

Comparative Literature

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Web: humanities.uchicago.edu/depts/complit/undergrad_program.html

The major in Comparative Literature leads to a BA degree. This program is designed to attract students who wish to pursue an interdisciplinary plan of course work focused on the study of literature as written in various languages and in various parts of the world.

Such a student might come to the University with a strong background in languages other than English and want to work in two or more literatures (one of which can be English). Another student might have a strong interest in literary study and wish to address general, generic, and/or transnational questions that go beyond the boundaries of national literature offered by English and other literature departments. Or, a student might wish to pursue an in-depth study of the interrelationship of literature and culture, as well as issues that transcend the traditional demarcations of national literary history and area studies.

These descriptions of academic interest are not mutually exclusive. Each student will design a plan of course work that will suit his or her individual goals and that will take advantage of the rich offerings of this university.

Program Requirements

The aim of the following guidelines is to help students develop a balanced and coherent plan of study. The Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies in Comparative Literature is available to discuss these guidelines with students who are interested in comparative literature.

- (1) In addition to the thirteen courses counted toward the major, students must complete a second-year sequence in a language other than English or demonstrate language ability of an equivalent skill through accreditation. Students should have completed this requirement, or be well on their way to its completion, by the time they apply to the program, typically the end of their second year. See Participation in the Program below for further details.
- (2) Six courses in a primary field, or in closely integrated subject areas in more than one field, are required.
- (3) Four courses in a secondary field, or in closely integrated subject areas in more than one field, are required.

(4) Two courses that emphasize critical and intellectual methods in comparative literature are required, one of which must be an introduction to the study of comparative literature. See, for example, CMLT 20801, 24501, 24901, 27000, and 28100 in Courses section.

(5) Students who are majoring in Comparative Literature are required to complete a BA project. The project will be supervised by a faculty member of the student's choice, with that faculty member's consent and the approval of the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies; that faculty member may be, but need not be, on the faculty of Comparative Literature. A graduate student in Comparative Literature will serve as preceptor for all BA projects through the BA workshop, moderating discussions, working with students on the mechanics of writing, and providing tutorial assistance. For details, see the following information on the BA workshop and the BA paper.

(6) As part of the process of writing the BA paper, fourth-year students are required to register for the BA workshop (CMLT 29801) and attend its meetings. The workshop begins in Autumn Quarter with readings and discussion of themes and methods in Comparative Literature. It continues through the middle of the Spring Quarter with workshops in which students provide written and oral feedback on each other's work in progress toward the BA project. While the BA workshop meets in all three quarters, it counts as a one-quarter course credit. Students may register for the course in any of the three quarters of their fourth year. A grade for the course will be assigned in the Spring Quarter based partly on participation in the workshop and partly on the quality of the BA paper.

Summary of Requirements

6	primary field courses
4	secondary field courses
2	critical/intellectual methods courses
<u>1</u>	BA project and workshop (CMLT 29801)
13	

The department encourages students to pursue further language study by taking courses in a second or third language. NOTE: Those language courses will be approved for use in the major only if they are at an intermediate or advanced level; elementary-level courses cannot be counted toward the total number of courses needed to complete the major.

Additional courses in critical/intellectual methods may be counted toward the six courses in the primary field or toward four courses in the secondary field if their materials are appropriate for those purposes, but the total number of courses presented for the major must total thirteen.

A student wishing to work in two literatures (one of which can be English) might choose two literatures as the primary and secondary fields. A student interested in literary study across national boundaries with a focus on generic and transnational

questions might create a primary field along generic lines (e.g., film, the epic, the novel, poetry, drama, opera); the secondary field might be a particular national literature or a portion of such a literature. A student interested in literary and cultural theory might choose theory as either a primary or secondary field, paired with another field designed along generic lines or those of one or more national literatures.

Courses in the various literature departments and in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities are obviously germane to the building of any individual program. A student is likely to find courses in the Humanities Collegiate Division and in the Department of History that extend beyond the usual definitions of literature (e.g., film, art, music, history) to be appropriate to her or his individual program of study. Study abroad offers an attractive means of fulfilling various aims of this program as well.

Participation in the Program. Students should express their interest in the major as soon as possible, typically before the end of their second year. The first step is to meet with the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies to consult about a program of study. Thereafter, students are required to submit a written proposal of about one thousand words in length that consists of two parts: (1) a statement explaining how the proposed plan of study will take advantage of existing College offerings and meet departmental requirements; and (2) a list of proposed courses (as well as alternates) and indications of how they will fulfill the department's requirements. Applicants must also submit a list of completed courses and a list of courses in which they are currently registered. Special mention should be made of language courses or other language training that affirms a student's level of language proficiency. Each proposal will be evaluated on the basis of the interest of the student and his or her achievement in the languages needed to meet the goals of the intended course of study.

Comparative Literature majors should demonstrate proficiency in a literary language (other than English) that is relevant to their proposed course of study (as indicated in requirement number one above). This requirement must be met at the time of application or shortly thereafter. Such proficiency is measured by the completion of a second-year sequence in the language, or by demonstration of an equivalent skill. Language ability is essential to work in comparative literature of whatever sort. The Department of Comparative Literature takes language preparation into consideration when evaluating applications, but it will also help students achieve their individual goals by suggesting programs of study that will add to their language expertise as appropriate.

BA Project. One obvious choice for a BA project is a substantial essay in comparative literary study. This option should not, however, rule out other possibilities. Two examples might be a translation from a foreign literature with accompanying commentary, or a written project based on research done abroad in another language and culture relating to comparative interests. Students are urged to base their project on comparative concepts, and to make use of the language proficiency that they will develop as they meet the program's requirements.

Visit humanities.uchicago.edu/depts/complit/undergraduate/ for details on the BA project.

This program may accept a BA paper or project used to satisfy the same requirement in another major if certain conditions are met and with the consent of the other program chair. Approval from both program chairs is required. Students should consult with the chairs by the earliest BA proposal deadline (or by the end of third year, when neither program publishes a deadline). A consent form, to be signed by both chairs, is available from the College adviser. It must be completed and returned to the College adviser by the end of Autumn Quarter of the student's year of graduation.

Grading. All courses to be used in the major must be taken for a quality grade, which must be a *B-* or higher.

Honors. To be eligible for honors in Comparative Literature, students must earn an overall cumulative GPA of 3.25 or higher, and a GPA of 3.5 or higher in the major. They must also complete a BA essay or project that is judged exceptional in intellectual and/or creative merit by the first and second readers.

Advising. In addition to their College adviser, students should consult on an ongoing basis with the Associate Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Further advice and counseling will be available from the preceptor for the program and from the faculty member who supervises the student's BA project.

Faculty

D. Bevington (Emeritus), T. Chin, A. Davidson, F. de Armas, L. Kruger, B. Maslov, F. Meltzer, M. Murrin, L. Rothfield, J. Scodel, M. Sells, Y. Tsivian, R. von Hallberg, D. Wellbery, D. Wray, A. Yu (Emeritus)

Courses: Comparative Literature (CMLT)

20500/30500. History and Theory of Drama I. (=CLAS 31200, CLCV 21200, ENGL 13800/31000, TAPS 28400) *May be taken in sequence with CMLT 20600/30600 or individually.* This course is a survey of major trends and theatrical accomplishments in Western drama from the ancient Greeks through the Renaissance: Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Aristophanes, medieval religious drama, Marlowe, Shakespeare, and Jonson, along with some consideration of dramatic theory by Aristotle, Horace, Sir Philip Sidney, and Dryden. The goal is not to develop acting skill but, rather, to discover what is at work in the scene and to write up that process in a somewhat informal report. Students have the option of writing essays or putting on short scenes in cooperation with other members of the class. End-of-week workshops, in which individual scenes are read aloud dramatically and discussed, are optional but highly recommended. *D. Bevington, H. Coleman. Autumn.*

20600/30600. History and Theory of Drama II. (=ENGL 13900/31100, TAPS 28401) *May be taken in sequence with CMLT 20500/30500 or individually.* This course is a survey of major trends and theatrical accomplishments in Western drama

from the late seventeenth century into the twentieth (i.e., Molière, Goldsmith, Ibsen, Chekhov, Strindberg, Wilde, Shaw, Brecht, Beckett, Stoppard). Attention is also paid to theorists of the drama (e.g., Stanislavsky, Artaud, Grotowski). The goal is not to develop acting skill but, rather, to discover what is at work in the scene and to write up that process in a somewhat informal report. Students have the option of writing essays or putting on short scenes in cooperation with other students. End-of-week workshops, in which individual scenes are read aloud dramatically and discussed, are optional but highly recommended. *D. Bevington, H. Coleman. Winter.*

20801/40801. Before and after Beckett: Theater and Film. (=CMST 24203/44203, ENGL 24401/44506) *PQ: Third- or fourth-year standing, and at least one prior course in modern drama or film. This course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students who are majoring in Comparative Literature.* Working knowledge of French helpful but not required. Beckett is conventionally typed as the playwright of minimalist scenes of unremitting bleakness. But his experiments with theater and film echo the irreverent play of popular culture (vaudeville on stage and film, including Chaplin and Keaton) and the artistic avant-garde (Dreyer in film; Jarry and Artaud in theater). This course juxtaposes this early twentieth-century work with Beckett's plays on stage and screen, as well as those of his contemporaries (Ionesco, Duras) and successors. Contemporary authors depend on availability but may include Vinaver, Minyana, and Lagarce (France); Pinter and Greenaway (England); and Foreman and Wellman (United States). Theoretical work may include texts by Artaud, Barthes, Derrida, Josette Feral, Peggy Phelan, and Bert States. *L. Kruger. Spring.*

21201/31201. Contemporary European Philosophy and Religion. (=PHIL 21209/31209, DVPR 40900, JWSC 21201/31201, HIJD 40901) For course description, see Philosophy. *A. Davidson, Winter.*

21600. Comparative Fairy Tale. (=GRMN 28500, HUMA 28400, NORW 28500) For some, fairy tales count as sacred tales meant to enchant rather than edify. For others, they are cautionary tales, replete with obvious moral lessons. Critics have come to apply all sorts of literary approaches to fairy tale texts, ranging from stylistic analyses to psychoanalytical and feminist readings. For the purposes of this course, we assume that these critics are correct in their contention that fairy tales contain essential underlying meanings. We conduct our own readings of fairy tales from the German Brothers Grimm; the Norwegians, Asbjørnsen and Moe; and the Dane, Hans Christian Andersen. We rely on our own critical skills as well as on selected secondary readings. *This course is offered in alternate years. K. Kenny. Winter. Not offered 2009–10; will be offered 2010–11.*

22001. Bringing Up the Novel in Bohemia. (=CZEC 26800) In *Bringing Up Girls in Bohemia*, Michal Viewegh engages with thinkers ranging from the Czech critic Jan Mukarovsky to the French theoretician Roland Barthes and writers from world literature (e.g., Graham Greene, Jorge Borges) to the paragons of the Czech novel (e.g., Karel Capek, Milan Kundera). This course explores the history of the Czech novel that begins with Jan Amos Comenius and Božena Němcová. We then look at the development of the Czech novel through the works of Franz

Kafka, Karel Capek, Milan Kundera, Josef Škvorecký, and Bohumil Hrabal. Finally we reread Viewegh and some of his contemporaries (e.g., Jachým Topol, Daniela Hodrová) within the context of this newly formed history of the Czech novel. *E. Peters. Spring.*

22201/32201. Magic Realist and Fantastic Writings from the Balkans. (=ISHU 27405, SOSL 27400/37400) In this course, we ask whether there is such a thing as a “Balkan” type of magic realism and think about the differences between the genres of magic realism and the fantastic, while reading some of the most interesting writing to have come out of the Balkans. We also look at the similarities of the works from different countries (e.g., lyricism of expression, eroticism, nostalgia) and argue for and against considering such similarities constitutive of an overall Balkan sensibility. *A. Ilieva. Spring.*

22400/32400. History of International Cinema I: Silent Era. (=ARTH 28500/38500, ARTV 26500, CMST 28500/48500, ENGL 29300/47800, MAPH 33600) *PQ: Prior or concurrent enrollment in CMST 10100. This is the first part of a two-quarter course. Taking these courses in sequence is strongly recommended but not required.* This course introduces what was singular about the art and craft of silent film. Its general outline is chronological. We also discuss main national schools and international trends of filmmaking. *J. Lastra. Autumn.*

22500/32500. History of International Cinema II: Sound Era to 1960. (=ARTH 28600/38600, ARTV 26600, CMST 28600/48600, ENGL 29600/48900, MAPH 33700) *PQ: Prior or current registration in CMST 10100 required; CMLT 22400/32400 strongly recommended.* The center of this course is film style, from the classical scene breakdown to the introduction of deep focus, stylistic experimentation, and technical innovation (sound, wide screen, location shooting). The development of a film culture is also discussed. Texts include Thompson and Bordwell’s *Film History: An Introduction*; and works by Bazin, Belton, Sitney, and Godard. Screenings include films by Hitchcock, Welles, Rossellini, Bresson, Ozu, Antonioni, and Renoir. *Y. Tsvivan. Spring.*

22601/32601. Cinema from the Balkans. (=ISHU 27603, SOSL 27600/37600) This course is designed as an overview of major cinematic works from Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Rumania, former Yugoslavia and Turkey. While the main criterion for selection is the artistic quality of the work, the main issues under consideration are those of identity, gender, the poignant relation with the “Western World,” memories of conflict and violence, and socialism and its disintegration and subsequent emigration. We compare the conceptual categories through which these films make sense of the world, especially the sense of humor with which they come to terms with that world. Directors whose work we examine include Vulchanov and Andonova (Bulgaria); Kusturica, Makavejev, and Grlic (Former Yugoslavia); Guney (Turkey); Boulmetis (Greece); and Manchevski (Macedonia). *A. Ilieva. Winter.*

22901/32901. Film Noir: French and American. (=ENGL 28911) This course focuses on film noir in a broad sense, including neo-noir. We attend to some of the

conventions of the genre in terms of plot, characterization, and cinematography. There is also a thematic focus: How is trust constructed in these films? What are the features of trust that most directly affect political systems? Is trust among men much different from that among men and women in heterosexual relationships? We interpret a set of films as utopian efforts to imagine trusting lives. Films include *The Maltese Falcon*, *The Big Sleep*, *Kiss Me Deadly*, *Out of the Past*, *Touch of Evil*, *Notorious*, *Narrow Margin*, *Blast of Silence*, *Night and the City*, *Criss Cross*, *The Postman Always Rings Twice*, *Gilda*, *Double Indemnity*, *Rififi*, *Chinatown*, *LA Confidential*, *Band of Outsiders*, *Bob le Flambeur*, and *Le Samourai*. R. von Hallberg. Autumn.

23201-23401/33201-33401. The Other within the Self: Identity in Balkan Literature and Film. This two-course sequence examines discursive practices in a number of literary and cinematic works from the South East corner of Europe through which identities in the region become defined by two distinct others: the “barbaric, demonic” Ottoman and the “civilized” Western European.

23201/33201. Returning the Gaze: The Balkans and Western Europe. (=ISHU 27406, NEHC 20885/30885, SOSL 27200/37200) This course investigates the complex relationship between South East European self-representations and the imagined Western “gaze” for whose benefit the nations stage their quest for identity and their aspirations for recognition. We also think about differing models of masculinity, the figure of the gypsy as a metaphor for the national self in relation to the West, and the myths Balkans tell about themselves. We conclude by considering the role that the imperative to belong to Western Europe played in the Yugoslav wars of succession. Some possible texts/films are Ivo Andric, *Bosnian Chronicle*; Aleko Konstantinov, *Baj Ganyo*; Emir Kusturica, *Underground*; and Milcho Manchevski, *Before the Rain*. A. Ilieva. Autumn.

23401/33401. The Burden of History: A Nation and Its Lost Paradise. (=ISHU 26606, NEHC 20573/30573, SOSL 27300/37300) This course begins by defining the nation both historically and conceptually, with attention to Romantic nationalism and its flourishing in Southeastern Europe. We then look at the narrative of original wholeness, loss, and redemption through which Balkan countries retell their Ottoman past. With the help of Freud’s analysis of masochistic desire and Žižek’s theory of the subject as constituted by trauma, we contemplate the national fixation on the trauma of loss and the dynamic between victimhood and sublimity. The figure of the Janissary highlights the significance of the other in the definition of the self. Some possible texts are Petar Njegoš’s *Mountain Wreath*; Ismail Kadare’s *The Castle*; and Anton Donchev’s *Time of Parting*. A. Ilieva. Spring.

22601/32601. Cinema from the Balkans. (=ISHU 27603, SOSL 27600/37600) This course is designed as an overview of major cinematic works from Bulgaria, Albania, Greece, Rumania, former Yugoslavia and Turkey. While the main criterion for selection is the artistic quality of the work, the main issues under consideration are those of identity, gender, the poignant relation with the “Western World,” memories of conflict and violence, and socialism and its

disintegration and subsequent emigration. We compare the conceptual categories through which these films make sense of the world, especially the sense of humor with which they come to terms with that world. Directors whose work we examine include Vulchanov and Andonova (Bulgaria); Kusturica, Makavejev, and Grlic (Former Yugoslavia); Guney (Turkey); Boulmetis (Greece); and Manchevski (Macedonia). *A. Ilieva. Winter.*

23901/33901. Gender in the Balkans through Literature and Film. (=GNDR 27702/37700, ISHU 27610, SOSL 27610/37610) This introductory course examines the poetics of femininity and masculinity in some of the best works of the Balkan region. We contemplate how the experiences of masculinity and femininity are constituted and the issues of socialization related to these modes of being. Topics include the traditional family model, the challenges of modernization and urbanization, the socialist paradigm, and the post-socialist changes. Finally, we consider the relation between gender and nation, especially in the context of the dissolution of Yugoslavia. All work in English. *A. Ilieva. Winter.*

24501/34501. Lyric Genres from Classical Antiquity to Postmodernism. (=CLAS 37109, CLCV 27109, SLAV 24501/34501) *This course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students who are majoring in Comparative Literature.* Moving beyond the modern perception of lyric as a direct expression of the poet's subjectivity, this course confronts the remarkable longevity of poetic genres that have remained in use over centuries and millennia, such as the hymn, ode, pastoral, elegy, epistle, and epigram. What kept these classical genres alive for so long and, conversely, what made them serviceable to poets working in very different cultural milieus? In an effort to develop a theory and a history of Western lyric genres, we sample such poets as Sappho, Horace, Marvell, Hölderlin, Whitman, Mandel'shtam, Brodsky, and Milosz. Texts in English. Optional discussion sessions offered in the original (i.e., Greek, Latin, German, Russian). *B. Maslov. Spring.*

24901/34901. Cosmopolitanisms. (=ENGL 24305/34901) *This course meets the critical/intellectual methods course requirement for students who are majoring in Comparative Literature.* This course explores notions of cosmopolitanism in philosophy, historiography, and literature. Topics include ancient world systems, world literature, hospitality, and hybridity. Readings may include Derek Walcott's *Omeros*, the Hellenistic *Life of Aesop*, early Chinese prose-poetry, Derrida, Frank, and Spivak. *T. Chin. Spring.*

25001. Foucault and *The History of Sexuality*. (=PHIL 24800) *A. Davidson. Autumn.*

25401. Sensibility, Sensation, and Sexuality. (=ENGL 25307) This course traces a genealogy of affect by focusing on the representation and incitement of emotions in nineteenth-century fiction. Readings include Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*; Austen, *Sense and Sensibility*; Flaubert, *Madame Bovary*; and Hardy, *Far from the Madding Crowd*. *L. Rothfield. Autumn.*

25901/35901. Reading Modern Poets. (=ENGL 27805/47215, SCTH 34340)
R. von Hallberg, A. Zagajewski. Autumn.

26801/36801. Love-Songs. (=ENGL 27806/47213) This course examines certain themes in poems and in popular song-lyrics that include devotion, sentiment, serial desire, bought love, and aged love. Many song-lyrics are tin pan alley tunes, often in their jazz versions. Students are encouraged to suggest songs that have particularly strong lyrics. Poems come from various historical periods, with the *Norton Anthology of Poetry* as our source. *R. von Hallberg. Spring.*

27000. Historicizing Desire. (=CLCV 27706, EALC 27410, GNDR 28001)
This course meets the critically/intellectual methods course requirement for students who are majoring in Comparative Literature. This course examines conceptions of desire in ancient China and ancient Greece through an array of early philosophical, literary, historical, legal, and medical texts (e.g., Mencius, Sima Qian, Book of Songs, Plato, Sappho). We attempt not only to bring out the cultural specificities of ancient erotic experience but also to make visible the historical and geopolitical contingencies of our own methods of reading. To do so, we explore the broader cultural background of the two ancient periods, and engage with theoretical debates on the history of sexuality, feminist and queer studies, and intercultural comparative studies. *T. Chin. Winter.*

28100/38100. Travelers on the Silk Road. (=ENGL 16180/36180, RLIT 31500, RLST 28400) *PQ: Advanced standing. This course meets the critically/intellectual methods course requirement for students who are majoring in Comparative Literature.* This course is a reading of some of the major travel narratives of the Silk Road and Tibet: Xuanzang, the most famous of the Chinese Buddhist pilgrims who went to the West; Marco Polo and others, who went to the East; a diplomat like Clavijo, who went to see Tamerlane; modern travelers, like the spies the British government sent from India to explore and map the area who were the prototypes for Kipling's *Kim*; and archaeologists, like Aurel Stein who went both ways on the Silk Road. We learn indirectly about the different religions and political regimes travelers experienced. *M. Murrin. Spring.*

28101/38101. Don Quijote. (=FNLD 21211, RLLT 34202, SPAN 24202/34202)
 This course is a close reading of Cervantes's *Don Quijote* that discusses its links with Renaissance art and Early Modern narrative genres. On the one hand, *Don Quijote* can be viewed in terms of prose fiction, from the ancient Greek romances to the medieval books of knights errant and the Renaissance pastoral novels. On the other hand, *Don Quijote* exhibits a desire for Italy through the utilization of Renaissance art. Beneath the dusty roads of La Mancha and within *Don Quijote's* chivalric fantasies, the careful reader comes to appreciate glimpses of images with Italian designs. All work in English; students who are majoring in Spanish do all work in Spanish. *F. de Armas, T. Pavel. Spring.*

28700. Major Works of Modernism. (=GRMN 29000) *PQ: Knowledge of German.* This course is centered on several canonical works of classical modernism: Hugo von Hofmannsthal's *Ein Brief*; Robert Walser's *Jakob von*

Gunten; Thomas Mann's *Tod in Venedig*; Franz Kafka's *Die Verwandlung*; Arthur Schnitzler's *Fräulein Else*; Bertolt Brecht's *Mutter Courage und ihre Kinder*; poetry by Stefan George, Hofmannsthal, Gottfried Benn, Rainer Maria Rilke, and Georg Trakl; and essays by Georg Simmel, Walter Benjamin, and Robert Musil. Our goal is to develop a concept of modernism sufficiently capacious to embrace radically opposed literary and cultural agendas. All work in German. *D. Wellbery. Autumn.*

29700. Reading Course. *PQ: Consent of instructor and Director of Undergraduate Studies. Students are required to submit the College Reading and Research Course Form. Must be taken for a quality grade. This course does not satisfy distribution requirements for students who are majoring in CMLT unless an exception is made by the Director of Undergraduate Studies. Autumn, Winter, Spring.*

29800/39800. Jewish American Literature. (=ENGL 25004/45002, GRMN 29800/39800, YDDH 27800/37800) This course expands the conception of the field of Jewish American literature from English-only to English-plus. We examine how Yiddish literary models and styles influenced the emergence and development of Jewish American literature. We also discuss how recent Jewish American novels have renewed the engagement with the Yiddish literary tradition. Readings are by Abraham Cahan, Henry Roth, I. B. Singer, Chaim Grade, Saul Bellow, Cynthia Ozick, Philip Roth, Bernard Malamud, Grace Paley, Jonathan Safran Foer, Pearl Abraham, and Dara Horn. *J. Schwarz. Winter.*

29801. BA Project and Workshop: Comparative Literature. *Required of fourth-year students who are majoring in CMLT.* This workshop begins in Autumn Quarter and continues through the middle of Spring Quarter. While the BA workshop meets in all three quarters, it counts as a one-quarter course credit. Students may register for the course in any of the three quarters of their fourth year. A grade for the course will be assigned in the Spring Quarter, based partly on participation in the workshop and partly on the quality of the BA paper. Attendance at each class section required. *Autumn, Winter, Spring.*