

## **Philosophy in Literature: Italo Calvino (Phil. 331)**

Fall 2014, M and W 12:00-13:50 p.m.; 103 PETR.

Professor Alejandro A. Vallega

### **Syllabus**

#### **Class Description**

This is an intensive upper level philosophy course with emphasis on the relationship between central issues in philosophy and the way these are articulated differently by literature. The central themes explored will be identity, narrative, writing, language, history, and time. The course will include introductory and methodological lectures on how to read philosophically, as well as close reading and interpretation of texts. The **goal** of the course is to introduce students to the philosophical reading of literature in order to ultimately expand their reading and interpretative philosophical skills and to challenge and expand the way they understand the limits and possibilities of conceptual philosophical knowledge. The course will focus on the writing of Italian author Italo Calvino. Particularly on *Six Memos for the Next Millennium*, which will be related to his fictional work in *Mr. Palomar*, *Invisible Cities*, and the *Cosmicomics*. All lectures will be based on the original Italian texts.

#### **Books Required**

Please notice that the required materials are in English but native speakers and advanced Italian majors are encouraged to read the author in the original language.

All readings are available at the book university bookstore:

ITALO CALVINO, *INVISIBLE CITIES*

ITALO CALVINO, *SIX MEMOS FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM*

ITALO CALVINO, *MR. PALOMAR*

ITALO CALVINO, *COSMICOMICS*

#### **Contact Information and Office Hours**

Professor Vallega will be available during regular office hours or by appointment.

Office Number: Philosophy Department, 248 Susan Campbell Hall

Office hours: Thursdays 1:00-3:00 p.m.

Email: [avallega@uoregon.edu](mailto:avallega@uoregon.edu)

In your emails please specify your full name and the title of the course you are attending.

#### **Requirements**

##### **1. a. A final paper (20%) / b. Final Paper presentation (20%)**

**Total credit 40%** (both assignments must be completed to obtain credit)

**a.** This is a five page paper: not less, and a page more when justified by the argument. The length does not include title page and reference page. The paper should be double-space, font 12, with standard margins and top and bottom. The topic will concern material discussed in class and will be assigned by the instructor, or chosen by students with approval of the instructor. All papers should be emailed on the due date before noon. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the course (see Rules of Academic Honesty, below).

**b.** The last weeks of classes each student will present his/her paper draft to the class for feedback. The presentation should state the main argument (thesis and conclusion), and discuss briefly the main citations. All work should be based on the close reading of texts read in class, and on course lectures and discussions.

**2. Class workshop and presentations (40%)** In class single or group writing linking the critical texts with Calvino's stories. Class presentation and discussion. All work must be done in order to obtain credit for the workshops, unless justified absence requires make up work (the make up will be to the discretion of instructor).

**3. Course participation and class discussion (20%)** You are expected to attend all lectures and to participate actively in completing assignments in class and in class discussions. Keep in mind that this is a philosophy course, and this means that unlike other courses you must take the time to digest the ideas and themes of the course and to develop your understanding of them and your ability to think critically. This is accomplished in part by participating in class discussions: both by offering your understanding of the material and issues in a clear manner, and by listening carefully to your fellow students. During class discussion you will be expected to refer to and respond to your peers with respect.

Additional Requirements:

Any short writing in class must be clearly legible. All assignments outside of class are to be typed and turned in when due, unless you have a documented excuse. All late assignments are to be turned in no later than a week after their original due date and with the permission of the professor.

### **Grade Breakdown**

Final paper and final paper presentation in class 40% (20% each); in class workshop participation 40%; and attendance and class participation 20%. **Failure to complete any of these requirements will result in a "D" or failure.**

Grade Rubric:

**A** = excellent. No mistakes, well-written, and distinctive in some way or other.

**B** = good. No significant mistakes, well-written, but not distinctive in any way.

**C** = OK. Some errors, but a basic grasp of the material.

**D** = poor. Several errors. A tenuous grasp of the material.

**F** = failing. Problematic on all fronts indicating either no real grasp of the material or a complete lack of effort.

Please note that the grades refer to the expected level of general performance, and to the understanding and articulation of the material covered in this course.

### **Course Policies**

#### **1. Attendance**

**It is the student's responsibility to be in class and to make up the class assignments you have missed.** Make sure you have at least one person in class who can provide you with notes and assignment information. Once you have worked on the material you missed, if you do not understand it or need clarification make sure you come and see me during office hours.

**Two consecutive unexcused absences will result in a "D" or lower grade for the course.** If you know that you will be absent from class or if you have an emergency, notify the instructor before class or as soon as you can, make sure that you speak with him in person. Only serious emergencies will be considered as sufficient reason for an excused absence. Those who must be absent from class for athletic activities or other responsibilities related to the university will be expected to make up all work and may be required to meet with the instructor in order to discuss in detail their understanding of the material covered in class.

**Unexcused absences will result in the lowering of your grade.**

## **2. Computer, Cell Phone, and Electronic Equipment Policy**

The use of computers, cell phones, or any other electronic equipment not specifically allowed by the instructor is not permitted during class.

## **3. Rules of Academic Honesty**

The following acts of academic dishonesty will result in course failure, i.e., an "F"

*Plagiarism:* Plagiarism is the inclusion of someone else's product, words, ideas, or data as one's own work. When a student submits work for credit that includes the product, words, ideas, or data of others, the source must be acknowledged by the use of complete, accurate, and specific references, such as footnotes. By placing one's name on work submitted for credit, one certifies the originality of all work not otherwise identified by appropriate acknowledgements. Verbatim statements by others must be enclosed by quotation marks or set off from the regular text as indented extracts.

Students will avoid being charged with plagiarism if there is acknowledgement of indebtedness. Indebtedness must be acknowledged whenever: 1) one quotes another person's actual words or replicates all or part of another's product; 2) one uses another person's ideas, opinions, work, data, or theories, even if they are completely paraphrased in one's own words; 3) one borrows facts, statistics, or other illustrative material—unless the information is common knowledge.

Unauthorized collaboration with others on papers or projects can inadvertently lead to a charge of plagiarism. If in doubt, consult the instructor or seek assistance from the staff of Academic Learning Services (68 PLC, 346-3226). In addition, it is plagiarism to submit as your own any academic exercise prepared totally or in part by another person, even if that person is acting as a tutor or editor (and ends up substantially producing part of the work).

*Fabrication:* Fabrication is the intentional use of information that the author has invented when he or she states or implies otherwise, or the falsification of research or other findings with the intent to deceive. Examples include, but are not limited to: 1) citing information not taken from the source indicated; 2) listing sources in a reference not used in the academic exercise; 3) inventing data or source information for research or other academic exercises.

*Cheating:* Cheating is an act of deception by which a student misrepresents or misleadingly demonstrates that he or she has mastered information on an academic exercise that he or she has not mastered, including the giving or receiving of unauthorized help in an academic exercise.

Examples include but are not limited to: 1) copying from another student's work; 2) collaborating without authority or allowing another student to copy one's work in a test situation; 3) using the course textbook or other material not authorized for use during a test; 4) using unauthorized material during a test; for example, notes, formula lists, cues on a computer, photographs, symbolic representations, and notes written on clothing; 5) resubmitting substantially the same work that was produced for another assignment without the knowledge and permission of the instructor; 6) taking a test for someone else or permitting someone else to take a test for you.

## **Statement Regarding Sexual Violence**

Senate Task Force to Address Sexual Violence and Survivor Support

The UO is committed to providing an environment free of all forms of

Discrimination and sexual harassment, including sexual assault, domestic and dating

violence and gender-based stalking. If you (or someone you know) has experienced or Experiences gender-based violence (intimate partner violence, attempted or completed Sexual assault, harassment, coercion, stalking, etc.), know that you are not alone. UO has staff members trained to support survivors in navigating campus life, accessing health and counseling services, providing academic and housing accommodations, helping with legal protective orders, and more. Please be aware that all UO employees are required reporters. This means that if you tell me about a situation, I may have to report the information to my supervisor or the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity. Although I have to report the situation, you will still have options about how your case will be handled, including whether or not you wish to pursue a formal complaint. Our goal is to make sure you are aware of the range of options available to you and have access to the resources you need. If you wish to speak to someone confidentially, you can call 541-346-SAFE, UO's 24- hour hotline, to be connected to a confidential counselor to discuss your options. You can also visit the SAFE website at [safe.uoregon.edu](http://safe.uoregon.edu).

### **FALL 2014- Reading Schedule**

#### **I.**

9/29. Syllabus / Philosophy in literature-literature in philosophy introduction.

10/1. Reading literature philosophically: hermeneutics, phenomenology, deconstruction

#### **II.**

6. Calvino interview (blackboard) / "Lightness," *Six Memos (SM)*

8 Guest Lecturer: Kimberley Parzuchowski

#### **III.**

13. "Lightness," *SM* / "The Distance of the Moon," *Cosmicomics*.

15. "Lightness" / "The Distance of the Moon," *Cosmicomics*. **Workshop (w)**

#### **IV.**

20. "Quickness," *SM* / "Games Without End" and "How Much Shall We Bet?" *Cosmicomics*.

22. Guest Lecturer: Shannon Hayes

#### **V.**

27. "Quickness" / "Games Without End" and "How Much Shall We Bet?," *Cosmicomics*. **(w)**

29. "Exactitude," *SM* / "A Sign in Space," *Cosmicomics*.

#### **VI.**

11/3. "Exactitude" / "The Model of Models," "The Universe as Mirror," *Mr. Palomar*. **(w)**

5- "Visibility," *SM* / "The Spiral," *Cosmicomics*. "The World Looks at the World" *Mr. Palomar*.

#### **VII.**

10. "Visibility" / "The Spiral," *Cosmicomics*. **(w)**

12. "Multiplicity," *SM* / *Invisible Cities*.

#### **VIII.**

17. "Multiplicity" / *Invisible Cities*. **(w)**

19. Theme: Consistency? / *Invisible Cities*.

IX.

24. *Invisible cities.*

26. *Invisible Cities.* **(w)**

11/27-28 TGD

X.

12/1 PAPER PRESENTATIONS

3 PAPER PRESENTATIONS

**12/9 FINAL PAPER DUE** before noon by email.