

# LITERATURE



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## AT HAMPSHIRE COLLEGE

The study of literature at Hampshire can vary from a focus on the traditional American and European canon to a more inclusive or multicultural approach to understanding literature. Students study this field in relation to a variety of artistic modes and socio-political contexts. The historical circumstances that provide the setting to either the story or the author's life are often an important source of analysis. Students are encouraged to understand the historical impact of literature as well as the ways in which society affects literary trends. Courses may focus on specific authors, genres, geographical locations, social or artistic movements, or a single novel.

### Sample First-Year Course

#### Literature of Crime and Detection

In this class we will explore the appeal of the detective story. Why has the detection of crime become so fascinating for readers during the last 150 years? What do these stories reveal to us about the nature of narrative and plot, and about cultural anxieties and the possibilities of justice? We will focus on the detective as a reader (both of texts and of the world), as a social phenomenon, and as a literary construct. We will look at both "analytic" detective stories (Poe, Agatha Christie, Borges), and at ones featuring a "hard-boiled" detective (Hammett, Chandler, Chester Himes, Paco Ignacio Taibo II). We will read critical essays exploring formal and socio-cultural aspects of detective fiction, study detective stories from many parts of the world, and also see some films. We may also read works that use the detective story as the point of departure, such as Paul Auster's *City of Glass*.

### Student Project Titles

*A Language of Her Own: The Struggle for a Woman's Voice in Patriarchal Language in Virginia Woolf's The Waves and Carmen Martin Gaité's El cuarto de atrás*

*Chick Lit: Popular Fiction for Women*

*"The Problem is the Englishness": Bodily Rapture and Post-Colonial Fiction*

*Fear, Mourning, and the Dying Mother*

*Laughter and Solitude: Subject and Society in the Modern Historical Novel*

*A Study of Vladimir Nabokov's Pale Fire*

### Sample Courses

#### *At Hampshire*

American Literary Landscapes  
Ancient Epic  
The Bodies of Leo Tolstoy  
Cognitive Science Fiction  
Contemporary Ethnic Literature  
The English Bible  
Literature of Crime & Detection  
Literature, Opera, Film  
Myth, Belief & Reality in World Literature  
Ordering the World: The Organization of Knowledge from Gutenberg to Google  
The Power of the Novel  
Projecting Shakespeare  
Shakespearean Appropriations  
Shakespeare & Woolf  
Southern Writers: A Sense of Place  
Tales of the Empire: Russian Short Fiction from Pushkin to Nabokov 1830-1930  
U.S. Literature & Popular Culture  
U.S. Literature Between the Wars

#### *Through the Consortium*

American Identities (UMass)  
Beowulf (SC)  
Big Books (AC)  
Dangerous Reading (AC)  
Medieval Texts and Contexts (MHC)  
Novels, Plays, Poems (AC)  
Reading Contemporary Poetry (SC)  
Shakespeare (MHC)

(continued on reverse)

## Faculty Profiles

### L. Brown Kennedy, professor of literature

L. Brown Kennedy, broadly trained at Duke and Cornell in English literature, has special interests in sixteenth and seventeenth century literature and culture (Shakespeare, Elizabethan and Jacobean drama, Milton, Renaissance and Reformation cultural history, theology and historiography). Additional teaching and research interests include: the literature and culture of the Southern U.S., women's writing and the representation of gender, the representation of childhood and children's literature; and Irish literature and culture. She is currently engaged in a study of Virginia Woolf as a reader of Shakespeare.

### Jeffrey Wallen, professor of comparative literature

Jeffrey Wallen received an A.B. from Stanford University in comparative literature, an M.A. in English from Columbia University, and an M.A. in French and a Ph.D. in comparative literature from Johns Hopkins University. He has published widely on late nineteenth century British and French literature, on biography and literary portraiture, and on the recent debates about culture and education. His book, *Closed Encounters: Literary Politics and Public Culture*, was published by the University of Minnesota Press. He is director of Hampshire's semester program in Berlin, and his teaching interests include nineteenth and twentieth century comparative literature, critical theory, and cultural studies.

### Mary Russo, professor of literature and critical theory

Mary Russo holds a B.A. from the Honors College at Michigan State University, an M.A. in comparative literature from the University of Michigan and a Ph.D. in Romance Studies from Cornell University. She also studied at the University of Rome and the University of Bologna. She was the recipient of the first MacArthur Chair at Hampshire College. She has published widely in the fields of European culture, semiotics, film, cultural studies, and feminist studies, and is currently working on a study of the figure of Beatrice Cenci in nineteenth century literature and culture. She regularly offers courses on narrative theory, book history and culture, comparative literature (especially English, French, and Italian), cultural studies, and autobiography.

### Lise Sanders, assistant professor of English literature and cultural studies

Lise Sanders received her B.A. in literature from Hampshire College and her M.A. and Ph.D. in English language and literature from the University of Chicago. Her research and teaching interests include nineteenth and twentieth century British literature and culture, feminist theory, women's social history, film studies and early film history, and mass culture. Sanders is the author of *Consuming Fantasies: Labor, Leisure, and the London Shopgirl, 1880-1920* (Ohio State University Press, 2006). She is presently at work on two projects: a biography of a family of Victorian feminists, and a study of sex, class, and modernity in 1920s England.

### Polina Barskova, assistant professor of Russian literature

Polina Barskova holds a B.A. from St. Petersburg State University and an M.A. and Ph.D. from the University of California at Berkeley. Her scholarly publications include articles on Nabokov, Bakhtin brothers, early Soviet film, and aestheticization of the historical trauma. She has also authored six books of poetry in Russian. Barskova is currently working on a project entitled, "Petersburg Besieged: Culture of the Aesthetic Opposition."

## Facilities and Resources

Founded in 1998, the Center for the Book is a Hampshire program that fosters the study of technologies of the word from antiquity to the electronic age. Textual communication is explored as a technical, social, and aesthetic endeavor across the liberal-arts curriculum. Scholars, as well as practitioners of the book trade and book arts, are brought to Hampshire in order to reflect upon the material forms of the text, the history and future of reading and writing, the institutions and movements of textual culture, and freedom of expression.

The Hampshire College campus is also home to the Eric Carle Museum of Picture Book Art, the first full-scale museum devoted to national and international picture book art.

