Spring 2018 Course Descriptions

Instructor: Michael Collins
Course: 481.902
Title: Law and Literature

Description: Crime, detection, trial, punishment, rehabilitation, freedom: This is the familiar cycle of justice in the United States and many other nations. The whole of this cycle, as well as the legal and theoretical framework in which the cycle unfolds, is the subject matter of the interdisciplinary subfield of literary criticism and legal studies that is known as “Law and Literature.” As a way of introducing “Law and Literature” (together with “Law as Literature,” which investigates the literary aspects of judicial opinions and other legal texts), this class will explore works that represent, theorize, or condemn all of part of this cycle. At a larger level, this class will explore the impact of legal systems and disputes on societies like that of the United States.

Proposed Readings: Final decisions have not yet been made, but possible readings include Robert Bloch's Psycho, Edgar Allan Poe's The Murders in the Rue Morgue, Laura Bates' Shakespeare Saved My Life, Michel Foucault's Discipline and Punish, Joyce Carol Oates' The Female of the Species, Nawal El Saadawi's Woman at Point Zero, Stephen King's Mr. Mercedes, Marian Faux's Roe v. Wade: The Untold Story of the Landmark Supreme Court Decision that Made Abortion Legal, and Angela Y. Davis's Angela Davis: An Autobiography.