it debuted in

Paris in 1929, sending a shockwave through the French avant-garde film movement.

Although it is tempting to restrict Surrealist cinema to the films made by members of the original Surrealist movement, including Buñuel, Dalí, Antonin Artaud, René Clair, Germaine Dulac, and Man Ray, Surrealist cinema is not reducible to a single style, genre, movement, or period but encompasses a wide variety of styles, genres, movements, and periods. As Maurice Blanchot argues in his essay "Tomorrow at Stake," which was written shortly after the death of Surrealism's founder André Breton, "One cannot speak of what was neither a system or a school, nor a movement of art or literature, but rather a pure practice of existence" whose potential has yet to be realized.

In this sense, although not a part of the original Surrealist group, directors such as Teshigahara Hiroshi (*Woman in the Dunes*, *Face of Another*)—who not only dabbled with Surrealist painting in the style of works by Dalí and Magritte but was also a founding member of the self-avowedly Japanese Surrealist group called the Century Club (Seiki no kai)—are also heir to that practice, just as surely as are contemporary directors such as Kenneth Anger, Alejandro Jodorowsky, Jan Švankmajer, Obayashi Nobuhiko, David Lynch, Peter Greenaway, Terry Gilliam, Michel Gondry, Kon Satoshi, Jean-Pierre Jeunet, Yuasa Masaaki, Spike Jonze, Charlie Kaufman, Darren Aronofsky, Miike Takashi, and Yamamura Kôji.

In this seminar, we will discuss a wide range of Surrealist live-action and animated films situated in relation to the transnational flows of international Surrealist art and literature. The Surrealist films and animations that we will study defy logic with unexpected juxtapositions, employ oneiric (dream-like) structures and scenarios, and raise existential and political questions about the status of identity, the body, and life. By confronting us with the strange, absurd, bizarre, and uncanny side of life, these films attempt to defamiliarize the everyday—making the everyday seem so strange that not only is its grip on the present loosened, but the organizational powers of modernity that repress, control, and objectify our bodies in constituting the everydayness of the status quo are also exposed. [Winter] [4 credits]

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## **COLT 540     Studies in Genre: "The Limits of Translation: Radical Poetics, Radical Translation"**

Karen Emmerich

This course invites students to think not just about what poems mean but also how they mean—and how that how complicates, challenges, obscures, enlivens, collides with, or overlaps with the task of translation. We will look at modes of poetic composition that challenge the limits of the translatable, as well as radical translation methods that expand our notion of what translation is. Can one translate a poem originally written in a made-up language? How does translation deal with the problem of textual instability, as with the variant-rich, visually idiosyncratic manuscripts of Emily Dickinson? Is erasure poetry a form of translation? How does homophonic translation change our understanding of translation's relationship to sound? Are visual translations translations, or simply works of art? At what point do traditional concepts of originality and derivation break down, and how can this breakdown assist our thinking about more "standard" notions of poetic composition and translation alike? These and many other questions will motivate our readings and discussions this term. [Winter] [4 credits]

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## **COLT 561     Studies in Contemporary Theory: "Literature and Photography"**

Martin Klebes

This course is devoted to examining texts at the intersection of letters and images. We will read a number of literary works in which photography plays a crucial role, by writers including André Breton, Italo Calvino, Thomas Bernhard, and W.G. Sebald. We will also study some classic essays on the theory of photography by Walter Benjamin, Susan Sontag, and Roland Barthes. Towards the end of the course the semiotic significance of the shift from analog to digital photography will also be considered. All readings will be in English. [Winter] [4 credits]



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## COLT 614 Graduate Studies in Comparative Literature: “Philology, Literature, Comparison: A Disciplinary Genealogy”

Michael Allan

Our class will focus on the emergence of Comparative Literature with attention both to local and global histories of the discipline. The first half of the course will combine essays on Comparative Literature with more general studies in philosophy, philology and culture, and the second half will be conducted as a workshop with each student focusing on the emergence of literary study in her particular field. We will be drawing primarily from Michel Foucault’s *The Order of Things*, Maurice Olender’s *The Languages of Paradise* and *The Princeton Sourcebook in Comparative Literature*. Our goal will be both to cultivate a reflexive historical method for the study of texts and to enrich our understanding of the formation of literary disciplines across regions and languages. Given the scope of the course and its emphasis on your particular research trajectory, I will be meeting with you individually throughout the term to assist you on your final research project. Our seminar will be collaborative and therefore demands your weekly participation in discussion, research and presentations. [Winter] [4 credits]

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## COLT 510 Experimental Course: “Listening to Cinema”

Steven T. Brown

In recent years, a new wave of film scholarship has emerged that seeks to correct the overemphasis on the visual aspects of narrative film by reclaiming the importance of sound. Following the lead set by earlier ground-breaking work on film sound by scholars such as Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion, Elisabeth Weis, and Rick Altman, a new generation of film scholars, including Jay Beck, William Whittington, Anahid Kassabian, and Andy Birtwistle, are asking important questions about the role of sound in film. The task set forth by such scholars is to attend to the sonic phenomena constituting sound cinema and the spectator's affective responses to the sound-image relations offered. In this seminar, we will analyze sound design with respect to two specific film genres—horror and science fiction—focusing on the specific sound strategies, technologies, and conventions that constitute the unique soundscapes associated with those genres. Films discussed include *Alien* (1979), *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012), *Cure* (1997), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Inception* (2010), *Psycho* (1960), *The Shining* (1980), *The Thing* (1982), *THX 1138* (1971), and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). [4 credits] In recent years, a new wave of film scholarship has emerged that seeks to correct the overemphasis on the visual aspects of narrative film by reclaiming the importance of sound. Following the lead set by earlier ground-breaking work on film sound by scholars such as Pierre Schaeffer, Michel Chion, Elisabeth Weis, and Rick Altman, a new generation of film scholars, including Jay Beck, William Whittington, Anahid Kassabian, and Andy Birtwistle, are asking important questions about the role of sound in film. The task set forth by such scholars is to attend to the sonic phenomena constituting sound cinema and the spectator's affective responses to the sound-image relations offered. In this seminar, we will analyze sound design with respect to two specific film genres—horror and science fiction—focusing on the specific sound strategies, technologies, and conventions that constitute the unique soundscapes associated with those genres. Films discussed include *Alien* (1979), *Berberian Sound Studio* (2012), *Cure* (1997), *The Exorcist* (1973), *Inception* (2010), *Psycho* (1960), *The Shining* (1980), *The Thing* (1982), *THX 1138* (1971), and *2001: A Space Odyssey* (1968). [Spring][4 credits]

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## COLT 560 Major Theorists: “Freud”

Kenneth Calhoon

This seminar will be devoted to a careful reading of a small number of Freud's key writings, including *The Interpretation of Dreams*, *The Psychopathology of Everyday Life*, *On Narcissism*, *Instincts and Their Vicissitudes*, *Beyond the Pleasure Principle* and *The Ego and the Id*\*. [Spring][4 credits]

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