Devinette (dialectale alsacienne): « Il tombe des p’tits couteaux, tous les brochets sont des truites ».*

Everybody speaks a language and yet we don’t all speak the same way. This class explores the nature of language and its basic functioning with regards to the sounds, words, grammar rules, meaning, and sociolinguistic variation. The study of phonetics describes how sounds are articulated and can help develop a more native-like pronunciation. Phonology puts single sounds in relation to others and describes their dynamic interaction as it is manifested in “liaison” or “elision” for example. Morphology looks at the structure and formation of words that combine in multiple ways to sentences following syntactic rules. How it is possible that we can make sense of linguistic signs is another aspect of language and semantics might provide some of the answers. And lastly, how come we all speak in different ways? This is a frequently studied question in our time and sociolinguistic variation can shed some light on it.

This class is open to undergraduates and graduate students and will be conducted in French.

*Traduction : « Il tombe des petites gouttes d’eau, tous les projets sont détruits ».
This course offers an overview of the innovations and adventures of twentieth- and twenty-first century French theatre. Situated at the intersection of literature and performance, the theatre offers a unique perspective on the social and artistic ferment of a century – and a culture – constantly reinventing itself. From absurdist comedies to postcolonial tragedies to existential dramas, our readings will follow the artistic, social, and political transformations of the French-speaking world as they were played out before the very people who were actors in this dramatic period in world history: authors may include Ionesco, Beckett, Césaire, Sartre, Duras, Genet, Sarraute, Vinaver, Koltès and Réza. And because theatre is both an oral and a written form, out-loud reading, as well as considerations of staging and performance, will be essential to our in-class discussions. While all students will be required to write at least one short paper, performance is strongly encouraged for the final project. Course conducted in French.
The Enlightenment conceptualization of the person as a performance of social signifiers stands as one of its most important contributions to modernity. Ancien Régime social ideology held comportment as a transparent indicator of social station, but the blurring of formerly impermeable categories of nobility and roture brought on by the decline of feudalism called this assumption into question. Eighteenth-century authors appropriated tropes of courtly behavior and theatrical acting to propose a new conception of the individual as a self-conscious construction, freed from the strictures of caste and family. This course will examine the genealogy of this performative idea of the subject in the fiction and philosophy of Prévost, Crêbillon, Marivaux, Diderot, Rousseau, Laclos, and others. Students will be responsible for short weekly responses to the reading, one oral presentation in class, and an original research paper for the end of the semester. Course conducted in French.
Qu’est-ce qu’un philosophe? C’est quelqu’un qui connaît une tradition vieille de vingt-sept siècles et la repense. C’est quelqu’un qui pèse ses mots, d’une manière différente du poète ou du romancier. C’est enfin quelqu’un qui, à partir de l’héritage de la pensée, avance des propositions inédites. Sur tous ces plans, Édouard Glissant est un philosophe (mais pas seulement) au plein sens du terme ; la densité du lexique philosophique de ses essais suffit à le démontrer.

Chose curieuse, seuls quelques-uns de ses commentateurs s’en sont aperçu, alors que cette dimension philosophique est essentielle à la compréhension de son œuvre, tous genres confondus, romans, essais, théâtre, poésie.

Il faut donc placer la réflexion qu’il a inlassablement et obstinément poursuivie en regard de toute la philosophie. Apparaît alors un « autre » Glissant, présent dès les commencements de l’œuvre, et dont on mesure tout ensemble la profonde connaissance qu’il avait de la tradition philosophique. et l’audace avec laquelle il la brusque pour en arracher des propositions véritablement inouïes : Tout-Monde, Relation, créolisation. Dès lors, la cohérence et la clarté du parcours de la pensée s’impose, contredisant le stéréotype d’une œuvre faussement réputée « obscure » ou « difficile ».

Tout comme l’œuvre littéraire et poétique de Glissant dessine un au-delà de la littérature, les essais augurent d’un temps et d’une géographie inédits de la philosophie, où une ontique qui fusionne les étants et les notions repense et déplace la métaphysique et l’ontologie. Cet inouï fait de Glissant un météore, surgit de l’Ailleurs et de l’Autre de tout ce qui est connu, de cet espace cosmique qu’il a nommé l’Autre de la pensée.

Dès lors, Glissant doit être lu non pas seulement comme un très grand écrivain, mais comme celui qui aura renouvelé de fond en comble, à l’orée du XXIe siècle, les très anciennes questions de la philosophie, en revenant à sa figure première, que pratiquèrent Héraclite et Parménide et que bannit Platon : la poésie.
Unity (Tawhid)—God’s absolute oneness—is the fundamental concept of Islam. Questions concerning the grounding of difference in oneness (unity-in-diversity) are at the heart of the Islamic intellectual tradition. This course will consider unity and diversity (religious, sectarian, moral, ethnic, gender, etc.) through reading a variety of important classical and canonical Islamic texts. In addition to the Quran and Traditions, genres and authors will include rationalist philosophy (Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes), Sufi writings (the great Persian poet Rumi and the Greatest Master Ibn Arabi), philosophical fiction (Ibn Tufayl), theology (including the two classical thinkers who have massively influenced modern Islamic thought—Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya), encyclopedic knowledge (the Brethren of Purity), legal theory, historiography (Ibn Khaldun), etc.

All readings will be in English
Comparative Literature Courses Fall 2015

CPLT 7020 / M 4.30-7.30 pm  History of Literary Theory from the Late Nineteenth Century to the Present  Adelaide Russo  (russoa@ku.edu)
This course addresses the evolution of literary theory from 1830 to the present. Topics discussed include phenomenology, structuralism, post-structuralism, linguistics and pragmatics, anthropology, psychoanalysis, gender and cultural studies as approaches to literary theory. Students will examine a broad spectrum of critical texts, and will be required to confront their theoretical readings with practical analysis of various literary genres. Required Text: Leitch, Cam, Pink. Johnson, McGowan, Williams. The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism (New York: Norton, 2nd edition). (RECOMMENDED FOR CPLT 2030)

CPLT 7120/PHIL / Tu-Th 1.30-2.50  Philosophy of the Event  François Raffoul  raffoul@kunig.edu
The course will develop a philosophy of the event based on readings in contemporary French and German philosophy. Traditionally, the metaphysics of causality, subjectivity and reason have framed or enclosed the event. From discussions of Hannah Arendt's notion that existence happens outside of thought, and of Nietzsche's claims that the deed has no doing and that the event evades causality, we will explore the post-metaphysical senses of the event, its very eventfulness—event as innocence of becoming, as excess (to reason and subjectivity), as impersonal happening, as groundlessness, as the very advent of the world, as the interruption of otherness, ultimately as the coming into presence of being. Authors include: Kunt, Arendt, Nietzsche, Sartre, Heidegger, Derrida, Levinas, Marion, Deleuze and Badiou.

CPLT 7130 / THTR 7920 / Tu-Th 10.30-12 pm  Drama of the African Diaspora  Femi Euba  (euba@kunig.edu)
This course addresses a study of the dramatic and theatrical expressions of the black cultures of the New World (North and South America, and the Caribbean), identifying, where possible, comparable connections with African counterparts. Works include those by August Wilson, Suzan-Lori Parks, Aime Cesaire, Abdias do Nascimento, and Derek Walcott.

CPLT 7140 / W 4.30-7.30  Unity and Diversity in the Classical Islamic Tradition  Greg Stone  stoneg@kunig.edu
Unity (Tawhid)—God’s absolute oneness—is the fundamental concept of Islam. Questions concerning the grounding of difference in oneness (unity-in-diversity) are at the heart of the Islamic intellectual tradition. This course will consider unity and diversity (religious, sectarian, moral, ethnic, gender, etc.) through reading a variety of important classical and canonical Islamic texts. In addition to the Qur'an and Traditions, genres and authors will include rationalist philosophy (Al-Farabi, Avicenna, Averroes), Sufi writings (the great Persian poet Rumi and the Greatest Master Ibn Arabi), philosophical fiction (Ibn Iqbal), theology (including the two classical thinkers who have massively influenced modern Islamic thought—Al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya), encyclopedic knowledge (the Brethren of Purity), legal theory, historiography (Ibn Khaldun), etc.

CPLT 8900 / TBA  Teaching World Literature  Adelaide Russo  (russoa@kunig.edu)
Students will audit the undergraduate section of World Literature and meet to discuss theoretical and practical issues related to Teaching World Literature to Undergraduates: Readings Teaching World Literature: World Literature: A Reader.

CPLT 2101 / ENGL / M-W-F 9.30-10.20  Introduction to World Literature  Pengyi Huang  phuang2@ku.edu
CPLT 2202 / ENGL / Tu-Th 1.30-2.50  Modern World Literature  Jingquan Liu  liujq@ku.edu