

The Foreign Languages Newsletter

Clark University · Worcester, Massachusetts

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FOREIGN FILMS AT LOCAL CINEMAS

One need not trek to Boston or Cambridge to see a variety of current foreign films. Two Worcester cinemas—The Bijou and Cinema 320—regularly feature films from abroad.

Currently playing at the Bijou, located in the Fashion Outlets (Worcester Center, which students can get to by sharing a taxi) is *Le Divorce*, a Franco-American production from the team of James Ivory and Ismail Merchant. With dialogues in English and French, the film is a witty, gently ironic account of the cultural codes, attitudes, practices, and myths that so often bewilder the French and Americans when they encounter each other (the title itself has extended punning resonances). Although Merchant and Ivory forsake their usual 19th century “white linen” period for a contemporary Parisian setting, the film’s plot is a subtle wink at Henry James’ *The American*, his account of American innocence colliding with aristocratic French *savoir-faire*.

Among the film’s cross-cultural pleasures is the use of a Hermes handbag named after an American actress as a plot device, and an etiquette lesson in how the French use cheese to deflect the introduction of an unpleasant topic at the dinner table.

Among an excellent international cast, special mention should be made of Glenn Close as an expatriate American novelist and Leslie Caron as the dowager of the film’s version of James’ Belgarde family. Watch also for the best art auction sequence in film since Hitchcock’s *North By Northwest*.

—jlt

NEW COURSE OFFERING

French 127: *Media Workshop in French*.

Prof. M. Spingler

This course offers intensive practice in spoken and written French through the study of print and visual news media. Based on their own exploration of current news in francophone newspapers and television, students will prepare their own newsletters or television broadcasts. In-class activity will involve the preparation, rehearsal and delivery of radio or television news items, and informal, conversational “editorial board” meetings where students discuss the merits and interest of particular stories offered by their classmates and decide which items should be developed for inclusion in a particular newspaper issue or broadcast. Students will be expected to research current news in such papers as *Le Monde*, and *Libération* (available on the web), and such newscasts as “le Journal de France 2” (available at Clark through Scola). Given in French.

The prerequisite for the course will be French 106 or permission. However, students at more advanced levels may also take this course for credit.

French 127 will use an activity-centered approach to encourage the use of written and spoken French. The primary activity will be journalism in written (newspapers), oral (radio newscasts) and visual (television newscasts) media. Other activities may include the making of short documentary video films, and/or interviews with francophone students or faculty about issues and topics of particular moment.

RARELY TAUGHT COURSES

French / Comparative Literature 240: *Art of the City: Paris in Art & Literature*. Prof. M. Spingler

This course explores the changing urban consciousness of 19th century France as an essential component of Modernism by examining problems of presenting the city through urban planning

(architecture and urban landscape), through the visual representation of Paris by impressionist painters (Caillebotte, Degas, and Manet), and through the literary representation of Paris in Charles Baudelaire's prose and poetry. The course is given in English.

German /Comparative Literature 116: *Hesse, Kafka, Mann.* Prof.W. Schatzberg

This course will examine selected works by Hermann Hesse (1877-1962), Franz Kafka (1883-1924) and Thomas Mann (1875-1955). These three German language writers began their literary careers at the turn of the century and are representatives of modernism in literature. Their works will be explored within the modernist literary tradition and as part of the broader cultural framework of modernity. The course is given in English.

FACULTY NOTES

Professor of Spanish CAROL D'LUGO's article, "Una nueva ola de periodismo en la novela mexicana: el caso de *Los herederos del hambre* de Jesús Magdaleno Cañavera," appears in the Fall 2003 edition of *Revista de Crítica Literaria Latinoamericana*. Professor D'Lugo's current work studies the treatment of the Zapatista uprising of 1994 in Mexico's latest fiction.

CONSTANCE MONTROSS, instructor of Spanish and director of LARC, attended the meeting of the New England Regional Association of Language Laboratory Directors at Smith College on October 10th. The topic was "Shaking the Money Tree: Successful Grant-Writing Strategies for Language Technology Professionals".

Professor of Spanish MARVIN D'LUGO's essay "Authorship, Globalization and the New Identity of Latin American Cinema," appears in the recently published volume *Rethinking Third Cinema*, edited by Anthony Guneratne and Wimal Dissanayake and published by Routledge Press.

Prof. M. D'Lugo has also published a review essay of Paul Julian Smith's *The Moderns: Time, Space, and Subjectivity in Contemporary Spanish Culture* (Oxford University Press, 2000) in the *Bryn Mawr Review of Comparative Literature*, Volume 4, No. 1 (Summer 2003). Smith argues that the apparent embrace of technology and consumer culture in post-Franco Spain is countered by the resistance of writers and other artists to "the spirit of modernity." The *Bryn Mawr Review* is an on-line journal; it may be accessed at: <http://www.brynmawr.edu/bmrcl>.

This semester, Lecturer in Hebrew TZILLA BARONE plans to continue her video-conferencing meetings with Haifa University, once they resume their school year. She has also invited Dr. Shiri Perlman-Avni for a lecture on November 17 here. For details contact Ms. Barone.

Ms. Barone is also working on translations of Holocaust Survivors Interviews recorded in Israel, Ukraine and here in the United States. The interviews will be published in book form in three languages (English, Hebrew and Russian). The publication of the book will be marked by a celebration of some of the survivors.

NEWSLETTER ON LINE

The *Foreign Languages Newsletter* is now available on line at the Clark website. Special thanks to the Department's secretary Zinta Moskalew for her patient dedication to this task.

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGES NEWSLETTER is published by the Department of Foreign Languages and Literatures, Estabrook Hall 301, Clark University, Worcester, MA 01610. Please send news items and announcements of coming events to Newsletter Editor, care of the Department, or call us at (508) 793-7342, 793-7234.

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