

Brandeis University

Humanities Small
Seminar Guide

Fall 2017

Dear Students,

Are you tired of getting lost in the crowd?

Small seminars in the humanities provide opportunities to:

- engage in deep, interactive inquiry through focused discussion;
- explore other cultures and others' lives;
- get to know faculty members on an individual level;
- meet students from a wide range of backgrounds.

The purpose of this guide is to draw your attention to fall 2017 courses in the small seminar format, courses you might not hear about otherwise.

Most of the courses listed here are conducted entirely in English, although the second section includes courses taught in several other languages.

If you have questions about a course, please contact either the instructor or the department offering it. We hope you find something that excites you.

Please share this booklet with friends!

Warm wishes for a great semester and a great year,

The Brandeis Humanities Faculty

Explore the Guide to learn more about the following small humanities seminars offered in fall 2017:

Courses Taught in English:

CLAS 165A 1: Roman Sex, Violence, and Decadence in Translation
COML 123A 1: Perfect Love?
COML/ENG 144A 1: Island Fictions
ECS 100A 1: European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Modernism
ENG 132B 1: Chaucer I
ENG 170A 1: The Globalization of Nollywood
NEJS 132B 1: Against the Apocalypse: Jewish Responses to the Holocaust
NEJS 150A 1: The Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany
NEJS 152A 1: Jerusalem: Holy and Contested
NEJS 155A 1: Maimonides: A Jewish Thinker in the Islamic World
NEJS 156B 1: A Philosophical Introduction to Judaism
NEJS 183B 1: Global Jewish Literature
NEJS 184B 1: Disability in Israeli Literature, Film, and the Arts
NEJS 195A 1: Muhammad: From Early Muslim Accounts to Modern Biographies
PHIL 114B 1: Topics in Ethical Theory: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship
PHIL 167A 1: Hegel: Self-Consciousness and Freedom in the Phenomenology of Spirit
RECS 148A 1: Russian Drama: Text and Performance
REL/SAS 152A 1: Introduction to Hinduism

Courses Taught in a Language Other than English:

FREN 150B 1: French Detective Novels: Major Questions for a Minor Genre?
FREN 151B 1: Francophone Identities in a Global World: An Introduction to Francophone Literature
GER 105A 1: Writing on the Wall: Literature, the Arts, and the Fall of the Wall
HISP 104B 1: Peoples, Ideas, and Language of the Hispanic World
HISP 198A 1: Experiential Research Seminar in Literary and Cultural Studies
ITAL 106A 1: Advanced Italian through Narrative, Film, and Other Media
ITAL 110A 1: Introduction to Italian Literature
NEJS 174A 1: Minorities and Others in Israeli Literature and Culture
RUS 106B 1 & 2: Advanced Russian Language through Film

CLAS 165A 1

Roman Sex, Violence, and Decadence in Translation

Ann Olga Koloski-Ostrow (aoko@brandeis.edu)

M,W 5:00 PM–6:20 PM (Block M)

This course examines a body of Roman literary works of the late first century BCE and the first two centuries CE (in English) from social, historical, psychological, and religious viewpoints. The principal theme of the course is the growing estrangement of Roman literature from classical ideas and its increasing involvement with exotic, private, and unconscious



forces of disruption and decay. The concept of “Roman decadence” is challenged, both by the Roman literary accomplishment itself and by its impact on the literature of subsequent periods.

No prerequisites. All ancient texts read in English. Writing intensive.

University requirements course fulfills: hum wi

ECS Courses in European Literature; Elective Course in Italian Studies

COML 123A 1

Perfect Love?

Michael Randall (randall@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

See how some of the greatest writers (Boccaccio, Hawthorne, Marguerite de Navarre), film makers (Wong Kar-wai and Di Sica), and composers (Monteverdi) have treated a problem that almost everyone knows too well: how the all too-common desire to achieve “perfect love” all too-often ends up on the rocks.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

ECS Comparative Literature Seminars; Elective Course in History of Ideas; Elective Course in Medieval & Renaissance Studies

COML/ENG 144A 1

Island Fictions

Jennifer Reed (jenniferreed@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

This course visits an archipelago of texts from drama and travel narrative to poetry and the novel. We will use fictions about islands to explore questions about literature—the enabling constraints of form, literary experimentation, and solitary and social reading.



Special one-time offering, fall 2017.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

ENG Post-1800 Course

ECS 100A 1

European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Modernism

Steve Dowden (dowden@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Explores the interrelationship of literature, music, painting, philosophy, and other arts in the era of high modernism. Works by Artaud, Baudelaire, Benjamin, Mann, Mahler, Schoenberg, Stravinsky, Kandinsky, Schiele, Beckett, Brecht, Adorno, Sartre, Heidegger, and others.



University requirements course fulfills: hum wi

Core Course in German Studies; Elective Course in History of Ideas;
Cross-Listed in Comparative Literature, English: Other Elective
Courses, French, and Music/Cultural Studies Track

ENG 132B 1 Chaucer I

William Flesch (flesch@brandeis.edu)
M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

In addition to reading Chaucer's major work *The Canterbury Tales* in Middle English, pays special attention to situating the *Tales* in relation to linguistic, literary, and social developments of the later Middle Ages. No previous knowledge of Middle English required.

University requirements course fulfills:
hum

ECS Courses in European Literature;
Medieval & Renaissance Studies
Colloquium; ENG Pre-1800 Course



ENG 170A 1

The Globalization of Nollywood

Emilie Diouf (dionf@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block P)

This course introduces students to Nigeria's film industry, one of the world's largest. It focuses on both the form and the content of Nollywood films. Examines how Nollywood films project local, national, and regional issues onto global screens.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

African and Afro-American Studies/Africa Specialization; African and Afro-American Studies/Arts Specialization; Elective Course in Film, Television & Interactive Media: Non-American Cinema; ENG Media/Film Course; ENG Multicultural Literature/World Anglophone

NEJS 132B 1

Against the Apocalypse: Jewish Responses to the Holocaust

Laura Jockusch (jockusch@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 11:00 AM–11:50 AM (Block D)

Provides an overview on the multifaceted Jewish responses to the Nazi destruction of European Jews in the years 1945-1961. Familiarizing students with Jews' historical, legal, cultural, political, religious and commemorative reactions to the Holocaust, it refutes the unwarranted claim of a postwar Jewish silence.

University requirements course fulfills: hum



NEJS 150A 1

The Jews in Weimar and Nazi Germany

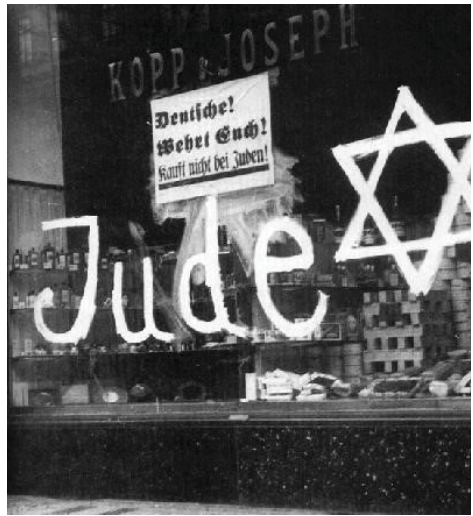
Laura Jockusch (jockusch@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 10:00 AM–10:50 AM (Block C)

Explores the history of the German Jewish community in the years 1918-1945, a period characterized by the dramatic change from the solid social, professional and cultural integration of the Jews into German society to their disfranchisement, discrimination, and ultimate destruction.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

Cross-Listed in History



NEJS 152A 1

Jerusalem: Holy and Contested

Walker Robins (wrobins@brandeis.edu)

T,F 12:30 PM–1:50 PM (Block J)

Traces the development from a small Jebusite stronghold to a modern metropolis, along the way exploring the many societies, cultures, and, of course, religions that have shaped and been shaped by the holy city.



Special one-time offering, fall 2017.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

Elective Course in History of Ideas; Elective Course in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies; Cross-Listed in History

NEJS 155A 1

Maimonides: A Jewish Thinker in the Islamic World

Jonathan Decter (decter@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

A study of the life, world, and thought of Moses Maimonides, the most significant Jewish intellectual of the Islamic world. This course traces his intellectual output in philosophy and Judaism, from its beginning in Islamic Spain to the mature works produced in Morocco and Egypt, in the context of the Arabic-Islamic milieu. Half of the course is dedicated to studying his *Guide of the Perplexed*, a Judeo-Arabic work that engages the demands of revealed religion and philosophical rationalism.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

Elective Course in History of Ideas



NEJS 156B 1

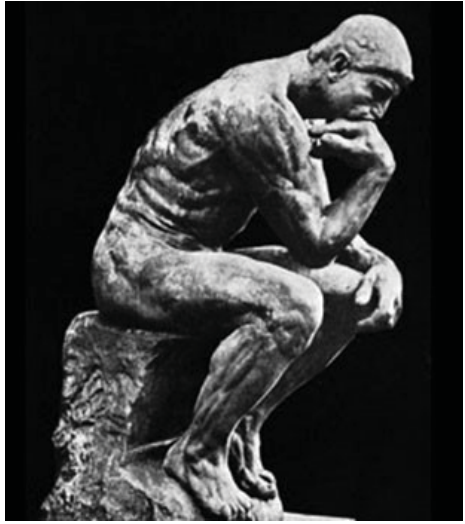
A Philosophical Introduction to Judaism

Jon Levisohn (levisohn@brandeis.edu)

T,F 9:30 AM–10:50 AM (Block G)

Explores selected topics that are central to Jewish thought and practice. An introduction to Judaism for those without background in Jewish texts and traditions, but also appropriate for those with background. Topics include covenant, ritual, idolatry, interpretation, gender, violence, chosenness.

University requirements course fulfills: hum



Elective Course in Religious Studies; Cross-Listed in Philosophy

NEJS 183B 1 Global Jewish Literature

Ellen Kellman (kellman@brandeis.edu)
M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

Introduces important works of modern Jewish literature, graphic fiction, and film. Taking a comparative approach, it addresses major themes in contemporary Jewish culture, interrogates the “Jewishness” of the works and considers issues of language, poetics, and culture significant to Jewish identity.

University requirements course fulfills: hum wi

IGS Elective in Media, Culture, and The Arts; Cross-Listed in Comparative Literature



NEJS 184B 1

Disability in Israeli Literature, Film, and the Arts

Ilana Szobel (szobel@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

Explores representations of disability within Hebrew and Israeli culture. By focusing on literature, film, dance, and visual art, it pursues various applications of physical, mental, and emotional disability experiences and theories to Zionist, Jewish-Israeli narratives and rhetoric.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

CAST Electives in Humanities; Elective Course in HSSP Focal Area B; Elective in Women's and Gender Studies; Cross-Listed in Theater Arts

NEJS 195A 1

Muhammad: From Early Muslim Accounts to Modern Biographies

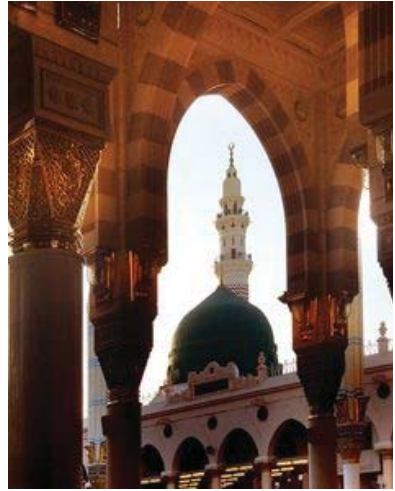
Suleyman Dost (dost@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Studies the life of Muhammad based upon the earliest biographical accounts and the academic analyses in both Islamic and non-Islamic sources, accompanied by an examination of his legacy in different aspects of Islam, such as Shi'ism and Sufism.

University requirements course
fulfills: hum

Elective Course in History of Ideas;
Elective IMES: Classical Period



PHIL 114B 1

Topics in Ethical Theory: The Rights and Responsibilities of Citizenship

Kate Moran (kmoran@brandeis.edu)

T,F 9:30 AM–10:50 AM (Block G)

This course is inspired by two observations. The first of these is the fact of pluralism in civil society. The second is the observation made by many philosophers that any claim to a right implies corresponding obligations on the part of others to protect or enforce that right. Together, these observations yield a series of questions about the fundamental rights of democratic citizenship and the obligations citizens have toward fellow citizens with whom they may disagree. In the course of this seminar, we will discuss philosophical notions of rights, the fact of reasonable pluralism, and civility in the context of democratic citizenship.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

ECS Related Electives; Elective Course in History of Ideas; Courses in Moral, Social, and Political Philosophy

PHIL 167A 1

Hegel: Self-Consciousness and Freedom in the Phenomenology of Spirit

Eugene Sheppard (sheppard@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

Offers a close reading of Hegel and pays special attention to his analyses of the changing patterns of understanding and self-understanding and the way in which he opens up these transformations for the reader to experience. In his modern paradigm, the Subject and the Object of thought necessarily affect one another's potential, essence, and fate. And through a rational comprehension of role of Spirit (Geist) in thought and the world, we can see how they become inextricably bound together. Indeed, for Hegel, the dialectic between subject and object provides the very ground for the self-aware and free subject to participate in modern life.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

Core Course in History of Ideas; ECS Related Electives; Courses in History of Philosophy; Cross-Listed in German Language and Literature

RECS 148A 1

Russian Drama: Text and Performance

David Povelstock (pstock@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

Open to all students. Conducted in English.

Lustful monks, spoiled brats, pretentious playwrights, jealous lovers, corrupt officials, revolutionary poseurs, everyday terrorists, pretenders to the throne, —and many more! Explore the rich history of Russian drama, including plays by Pushkin, Lermontov, Gogol, Ostrovsky, Mayakovsky—and of course Chekhov!—among many others. We will also look at the pioneering ideas of the great directors Konstantin Stanislavsky and Vsevolod Meyerhold.



Set design by Iurii Annenkov for the public reenactment of *The Storming of the Winter Palace* (1920)

University requirements course fulfills: hum

ECS Courses in European Literature; Cross-Listed in Music/History Track, Theater Arts

REL/SAS 152A 1

Introduction to Hinduism

Rupa Pillai (rpillai@brandeis.edu)

T,F 12:30 PM–1:50 PM (Block J)

Introduces Hindu practice and thought. Explores broadly the variety of forms, practices, and philosophies that have been developing from the time of the Vedas (ca. 1500 BCE) up to present day popular Hinduism practiced in both urban and rural India. Examines the relations between Hindu religion and its wider cultural,



social, and political contexts, relations between the Hindu majority of India and minority traditions, and questions of Hindu identity both in India and abroad.

University requirements course fulfills: hum nw

IGS Elective in Media, Culture, and The Arts; Elective Course in Religious Studies: Traditions; Global Studies: Emerging Powers

FREN 150B 1

French Detective Novels: Major Questions for a Minor Genre?

Michael Randall (randall@brandeis.edu)
M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Taught in French. Prerequisite: FREN 106b or the equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

This course will look at how French and Francophone detective novels take on big questions such as the origin of evil and how do you know what you know. Authors include Fred Vargas, Simenon, Driss Chraïbi, Moussa Konate.

University requirements
course fulfills: fl hum

IGS Elective in Media,
Culture, and The Arts; Elective Course in History of Ideas



FREN 151B 1

Francophone Identities in a Global World: An Introduction to Francophone Literature

Clémentine Fauré-Bellaïche (cfaure@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

Taught in French. Prerequisite: FREN 106b or the equivalent, or permission of the instructor.

Introduces Francophone literature and film, retracing, through the works of great contemporary Francophone writers and directors, the evolution of the Francophone world, from the colonial struggles to the transcultural and transnational trajectories of our global era.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum wi

Elective Course in History of Ideas

GER 105A 1

Writing on the Wall: Literature, the Arts, and the Fall of the Wall

Kathrin Seidl (kseidlgo@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 12:00 PM–12:50 PM (Block E)

Taught in German. Prerequisite: GER 30a or the equivalent.

The fall of the Berlin Wall in 1989 drastically changed Germany's geographical and political landscape. This course focuses on the role of literature, music and the arts in this historical process, and on changes in conceptual frameworks for the perception of borders, language, space and tradition.



Students expand their vocabulary, improve their oral/written use of idiomatic German, and hone reading strategies and analytical skills.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum wi

ECS Courses in European Literature

HISP 104B 1

Peoples, Ideas, and Language of the Hispanic World

Elena González Ros (elenag@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 10:00 AM–10:50 AM (Block C)

Taught in Spanish. Prerequisite: 30-level Hispanic Studies course or equivalent. Consent code required.

Participants will expand their skills in Spanish while deepening their understanding of Hispanic cultures. Focuses on aspects of the history and ideas that shape today's Spanish-speaking world, from its peninsular origins to the realities of Spanish-speakers in the Americas.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

HISP 198A 1

Experiential Research Seminar in Literary and Cultural Studies

Jerónimo Arellano (jarellan@brandeis.edu)

M 2:00 PM–4:50 PM (Block S1)

Taught in Spanish. Prerequisite: HISP 109b or HISP 110a or HISP 111b, or permission of the instructor.

A research seminar in which each student has the opportunity to become an “expert” in a Hispanic literary or cultural text/topic that captures her or his imagination,



inspired by a study abroad experience; an earlier class in Hispanic Studies; community-engaged learning; etc. Instruction in literary/cultural theory, researching a subject, and analytical skills necessary for developing a scholarly argument. Students present research in progress and write a research paper of significant length.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum wi

COML Lit Course in a Language Other than English; Elective Course in LALS if course content approved

ITAL 106A 1

Advanced Italian through Narrative, Film, and Other Media

Silvia Monteleone (sppm@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

Taught in Italian. Prerequisite: ITAL 30a, ITAL 105a, or the equivalent. Consent code required.

Topic for fall 2017: Storia E Storie D'Italia. This course aims to improve skills of reading and communication in Italian through a general overview of Italian history and the developing of an Italian identity from the end of 1800s to the present. In class we will read, analyze, and discuss short Italian texts, selected for their relevance and accessible language, in combination with material from visual arts and film.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

ECS Courses in European Literature

ITAL 110A 1

Introduction to Italian Literature

Paola Servino (servino@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Taught in Italian. Prerequisite: ITAL 105a or 106a or permission of the instructor.

Why Study Dante (and much more!)? Just for the Hell of it!

Surveys the masterpieces of Italian literature from Dante's journey to Goldoni's stage. Come explore intrigues of love and politics in Italian culture and literature, through dynamic analysis and discussions of primary texts. Conducted in Italian.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

ECS Courses in European Literature

NEJS 174A 1

Minorities and Others in Israeli Literature and Culture

Ilana Szobel (szobel@brandeis.edu)

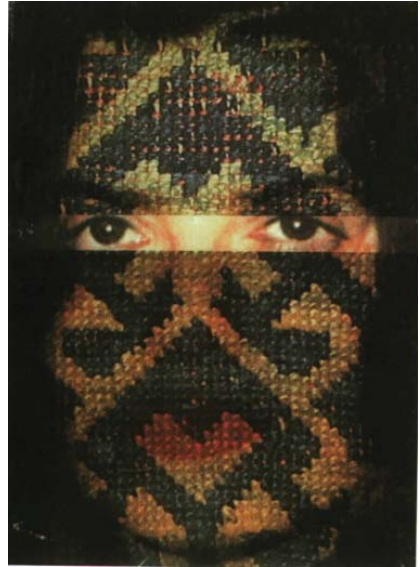
T,Th 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block P)

Taught in Hebrew.

An exploration of poetics and identity in modern Hebrew literature. By offering a feminist and psychoanalytic reading of various Hebrew texts, this seminar explores questions of personal and national identity, otherness, visibility, and marginality in the Israeli context.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

Elective Course in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies



RUS 106B 1 & 2

Advanced Russian Language through Film

Irina Dubinina (idubinin@brandeis.edu)

Section 1 (for heritage speakers): M,W 5:00 PM–6:20 PM (Block M)

Section 2 (for non-heritage speakers): M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: RUS 29b, RUS 40b or RUS 50b with a grade of C- or higher, or the equivalent as determined by placement examination.

For advanced and heritage students of Russian who wish to enhance their proficiency and accuracy in speaking, listening and writing, and learn about Russian/Soviet culture.

Course activities focus on discussions of Russian and Soviet societies as portrayed in Russian/Soviet films;

oral presentation assignments help students develop their public speaking skills.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum oc

