Philosophy in Literature (Phil, 331)
Fall 2012, M and W 4:00-5:50 p.m., 122 MCK.
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 reading s are available at the book university bookstore:

ITALO CALVINO, INVISIBLE CITIES (RANDOM UK RANDOM UK) 978-0-09-942983-8 P2
ITALO CALVINO, SIX MEMOS FOR THE NEXT MILLENNIUM (RANDOM VINTAGE) 978-0-679-74237-1 P1
ITALO CALVINO, MR.PALOMAR (HBC TRADE HARVEST) 978-0-15-662780-1 RQ
ITALO CALVINO, COSMICOMICS (HBC TRADE HARVEST) 978-0-15-622600-4 RQ

Contact Information and Office Hours
Professor Vallega will be available during regular office hours or by appointment.
Office Number: Philosophy Department, PLC328
Office hours: M-W, 2:00 to 3:00
Email: avallega@uoregon.edu
In your emails please specify your full name and the title of the course you are attending.

Requirements
1. A final paper (20%) 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. All papers should be printed out; do not send papers by e-mail. Plagiarism will result in the automatic failure of the course (see Rules of Academic Honesty, below).

2. Course Reports (40%, each 20%) This is a weekly report that covers the material discussed in class. The first part of the report’s entry will include the main author/text discussed, themes, and technical issues such as form, symbolism, linguistic choices, etc…; the second part will be a one paragraph discussion of a specific aspect of the work or author that is most interesting to the student. This latter part should include the specific issue and
a careful and thoughtful discussion of what and why this is of interest. The report will be collected twice in the semester, once in midterm and again at the end of the semester as a “comprehensive report” inclusive of all materials and themes discussed in class.

3. **In class tests (30%, 15% each)** There will be two in class tests covering the assigned book due that date: one for *Mr. Palomar* and one for *Invisible Cities*. You must complete both tests to receive credit for this requirement.

4. **Course participation and class discussion (10%)** 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**
2 Course Reports 40% (20% each); 2 in class tests 30% (15% each); Final Paper 20%; and attendance and class participation 10%. **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.
Course Reading Schedule

I-
9/24 - Syllabus / Philosophy in Literature Introduction.
26- Reading as philosophical interpretation and philosophy as phenomenological hermeneutics.

II-
10/1 - “Lightness,” Six Memos / “The Distance of the Moon,” Cosmicomics.
3- “Lightness” / “The Distance of the Moon,” Cosmicomics.

III-
8- “Quickness,” SM / “Games Without End” and “How Much Shall We Bet?,” Cosmicomics.
10- “Quickness” / “Games Without End” and “How Much Shall We Bet?,” Cosmicomics.

IV-
17- Class Cancelled: read assigned readings for next week and prepare report.

V-
22- “Exactitude” / “The Model of Models,” “The Universe as Mirror,” Mr. Palomar

VI-
29- "Visibility" / “The Spiral,” Cosmicomics
31 - Guest Lecturer: specialist on Scandinavian Literature, philosopher, and poet, Professor Michael Stern

VII-
5- “Multiplicity,” SM
7- “Multiplicity”

VIII-
12- Theme: Consistency? Have read: Mr. Palomar [Mr. Palomar in class test 15%]
14- Mr. Palomar

IX-
19- Invisible Cities [Invisible Cities in class test 15%]
21- Invisible Cities
22-23 Thanks Giving

X-
26- Invisible Cities
28- Invisible Cities [Second Course Report DUE 20%]

12/3- Paper Due (20%) by 3:00 pm.