**Breadth Field:** Novels from Minor Literatures

1. Carmine Abate, *La festa del ritorno*
2. Saul Bellow, *Herzog*
3. Elena Ferrante, *L’amica geniale*
4. Suheir Hammad, *Breaking Poems*
5. Jens Peter Jacobsen, *Niels Lyhne*
6. Antonio Muñoz Molina, *Sepharad*
7. Amelia Rosselli, *Locomotrix*

Each of these works has been constructed by a minority group within a major language, situating them within the scope of Deleuze and Guattari’s definition of minor literary traditions. Within this concentric framework of a smaller community’s identity within a larger group, however, the pressures exerted in both directions vary. They are often linguistic or cultural in nature, and the interweaving of multiple languages permeates these selections. Carmine Abate’s novel *La festa del ritorno* reflects this interplay in an Arbëresh (Italo-Albanian) community, while Suheir Hammad’s poetry in *Breaking Poems* expresses its role in her Arab-American experience and Amelia Rosselli’s poems in *Locomotrix* echo her multilingual Italian, Spanish, and French background. Socioeconomic differences also rise to the surface, as the “major” and “minor” groups in Elena Ferrante’s *L’amica geniale* are determined by factors like wealth and education. Spirituality presents another element driving minor literary perceptions, notably in Saul Bellow’s *Herzog* and Jens Peter Jacobsen’s *Niels Lyhne*. Memory dominates narrative voice in each of these works—particularly strongly in *Sepharad* by Antonio Muñoz Molina—and the intertwining of memory and narrative shifts between time periods offer important modes of narrowing this discussion. These texts each exemplify many of the interior and exterior negotiations that living across multiple identities can precipitate, and together they reveal representations of those negotiations across a variety of minor literary traditions.
For this topic, I will examine multiple competing and complementary theoretical approaches to translation. I will ground this discussion with traditional authoritative texts in the field, including two translations of Walter Benjamin’s canonical essay “The Task of the Translator” and Susan Bernofsky’s translation of Friedrich Schleiermacher’s “On the Different Methods of Translating.” I will further analyze Schleiermacher’s conception of “foreignizing” a translated text through the incorporation of contemporary commentaries on that theme by Bernofsky and David Bellos. These essays invoke many ways of thinking about the ideal balance in the relationship between translator, writer, and reader, which naturally leads into a discussion of ethics. To that end, I will explore views on the moral question inherent in translation through engagement with Lawrence Venuti’s book *The Scandals of Translation: Toward an Ethics of Difference* and Vladimir Nabokov’s spirited essay on translating *Onegin*. Jacques Derrida’s essay on “relevance” in translation is certainly relevant here, and I will look at how Venuti, who has translated the text, reflects on Derrida’s paradox of the simultaneous necessity and impossibility. Also a translator of Derrida, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak expands upon the cultural politics that complicate translation and the methods of employing them, questioning how the translator harnesses his or her agency. Emily Apter, too, challenges the dominant models of translation studies in her proposal of a new conception of comparative literary studies with translation at its core. Her novel *The Translation Zone* brings this dialogue full circle to modern debates and spurs an examination of the critical evolutionary developments in the study of translation.
association in order to liberate and record the uninhibited imagination of the subconscious. The surrealists were initially resistant to incorporate visual art into their movement due to beliefs that their artistic processes were incongruous in the spontaneous world of Surrealism. However, experimental painting by Max Ernst opened the door for the expansion of Surrealism into art forms that would become highly influential within the movement. In particular, this study will consider Surrealism's surprising imagery, experimental techniques, and disdain for convention as expressed across literature, painting, and film.
Breadth Topic: Depictions of Female Madness
- Ophelia in “Hamlet” by William Shakespeare; “Ophélie” by Arthur Rimbaud
- Lady Audley’s Secret by Mary Elizabeth Braddon
- “The Yellow Wallpaper” by Charlotte Perkins Gilman
- Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë
- “Dora” by Sigmund Freud; “Fraulein Elisabeth von R.”, “Fraulein Anna O.” from Studies on Hysteria by Josef Breuer and Sigmund Freud
- Invention de l’hystérie. Charcot et l'iconographie photographique de la Salpêtrière by Georges Didi-Huberman
- The Oval Lady,” ”The Debutante,” and "Down Below” by Leonora Carrington

In these collected works, depictions of “madwomen” are often used to explore the boundaries of sociopolitical roles and artistic subjectivity. This madness may be rooted in social or gender role transgression (Ophelia, Lady Audley’s Secret), depictions of the monstrous (Jane Eyre), and in narratives of incarceration and asylum (“The Yellow Wallpaper”, Carrington). This study will entail an analysis of the socio-psychological politics of madness and power in art and society with reference to studies in hysteria and psychoanalytic theory (Freud, Breuer) as well as iconographic representations of hysteria (Didi-Huberman). It will consider the figure of the madwoman in terms of social mobility and power as well as the interaction between the madwoman and the spatio-visual forces that determine the parameters of sanity and propriety in modern western culture.

Depth Topic: Surrealist Imagery and Narrative
- “Le Manifeste du Surréalisme”, “Le Surréalisme et la peinture” by André Breton
- Nadja by André Breton
- Collected Poems: “J’ai tant rêvé de toi”, “Non l’amour n’est pas mort” by Robert Desnos; “Union Libre” by Breton; “Chanson de sécheresse”, “Quatre à Quatre” by Benjamin Péret
- “La Coquille et le Clergyman” by Germaine Dulac and Antonin Artaud; “Un Chien Andalou” and “L’âge d’Or” by Luis Buñuel
- Laurent Jenny, "From Breton to Dali: The Adventures of Automatism," « Nouvelles considérations générales sur le mécanisme du phénomène paranoïaque du point de vue surréaliste » by Salvador Dali, from Minotaure

Surrealism was an extremely influential avant-garde movement of the 20th century that became an international intellectual, artistic, and political school of thought. Beginning in Paris in 1924 with the publication of André Breton’s “Le Manifeste du Surréalisme,” Surrealism originated as a literary movement involving experimentation with “écriture automatique” (“automatic writing”) and Freudian methods of free
Orals List

Breadth Topic

Expressing Cognition and Neurodiversity Through Literature

- *The Narrow Road to the Deep North*, Matsuo Basho
- *Le Horla* – Maupassant
- *Girl, Interrupted*, Susanna Kaysen
- *The Man Who Mistook His Wife for a Hat*, Oliver Sacks
- “Down Below”, “The Oval Lady” – Leonora Carrington
- *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night-Time*, Mark Haddon

What part of the mind is or should be engaged in literary production and appreciation? Which aspect of the self is at stake? From Basho’s ego-diminishing mindfulness practice haiku to Carrington’s surrealist symbolism to Plath and Sexton’s confessional self-revelation, literary form has been used to develop and reveal seemingly opposing aspects of the mind. These texts, however, share a common goal of revealing the mind both generally and specifically, showing the individual’s unique mode of making sense of the world. Thus literature here can also function to expose differences in cognition and reveal neurodiversity. How might such differential explorations of the mind affect the reader? What does a literary approach to neurodiversity allow that might differ from other forms? We will compare such self-representation to third person case studies (*The Man Who Mistook His Wife For A Hat*) as well as fictional first person narrative (*The Curious Incident, Le Horla*) to see how the rich diversity of cognitive understandings are served by and transform narrative structure.

Depth Topic

Distortions of the Human: Contemporary Representations of Animals in Society

- *Elizabeth Costello* – J.M. Coetzee
- *Zoo ou L’assasin Philanthrope*, Vercors
- *Life of Pi*, Yann Martel
- “Strays” – Mark Richard
- *Baraka*, Ron Fricke
- *Sweet Grass*, Lucien Taylor and Ilisa Barbash
- *Ashes and Snow*, Gregory Colbert

What distinguishes human from animal, and what happens when this boundary is blurred? *Life of Pi* belongs to a long tradition of blurring human and animal in literature, showing a longstanding sense of identification with fellow creatures. *Zoo* introduces this question differently, introducing *tropis*, creatures more genetically similar to humans than any other ape, to play out the implications of human vs. animal rights and their confusion. What is our responsibility towards animals in a world being reshaped by human society? What sort of communication or community is possible? *Sweet Grass* and *Baraka* hold up opposing modes of relating to the animals we eat, documenting mass slaughter in contrast to the deeply individualized life of isolated mountain herdsmen. *Ashes and Snow* point to an ideal of communion between animal and human, an alternative mode of communication beyond language that crosses the human-animal boundary. *Elizabeth Costello* fictionally explores the complexity of embracing such responsibility towards animals in a modern society that runs off of animal labor and often, suffering.
Depth Topic: African-American Literary History

Charles W. Chesnutt, *The Marrow of Tradition* (1901)  
---, *The Conjure Woman* (1899)  
Frederick Douglass, *The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845)  
---, *My Bondage and My Freedom* (1855)  
Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (1952)  
Olaudah Equiano, *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African Written by Himself* (1789)  
Richard Wright, *Native Son* (1940)

My depth topic list represents a skeletal outline of African American literary history, largely focused on the development of the novel within the African American tradition as well as autobiography. It includes Equiano’s classic *Interesting Narrative*, among the most significant texts of the Black Atlantic and one of the first to merge spiritual autobiography and anti-slavery polemics. Frederick Douglass’s first memoir, his *Narrative* of 1845, arguably remains the stylistic and political apogee of the antebellum slave narrative genre. His second autobiography—or, according to some critics, his first “real” autobiography—represents his editorial break with professional abolitionists, producing what can be understood as a rewriting of his *Narrative* and elaboration of life as a freeman beyond the abolitionist imprint. I have included two contrasting works by Charles Chesnutt, the greatest author of the “postbellum/pre-Harlem” period. His historical novel *The Marrow of Tradition*, a fictionalized account of the Wilmington Race Riot of 1898, is a classic example of American realism lauded and championed by William Dean Howells. *The Conjure Woman* is a brilliant collection of short stories, framed as plantation tales told by Uncle Julius, a former slave. Richard Wright’s *Native Son* and Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* are the two most significant African American literary texts of the mid-twentieth century. Wright’s novel is an extended exercise in class-conscious naturalism; Ellison’s novel shows the stylistic convergence of Euro-American modernism and jazz. Finally, Junot Diaz’s Pulitzer Prize-winning *Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* signals the overlapping of African American literature, Afro-Latino writing, and immigrant fiction couched in post-modern technique and literary play.
Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, “Conversations with Eckermann on Weltliteratur” (1827)
Deborah Jenson, *Beyond the Slave Narrative: Politics, Sex, and Manuscripts in the Haitian Revolution* (2011)
Vladimir Nabokov, *Pale Fire* (1962)

My breadth topic list covers recent developments in the field of “world literature,” a theoretical approach to comparative literary study arguably inaugurated by J.W. Goethe’s concept of *Weltliteratur* in the early nineteenth century. My interest in this particular framework was spurred by David Damrosch’s *What is World Literature?*, which loosely defines world literature as a group of works that are endowed with a global afterlife and that gain in translation. In his two controversial essays “Conjectures on World Literature” and More Conjectures,” a response to critics,” Franco Moretti outlines the methodological implications of this historical wave of globalization—among them, distant reading, the use of visualizations borrowed form social science (graphs, maps, tree) to understand literary history, and the comparative morphology of literary forms. Wai Chee Dimock’s *Through Other Continents* endeavors to read American literature as world literature, while Marc Shell and Werner Sollors’ *Multilingual Anthology of American Literature* demonstrates how American literature and Anglophone writing should not be conceived as isomorphic, that non-English writing has been a crucial component of American literary history since its inception. Deborah Jenson’s work on Haitian Revolutionary letters reveals the advantages of “hemispheric”—and thus, too, multilingual—approaches to American studies, thereby revealing how the American slave narrative resonates with testimonial sources in Francophone and Creole print traditions. Lastly, I include two works by Vladimir Nabokov as a case study in world literature. Nabokov’s practically unreadable “literal” translation of Pushkin’s “novel in verse” *Eugene Onegin* represents a self-styled, creolized prosody situated somewhere between English and Russian, but not definitively either. Nabokov’s extended commentary on Pushkin’s work and specifically on the author’s African ancestry reveals how Pushkin’s oeuvre demonstrated his lack of national belonging. Nabokov’s postmodern masterpiece *Pale Fire* is a parodic take on his own translation of *Eugene Onegin*, thereby reflecting and producing Pushkin’s global afterlife in the American context.
In his treatise on naturalism in the theatre, Emile Zola calls for a new generation of genius playwrights to write drama suitable to the spirit of the age. He imagines this new drama would deploy scientific, Darwinian approaches to realism, exploring ‘real’ man and his environment. Ibsen, Chekhov, and Schnitzler fulfill this role, laying the foundation for a school of realistic, psychological drama that, along with Stanislavski’s influential acting method, radically transformed theatrical values. The new theatre valorized the illusion of true and unembellished reality, of a transparent view into the sometimes quotidian lives of its characters, and was, at least according to Zola, an escape from the false lure of romanticism. In each of the plays selected here, however, haunting remnants of romanticism find their way into the play’s action through setting. Each play brings nature onstage in a way that immediately sabotages the stated project of Zola’s naturalism. Often, these natural elements hearken back to romantic ideas of the sublime, first laid out by Burke. I will explore the paradoxical function of nature in naturalistic theatre with a reading of these texts in relation to one another, using this stumbling block in Zola’s project to expose the unavoidable ideological biases at play in constructing the idea of a ‘transparent’ reality represented onstage.
Breadth

Authority and Authorial Play

Geoffrey Chaucer. *Canterbury Tales, House of Fame* (14th century)

The Medieval English Mystery Play Cycles (15th century, anonymous)

Michel de Montaigne. “Des Cannibales” (1580)

The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (1564-1616)


Italo Calvino. *If on a Winter’s Night a Traveler* (1979)


In each of these diverse texts, an idiosyncratic and commanding authorial voice creates an unconventional relationship between text, author, and reader. The act of reading such texts becomes a site of innovation in itself, and thus the reader experiences them as ‘scriptible,’ to use Barthes’ term from *S/Z*. The writers of these texts, often explicitly inserting themselves into the narrative, conspicuously perform the role of author (as distinct from the role of narrator). The deliberate exposure of the artifice of authorship serves a different purpose in each text, but each makes of this revealed artifice a device with which to express their specific goals, often creating implications about the relationship between art-making and authority along the way. What can we say about the special role of the author in these texts, in relation to Barthes’ (and Foucault’s) theoretical work on the author?

The juxtaposition of these texts reveals Chaucer’s surprisingly post-modern stance on the uncertain longevity of the author’s authority and the slipperiness of everyday discourse. This reading of *The House of Fame* is interesting alongside Shakespeare, one particularly monolithic author in the canon, and the paradoxically loose and inventive approaches that many directors have taken to producing his plays. In Montaigne’s imagined account of a journey to the New World, the overwrought performance of a certain set of genre markers quickly indicates for the reader the game being played. Montaigne inserts himself by exaggerating the artifice of his own activity, and then goes on to make a number of interesting remarks about the transparency of witness and communication. Comparing Montaigne’s witty manipulation of his reader to the work of Borges and Calvino, and perhaps most interestingly with the particular relationship to authority and deliberate artifice displayed by the Medieval Mystery Plays, will lend further material to our exploration of the production of meaning in instances of charismatic or overbearing authorial presence.
Orals List

**Breadth: Variations on the Bildungsroman**
Ndyanao Balisidya, *Shida*
Niki Caro, *Whale Rider*
Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Crime and Punishment*
Henry James, *What Maisie Knew*
James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
Kenzaburo Oe, *A Personal Matter*
Marcel Proust, “Combray” from *Swan’s Way* from *Remembrance of Things Past*

In my breadth list I explore the coming-of-age narrative across a number of cultural settings. Though not all of these texts adhere to the classical structure of the bildungsroman, each follows a young person as she attempts to make sense of her world and define her place within it. These texts are concerned with the perspective of the child, adolescent, or emerging adult, and with the special challenges that these times of life present. How do children and adolescents experience the adult world? What is important to them? What kinds of things do they notice? How do they respond to their growing awareness of sexuality? Independence from the control and influence of parental figures increases throughout the narratives of these texts, but at the same time, characters discover that they have a greater responsibility for their actions and for those people around them. Even those stories that take place over a very short period of time, such as *A Personal Matter* and *Crime and Punishment*, the characters become much more aware of themselves and their relationship to others.

**Depth: Literature of Transformation**
Horace, Odes 3.13 “Fons Bandusiae” and Odes 1.9 “Vides ut alta”
Franz Kafka, “Metamorphosis”
Heinrich von Kleist, “The Chilean Earthquake” and “St. Cecilia, or the Power of Music”
Thomas Mann, *Death in Venice*
Ovid, “Echo and Narcissus,” “Apollo and Marsius” and “Orpheus and Eurydice”
Rainer Maria Rilke, “Orpheo. Eurydice. Hermes” and *Sonnets to Orpheus* 2 and 9
W.B. Yeats, “Among School Children,” “Leda and the Swan” and “All Soul’s Night”

My depth list includes works within the European tradition that address the question of transformation in art. I understand these texts through the language and conceptual framework of Ovid’s *Metamorphosis*. The myths I would like to focus on, “Echo and Narcissus,” “Apollo and Marsius,” and “Orpheus and Eurydice” display the deep connection between a complete and irrevocable change of state and the experience of art. This connection and its many consequences appear throughout the texts in my list. In looking at them in relation to each other, I have become particularly interested in whether characters (and authors and readers) choose to allow the transformation to occur, or whether they resist, trying to experience the transformation without losing their sense of their independent selves. And for those who submit to the full transformation, the consequence is usually some kind of death. I find that poetry well represents this tension between submitting to the terrifying power of art and maintaining a critical distance. Reading Horace, Ovid, and Rilke, the distance of translation (whether my own or another’s) always divides me from the text. And even once I understand the content of the poem, the structure and meter simultaneously pulls me into an artistic experience and creates a frame that protects me from full immersion.
Orals List – Senior Year

**Depth:**

Black Writers Engaging with Race and Gender in the United States from the 1950s to the Present Day

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*
Toni Morrison, “Recitatif”
James Baldwin, *Go Tell It On The Mountain*
James Baldwin, *Notes of a Native Son*
Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*
Gwendolyn Brooks, “A Bronzeville Mother Loiters in Mississippi. Meanwhile, a Mississippi Mother Burns Bacon.” and “The Last Quatrain of the Ballad of Emmett Till”
Lenelle Moïse, “The Fuck You Now Manifesto” and “Madivinez”

Each of these texts, published between 1953 (*Go Tell It On The Mountain*) and 2007 (Moïse), addresses the intersection of race and gender in moments throughout United States history, from Morrison’s exploration of the trauma of slavery to Brooks’ meditation on the 1955 murder of Emmett Till to Moïse’s reflections on her experiences as a black lesbian in the 21st century. Moreover, these texts consider the dynamics of race and gender in a variety of contexts. *Beloved* and *Go Tell It On The Mountain* highlight motherhood and fatherhood, respectively, while *Lucy* and “Madivinez” investigate the complexities of the immigrant experience. Sexuality features prominently in a number of these texts: Baldwin explores masculinity and homosexuality, Kincaid focuses on her protagonist’s developing sexuality, and Moïse’s lesbian identity shapes the course of her poems. Finally, these writers choose a range of perspectives from which to explore these questions. Baldwin’s essays and novel, Kincaid’s novel, and Moïse’s poems are all explicitly or implicitly autobiographical, *Beloved* and “The Last Quatrain” both adopt the (third-person) viewpoint of a historical black female figure, and “Recitatif” and “A Bronzeville Mother” both take on the perspective of a white woman navigating racial tensions in the United States. Each of these works addresses the entanglement of race and gender in the United States unfolding in a particular time, context, and perspective.

**Breadth:**

Translation in Theory and Practice

Emily Apter, “‘Untranslatable’ Algeria: The Politics of Linguicide” and Marilyn Booth, “Translator v. Author”
Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/ La Frontera*
Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *Decolonizing the Mind* and Chinua Achebe, “The African Writer and the English Language”

Tom Stoppard, *The Invention of Love*

Brian Friel, *Translations*

Gaius Valerius Catullus, *Carmina* 5, 7, 8, 85, 86, and 64.132-201 (Latin text and my own translation)

This collection of works offers perspectives on the theory and practice of translation. Benjamin’s and Schleiermacher’s seminal essays provide an anchor in translation theory, to which Venuti responds from a contemporary perspective. Meanwhile, Apter and Booth offer two reflections on the politics of translating the Arabic language in theory and practice. Anzaldúa, Ngugi, and Achebe confront issues in the practice of translation, especially in a multilingual and postcolonial context. Anzaldúa peppers her English prose with Spanish words and provides facing-page translations of her own poems; Achebe and Ngugi present opposite answers to the question: *Should African writers write in English?* Stoppard’s and Friel’s plays both dramatize the tensions that the practice of translation engenders. Friel brings to life the English campaign to translate Irish place-names, while Stoppard addresses Victorian classicists’ reverence for Greek and Roman poetry in concert with qualms about homosexual practices. Finally, my own translation of six of Catullus’ Latin lyrics draws on many of the theoretical texts above to confront the quandaries I encountered in the practice of translation. Though many of these texts concern translation into English, they also represent the range of linguistic traditions I have studied in the Literature department: Apter and Booth write on Arabic, Anzaldúa on Spanish, and Stoppard on Latin (in addition to my own translations from Latin). The texts above present a range of approaches to the theory and practice of translation.