

# TEACHING PORTFOLIO

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## Teaching Statement

Teaching a course on the uncanny in global medieval literature to a diverse group of undergraduates is a daunting task. I have cryptozoology enthusiasts, medieval studies majors with a strong grasp of Middle English, and plenty of students who have never read premodern literature before. I have chemists who need to check off a humanities requirement, and writers who plan to make literary analysis a central component of their academic and professional lives. There is no approach that can cater to all their needs at all times. Even as the quarter progresses, and their knowledge bases coalesce to some degree, I strive to remain alert to times when the medieval studies majors will benefit from a digression on Welsh etymology; when all the others require a crash course in the basics of medieval Christianity; or when the whole class needs to unwind with a few minutes of drawing memes relating our texts to one another. This alertness is key to teaching as a comparatist, and to teaching comparatively.

Fundamentally, teaching comparatively entails guiding my students towards an ability to synthesize knowledge on their own terms. In this way, comparativism becomes not a shallow compromise but an active pedagogical strategy. In whatever class I am working as an instructor, I aim to convey my particular expertise as well as model approaches to comparative work. While I am always excited to introduce students to new material (Persian poetry, North Atlantic sagas, modern medievalisms...), I am aware that these subjects accrue the most meaning when fit into larger narratives (the role of the supernatural in accounts of the past, perhaps; or the relation between eros and history). A digression on Irish nationalism isn't crucial to understanding *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*. But it helps my students situate the text, to understand that the process of self-creation they are studying is deeply responsive to its setting in time and place. Additionally, it presents a way for me to model for them how historical and literary analyses can intersect. Similarly, discussing contemporary critical theory in a medieval literature class allows my students to understand the intellectual stakes of their insights and the ongoing relevance of ancient texts.

In designing my own curricula, my aim is not for students to situate their work within an artificial replica of the networks and connections that I study. Rather, I want them to shape the material I am teaching into their own comparative frameworks, individualized to their personal positioning and interests. In structuring assignments for the courses I design, I likewise incorporate flexibility at as many levels as possible. Several shorter papers or a single longer paper, an in-depth engagement with one text or a comparative study of several, an analytical essay or a carefully-designed creative response—all are valid modes of engaging with and responding to course material. Allowing students to choose amongst these options grants them vital ownership over their learning.

My teaching experience has consisted primarily of small discussion-based seminars and individual tutoring, working with students from the middle school through graduate levels. I have largely focused on undergraduate courses, including designing and teaching my own medieval literature course and working as an assistant instructor for classes in analytic philosophy and Persian language. More recently, I have also begun working as a facilitator and instructor for pedagogical workshops aimed at graduate students. Despite the very different expectations of these fields and levels, in each setting I aim to balance attention to detail with broader questions about the application of knowledge. Most of my undergraduate students, for whom a liberal arts education is an asset but not an end in itself, are oriented more towards this wider context. Some, with an eye towards academic careers, are deeply invested in the details – in close reading, historical specificity,

grammatical rigor. Knowing when to pivot from one frame to another is a skill I am working actively to develop. Additionally, assessing outcomes requires me to remain mindful of learners' varying goals. Passing an oral proficiency test in Persian means something very different for an undergraduate completing an obligatory language course than it does for a masters student hoping to pursue investigative journalism in the Middle East.

A commitment to teaching comparatively asks me to remain engaged in learning to be a better teacher. Pedagogy courses and syllabus design workshops have an important place in this process. However, enacted experience is key. I have taught in three countries, in major cities and small towns, at international boarding schools, adult education programs, and research universities. My students across these contexts have varied greatly in their life circumstances, familiarity with English, and connections to the subjects I teach. Additionally, each of these positions has brought me into contact with other instructors, whose expertise I draw on in developing my own. In language review sessions, I might combine memory games from my high school French *prof*, linguistic insights from my current dissertation chair, and classroom management exercises from a recent pedagogy course. As I mix and match these approaches, I work towards the ongoing formulation of my own teaching style.

In this way, the versatility I value in my own work, and which I strive to convey in my teaching, owes much to the diversity of environments and students I have worked with in the past. My responsibility to honor and synthesize these experiences provides an ethical dimension to teaching comparatively. In practice, I extend this commitment to foregrounding inclusivity through an ongoing effort to recognize and remove barriers to students' engagement with classroom discussions and reading materials alike. Dividing the class into smaller discussion groups, for instance, allows each student more time to talk, while also gaining a fuller idea of the differing engagements their classmates bring to the course material. As I circulate through the room, checking in on these conversations, I remain attentive to both individual insights and group dynamics. I supplement these in-class observations by communicating openly with my students about how their learning is or is not progressing in my courses, and how we can work together to improve those outcomes. Regular office hours and open invitations to relevant on-campus lectures or activities help sustain this dialogue.

As a scholar of comparative literature, I am constantly switching from one language to another, or jumping from ancient texts to modern theory. The body of knowledge I work with is highly idiosyncratic to my interests, abilities, and experiences. Rather than hoping my students will share these particular facets, I am more concerned with teaching versatility. The idea that artistic and cultural studies can broaden perspectives, promote dialogue, and force critical reexaminations of received wisdom is central to many arguments for the value of the humanities. But to practice these interlacings requires the same kind of flexibility that I employ in drawing together my far-flung sources. This is the central goal of my teaching work – framing comparativism not as an excuse for muddled jumbles of half-learned methods, but rather as a philosophical commitment and an effective strategy for promoting learning. In teaching comparatively, I model my discipline's values through pedagogical practice. By facilitating my students' conversations with texts and one another, I help them become comparatists themselves.

## *Teaching Biography*

### **CCTE 50000: Course Design and College Teaching**

**Teaching Mentor** (Instructor: Joseph Lambert)

*April – June 2019, University of Chicago. 10 students in two sections.*

I led sections for graduate students in a college pedagogy course. In these, we discussed core concepts, critiqued syllabi, and conducted microteaching workshops.

### **CMLT 24610: Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature**

**Instructor of record**

*September – December 2018, University of Chicago. 20 students.*

I designed and taught this course as a stand-alone seminar for advanced undergraduates. Students explored medieval texts and modern approaches relating to the supernatural through classroom discussion, analytical work, and creative projects.

### **Fundamentals of Teaching Literature**

**Co-instructor** (with Nell Hawley)

*October 2018, University of Chicago. 13 students.*

My co-instructor and I designed and taught a workshop for graduate student instructors in literature and the humanities. Topics included student-centered learning and inclusivity.

### **PERS 10101, 10102 & 10103: Elementary Persian 1, 2 & 3**

**Language Assistant** (Instructor: Saeed Ghahremani)

*September 2017 – June 2018, University of Chicago. 16 students.*

I led a Friday immersion conversation and drill section for the year-long introductory Persian class. Additionally, I offered weekly office hours to cover and practice course material.

### **PHIL 21834: Self-Creation as a Philosophical and Literary Problem**

**Course Assistant** (Instructor: Agnes Callard)

*March – June 2017, University of Chicago. 17 students in two sections.*

I led two weekly discussion sections for a philosophy lecture course. My responsibilities included grading papers and holding office hours.

### **Literary Discussion**

**Instructor**

*January – June 2014, Brookline Adult Education. 8 students.*

I designed and led a weekly world literature course for adult learners, focusing on close reading and discussion skills. Curricula included ancient and contemporary texts.

### **Writer's Toy Box**

**Instructor**

*April – June 2014, Brookline Adult Education. 6 students.*

I designed and led a weekly writing course for adult learners. The course centered on short writing activities to encourage creativity and generate ideas.

### **Courses in Literature, History, Writing, and Theater**

**Volunteer Teacher**

*January – May 2008; June - August 2010 & 2012. Taktse International School. 3–30 students.*

On three separate occasions, I worked as a volunteer teacher at an international school in northeastern India. My work included teaching courses for students in grades 5-10, designing curricula, leading workshops, and administrative tasks.

## *Syllabi*

*This is the syllabus for the first university course I designed and taught independently, in the Fall of 2018.*

### **Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature**

Tuesday and Thursday, 12:30 – 1:50

Cobb 319

Sam Lasman (he/him/his)

[slasman@uchicago.edu](mailto:slasman@uchicago.edu)

*Office Hours & Location:* Wednesday 12:30–2:30pm, Classics 116 (Comp. Lit. Lounge)

*Signups via Google Docs:* <https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/...>

Alternate times may be available by email appointment

Meetings with ghosts, dragons, elves, and jinn – violent or erotic, compassionate or unsettling – animate many key texts of the Middle Ages. Unlike in our stereotypes of a past when people blamed their daily problems on witches or demons, medieval literature depicts strange beings, dangerous monsters, and otherworld realms as anything but quotidian. Rather, medieval protagonists regularly find their lives changed by experiences with the strange.

In this course, we will interrogate the literary and cultural meanings of these uncanny encounters through close readings of primary texts in translation from across medieval Eurasia – including Norse sagas, Persian epics, Celtic legends, Tibetan hagiographies, and Japanese drama. We will draw on comparative methods in responding analytically and creatively to these underappreciated works.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will:

- learn to read and analyze premodern texts from a variety of cultures
- use close readings to construct strong critical frameworks for considering the role of the natural/supernatural, human/nonhuman, magic/ordinary, and other categories in narrative works of the global Middle Ages
- develop comparative methodologies for considering multiple works across broad geographical and temporal ranges
- generate analytical and/or creative work that engages substantially with primary texts

### **GRADING, REQUIREMENTS, & POLICIES**

#### **5% Office Hours**

*At least one appointment in the quarter; more are encouraged.*

#### **15% Attendance**

*One absence with notification is allowed; any additional absence will have to be made up at office hours; three or more absences will be grounds for concern. Family and other personal emergencies are of course exempt, though still require notification.*

#### **30% Participation** (including a brief presentation)

*Class will be conducted as a seminar, and students are expected to complete all assigned readings and bring those readings for reference in class. Active engagement in discussion is the baseline, including asking questions, offering thoughts, and taking notes (see*

*details below under TEXTS.) However, there are other modes of participation. I am happy to discuss accommodations and alternate arrangements.*

*Additionally, every student will be responsible for offering a brief introduction to one of our texts. Details are below under PRESENTATION.*

### **50% Projects**

**All assignments should be submitted by email to [slasman@uchicago.edu](mailto:slasman@uchicago.edu).**

*2 papers of 5-6 pages, one midterm and one final (25% each). At least one of these should engage with more than one primary text.*

OR

*A single paper of 10-12 pages, due at finals, with a short proposal/project outline due at midterm. This should engage with at least two primary texts. (50%)*

AND/OR

*A creative project that engages substantially and critically with the course material, which may replace the final short paper, or, if large enough in scope, the single longer paper. Various media may be considered. Creative projects must be approved by me before being undertaken. A key part of the grade will be an artistic statement, expressing the vision behind the piece and its critical connections to the course material. A preliminary version of this statement will be due at the midterm (equivalent to the project outline for the analytic paper), if the student elects to do the larger final artistic project (25 or 50%)*

*Further assignment details will be provided closer to the midterm.*

EXTENSIONS may be granted in consultation with me, up to a week before the due date of a particular assignment. Exceptions are of course made for unforeseen circumstances and emergencies.

LATE WORK to which no extension has been granted will incur a grading penalty of one-third a full letter grade (so A- work would be given a B+) for every week it is late. Additionally, late midterm work will receive less in-depth commentary from me – this is simply a matter of my time!

REWRITES or REVISIONS based on my comments are allowed, for an automatic increase of one-third a full letter grade (so B+ work would earn an A-).

PLAGIARISM – the use of any writing or ideas that are not your own in official assignments, without appropriate quotation and citation – will result in an automatic failure of that assignment, and potential disciplinary action. If you are unsure what plagiarism constitutes, or are concerned about how to avoid it, please check with me.

BROWSING unrelated sites on computers, phones, or tablets during class time (as well as texting, Snapchatting, Instagramming, etc.) is disruptive to the discussion atmosphere, and does no one any favors. If it's clear to me that you are doing so, I will give you a warning. Two warnings in one class will be grounds for me to ask you to leave class for that day, with consequences for your participation grade. If you find yourself regularly tempted by digital wanderlust, please talk to me and we will work out some strategies (on your part and mine) to help you and the class remain focused and productive.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

Once during the quarter, each student will be responsible for providing a brief introduction to a text. This will consist of posing and then answering 2-3 questions (or question sets) about the work and its context. The types of questions that will be most useful here are *in-depth* yet *factual* – they go beyond the surface, but do have some right (and some wrong!) answers. Some examples might be:

- *How was this work presented to its original audience? (Was it sung? Chanted? Read silently? Acted out? How do we know? And who was in that original*

*audience? Nobles? Commoners? Monks? Where were they? Public settings? Private settings?)*

- *What is this work's relationship to previous works/histories/mythologies? (Is it based on an earlier text or story? How does it differ from older versions? Is there a historical basis for some of its characters or events? What is its relationship to this history? Is there current controversy over its origins?)*
- *What has the reception of this work been? (Did it inspire other versions, in the past or in the present? Are there novels paintings, sculptures, operas, films, video games, etc., based on it? How do these versions interpret or alter the original work? Is the work still considered culturally important in its country of origin? In other countries? How is this demonstrated?)*
- *How have a few prominent scholars read or interpreted (or ignored!) this work? What do these analyses highlight or leave out?*

Most of the presentations will be on primary sources, for which these sorts of questions will apply well. A few will be secondary/theoretical works, for which better questions might be slightly more interpretive, and include things like:

- *How does this text compliment, complicate, illuminate, or interrogate one or more of the works we have read (particularly the works for this week?)*
- *What are the philosophical, political, or theoretical commitments of this author? How do these appear in the text?*

Feel free to use these questions as a starting point, or come up with your own in a similar vein. Presentations should be no more than 5 minutes. Complicated A/V setups/Powerpoints aren't necessary, but playing a relevant recording or displaying an image (for instance) might help illustrate your points.

I won't be requiring that you turn in anything for the presentations, but I do ask that you aim for accuracy. Use trustworthy sources, like the Introductions and Notes to published editions, encyclopedias, or articles from JSTOR. If you do use Wikipedia, use it as a starting point – any dependable Wikipedia article will have footnotes and links pointing you towards more authoritative sources. If you have any questions about conducting this research, or run into any snags along the way, please contact me.

**\*\*The plagiarism rules cited above *still apply* for these short presentations. If you directly use the words of others in your presentation, you must mention where those words come from. The citation doesn't need to be as formal as in your essays – “Professor X/The Encyclopedia of X/the Youtube channel X notes that, quote, ...” is fine – but otherwise, rephrase, summarize, and make the words your own.**

## **TEXTS**

All texts will be available online and/or through the Canvas site (if no link is provided here). If you prefer to work with print materials, I am happy to direct you to print editions, though these may differ in some cases from the translations provided here. You are of course welcome to print out texts, though you will probably want to crop out the thick dark margins from some of the scans.

You are expected to read actively. This means different things for different people – highlighting, taking notes, looking up words, references, or ideas that intrigue you. However, the purpose is always the same – coming to class with questions and ideas, prepared to talk and explore the texts. This preparation will figure into your participation grade.



In class, I may occasionally direct our attention to details of the original-language texts. If you would like to work more closely with any of the original texts, please contact me or come to office hours. I am happy to go over original texts in languages I know or direct you to resources and resource people for those I do not.

## **CLASS AND READING SCHEDULE**

\*indicates a primary source text. I've given these first in the original language; then, where the title isn't simply one or more proper names, I've provided a translation. All dates given are CE.

*I reserve the right to change any readings, with advance notice of one week.*

*If you are interested in additional primary or secondary readings related to the week's topic, for assignment purposes or personal enrichment, please let me know.*

### **WEEK 1: Introductions & The Green Children of Woolpit (52pp)**

#### **Tuesday, October 2**

*Introductions*

#### **Thursday, October 4**

\*William of Newburgh, *Historia rerum Anglicarum* (1198) ("History of English Affairs"), Book 1, Chapter 27, "De Viridibus Pueris" ("Of the Green Children"). Trans. from Latin by Joseph Stevenson (London: Seeley's, 1861).

<https://sourcebooks.fordham.edu/basis/williamofnewburgh-one.asp#27>

\*Ralph of Coggeshall, *Chronicon Anglicanum* (1224), ("English Chronicle"), "De quodam puero et puella de terra emergentibus" ("Of a certain boy and girl who emerged from the earth"). Trans. from Latin by Thomas Keightley, *The Fairy Mythology* (London: H. G. Bohn, 1860) (pp. 281-282) <https://books.google.com/books?id=BLcneocu3kAC&pg>

John Clark, "Small, Vulnerable ETs": The Green Children of Woolpit," *Science Fiction Studies*, Vol. 33, No. 2 (Jul., 2006), pp. 209-229. <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4241432>

Richard Firth Green, *Elf Queens and Holy Friars* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016), "Chapter 1: Believing in Fairies," pp. 11-41

### **WEEK 2: Encountering Jinn and Giants in Medieval Arabic Culture (109pp)**

#### **Tuesday, October 9**

Suzanne Pinckney Stetkevych, *The Mute Immortals Speak: Pre-Islamic Poetry and the Poetics of Ritual* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1993), "Ta'abbata Sharran and Oedipus" (11 pp), esp. \*Ta'abbata Sharran, "Qit'a Nūniyya" and "Qasīda Lāmiyya" (before 600?) ("Fragment in 'N' and Ode in 'L'"), pp. 96 & 101-102

\*Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān, *Risālat Aḥmad ibn Faḍlān* (921) ("The Travel account of Ahmad ibn Fadlan"), excerpts. Trans. from Arabic by James E. McKeithen (PhD dissertation, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Literatures, Indiana University, 1979) (25 pp)

Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture: Seven Theses" from *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), pp. 3-25 (18 pp)

#### **Thursday, October 11**

\**Sīrat Sayf bin Dhī Yazan* (c. 1500) ("The Epic of Sayf son of Dhu Yazan"), "The Quest for the Book of the Nile." Trans. from Arabic by Lena Jayyusi (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996) (55 pp)

WEEK 3: **Taming Spirits in Tibetan Hagiography** (88pp)**Tuesday, October 16**

\*Yeshe Tsogyal/Nyang Ral Nyima Öser, *Namthar Zanglingma* (before 1192) (“The Copper Temple Biography”), Chapters 1-10 & 20-23. Trans. from Tibetan by Erik Pema Kunsang (Boston: Shambhala Publications, Inc., 1993) (70pp)

**Thursday, October 18**

Patricia MacCormack, “Posthuman Teratology,” from *The Ashgate Research Companion to Monsters and the Monstrous*, ed. Asa Simon Mittman with Peter J. Dendle (London and New York: Routledge, 2016), pp. 293-311 (18pp).

<https://www.routledgehandbooks.com/doi/10.4324/9781315241197.ch13>

**\*Quarter-Quarter Check-In. Sometime this week, please email me a short piece of writing (roughly 1 page in length) that reflects on or engages with the course. It can be analytical, creative, or personally reflective. It will receive some brief comments from me, but it will not be graded. Its purpose is to give me a sense of your interests, what you are getting out of the course thus far, and, perhaps most importantly, a glimpse of your writing ahead of the midterm and final assignments.**

WEEK 4: **Battling Demons and Dragons in Iranian Epic** (108pp)**Tuesday, October 23**

\*Abolqāsem Ferdowsi, *Shāhnāmeḥ* (1010) (“The Book of Kings”): “Kayumars and the Demons” (pp. 1-3), “The Tale of Sām and the Simorgh,” “Kay Kāvus’s War Against the Demons of Māzanderān,” “The Seven Trials of Rostam,” “The Akvān Div,” “The Simorgh’s Aid” (pp 408-416) & “Haftvād’s Worm” (pp 544–553). Trans. from Persian by Dick Davis (New York: Penguin Classics, 2007) (72 pp)

**Thursday, October 25**

Eugene Thacker, *In the Dust of This Planet [Horror of Philosophy, vol 1]* (Winchester, UK; Washington, USA: Zero Books, 2011), “Preface: Clouds of Unknowing,” “Quæstio II – On Whether There are Demons, and How to Know Them,” & Quæstio III – On Demonology, and Whether it is a Respectable Field of Study” (36pp)

***Dick Davis (the scholar and translator whose Shahnameh edition we are using) will be delivering a lecture in Pick Lounge at 7:00 PM, 10/25. Topic TBA but I will supply more information as this date approaches.***

WEEK 5: **Living with Fallen Gods in Medieval Ireland** (76pp)**MIDTERM WEEK****Tuesday, October 30**

\**Tochmarc Étaíne* (before 1106) (“The Wooing of Étaín”)

\**Aislinge Óenguso* (before 1517) (“Óengus’ Dream-Vision”). Both trans. from Old Irish by Jeffrey Gantz, in *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982) (60pp)

\**Echtra Nerai* (c. 1400) (“The Adventures of Nera”). Trans. from Old Irish by Kuno Meyer, in *Revue Celtique 10* (1889) (7pp)

**Thursday, November 1**

\**De Failligud Tána Bó Cuailnge* (c. 1160) (“How *The Cattle Raid of Cúalnge* was Found”)

\**Ces Ulad* (c. 1160) (“The Debility of Ulster”)

\**Compert Con Culainn* (before 1106) (“Cú Chulainn’s Conception”). All trans. from Old Irish by Thomas Kinsella, in *The Tain* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1969) (9pp)

\**Serglige Con Culainn ocus Oenét Emire* (before 1106) (“Cú Chulainn’s Sickbed and Emer’s Only Jealousy”). Trans. from Old Irish by Jeffrey Gantz, in *Early Irish Myths and Sagas* (Middlesex: Penguin Books, 1982)

**MIDTERM PROJECT or OUTLINE FOR FINAL DUE by 11:59PM, Saturday, November 4th**

**WEEK 6: Uncanny Seductions in ‘Breton’ Lays (99pp)**

**Tuesday, November 6**

\*Marie de France, *Lanval* (before 1215). Trans. from Old French by Judith P. Shoaf (2005). <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/jshoaf/marie/lanval.pdf>

\*Marie de France, *Yonec* (before 1215). Trans. from Old French by Judith P. Shoaf (1993). <http://users.clas.ufl.edu/jshoaf/marie/yonec.pdf>

Sigmund Freud, “Das Unheimliche” (“The Uncanny”) from *Imago* Bd. V (1919), trans. from German by Alix Strachey (38pp)

**Thursday, November 8**

\**Sir Orfeo* (before 1330). Ed. by Anne Laskaya & Eve Salisbury, *The Middle English Breton Lays* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995). <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-orfeo>

\**Sir Degare* (before 1330). Ed. by Anne Laskaya & Eve Salisbury, *The Middle English Breton Lays* (Kalamazoo: Medieval Institute Publications, 1995). <http://d.lib.rochester.edu/teams/text/laskaya-and-salisbury-middle-english-breton-lays-sir-degare>

**WEEK 7: Contending with the Otherworld in Medieval Wales (119pp)**

**Tuesday, November 13**

\**Pedeir Keinc y Mabinogi* (before 1350) (“Four Branches of the Mabinogi”). Trans. from Middle Welsh by Will Parker (Bardic Press, 2005). <http://www.mabinogi.net/translations.htm>

**Thursday, November 15**

\**Culhwch ac Olwen* (before 1325). Trans. from Middle Welsh by Will Parker (2016). <http://www.culhwch.info/>

\**Preideu Annwfn* (before 1350) (“The Plunder of Annwfn”). Trans. from Middle Welsh by Marged Haycock, in *Legendary Poems from the Book of Taliesin* (Aberystwyth: CMCS Publications, 2015)

Mark Fisher. *The Weird and the Eerie* (Repeater Books: London, 2016), “INTRODUCTION: The Weird and the Eerie (Beyond the Unheimlich)” (17pp)

**WEEK 8: Meeting Ghosts in Japanese Nō Drama (50pp)**

**Tuesday, November 20**

\*Kan’ami Kiyotsugu & Zeami Motokiyo, *Matsukaze* (before 1443) (“Wind-in-the-Pines”) Trans. from Japanese by Royall Tyler, in *Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970)

\*Kanze Kojirō Nobumitsu, *Dōjōji* (before 1516) (“Dōjōji Temple”) Trans. from Japanese by Donald Keene, in *Twenty Plays of the Nō Theatre* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1970) (36 pp)

\*Excerpt of performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLu9927A8YQ>

\*Zeami Motokiyo(?), *Hagoromo* (before 1524) (“Feather Mantle”) Trans. from Japanese by Kenneth Yasuda, in *Masterworks of the Nō Theater* (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1989) (14pp)

\*Excerpt of performance: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=33gAp8n-C8k>  
**Thursday, November 22 THANKSGIVING**

WEEK 9: **Journeying into Otherness in Norse Sagas** (104pp)

**Tuesday, November 27**

\**Völsunga saga* (c. 1270) (“Saga of the Völsungs”) Trans. from Old Norse by R. G. Finch (London: Nelson, 1965) (40pp)

**Thursday, November 29**

\**Eiríks saga rauða* (Before 1310) (“Eirík the Red’s Saga”) Trans. from Old Norse by Keneva Kunz, in *The Sagas of the Icelanders* (New York: Penguin Books, 2001) (24pp)

\**Hrólfs saga kraka* (c. 1400) (“Shriveled Hrólfr’s Saga”) Trans. from Old Norse by Peter Tunstall, 2005.

<https://web.archive.org/web/20100908084159/http://www.oe.eclipse.co.uk:80/nom/Hrolf%20Kraki.htm>

WEEK 10: **Conclusions**

**Tuesday, December 4**

*Concluding discussion, sharing of projects*

**Thursday, December 6**

*Reading Period – no class – open office hours for consultation*

**FINAL PROJECT DUE BY 11:59PM on THURSDAY, DECEMBER 13 (ONE WEEK AFTER LAST CLASS)**

CONTENT STATEMENT

Due to the nature of our primary sources, much of the literature we will be considering features violence, sometimes including sexual violence. If you are concerned about your ability to engage with any of the content, please meet with me as soon as possible so we can discuss accommodations.

INCLUSIVE TEACHING STATEMENT

I believe that when we recognize and share our diversity, we are able to create a better learning environment, address problems more creatively, and pursue more rigorous inquiry. I thus strive to maintain a classroom based on open communication, mutual respect, and non-discrimination. I view the diversity that students bring to this class as a resource, strength and benefit. It is my intent to present materials and activities that are respectful of diversity: gender, sexuality, disability, generational status, socioeconomic status, ethnicity, race, religious background, and immigration status. Any suggestions for promoting a positive and open environment will be appreciated and given serious consideration. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, please let me know.

DISABILITY STATEMENT

If you need any special accommodations, please provide me with a copy of your Accommodation Determination Letter (provided by the Student Disability Services office: [disabilities@uchicago.edu](mailto:disabilities@uchicago.edu), 773-702-6000) as soon as possible so that we may discuss how your accommodations may be implemented.

*This is a prospective syllabus for an undergraduate seminar on Persian literature in translation. Policies and detailed assignment descriptions are not included; for reference, see above syllabus. The syllabus is for a ten-week quarter system; for expanding the course in order to teach it within a semester system, options include reading entire works instead of excerpts (especially the prose Eskandarnāmeḥ and Bābornāmeḥ); expanding the offerings of secondary literature; and/or adding a unit or two (for instance, on Nezāmi's Haft Peykar or Sādeq Chubak's Tangsir.)*

## **Peril and Pleasure: Persian Epic Narrative**

Sam Lasman (he/him/his)  
[slasman@uchicago.edu](mailto:slasman@uchicago.edu)

*Razm o bazm*—“fighting and feasting,” or “peril and pleasure”—together define the heroic world of Persian epics. *Razm* includes battles against rival warriors, monsters, and wild beasts; daring escapes; and feats of strength. *Bazm* covers the arts of music, love, wine-drinking, and banqueting. What is the relationship of these two modes? Why did writers within the Persian cultural sphere consider both essential to their vision of history and culture? In this course, we will explore these questions through key texts spanning the pre-Islamic period to the twentieth century. From Ferdowsi's champions to Nezami's star-crossed lovers, Babur's memoirs of conquest to Simin Daneshvar's anti-imperialist tragedy, we will consider how the poles of *razm* and *bazm* define characters and their societies. Primary readings will be in English translation; if there is interest, a section may be set up for those interested in reading portions of the original texts in Persian.

### **COURSE OBJECTIVES**

Students will be able to:

- demonstrate familiarity with the tropes and stylistic features of Persian epic narrative
- trace patterns of continuity and disjuncture throughout Persian literary history
- apply techniques of literary criticism to a tradition outside the Western canon, and interrogate how that tradition critiques those same ideas (“literary,” “Western,” “canon”...)
- generate analytical work that engages substantially with primary texts

### **GRADING & REQUIREMENTS**

**5% Office Hours**

**15% Attendance**

**30% Participation**

**50% Projects**

*Undergraduate students may opt to complete two shorter papers (4-5 pages each), one due at midterm and one due at the end of term; or a single longer paper (roughly 10 pages) due at the end of the term.*

## **CLASS & READING SCHEDULE**

### **WEEK 1: Memory and Memorial in Pahlavi Legends**

*Ayādḡār-ī Zarērān* (“Remembering Zarer”) (10<sup>th</sup> century CE?), trans. by Sam Lasman.  
*Kārnāmag-ī Ardashīr-ī Pāpagān* (“The Book of the Deeds of Ardashir son of Papag”) (10<sup>th</sup> century CE?), trans. by Darab Dastur Peshotan Sanjana (1896).

<http://www.avesta.org/pahlavi/karname.htm>.

Mary Boyce, “The Parthian gōsān and Iranian Minstrel Tradition,” *JRAS*, 1957, p. 10-45.

### **WEEK 2: Shāhnāmeḥ 1: Monstrous Heroics**

Excerpts from *Shāhnāmeḥ* (“Book of Kings”) by Abolqāsem Ferdowsi (1010 CE), trans. by Dick Davis (2007): *Haft Khwān-e Rostam* (“Rostam’s Seven Feats”); *Bizhan o Manizheh* (“Bizhan and Manizheh”); *Siyāvash*.

Excerpts from *Epic and Sedition: The Case of Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh* by Dick Davis (2006).

### **WEEK 3: Shāhnāmeḥ 2: Entering History**

Excerpts from *Shāhnāmeḥ* (“Book of Kings”) by Abolqāsem Ferdowsi (1010 CE), trans. by Dick Davis (2007): *Ardashir o Kerm-e Haftvād* (“Ardashir and Haftvad’s Worm”); *Bahrām-e Chubin*.

Kinga Ilona Márkus-Takeshita, “From Iranian Myth to Folk Narrative: The Legend of the Dragon-Slayer and the Spinning Maiden in the Persian Book of the Kings,” *Asian Folklore Studies*, 2001, p. 203-214.

### **WEEK 4: Fanfictions: Marvels of the Secondary Epics**

Excerpts from *Farāmarznāmeḥ* (“Book of Faramarz”) (late 11<sup>th</sup> century CE?), trans. by Marjolijn van Zutphen (2017).

*Dāstān-e Babr-e Bayān* (“The Tale of the Raging Tiger”) (18<sup>th</sup> century CE?), trans. by Sam Lasman.

### **WEEK 5: Antiquarian Romance**

*Vis o Rāmin* (“Vis and Ramin”) by Fakhroddin As’ad Gorgāni (c. 1050 CE), trans. by Dick Davis (2009).

***Midterm. Shorter papers due at end of this week. All students must have visited office hours at least once by end of this week.***

### **WEEK 6: The Alexander Cycle in Persian**

Excerpts from the *Eskandarnāmeḥ* (“Book of Alexander”) by Nezāmi Ganjavi (c. 1202 CE), trans. by H. Wilberforce Clarke (1881).

<https://books.google.com/books?id=ybcOAAAAQAAJ>.

Excerpts from the prose *Eskandarnāmeḥ* (“Book of Alexander”) (14<sup>th</sup> century CE?), trans. by Evangelos Venetis (2017).

### **WEEK 7: Star-Crossed Lovers**

*Leyli o Majnun* by Nezāmi Ganjavi (c. 1188 CE), trans. by Rudolph Gelpke (1997).

### **WEEK 9: The Epic Memoir**

Excerpts from *Bābornāmeḥ* (“Babor’s Book”) by Zahiroddin Mohammad Babor (1529 CE), trans. by Wheeler M. Thackston (2002): *Farghāneh* (“The Ferghana Valley”), *Hendustān* (“India”).

**WEEK 8: Popular Religious Epic**

Excerpts from *Amirhamzahnāmeḥ* (“Book of Amir Hamza”) by Ghalib Laknavi and Abdullah Bilgrami (1871 CE), trans. by Frances Pritchett (1991).

<http://www.columbia.edu/itc/mealac/pritchett/oolitlinks/hamzah/index.html>

**WEEK 10: Lament of the Modern**

*Savushun* (“The Mourners of Siyavash”) by Simin Dāneshvar (1969 CE), trans. by Roxane Zand (as *A Persian Requiem*), 2002.

***Final papers due a week after last class meeting.***

## *Proposed Courses*

### **Maneaters: Humans and their Predators** (*Freshman Seminar/1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> year undergraduates*)

Animals that prey on humans occupy critical niches in individual imaginations, global culture, and natural environments. While our interactions with these creatures have shifted drastically over the millennia, only recently has the majority of the world's population come to live without regular threat of predation. This class draws on a variety of disciplines to interrogate the relationship between people and the mammals, birds, reptiles, and fish that occasionally eat us. We will read epic literature from the Middle East and Europe; examine news reports from 18<sup>th</sup>-century France and 20<sup>th</sup>-century New Jersey; explore the colonial and postcolonial dimensions of tiger-hunting in India; and navigate ways in which ecology, paleontology, and other scientific disciplines can inform humanistic inquiry.

### **Arthurian Otherworlds** (*Lecture*)

From early in their literary careers, Arthur, Guinevere, and their knights have walked the line between this world and an array of strange lands filled with wise women, giants, holy relics, and unspeakable terrors. This lecture course uses the relationship between the king's court and these "otherworlds" as the basis of a multilingual, transhistorical exploration of the Arthurian mythos. Beginning with Welsh poetry, Latin history, and French romance, we will journey through to the modernist, feminist, and cinematic retellings of the cycle in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

### **Outlaw Poetics** (*Advanced Seminar*)

While often maligned and feared, outlaws throughout history have also been celebrated for their anti-authoritarian deeds and their rejection of established norms. In addition to featuring in literature written by others, outlaws themselves have created poetry that offers a sharp critique on the societies against which they struggle. From the *sa'alik* poets of pre-Islamic Arabia to the exiled skalds of medieval Iceland, from verses by anticolonial rebels of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries to twentieth and twenty-first century blues and rap, outlaw poetry has been read, sung, banned, and co-opted for centuries. This course will examine the various phenomena that comprise outlaw poetics, exploring them as literary expressions, social commentaries, historical documents, and political manifestos. Students will be expected to work in and present on a source in at least one non-English language.

### **Pseudohistory** (*Advanced Seminar*)

Since its coinage in the nineteenth century, "pseudohistory" has been used to describe particular modes of historical writing that draw on myth, conspiracy, or falsehood to advance a particular vision of the past. In this course, we will use on theories of historical narrative to interrogate this concept, its development from the Classical period to the modern era, and its relationship to mainstream history, while reading examples of pseudohistories from Latin, Persian, French, and other traditions. Each student will be expected to lead a class based on a specific work within their linguistic field. The final project will consist of a translation and commentary on a section of this work, or an analytic essay if the original is in English.



## Sample Teaching Materials

### MIDTERM PROJECT for UNCANNY ENCOUNTERS IN GLOBAL MEDIEVAL LITERATURE

*As noted in the syllabus, several approaches are possible for the midterm. You may:*

1. Write an analytical paper of 5-6 pages. This will represent 25% of your final grade.
2. Complete a paper proposal/project outline for a final paper of 10-12 pages. This outline should be at least 1 page in length plus preliminary bibliography. It represents 20% of your final project grade (and therefore 10% of your total course grade), though the provisional midterm grade may be revised in light of the final paper.
3. Complete a 1-2 page project proposal for a final creative project. This will represent 30% of your final project grade (and therefore 15% of your total course grade), though the provisional midterm grade may be revised in light of the final project.

\*\*\*If at any point in this process you become stuck or would like extra assistance, don't hesitate to reach out to me, sign up for office hours, and/or contact the University Writing Program: [writing-program@uchicago.edu](mailto:writing-program@uchicago.edu).

*If you choose 1, the shorter analytical paper:*

- Papers should be 5-6 pages (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, ordinary margins), not including bibliography.
- You don't strictly need to cite outside sources, but at least some background reading on your text(s) of choice can help contextualize your argument (and show me that you've engaged with the work substantially). If you need help locating any sources, please let me know.
- I prefer footnotes or endnotes for citations (these are more common for humanities papers), but the important thing is to *cite* and to cite *consistently*.
- Papers should engage substantially with at least one primary (i.e., medieval, non-theoretical) text we have read so far. Remember that at least one of the short papers – this one or the one at the end of the term – must take a comparative approach and engage with more than one primary text. Given the length restriction, it is best to focus on a very specific element that unites or divides the works you are considering, so that you can give each text adequate space within the paper.
- Feel free to make use of any of theoretical texts that we have read so far, *if* doing so helps you engage with the primary source.
- Be cautious about bringing in works – particularly modern works – that we haven't covered in class. It can certainly be done (the

definitive five-page analysis of flesh-eating in *Namthar Zanglingma* and *The Walking Dead* has not *yet* been written)... but it requires care and sophistication. If you're considering making substantial use of a source from outside the syllabus, I strongly encourage you to meet with me in office hours to discuss your ideas.

- Every good paper begins with a *genuine question* that gets at an *instability* or *tension* or *strangeness* in the text(s) under consideration. For example: why does a particular jarring scene occur? Why does a particular character appear or disappear in the narrative when s/he does? To invoke some core themes of the course – why is the magical or supernatural deployed where it is? How does it break or change the pre-existing world of the text?

*If you choose 2, the project outline for the final paper:*

- The outline should be at least 1 page in length (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, ordinary margins), plus a preliminary bibliography of at least 8 works – at least 2 primary sources, and several secondary works. These secondary works may be some combination of prior studies of your texts, studies of the historical or cultural context in which they were produced, and theoretical texts whose methodologies or insights you plan to employ.
- Two is the recommended number of primary sources to tackle. More is theoretically possible, but difficult in a paper of this length. If you have a brilliant plan to incorporate more than two, though, the project outline is the place to convince me it can be done.
- Your project outline should pose a *genuine question* that gets at an *instability* or *tension* or *strangeness* in the texts under consideration. For example: why does a particular jarring scene occur? Why does a particular character appear or disappear in the narrative when s/he does? To invoke some core themes of the course – why is the magical or supernatural deployed where it is? How does it affect the hero's journey? How does it break or change the pre-existing world of the text? How does it shape broader historical narratives? This question should be clearly and succinctly stated somewhere in the outline – towards the beginning is a solid choice!
- While you don't need to answer the question in the outline – you wouldn't need to write the paper if you could, after all – you should address some of the observations that led you to it, the investigative approaches you plan on using, and the constitutive questions that you will be answering in working towards your thesis.
- I'm not opposed in principle to final projects that offer a comparative analysis of one of our syllabus texts and a modern work, in any medium. However, doing so requires careful and sophisticated readings of both the medieval and the modern work – readings that don't suppose or want them to do the same things or

work the same way. Again, if you want to take this approach, the project outline is the place to convince me.

*If you choose 3, the proposal for the final creative project:*

- Project proposals should total 1-2 pages in length (double-spaced, Times New Roman, 12 point font, ordinary margins).
- About half the length should consist of an outline for the creative project. What medium/media will you use? If it is a narrative work, such as a short story, ballad, theater piece, film, or dance, what will happen? If it is a visual artwork, how do you envision it looking? If it is a performance of some kind, how will you present/display/share it with its audience?
- The other half of the proposal should describe how this project explores the central questions of this class – the role of the uncanny, marvelous, supernatural, and inhuman in medieval narratives. What text(s) are you invoking or drawing upon? What questions are you exploring? What can a creative work accomplish that an analytical essay could not? Remember that both creative projects and analytical essays should feature deep thinking on the course texts – the *type* of deep thinking, however, differs.
- Remember that since there is also an option for a *short* final creative project (if you do the shorter analytical midterm essay), if you are proposing a single, final creative project, it should be *substantial* or *multiple* (more than one song, for instance). What constitutes substantial/multiple will, of course, vary from medium to medium – but, to be blunt, the basic question could be: *If I could do x creative work for 25% of my final grade, what would a project accounting for twice that look like?*

#### RUBRIC

- A (100% of the grade portion) – the midterm project meets all the requirements outlined above, and goes substantially beyond them. It represents deep, original engagement with the texts and the fundamental questions of the course. It takes risks and engages dilemmas in the source text and in its own argument. The question(s) it tackles are clearly stated and thoroughly addressed. It is clearly and correctly written, with essentially no mechanical errors, logical gaps, or irrelevant passages.
- A- (90% of the grade portion) – the project meets all the requirements outlined above, and is fully developed. It engages competently with the texts and course questions. It features a clear central question, but may leave some important point unaddressed, circumvent a core difficulty of the text or argument, or settle for an easier path out of a dilemma. The writing is clear and engaging throughout, with minimal errors, logical gaps, or irrelevant passages.
- B (85% of the grade portion) – the project is complete, but somewhat underdeveloped. It engages the course texts and makes some good points about them, but the central question may be left vague, or several important

- points are left unaddressed. The writing is generally clear, but there may be errors, logical gaps, or irrelevant sections.
- B- (80% of the grade portion) – the project is complete, but one or two requirements may be missing or underdeveloped. Course texts are engaged, but not deeply. The central question may be unclear. The writing has moments of clarity, but still features errors, logical gaps, and digressions.
  - C (75% of the grade portion) – the project is barely complete. Several requirements are missing or underdeveloped. It mentions course texts, but engages with them only at a surface level, or draws largely unsupported conclusions about them. The writing features a general lack of clarity, with mechanical errors, logical gaps, and irrelevant digressions.
  - C- (70% of the grade portion) – the project is incomplete. It meets some of the requirements outlined above, but substantial portions are missing or underdeveloped. It mentions course texts but may misrepresent them or draw unsupported conclusions about them. Significant portions may be incoherent or irrelevant.
  - D (65% of the grade portion) – the project is substantially incomplete. It meets very few of the requirements outlined above. It is largely incoherent or irrelevant.
  - F (60% of the grade portion or below) – the project is never turned in, substantially incomplete, or plagiarized. It meets few if any of the requirements outlined above. It is completely incoherent or irrelevant.

Below is a sample of a student paper based on the above assignment, together with my comments. Even in strong papers such as this, I strive to provide substantive feedback that engages the student's ideas while pushing them to hone their critical thinking. I am then able to track this development through revisions or subsequent assignments.

STUDENT

10/31/18|

The Uncanny in Global Medieval Literature

### The Skin We / They Are In

To be an embodied human is necessarily to have a skin. As a general maxim, to be civilized is to cover that skin, often with the skins of other animals. Wearing skins becomes a civilizing project in which socioeconomic status, religious affiliation, marital status, age, and cultural identity are visibly identifiable. All of these traits simply position the wearer closer or further from the "normal human", whose mythology is created in a precarious, contingent demarcation of what the "normal human" is not. The monster, which is always a funhouse mirror reflection of the human, lurks in the liminality of known / unknown / unknowable. In the Tibetan chronicle *Namthar Zanglingma* and the Yemeni epic *Sirat Sayf ibn Dhi-Yazan*, the main characters, Padmasambhaya and King Sayf, both challenge the myth of the "normal human" by wearing monstrous skins. In doing so, the characters are perceived as (and perhaps become) beings which are not-quite-human. In a world in which flesh is a necessity and identity is inextricable from the environment, as Patricia MacCormack claims in "The Wonder of Teras", what are the implications of consciously twisting a unifying feature of civilization into a grotesque marker of aberrance? In scenes of character development, Padmasambhaya and King Sayf wear skins which render them monstrous, respectively, the skin of flayed corpses and the skins of multiple freshly-slaughtered animals. As MacCormack writes, "Ambiguous hybridity of

Sam Lasman

Be careful with your phrasing of these generalizations, particularly when you're using a term as loaded/problematic as "civilized." I think we could also argue that specifically wearing skins is in fact seen as "less civilized" than wearing other kinds of clothing, more abstracted from natural processes (first and foremost, death.) Your next sentence here is both clearer and more careful!

Sam Lasman

This three-part linkage of "normality," "mythology," and "monster" is fascinating and suggestive, but could be drawn a little clearer/tighter - particularly because here and in your thesis, I'm not entirely clear on how you're using "myth."

Sam Lasman

Well... hagiography/"sacred biography," really!

Sam Lasman

Great thesis!

Sam Lasman

A citation could be nice here – even directing us to a few pages of MacCormack, if there's no specific quote that quite does what you want it to

Sam Lasman

Right – this seems a better description than your earlier generalization about wearing skins!

form and encounter spatially locate the monster. Temporally, the monster is constituted through metamorphosis and distortion<sup>1</sup>. Although Padmasambhava and King Sayf are on different quests in different realms (both spiritual and physical), both characters become monstrous when they warp time, space, and authority—and thus pervert the myth of the “normal human”.

Though porous, breakable, and extremely mutable, skin serves as a social wall, a boundary which delineates categorical Cartesian knowledge of self / other, us / them, living / dead. These neat dichotomies are challenged by Padmasambhava and King Sayf as they show how hybridity (the joining together of separate parts) can lead to metamorphosis (becoming a new entity from pre-existing parts). Metamorphosis implies a reflexive layer of abstraction; the root “meta” anticipates a beyond attainable only via change of the self. In the context of Padmasambhava, a bodhisattva who practices meditation to achieve an escape from eternal return, metamorphosis inherently involves the spiritual. Yet, this spirituality cannot be divided from the visceral realm, as seen in the charnel ground passage. Exiled from his foster father’s kingdom on grounds of manslaughter, Padmasambhava is led to the Cool Grounds by a group of ministers. It is a supernatural space, filled with spirits, corpses, carrion-eating birds, and ferocious predators. Padmasambhava claims, however, that he has “no fear, as mind knows neither birth nor death / Not having attachment to a homeland, to be exiled does not intimidate (him)”<sup>2</sup>. Divorced from worldly life / death, Padmasambhava achieves a state of samadhi, a state of concentration in which a union with the divine is reached, just as before or after death. Initially, he sustains his own life by eating offerings to the dead and by wearing the corpses’ shrouds. But in the time of famine, Padmasambhava flays and eats the corpses, thus embodying

**Sam Lasman**

Intriguing (and sweeping!) though I think a nod back to skins is called for in this sentence – ‘when they wear skins in order to warp...’ or something

**Sam Lasman**

A paragraph break here might be nice, as we move from the more general level to a specific discussion of an episode from the text

**Sam Lasman**

I think it may be stronger here to invoke the key aspect of a bodhisattva – the *return* to existence from enlightenment, in order to help other sentient beings

<sup>1</sup> MacCormack, Patricia. *Posthuman Ethics : Embodiment and Cultural Theory*. Routledge, 2012. pp. 82.

<sup>2</sup> Ye-shes-mtsho-rgyal. *The Lotus-born: The Life Story of Padmasambhava*. Translated by Erik Pema Kunsang. Edited by Martha Binder Schmidt. Hong Kong: Rangjung Yeshe, 2005 pp. 38

the dead human internally (digestively) and externally (as clothing). He has become a monster because his state of being is ambiguous; he is made both of the living and the dead in order to transcend both classifications (and thus transcend human knowledge).

Sam Lasman  
Nice

A tenet of MacCormack's teratology theory is that human desire shapes the construction of the monster--in fact, the monstrous body cannot exist without the human mind and its longing for knowledge.<sup>3</sup> The technics of skins reveal this grotesque collusion. The word "skin" in English is etymologically traced back to the verb "to flay" or "to peel" in Dutch and German.<sup>4</sup>

The ideas are inextricably linked; humans will always want to cover what is exposed and to expose what is covered. In the story of King Sayf, this idea finds expression in the sorceress 'Aqila's plot to disguise her daughter's fated fiance from the court sorcerers. To obscure their visions, she cuts open the belly of a fish and skins it, wrapping Sayf up to his armpits in it. She slits open the breast of a roc bird and sets its legs over Sayf's shoulders, placing his hands inside the breast. 'Aqila then suspends this hybrid form in her well. This gory disguise deceives the sorcerers, whose improbable visions of monsters elicit the murderous wrath of King Qamroun. It is the gaze of the "normal human" through the lens of its self-sustaining myth which lends such absurdity to Sayf's transformation. Though the sorcerers perceive the distinct animals, they cannot understand how a human could be at once swallowed by a fish and grasped by a bird. Sayf is made unknowable, and therefore monstrous, by the superimposition of animal parts onto his own body. As MacCormack writes, "The hybrid and the ambiguous hold fascination for the 'non-monster' because they show the excesses, potentialities, and infinite protean configurations of form and flesh available in nature even while human sciences view them as unnatural" (79).<sup>5</sup>

Sam Lasman  
Which ideas exactly? Again, some very interesting terms in play (human/skin/knowledge/uncovering), but their precise relationship could be clearer

Sam Lasman  
Nicely put

<sup>3</sup> *Posthuman Ethics* pp. 79

<sup>4</sup> "Skin (n.)." Index. Accessed November 03, 2018. <https://www.etymonline.com/word/skin>.

<sup>5</sup> *Posthuman Ethics* pp. 79

The gaze of the “normal human” transforms Sayf from cornered, threatened man into a hybridized monster who inspires the terror of King Qamroun through his unknowability. King Qamroun cannot see the skin beneath the skin, cannot flay the beast to find the human. Sayf undermines the King’s authority by undermining the axioms of possibility and knowledge: Qamroun loses his power as soon as the absurd infringes upon an ordered epistemology of his land, its subjects, and most importantly, the distinctions between man and animal.

Sam Lasman  
Great

While the hybridity of Sayf makes him impossible to place or to categorize, the hybridity of Padmasambhava locates him concretely in the world of the charnel fields. Specifically through his acts of flaying and cannibalism, Padmasambhava becomes master of all *mamo dakinis*. It is in this state that he ascertains that King Shakraraja is leading his people on an “errant path”, and that the sole means of correction is through “subjugating and wrathful activity”.<sup>6</sup> Thus, he ties up his hair with a snake, fashions a shirt of human flesh and wears a skirt of tiger skin. As in Sayf’s disguise, Padmasambhava wears a hybridization of human / animal to upend the existing authorities, but in this case, Padmasambhava confronts rather than conceals. After Padmasambhava rapes and murders Shakraraja’s subjects, he is considered by the people to be a Rakshasa Demon. Once again, the gaze of the “normal human” through the lens of its own mythology characterizes this antisocial behavior as that of a non-human. A party of skilled warriors is assembled to hunt the Rakshasa Demon in the cemetery; however, the Demon escapes after shooting a guardsman and is renamed the “Youth Escapee”. Certainly, Padmasambhava escapes capture, imprisonment and / or death. In other words, he evades the punitive arm of authority, and in a more general context, he evades the system of teaching key to Buddhism. Padmasambhava is a self-taught bodhisattva, and this alone arouses the suspicions of

Sam Lasman  
A gloss on this, or its connection to the charnel fields, would be helpful here

Sam Lasman  
Here again, a clearer sense of how you are employing this term would be helpful!

Sam Lasman  
I’m not sure this adverb is helping the argument here – it may actually be obscuring it! Especially as your next sentence is both clearer and more incisive.

<sup>6</sup> *The Lotus-born: The Life Story of Padmasambhava* pp. 39



the people, who conclude he must be a demon. Just as Sayf remains a monster to King Oamroun, Padmasambhava remains a monster to the people until both characters shed their monstrous appearances.

Wearing clothing is at once a permanent metamorphosing force and a temporary state of being for both Padmasambhava and King Sayf. Eventually, the characters seek a more social purpose and are consequently obligated to assume more “human” forms. In response to allegations of being a demon, Padmasambhava decides to appear as if he needs help from the existing hierarchies of instruction. Therefore, he decides to seek out Master Prabhahasti, but on the road, he is stopped by two “terrified” monks. Padmasambhava assures them that he is “not doing any more evil actions” and says, “Please accept me”.<sup>7</sup> The monks do not accept his promise until Padmasambhava relinquishes his weapons. Disarmed, the bodhisattva rejoins society and can wield his powers of compassionate wrath for good. Later, when he returns to the lands he once raped and pillaged, the people gather to burn him. When he emerges from the flames in a tranquil lotus, the rabble converts to Buddhism. Through his monstrous, inhuman violence exemplified by his weapons and skins, Padmasambhava eventually leads Tibetans to the right path. The monster becomes a hero and leader when the people come to understand his authoritative episteme. Likewise, King Sayf sheds his monstrous skins when he realizes he must continue in his quest to obtain the Book of the Nile, a quest fueled by his social desire to marry Shama. ‘Aquila disguises Sayf until he reaches the chest with the book, at which point the chest will come to land at his feet, thus identifying Sayf as the intruder and potential thief.<sup>8</sup> Disguise through hybridized skins is a temporary state which helps Sayf and Padmasambhava upend

**Sam Lasman**

Great observation – I think my only quibble is “eventually,” which obscures some of the reasons why this might happen (why the initial monstrous state AND the subsequent social (re)-integration are important

**Sam Lasman**

Intriguing, though it’s not clear to me how to reconcile this monstrousness with Padmasambhava’s relinquishing of his weapons and tranquility, which you’ve just mentioned. If you’re positioning “hero” and “monster” as opposing qualities, then that could be clearer!

**Sam Lasman**

This tense switch is a little jarring

<sup>7</sup> *The Lotus-born: The Life Story of Padmasambhava* pp. 41

<sup>8</sup> Jayyusi, Lena. *The Adventures of Sayf Ben Dhi Yazan: An Arab Folk Epic*. Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1999 pp.54

existing forms of authority; yet, to fulfill their larger aims, both must present themselves as more “normal humans”.

Although this chrysalis-like state is temporary, both characters emerge as irrevocably changed and as having caused social change: Savf challenges the King’s authority and moves closer to marrying Shama, and Padmasambhava wreaks havoc in an unethical king’s lands to later use them as sites of conversion. Thus, these positions, which are made liminal through the schema of the “normal human” mythology, become subversive through their aberrance. It appears that the most effective way to undermine human constructions of the social is to move to the peripheries and to therefore question the meanings of “human” and “humanity”. When McCormack writes that “Monsters formed from human matter are never entirely independent from the human form, their uncanny redistribution of human elements considered aberrant configurations”, it becomes important to consider the social implications of these aberrances.<sup>9</sup> In both stories, the not-quite-human becomes a vehicle of social transgression and ultimately, of social transformation. In the conclusion, Savf marries Shama but also obtains the book which allows him to redirect the Nile, while Padmasambhava becomes an established bodhisattva and converts Tibetans to Buddhism. Personal transformations from classifications of “non-human” to “normal human” facilitate a larger social-political and ultimately a “civilizing” change in the texts.

<sup>9</sup> *Posthuman Ethics* pp. 82

Sam Lasman

Great image. I’m pretty sure this is referring to wearing hybridized skins – not to being “normal humans” – but the referent of “this” could be clearer

Sam Lasman

I’m not entirely sure what you mean by “positions” here (vis-à-vis the aspects of the texts you’ve just described)

Sam Lasman

A solid ending, though I’d like “skins” to make it back into this last paragraph more directly and forcefully!

Sam Lasman

Dear STUDENT,

Thanks for this engaging and well-written essay. You’ve tackled difficult aspects of three complex texts, and brought them together – medieval sources and modern theory - through close readings around a unified theme. Without collapsing distinctions between the Sira and the Namthar, you’re able to make convincing comparisons.

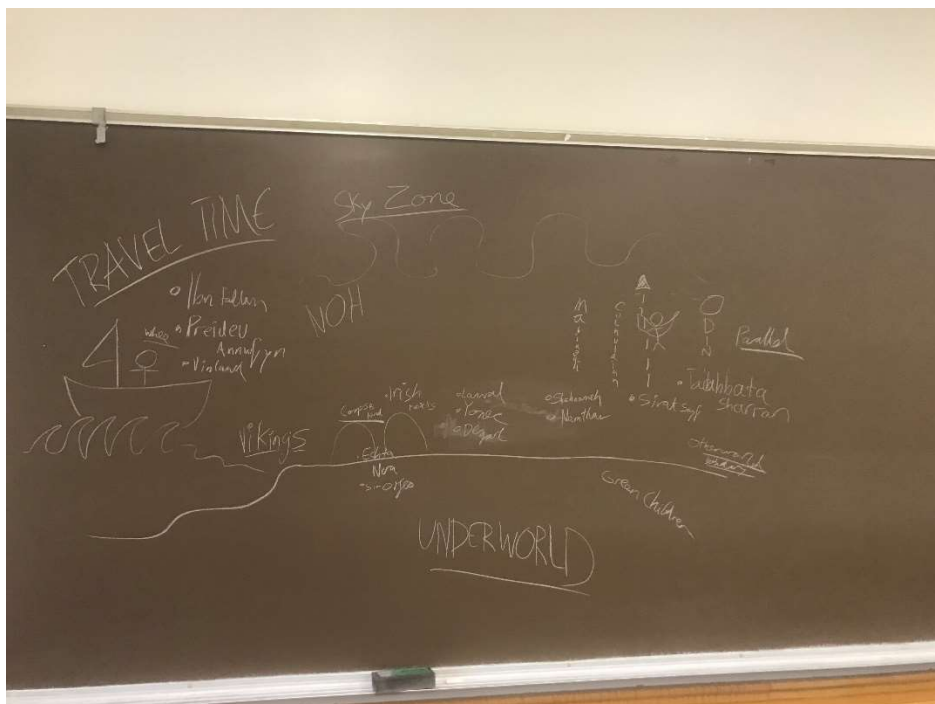
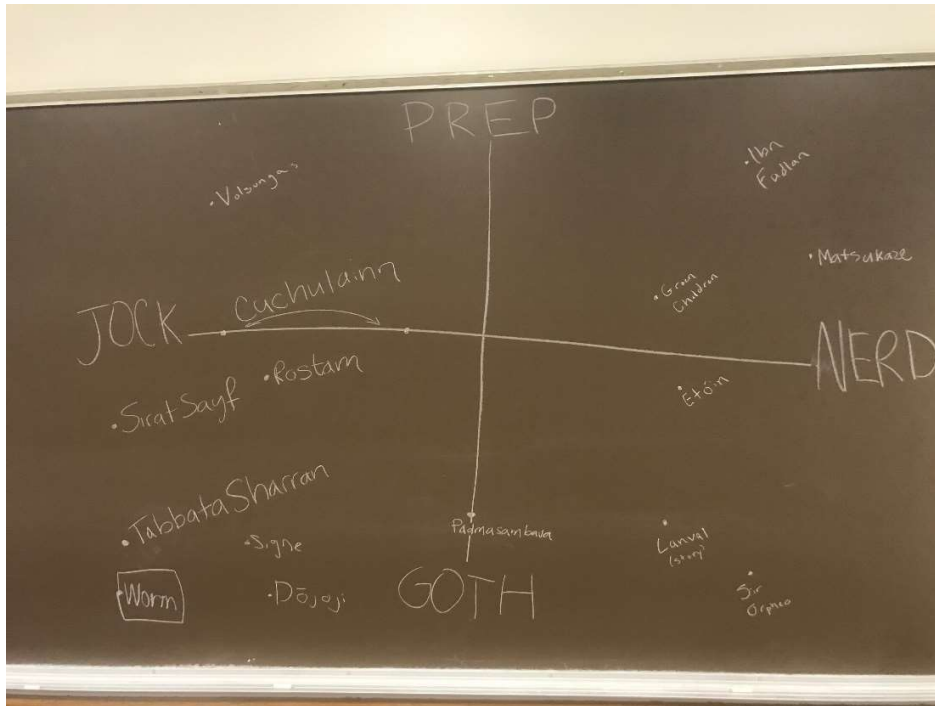
Do be mindful of generalizations, including broad, undefined terms (“mythology” being one of the key ones in this paper). If you want these to work for you, you must specifically outline how you are defining them in the context of your analysis. This in turn would allow you to make stronger ties between related sets of concepts – human/myth/skin, skin/knowledge/uncovering – that you assemble throughout this paper but don’t always unite as clearly as you could. Likewise, be sure that you’re employing sweeping conclusive statements – which you write very well! – only when you’ve adequately built up the argumentative structure around them.

Again, a very impressive midterm, and I look forward to reading more of your work.

Best,  
Sam  
23/25

## Summative Group Work from *Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature*

On our last day of class, I asked students to divide into groups and map our course texts in a non-geographical manner of their choice. I was deeply impressed by their creativity, cooperation, and ability to demonstrate not only familiarity with our expansive syllabus but also insightful analysis. Below are two examples of the “maps” that students produced. The first arranges texts on the basis of a popular meme; the second groups figures and motifs from throughout the course into a series of archetypal landscapes and spaces.



## *Student Evaluations*

*For each of the courses below, I provide a digest of student evaluations by displaying select responses to each qualitative evaluation question as well as quantitative response data where applicable.*

### **CMLT 24610: Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature**

**Number Enrolled:** 20

**Number of Responses:** 11

#### **What are the most important things that you learned in this course?**

- I got to see a lot of patterns and analyze differences across very old texts -brushed up on comparison skills in essays and discussions
- So much monster theory! It was awesome to discuss monsters and epics in an academic context
- Thinking about texts in translation, how we come to build and understand cultural history based on what we have, and how there are always gaps to be uncovered in the way these folkloric stories have been synthesized into our modern understanding.

#### **Describe how aspects of this course (lectures, discussions, labs, assignments, etc.) contributed to your learning.**

- class discussions were very fun and interesting, I always enjoyed both the subject matter and the way we talked about it and the way Sam facilitated/organized discussion
- Discussions were always interesting, and when Sam split us up into groups it was fun to learn more about what your classmates thought in-depth about the texts
- All of the lectures were incredibly well structured, and the texts were always discussed by themselves and with an eye to the major themes of the course and our own personal interests

#### **Thinking about your time in class, what aspect of the instructor's teaching contributed most to your learning?**

- Kept a lot of energy and interest in discussion -organized things well and kept things moving, would point out very interesting things but also keep discussion such that there were opportunities for everyone to analyze and discuss -picked very interesting texts and knew so much about them that there was a mountain of interesting material to discuss
- Had knowledge of many texts in their original languages, which was enormously helpful in trying to define the parameters of their uncanny elements. This class jumped from many times and places, and so the instructor's ability to quickly situate the class to the next text's cultural context was enormously helpful. As was the 'How to Read Middle English' workshop held outside of normal class hours.
- Organized the class really well between student presentations, small group discussion, and full class discussion. There was never a lull and class always felt productive. In his lectures, he brought a ton of energy and esoteric knowledge.

### **What could she/he modify to help you learn more?**

- I like breaking into groups for discussion purpose, but sometimes we did way too often. Small group discussion is not always helpful.
- Maybe hold more class discussions or lecture a bit more, would have liked to hear more of his thoughts on the readings.

### **Quantitative Evaluations**

*Values represent average student responses on a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 = strongly disagree and 5 = strongly agree.*

I understood the standards for success on assignments.	<b>4.56</b>
Class time enhanced my ability to succeed in graded assignments.	<b>4.64</b>
I received feedback on my performance that helped me improve.	<b>4.73</b>
My work was evaluated fairly.	<b>4.64</b>
I felt respected in this class.	<b>4.64</b>
The instructor: organized the course clearly.	<b>4.56</b>
facilitated discussions that were engaging and useful.	<b>4.45</b>
stimulated your interest in the core ideas of the course.	<b>4.56</b>
challenged you to learn.	<b>4.45</b>
was available and helpful outside of class.	<b>4.82</b>
motivated you to think independently.	<b>4.64</b>
worked to create an inclusive and welcoming environment.	<b>4.73</b>
Overall, this instructor made a significant contribution to your learning.	<b>4.64</b>
Overall, this was an excellent course.	<b>4.64</b>
I would recommend this course.	<b>5.00</b>

**PERS 10101, 10102 & 10103: Elementary Persian 1, 2 & 3**

**Number Enrolled:** 16

**Number of Responses:** 10

**Please comment on the T.A. Did he/she answer your questions fully and clearly?**

- Sam Lasman is great. He tries his best to have engaging activities and he's very available to help us out and will help us understand so many random subtleties in the language. He is very appreciated. Class would not be as nice without him.
- He was helpful, enthusiastic, and very knowledgeable. We had sessions with him on Friday for 1.5 hours where we were able to talk more and do activities.
- Yes, Sam Lasman, our TA, was extremely helpful and accessible. I really loved how he ran our TA section entirely in Persian, and his explanations of the grammar were extremely clear.

**How available was the T.A. for communication and meetings?**

- Nearly always, and if not available at a specific time, would always find a way to create time.
- He was always available to meet anytime for any kind of question.
- Always made himself available.

**What were the strengths and weaknesses of the T.A.'s section?**

- TA's sections were very helpful, especially speaking the language and using the new vocab, since we barely ever spoke in actual class. It was overall a very beneficial experience.
- #1 TA right here, very helpful, always available outside class, super nice, understands frustrations, good at explaining in multiple ways. He did his best, and it was more than enough to help me understand Persian better.
- Sam was very helpful, and the section taught a lot of new helpful vocab and was great for practicing listening and speaking. I would only say to maybe use more English in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter especially for people who have no useful background.

## **PHIL 21834: Self-Creation as a Philosophical and Literary Problem**

**Number Enrolled:** 17

**Number of Responses:** 14

### **What were the special strong points of your course assistant?**

- Guided discussion well, particularly when we were tired. Never a silent moment. Knows the literary material well, overall strong CA performance.
- Facilitated discussion, helped clarify literary texts, helped structure papers, v. supportive!
- Sam is great! I loved our discussions, he was very helpful in one-on-one meetings, and his paper grades/comments were useful and reasonable.

### **What could your course assistant have done better? Suggestions?**

- Maybe more feedback on paper? A little more focus on Philosophy side would have been helpful, but since he was a literary student it was no big deal.
- As he was a Comp. Lit. student, his explanations of the philosophy texts were less nourished than his (brilliant) analysis of the literary texts.
- Perhaps slightly more structure to the discussion sections, but generally I think he did a good job.

### **Quantitative Evaluations**

*Values represent average student responses on a scale from 1 to 4, with 1 = poorly and 4 = excellently.*

How well was the C.A. able: <b>to conduct discussions:</b>	<b>3.36</b>
<b>to respond to questions and comments:</b>	<b>3.58</b>
<b>to respond to written materials:</b>	<b>3.50</b>



## INDIVIDUAL TEACHING CONSULTATION FINAL REPORT

Date: October 30, 2018

Instructor: Samuel Lasman

Course: Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature

Consultant(s): Katharine Harris, Nell Hawley

Attendance: 18

### Summary

Sam teaches a self-designed course entitled “Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature” (ENGL 24610) which is cross-listed in the Comparative Literature, English, Medieval Studies, and Religious Studies departments. Students enrolled in this class are primarily 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduates with an interest in the humanities. This discussion-based course meets twice per week for 80 minutes and focuses on helping students to closely analyze medieval texts and build frameworks for comparison. I observed a class session in Week 5 of Fall Quarter. In this session, the class focused on texts from medieval Ireland; this was the class’s first foray into medieval Europe after spending the beginning of the class with Arabic, Persian, and Tibetan texts. In this session, Sam facilitated an in-depth analysis of the assigned texts through activities including a student presentation, small group work, and full class discussions.

Sam demonstrated an excellent command of effective teaching strategies during the observed class session. He structured the class discussions in such a way as to invite the students to share thoughtful observations and skillfully incorporated student input into his comments so as to promote further student engagement. Sam utilized a number of different in-class activities to support student learning. These included a student presentation, an opportunity for the students to respond in writing to a question, and small group discussions of assigned texts. In this Individual Teaching Consultation, we focused on ways that Sam could build upon these (already effective) strategies by clarifying the expectations and structure for students during these activities.

\*\*\*\*\*



## **Part I: Pre-Observation Meeting**

Date of meeting: October 29, 2018

In our pre-observation meeting, Sam and I discussed his goals for the consultation and Sam provided me with background information about the class that I would be observing. This course is the first one Sam has designed, and he was interested in receiving feedback and perspective on it. Additionally, he hoped to use this experience to further develop as a teacher in order to improve his preparedness for future teaching opportunities. Specifically, Sam has been concerned about whether the structure for his class sessions has been working with the larger-than-expected number of enrolled students and whether he has been able to keep the course cohesive as it incorporates a large number of texts from a variety of places. The rest of this report will focus on strategies that Sam can use to continue to grow as a teacher and to teach a large number of students from a variety of different texts.

## **Part II: Observation and Comments**

Date of observation: October 30, 2018

Observation #1: In the beginning of the class session, Sam invites a student who has prepared a presentation to share that presentation with the class. After this 3-5 minute presentation, Sam provides an opportunity for the rest of the students in the class to ask the presenter any follow up questions or to contribute their thoughts to the discussion.

Comments: This was a very effective way to open the class. It immediately allowed for student engagement, and communicated to students that their participation and ideas were welcomed and valued in the class session. I noted that during this student presentation, many but not all of the other students in the class appeared to be actively engaged in listening. In our post-observation meeting, we talked about how Sam could provide more structure to the listening students as to how they can best be an active audience for their presenting classmate. Since Sam doesn't know the content of the presentations beforehand, it isn't feasible for him to propose specific things for the students to listen for. However, he could ask them to each write down one question that occurs to them during the presentation, or ask them to listen for something that connects with the texts they've read for the day (if this is applicable). Overall, this was an effective way to open class and Sam should consider continuing to use this type of activity to support student learning.

Observation #2: After briefly introducing the day's topic, during which time he drew connections between the topic and what the class has previously been focused on, Sam asks a question of the class to which they should respond in writing. After allowing time for writing, Sam asks for students to share their responses with a partner. Sam then leads a whole class discussion, charting their responses on the board. Later in the class, Sam asked the class to break into small groups and discuss a question based on a text he assigns to each group. After a group discussion during which Sam circulates, checking in with different groups, he leads a whole class discussion based on responses from the groups. Students discussed their ideas readily with one another in their pairs and small groups. (It took a little more time for the small-group discussions to grow animated.) In

the whole-group discussion based on the first activity, students are looking at their classmates who are speaking, watching what Sam writes on the board, and taking notes. In the whole-group discussion based on the second activity, students seem to take fewer notes; students share more comments with the class when Sam draws them out on specific ideas ("I know from listening to your conversation there was one more really interesting point you were talking about").

Comments: Both of these activities were well-received by the students and resulted in engaged and thoughtful discussions by the class. In both of these instances, however, there was some uncertainty among some of the students about precisely what they were supposed to be doing at the very beginning of the activity. In our post-observation meeting, we discussed that Sam might consider ways of providing more directions and structure during these activities so that students can engage with the material from the very start. For example, he could write the question or discussion prompts that he would like the students to consider on the board as he introduces these activities. This gives students whose attention may have momentarily drifted during the verbal explanation the opportunity to reconnect quickly into the class activity.

Sam actively and consistently engaged with the students during the small-group discussion activity. He was attuned to all of the groups in the classroom and expertly stepped in to help spur discussion in groups where the conversation may have been flagging. This would also be an opportunity for Sam to address any issues with imbalanced participation by members of the class. Although Sam facilitated whole-group discussions so as to prompt balanced participation overall, Sam could still use this technique in future classes, especially larger ones. While circulating among the groups, he could identify students who less frequently contribute to the whole class discussions, but who are nonetheless sharing interesting observations within their small group. He can then prime those students to share later in the whole class setting and call on them in order to more evenly distribute the discussion among all students.

Observation #3: As the class period draws to a close, Sam ends the class by summarizing the day's discussion on the Sid and the Otherworld. He then previews the next class for the students, connecting it to what they have discussed that day.

Comments: This was an effective way to wrap up the class because it helped the students to review what they had learned that day and anchored the day's lesson into the context of what would be coming next. In our post-observation meeting, we discussed that Sam could consider incorporating student participation into this end-of-class summary. He could ask specific questions about the topics discussed that day, or ask general questions about what the students perceived as important in the day's lesson. This not only would help the students build their knowledge through practicing recall, but would serve as a mechanism for Sam to assess what the students had gleaned from the day's discussion. This could be in addition to the excellent summary that Sam himself gave, as that remains a good way to communicate to the students what was important about the day from the perspective of the instructor. Indeed, in our post-observation meeting Sam shared that in their mid-course evaluations, his students requested that he share his own wrap-up at the end of class periods. Sam can continue to do this while also incorporating student participation into the time at the end of the class.

### **Part III: Post-Observation Meeting**

Date of meeting: November 26, 2018

During our post-observation meeting, Sam shared his thoughts about how the observed class session had gone based on his viewing of the recorded session. We then discussed the observations and comments summarized above. We agreed that there is a high level of student engagement in Sam's class, and discussed how many of the activities that he is using promote this engagement. We also discussed the techniques that Sam uses during discussion to facilitate a productive and positive classroom; he effectively summarizes student comments, structures discussions so that students understand what is expected of them, uses different postures (standing vs. sitting) to provide for both collegiality and structure, and cross-links student comments with each other in order to affirm the importance of student input in the class. Finally, we discussed some strategies (in the comments, above) that Sam could use to expand on or tweak the effective activities he's already using. Sam's commitment to supporting student learning in his classroom is obvious. The work he has done in designing and teaching this class has paid off in the form of an engaged and active classroom that benefits his students. His willingness to engage in the often difficult practice of self-critique during this process will be helpful to him as he seeks to build upon his teaching skills going forward.

*Teaching Observation by Daisy Delogu (Department Chair, Department of Romance Languages and Literatures; Professor of French Literature)*

**Class observed:** Uncanny Encounters in Global Medieval Literature

Classroom observation from 11/6/18, on Yonec and Lanval

Overall the classroom had an excellent atmosphere. The vibe was low key, but students were obviously engaged, most spoke voluntarily, many spoke multiple times. In small groups students were very talkative and on task. One student on his way out of the room stopped to tell me that Sam was great. Sam clearly has created a good learning environment.

The class began with two student presentations, one on an article, and one on Marie de France. Sam allowed for student questions after each presentation (of which there were one per presentation), and supplemented judiciously with information/clarification. Class proceeded with a mixture of small and large group conversation. The room is a bit small for the number of students. 1-2 were sitting in the outer circle, and were not fully integrated (one student in particular) into the large group.

Sam had written a passage from Yonec on the board but (for me at least) it was illegible. Powerpoint might be useful for display of information.

Student interaction/response to student contributions: SL circulated during small group work and stopped to talk with each group of students. SL made comments such as “I like that” which don’t judge the student or their remark, but focus instead on SL’s appreciation for the contribution. Also comments like “nice link” validate student contributions to creating a cohesive conversation. SL asked clarifying questions so that students could refine/substantiate their ideas. He also turned a student question back to the group to consider. SL calls on groups, but not individuals. Ensuring student participation might be something to keep an eye on. It’s not ideal to have a student/s who routinely flies below the radar. That said, some students have real trouble speaking in front of the whole group, and it’s important to be sensitive to those issues too.

corrections: not really relevant to this class

focus/objectives: the notion of the uncanny was clearly one that had been developed and refined over the course of the quarter, and provided a conceptual touchstone for students. SL did a good job at connecting the day’s readings to one another, and to previous critical and primary source readings. These connections create a sense of progression and unity over the course of the quarter.

teaching techniques: Sam employs a variety of activities, including student presentations, moments for individual re-reading/reflection, small group work, large group work. He does an excellent job connecting these in meaningful ways, so that each activity feels important. For instance, students were first asked to brainstorm points of conjunction/disjuncture b/t the *lais* and the readings from Freud. They then shared their points in small groups, and then the small groups shared their findings with the large group. Sam put key points on the board for further development. The building up of an increasingly complex interpretation of a text/of key ideas

was well done through activities that progressed from more limited to more inclusive student groups.

ideas to consider: more use of first names might be nice, both on the part of SL, and hopefully to be modelled by the students. sometimes student questions could be re-directed outward (more than was done in this session) to generate student responsibility for crafting understanding, and so that students are responding to/interacting with one another, and not exclusively to SL.

*Pedagogy Training and Seminars*

**Chicago Center for Teaching College Teaching Certificate**

(see documentation below)

**Chicago Center for Teaching Fellow, 2018-2019**

**At the University of Chicago**

- *Workshop on Teaching Portfolios* (February 25, 2019) - Participant
- *Seminar on Teaching Portfolios* (January 15, 2019) – Participant
- *Teaching@Chicago Conference* (September 26, 2018) – Session Leader
- *The Animal/Nonhuman Workshop Pedagogy Workshop* (February 6, 2018) – Panelist
- *CCTE 50000 1: Course Design and College Teaching* (Winter 2018) - Student
- *Fundamentals of Teaching in the Humanities* (Fall 2017) - Participant
- *HUMA 50000 1: Pedagogies of Writing* (Spring 2017) – Student



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**CHICAGO**

## College Teaching Certificate

The Chicago Center for Teaching  
awards this certificate to

**Samuel Lasman**

*from the Department of Comparative Literature*

for completing training in the principles and practices of teaching.



Chicago  
Center for  
Teaching

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO

Spring 2019

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Rando".

William Rando, Executive Director, CCI



William Rando  
Executive Director  
Wieboldt Hall, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor  
1050 East 59<sup>th</sup> Street, Chicago, IL  
[teaching@college.uchicago.edu](mailto:teaching@college.uchicago.edu)  
773.834.2562

April 7, 2019

To Whom It May Concern:

Samuel Lasman has completed the requirements for the College Teaching Certificate through the University of Chicago's Center for Teaching. This program is designed to guide graduate students in reflecting critically about university teaching in general and their own teaching practices in particular. The central objectives of the program are to help graduate students and postdoctoral scholars to:

1. Develop and critically reflect on their teaching practice as they take up teaching opportunities at the University
2. Discuss and appraise key pedagogical principles and frameworks, and implement them in the design of a new course
3. Receive constructive, confidential feedback on their teaching
4. Articulate a meaningful, student-centered and inclusive approach to teaching, expressed in a statement of teaching philosophy and demonstrated in a teaching portfolio

Upon completion of the program, candidates possess a complete teaching portfolio including a set of syllabi ready for classroom use, evidence that they have sought feedback and engaged in self-assessment of their teaching, and reflective statements on teaching that describe their teaching experience and overall approach to undergraduate education. For more information on the certificate, please visit our website at

<https://teaching.uchicago.edu/courses-certificates/college-teaching-certificate/>.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "William Rando".

William Rando,  
Executive Director, Chicago Center for Teaching