What is Comparative Literature?
Comp Lit is the study of literature from a range of different contexts and traditions. This includes literature produced by various cultures around the world, but also texts that belong to different times, different genres, and different media.

At Williams, Comp Lit is a vibrant interdisciplinary program that brings together faculty and courses from a range of departments and programs, including the foreign language and literature departments, English, Africana Studies, Latino/a Studies, American Studies, Religion, and Theatre, among others.

What kinds of courses can I take in Comp Lit?
Courses listed in the Comparative Literature section of the course catalog cover a wide range of texts and cultures: from the Russian novel to Chinese poetry, from the Qur’an to Hollywood film. There are also courses that read different kinds of "texts," like fashion, museums, or the mass media. Classes are typically small, and students receive close attention from professors who work to meet their individual needs and interests.

Do I have to know a foreign language?
Not necessarily. Many of our students are studying foreign languages and reading literature in the original language, but all the courses listed on the back of this sheet are taught entirely in English, and many have no prerequisites.

Can I major in Comp Lit?
Yes! Within the major, we have two tracks students can choose from. In the first track, students focus on a specific national language and work up to advanced literature courses with readings in the original language. The other track emphasizes classes taught in English and reading in translation, but covers a wider range of traditions.

For information, contact the program chair: Christopher.A.Bolton@williams.edu
Core Courses

COMP111 Nature of Narrative (Bolton)
ENGL 113 Banned Books (Taylor)
COMP117 Intro to Cultural Theory (Thorne)
COMP151 Intro to Theatre (Holzapfel)
COMP202 Modern Drama (Pethica)
COMP239 The Novel in Theory (Case)
COMP245 Black Asia (Schleitwiler)
COMP250 From Adam to Noah (Dekel)
COMP261 Postcolonial Narratives (Eqeiq)
COMP263 Environmental Lit of Latin America Tutorial (J.French)
COMP280 History of the Book (Dekel & Nugent)
COMP283 Great Big Books (Tifft)
COMP312 Francographic Islands (Pieprzak) – conducted in French
COMP339 Race Gender Performance (Huang)
COMP340 Literature and Psychoanalysis (Newman)
COMP341 Cinema of Work and Migration (Druxes)
COMP358 Impossible India: South Asian Lit (Raza Kolb)
COMP365 Fanaticism (Sokolsky)
COMP367 Documentary Fictions (Rosenheim)
COMP376 Silent Film (Tifft)
COMP392 Wonder (Pye)
COMP395 Signs of History (Johnston)
COMP401 Senior Seminar: Children’s Lit (van de Stadt)
COMP407 Literature, Justice & Community (Pye)

Core courses are literature courses with a particularly strong emphasis on critical theory or on comparison across cultures, languages, media, etc. Courses not on this list that meet these criteria may be counted with the chair or advisor’s approval.

Electives

COMP108 Roman Lit: Foundation & Empire (Wilcox)
COMP211 Intro to Latina/o Literatures (Hernández)
RUSS213 Post-Soviet Gender (Cassiday)
COMP213 The New Testament (Moxnes)
COMP255 Love and Death in Modern Japanese Lit (Bolton)
COMP305 Dostoevsky and His Age (Cassiday)
COMP316 An American Family & Reality TV (Chavoya)
COMP332 Hiphop and the Changing Same (Tate)

Any literature course at the college can be counted as an elective for the major. Appropriate courses in art, music, or dance may also be counted with the permission of the chair or your advisor.