

Brandeis University

Humanities Small
Seminar Guide

Spring 2018

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 Spring 2018 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.

Course registration for Spring 2018 is open for graduate and undergraduate students daily in Sage between Wednesday, November 29, 2017 and Wednesday, January 3, 2018 from noon to 11:59 p.m. EDT. The general registration period begins January 4, 2018 and ends January 24, 2018.

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 joyous and peaceful holiday season and new year,

The Brandeis Humanities Faculty

Small humanities seminars offered in Spring 2018:

Courses Taught in English

ECS 100B 1: European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Making of European Modernity
ENG 134A 1: Going Public: Women Authors Before Austen
ENG 166B 1: Slanted Truths and Barbaric Yawps: American Poetry in the Age of Whitman and Dickinson
FA 157A 1: Georgia O'Keeffe: Life and Art
FA/RECS 118B 1: Drawing on Literature
FA/NEJS 183A 1: Breaking Boundaries in Contemporary Israeli Art
GECS 185B 1: Contemporary German Fiction
NEJS 128A 1: Introduction to Christianity
NEJS 132A 1: The Jews of Latin America
NEJS 139B 1: Christians and Israel
NEJS 170A 1: Studying Sacred Texts
NEJS 174B 1: Israeli Women Writers on War and Peace
NEJS 183B 1: Global Jewish Literature
NEJS 191A: Biblical Narratives in the Qur'an
PHIL 142B 1: Subjective Point of View
RECS 144B 1: Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: Confronting the Novel

Courses Taught in a Language Other than English

CHIN 29B 1: Pathways for Chinese Literacy
CHIN 105b 1: Advanced Conversation and Composition II
FREN 105A 1: France Today: French Conversation
FREN 154b 1: Regards vers la Chine
GER 181A 1: Franz Kafka's Erzählungen
HISP 108A 1: Spanish for Heritage Speakers
HISP 150A 1: Staging Early Modern Spain: Drama and Society
ITAL 105A 1: Italian Conversation and Composition
ITAL 120B 1: Modern Italian Literature: From Script to Screen
RUS 115B 1: Topics in Russian Culture and Society
RUS 121B 1: Russian-English Translation

ECS 100B 1

European Cultural Studies Proseminar: Making of European Modernity

Michael Randall (randall@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Investigates how the paradigm of what we know as modernity came into being. We will look at the works of writers and philosophers such as Descartes, Aquinas, Dante, Ockham, Petrarch, Ficino, Rabelais, and Montaigne. Artwork from the Middle Ages and the Renaissance will be used to understand better what “the modern” means.



University requirements course fulfills: hum, wi

Cross-Listed in Medieval and Renaissance Studies

ENG 134A 1

Going Public: Women Authors Before Austen

Jennifer Reed (jenniferreed@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block P)

The course looks at what was at stake for women to enter the public sphere in the eighteenth century – specifically by publishing. We'll engage with questions of what love and marriage, sex and consent, class and money, slavery and freedom, meant to these female authors, and how their society evaluated them. We'll ask what it means for women to join an economic marketplace in addition to a marriage marketplace and what it means for women to be public.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

ENG 166B 1

Slanted Truths and Barbaric Yawps: American Poetry in the Age of Whitman and Dickinson

John Burt (burt@brandeis.edu)

T, F 12:30 PM–1:50 PM (Block J)

The poetry that Walt Whitman and Emily Dickinson wrote in the years surrounding the American Civil War were unlike anything written in English before their time, and have had a profound influence, particularly in avant-garde circles, on poetry since their day. Although they are often seen as polar opposites -- discursive vs. terse, extraverted vs. introverted, biblically inflected free verse vs. roughened common measure, not to mention male-authored vs. female-authored -- they were equally challenging to the verse conventions of preceding generations, equally committed to novel and extreme experiences not often put into verse, and equally full of provocations for the future of poetry. Both poets stood in a complex relationship to Emerson, although both were more engaged with Emerson's essays than with his verse. To these I have also added Melville, like Hardy a poet better known as a novelist, and like Hardy a poet whose techniques are often felt to be roughly textured, even clunky. But also like Hardy, Melville wrote poetry of terrific intellectual depth. We will concentrate on his poems of the Civil War years, collected in his book *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War*, but we will also pay some attention to his neglected late epic *Clarel*. We will also pay some attention to what was closer to the poetic mainstream of the nineteenth century, the poetry of the Federal period (Adams and Barlow), the poetry of the "Nightingale" poets (like Lydia Sigourney), and of the "Fireside" poets (Longfellow, Whittier, Lowell), as well as to some outliers like Poe, Very, Cranch, and Tuckerman, and poets who look ahead to the poetry of the twentieth century (Chapman, Crane, and Stickney).

University requirements course fulfills: hum

FA 157A 1

Georgia O’Keeffe: Life and Art

Nancy Scott (scott@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

The curriculum explores the art of Georgia O’Keeffe, and her place in American culture and history, within the larger development of American modernism in New York and the Southwest. Other important painters of the early 20th century, from Marin, Hartley, Dove and Demuth to the



photographers Stieglitz, Strand and Steichen, paralleled and fueled her creative work. On-campus resources in Native American arts, along with museum visits, will enlarge our view of O’Keeffe’s world.

University requirements course fulfills: ca

Cross-listed in WGS

The students in this course will visit the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston to see O’Keeffe paintings and related work in photography on view in “Making Modern,” in the American Wing. Also we will travel to and study the special exhibition “Georgia O’Keeffe: Art Image Style” at the Peabody Essex Museum in Salem MA, on view this semester through April 1, 2018. Due to the small course size, can take grad students, and be adapted for advanced students. Students may be allowed to write a longer research paper to fulfill their seminar requirements.

FA/RECS 118B 1
Drawing on Literature

*Robin Feuer Miller (rfmiller@brandeis.edu & Susan
Lichtman(lichtman@brandeis.edu)*
M,W 11:00 AM–12:50 PM

Prerequisite: A studio art course taught at Brandeis. Studio fee: \$75 per semester.

An interdisciplinary team-taught course bringing together the practice of studio art and the study of literature. Students use Russian fiction and poetry (and some critical theory) as source material for the creation of visual images: drawings in various media, watercolors, prints, and photographs.



University requirements course fulfills: ca, hum

Cross-listed: Fine Arts and Russian and European Cultural Studies

FA/NEJS 183A 1

Breaking Boundaries in Contemporary Israeli Art

Gannit Ankori (gannit@brandeis.edu) & Ilana Szobel (szobel@brandeis.edu)

M, W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Explores how the Creative Arts reflect, challenge, and reconfigure various cleavages and barriers that characterize contemporary Israeli society. This course will focus on literary, visual and cinematic artworks, organized around thematic clusters and major theoretical issues.

University requirements
course fulfills: ca, hum

Cross-listed: Fine Arts and
Near Eastern and Judaic Studies



GECS 185 B 1 Contemporary German Fiction

Steve Dowden (dowden@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Explores the postmodernist rejection of the German tradition in fiction after World War II, a multifaceted confrontation with German history and organized amnesia that has continued into the present. Works by Koeppen, Grass, Johnson, Bernhard, Handke, Bachmann, Seghers, Treichel, Sebald, and others.

University requirements course
fulfills: hum



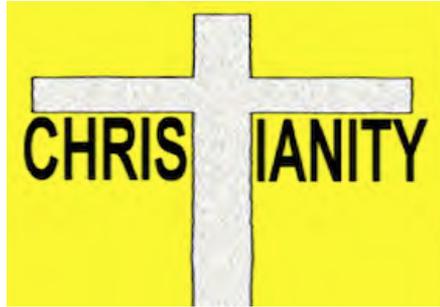
NEJS 128A 1

Introduction to Christianity

Bernadette Brooten (brooten@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

An introduction to Christian beliefs, liturgy, and history. Surveys the largest world religion: from Ethiopian to Korean Christianity, from black theology to the Christian right. Analyzes Christian debates about God, Christ, and human beings. Studies differences among Catholics, Protestants, and Orthodox.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

Cross-Listed in Religious Studies.

NEJS 132 A 1

The Jews of Latin America

Dalia Wassner (daliafw@brandeis.edu)

T,F 12:30 PM–1:50 PM (Block J)

Through historical analysis of literature, theater and art, this course will explore the multiple understandings of Jewishness that arose in Latin America from the colonial times to the present, as well as how the idea of Jewishness and Jewish inclusion in society was incorporated into larger national conversations of identity and belonging.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

NEJS 139B 1 Christians and Israel

Walker Robins (wrobins@brandeis.edu)

M,W 5:00 PM–6:20 PM (Block M)

Explores how different Christian groups--from American evangelicals to Orthodox Palestinians--have wrestled with both the idea and reality of a Jewish state in the Holy Land.

Special one-time offering in Spring 2018.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

NEJS 147B 1

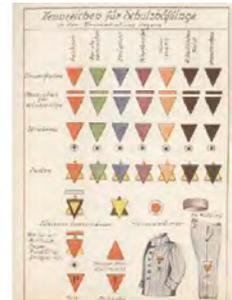
Racial Utopias: The Persecution of Minorities in Nazi Germany

Laura Jockusch (wrobins@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 10:00 AM–10:50 PM (Block C)

Seeking to build a society without those it branded “racial enemies,” Nazi Germany murdered over 10 million civilians and 3 million Soviet POWs. This course analyzes the ideological basis of Nazi racism, contextualizes it with the broader history of European racism, and discusses how the Nazi persecutions of different groups were interrelated yet also differed in character, timing, and scope.

University
requirements course
fulfills: hum



NEJS 170A 1

Studying Sacred Texts

Jon Levisohn (levisohn@brandeis.edu)

Th 2:00 PM–4:50 PM (Block S4)

What does it mean to study a sacred text? What are the problems with doing so? What is sacred about a sacred text? How is studying a



sacred text similar to and different from studying other texts? How do different religious traditions study texts differently?

University requirements course fulfills: hum

Cross-listed in Education, Religious Studies

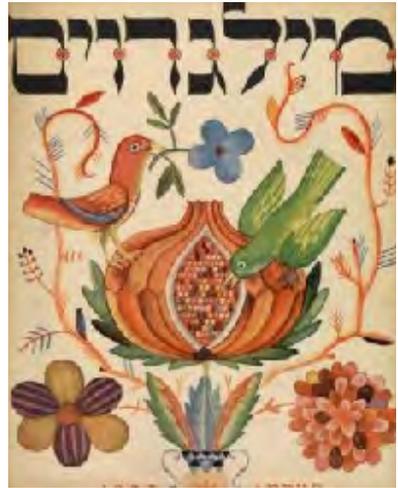
NEJS 183B 1 Global Jewish Literature

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



May not be taken for credit by students who took NEJS 171a in prior years.

NEJS 191A 1

Biblical Narratives in the Qur'an

Suleyman Dost (dost@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

The Qur'an retells many narratives of the Tanakh and the New Testament. Compares the Qur'anic renditions with those of the earlier scriptures, focusing on the unique features of the Qur'anic versions.



University requirements
course fulfills: hum

Cross-listed in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies.

PHIL 142B 1

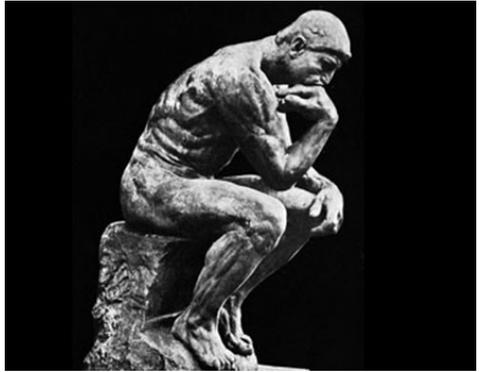
Subjective Point of View

Robert Greenberg (rgreenbe@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Prerequisite: PHIL 1a or PHIL 66b or one course numbered PHIL 35a through PHIL 38b.

Explores the relation between the variable and the constant in experience, a relation embraced by what we as subjects bring to our experience, our subjective point of view of the world. Addresses the question of how our experience, with its inherent subjectivity, variable and constant, can provide us with knowledge of reality.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

RECS 144B 1

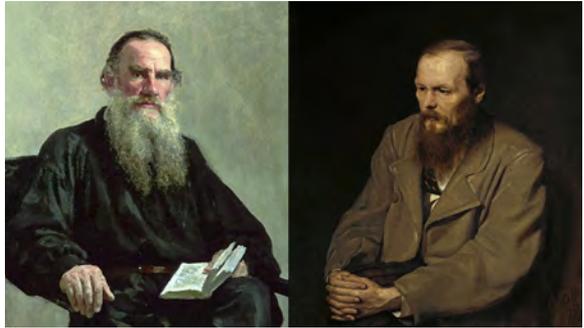
Tolstoy and Dostoevsky: Confronting the Novel

Robin Feuer Miller (rfmiller@brandeis.edu)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

Open to all students.
Conducted in English.

Where do Tolstoy and Dostoevsky fit in the theory and history of the novel? Students will engage in close readings of two of the greatest novels of all



time: *War and Peace* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. We will explore the genesis of each work, its cultural backdrop and critical responses.

University requirements course fulfills: hum

CHIN 29B 1 Pathways for Chinese Literacy

Jian Wei (randall@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

Taught in Mandarin.

For students who have significant bilingual background in Mandarin Chinese or a non-Mandarin dialect (e.g., Cantonese). Emphasizes reading and writing skills, but standard Mandarin pronunciation and grammatical structure are also stressed.

This course is designed for three groups of students:

1. You speak Chinese at home and you speak Chinese quite well.

However, your reading and writing skills are weak or you don't write Chinese at all; 2. You learned Chinese at high school for one year or more but you mainly learned basic Chinese conversations and your skills in reading and writing are very limited; 3. You stayed in a Chinese speaking region for one year or more and you speak Chinese well. However, you don't read and write Chinese. During the class, you will learn how to read and write Chinese with computer while consolidating your conversational Chinese. If you are not sure if this course will meet your needs, please contact the course instructor.



CHIN 105B 1

Advanced Conversation and Composition II

Xiwen Lu (xiwenlu@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 12:00 PM–12:50 PM (Block E)

Taught in Mandarin. Prerequisite: A grade of C- or higher in CHIN 105A or the equivalent.

Designed for advanced students who wish to enhance and improve their speaking proficiency and writing skills. Speaking skills will be developed through guided conversation, discussion of texts and films, and oral presentation. Exercises and essays will be used to improve students' writing skills.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum wi

FREN 105A 1

France Today: French Conversation

Gabriela Nenciu (gnenciu@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 11:00–11:50 (Block D)

Taught in French. Prerequisite: FREN 104B, or the equivalent.
Consent code required.

Improve your speaking skills while learning about and discussing socio-cultural issues that distinguish the French view of the world from that of Americans. Students will focus on expressing themselves better orally while continuing their work on reading, listening, and writing.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

FREN 154B 1

Regards vers la Chine

Martine Voiret (voiret@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

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

Examines how China has often been represented by French writers and artists as the Other in order to question their own society, artistic practices, and political order. We will also



examine if the new generation of francophone writers born in China offer a different vision of their country of origin. The course includes novels, poetry, movies, and paintings.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

Cross-listed with IGS

GER 181A 1

Franz Kafka's Erzählungen

Steve Dowden (dowden@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Taught in German. Prerequisite: GER 105a is recommended.

A detailed exploration of Kafka's works, life, and thought. Emphasis will be given to his place in the larger scheme of literary modernism.

University requirements course fulfills:
fl hum



HISP 108A 1 **Spanish for Heritage Speakers**

Lucía Reyes de Deu (lreyes@brandeis.edu)

M,W,Th 1:00 PM–1:50 PM (Block F)

Taught in Spanish. Consent code required.

Designed specifically for students who grew up speaking Spanish and who would like to enhance existing language skills while developing higher levels of academic proficiency.



Assignments are geared toward developing skills in reading, writing, and critical thinking about U.S. Latin@s and the Spanish-speaking world. Students may use this course to fulfill the foreign language requirement.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum wi

Elective Course in Latin American and Latino Studies

HISP 150A 1

Staging Early Modern Spain: Drama and Society

James Mandrell (mandrell@brandeis.edu)

T,Th 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block P)

Conducted in Spanish.

We will explore social class, gender, and violence in seventeenth-century Spanish dramas that deal with seduction, cross-dressing, revolution, and wife-murder. Authors to be studied include

Cervantes, Lope de Vega, Alarcón, Tirso de Molina, and Calderón. We also pay attention to the staging of these dramas, including the use of spaces on the Brandeis campus.



University requirements course fulfills: hum

Cross-listed with Theatre Arts

ITAL 105A 1

Italian Conversation and Composition

Silvia Monteleone (spmw@brandeis.edu)

M,W 5:00 PM –6:20 PM(Block M)

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

Bring your Italian to the next level! Learn how to express yourself more clearly and completely in Italian. Students will use films and TV movies, music and contemporary art to explore contemporary Italian culture and society. Siete pronti per questa nuova avventura?



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

This is an experiential learning course. The course's scheduling block has recently been changed to accommodate a larger number of students.

ITAL 120B 1

Modern Italian Literature: From Script to Screen

Paola Servino (*servino@brandeis.edu*)

M,W 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block K)

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

What compels directors to create a movie from a book? To bring to action a story, a character, an idea, or a specific context? This course will focus on Italian masterpiece literature from the twentieth-century to the present, including writers such as Sciascia, and Lampedusa, as well as contemporary writers, such as Baricco, Ammaniti, and Tamaro with emphasis on the theme of historical, individual, and familial identity within the context of socio-economic upheaval and transformative cultural events. Several films based on these works will be examined, with emphasis on an analysis of cinematic innovation.



University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

COML Lit Course in a Language Other than English; ECS Courses in European Literature

NEJS 174B 1

Israeli Women Writers on War and Peace

Ilana Szobel (szobel@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Taught in Hebrew.

An exploration of nationalism and gender in Modern Hebrew literature. By discussing various Hebrew texts and Israeli works of art and film, this course explores women's relationship to Zionism, war, peace, the state, politics, and processes of cultural production.

University requirements course fulfills:
fl hum



RUS 115B 1

Topics in Russian Culture and Society

Irina Dubinina (idubinin@brandeis.edu)

M,W 3:30 PM–4:50 PM (Block L)

Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: Advanced Russian language skills.

For heritage and advanced students of Russian who wish to enhance their proficiency and accuracy in speaking, reading and writing.

Introduces students to issues central to Russian folklore. Through an analysis of chronicles, icons, epic tales, and folktales, discussions will

explore the roots of Russian cultural values and beliefs.

Students will examine structures and archetypes in folktales and magic tales.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum



RUS 121B 1

Russian-English Translation

David Powelstock ([pstock@brandeis.edu](mailto:dstock@brandeis.edu))

T,Th 2:00 PM–3:20 PM (Block N)

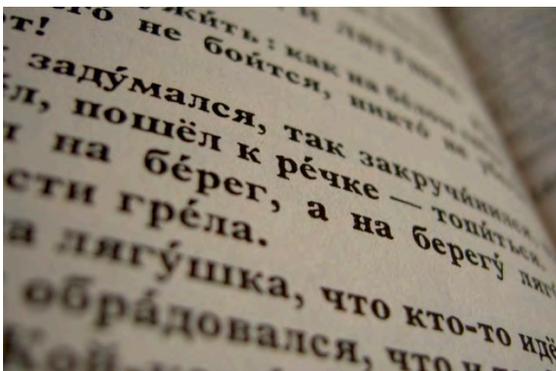
Taught in Russian. Prerequisite: RUS 40b or demonstrated equivalent proficiency.

Students will acquire practical skills for dealing with the particular challenges of Russian-English translation and strategies for dealing with them through translation of a wide variety of sample

texts and the pursuit of individualized projects using texts chosen by the students themselves. Students will also improve their reading comprehension; vocabulary; understanding of advanced Russian grammar topics; and awareness of cultural differences necessary for translating effectively.

University requirements course fulfills: fl hum

Students may take RUS 121B concurrently with RUS 40B with the permission of the instructor.



Humanities at Brandeis
<http://humanities.brandeis.edu>