



Comparative Literature

Source: *The News Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*, May, 1954, Vol. 7, No. 2 (May, 1954), pp. 2-5

Published by: Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association

Stable URL: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/1346309>

JSTOR is a not-for-profit service that helps scholars, researchers, and students discover, use, and build upon a wide range of content in a trusted digital archive. We use information technology and tools to increase productivity and facilitate new forms of scholarship. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of the Terms & Conditions of Use, available at <https://about.jstor.org/terms>



JSTOR

Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association is collaborating with JSTOR to digitize, preserve and extend access to *The News Bulletin of the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association*

The Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association

Officers, 1953-1954

TOM BURNAM (Colorado State College of Education), *President*

QUINCY GUY BURRIS (New Mexico Highlands University), *Vice-President*

MARTIN CANDELARIA (Colorado State College of Education), *Secretary-Treasurer*

DONALD MCKENZIE (University of New Mexico), *Editor of The News Bulletin*

The News Bulletin of The Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association is published quarterly at The University of New Mexico, Albuquerque. Annual dues in the Association are \$2.

ing. Boil them down and write them up and send them to the editor. He will be grateful

i hope you were all impressed by the lucid and complete coverage of the 1953 October Meeting which appeared in our last issue. Our thanks and congratulations are due the former secretary, Professor John M. Sharp of Texas Western, who supplied this editor with meticulously accurate copy. Mil gracias!

D. M.

RMMLA Reminders

The 1954 meeting of the Association will be held at the COLORADO STATE COLLEGE OF EDUCATION at Greeley, Colorado, on October 22-23. NOTE THE NEW DATE!

Our current President, Tom Burnam, reminds you that you will do your colleagues a favor by encouraging them to join the Rocky Mountain Modern Language Association today! He writes: "Founded in 1947 at the University of New Mexico, the RMMLA has held seven annual meetings, the eighth being scheduled for next October 22 and 23 here at Colorado State College in Greeley, Colo. Following, in general, the pattern established by the national MLA, various sections gather for discussions, critiques, and the reading of papers. Many of the papers read at past meetings have found their way into journals of national and international significance; speakers for the annual banquet have been chosen for their abilities as well as their reputations; and of course the unspoken but real value simply of pleasant social contact with laborers from neighboring—or not so neighboring—vineyards has always enhanced greatly the annual meetings."

Tentative Program

RMMLA meeting, October 22-23, 1954, at Colorado State College, Greeley, Colorado.

Friday, October 22

8:30-10:00—Registration.

10:00-10:30—Opening session.

10:30-12:00—Linguistic Atlas (joint meeting with Linguistic Atlas of the Pacific Coast). Chairman, Marjorie Kimmerle, University of Colorado.

12:15-1:30—Luncheon.

2:00-3:30—English II (after 1800). Chairman, Clarice Short, University of Utah.

Modern Languages I (linguistics). Chairman, C. A. Bevans, Texas Western College.

3:30-5:00—English I (before 1800). Chairman, Robert D. Thornton, University of Colorado.

Modern Languages II (literature). Chairman, J. M. Sharp, Texas Western College.

7:30—Banquet.

Saturday, October 23

8:30-10:00—English III (teaching). Chairman, J. W. Kuntz, University of New Mexico.

English V (American studies). Chairman, D. D. Walker, University of Utah.

10:00-11:30—Modern Languages III (teaching). Chairman, R. M. Duncan, University of New Mexico.

English IV (American literature). Chairman, William Mulder, University of Utah.

11:30-12:30—Business meeting.

Notes: Suggestions will be most welcome. Cutting the opening session down to a half-hour obviates scheduling three sections at once. Some reshuffling of previous programs has been done to prevent, insofar as possible, scheduling sections with similar appeal at the same time. The campus is providentially located only a few blocks from the line separating Greeley from the villages of Rosedale and Garden City; there are no restrictions on importations from across the border. Information about accommodations will be provided later.

Tom Burnam, President, RMMLA

Comparative Literature

Somebody is modest in this brash world! We were encouraged by our colleagues to organize a symposium of opinion on the problem of teaching Comparative Literature. Most of us have never had a chance to teach Comp. Lit. but, as I have learned, even some of my friends in History have quite definite (if at times erroneous) ideas about the subject. Teachers of literature have valuable ideas

about which they should not be modest. Just seven comments on the subject came to our desk.

JAMES S. PATTY, *University of Colorado:*
A PROGRAM IN COMPARATIVE LITERATURE

It seems to me that no exclusive point of view should be adopted in establishing a curriculum in comparative literature. The dominant consideration should be that the courses given be within the framework of the particular disciplines that comparative literature has developed. My personal inclination would be to set up courses in the following categories:

I. The great figures and works of world literature other than English (Homer, the Bible, Dante, Cervantes, Goethe, for example).

II. Movements and style-periods cutting across national and linguistic boundaries (e.g., Renaissance, Baroque, Neo-Classicism, Romanticism, Realism-Naturalism, Symbolism-Decadence-Modernismo).

III. Genres within the limits of a recognizable evolution (Neo-Classical tragedy, Homero-Virgilian epic, realistic-naturalistic novel, etc.).

IV. General literary problems and methods (history of criticism, techniques of criticism, aesthetics of literature, prose-fiction, poetry, drama, literature and social problems, literature and psychology, etc.).

Of course, very few universities could establish such a program overnight, but a beginning could be made by first setting up one or two courses in each of the above categories and then gradually adding on. For the first year, an offering of Homer, Dante, Baroque, Romanticism, Neo-Classical Tragedy, Modern Novel, Techniques of Literary Criticism, and Literature and the History of Ideas would certainly give students more than enough to whet their appetites on.

The problem of reading texts in the foreign language might be handled on the basis of the use the student intends to make of the particular comparative literature course he is taking: the students taking comparative literature courses as electives in a liberal arts program need not read the material in the original language; students majoring in foreign languages could be required to read in the original language the texts chosen from their major literature; graduate students planning to teach comparative literature could be required to read all or most of the materials in the original language. A doctoral program in comparative literature should require candidates to have and to use a real mastery of no less than two languages other than English—one Classical language and one modern, say, or one Romance language and one Germanic. Best

of all would be to require a knowledge of one Classical, one Romance, and one Germanic language. How can one compare two languages and literatures without knowing at least two? And once the magic circle of linguistic isolationism is broken, how quickly comes the realization that a good knowledge of two languages and literatures is but the beginning of wisdom in such matters.

KATHERINE P. BROWN, *The Nebraska Wesleyan University:*

If we were organizing such a course (in Comp. Lit.) I would base it on literary periods, as being the simplest approach for the student to follow. Also only original texts in French, German, Spanish, Italian, etc., would be read because a text loses much of its freshness and originality in translations. I imagine that part of the existing courses in World Literature could be satisfactorily utilized.

TOM BURNAM, *Colorado State College:*

Though I do not happen to be one of those who feel that the major curse of education nowadays is too much specialization, nevertheless, I do feel that literature has been taught very considerably in a vacuum in past years. I should like all the resources of science, sociology, anthropology, and philosophy to be brought to bear upon the study of the great literary works of all cultures. Obviously this is not entirely possible; but the more we know about the cultural conditions from which literature and its creators spring, then the better equipped we are to handle our problems as human beings. Thus, I should like to see comparative literature courses organized against the background of the total body of human knowledge insofar as this is possible.

ROBERT D. THORNTON, *The University of Colorado:*

Taking a cue from the new activities of the MLA, the RMMLA should give some attention to the matter of Far Eastern literatures and the possibilities of developing a course devoted to these literatures in translation. Interest in the Far East is our single greatest void in the Humanities; we are far, far behind!

CALEB A. BEVANS, *Texas Western College:*

As to comparative or world literature courses: my opinion is that they should stress criticism, active, not historical. Except for the specialist, the greatest value in such courses is in training the student to understand how peoples of other lands and times think and

feel. Analysis by the students themselves seems to me to be the best answer.

The amount of foreign language texts read would depend, of course, on the level of the course and on the preparation of the students in a particular class; perhaps as a minimum some parallel passages of original and translation.

WM. F. J. DEJONGH, *University of New Mexico*:

The teaching of Comparative Literature is handicapped at the undergraduate level by the inability of too many students to read at least two languages besides their native tongue. Three languages are minimal for C. L. and the minimal requirement will also prove to be maximal for average good students in any university or country. Since most, if not all, of the important books in the Occidental languages have been translated into English, or are so translated as fast as they are written and their importance recognized, there is no dearth of suitable material. The temptation to resort to printed translations is great, especially since too few undergraduates can read two foreign languages fast enough to keep up with assignments. In the second place there is also the matter of the instructor's preparation even if C. L. courses are taught exclusively at the graduate level. Only the aged have already had the time to work up several courses in C. L. and among the younger set only the superlatively brilliant can work up subjects fast enough to offer a sufficient variety of courses to constitute a Department of C. L. Comparative L. courses are feasible when the language and literature departments, including English, are very large, so that many average instructors can each offer in C. L. a course in a field where his reading over many years and his interests have prompted him to work up the material.

WILLIS D. JACOBS, *University of New Mexico*:

COMPARATIVE LITERATURE — A STEP FORWARD

Should universities offer a curriculum in Comparative Literature? At the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque the Departments of English and Modern and Classical Languages are agreed that a program in Comparative Literature is desirable. Moreover, they are agreed that such a program should offer a major study in the field, rather than merely a scattering of courses. These two Departments have therefore prepared and are recommending to the University administration a program providing for a major in Comparative Literature.

Though time-consuming and often spirited, formulation of this curriculum was a signal example of amicable cooperation by two Departments. Many questions had to be resolved—or noted and by-passed. Should the University organize its Comparative Literature offering around a few newly-constructed courses such as the Renaissance, Romanticism, and Realism? Or the Drama, the Novel, the Lyric? Should it recommend the addition to the faculty of one or more instructors with special graduate training in programs of Comparative Literature? Should it require one or two foreign languages from students? Should it demand two or three or four years of a foreign language? Should it institute special undergraduate seminars? And—to bring the unendable to an end—how should such a curriculum be administered?

Endless and malign though such questions may be, on one matter both Departments were resolved: American students deserve a program of studies which will extend beyond national frontiers, provide knowledge of notable figures and concepts in the life of several nations, encourage wide reading and an ecumenical understanding, and—in short—teach the first-rate works of literature regardless of parochial boundaries.

And so the following curriculum is being recommended to the administration of the University. It leads to an undergraduate major in Comparative Literature in the College of Arts and Sciences:

1. English 75 and 76 6 hours
This is a sophomore course in foreign literature already offered for many years by the Department of English. The text now used is Buck's *Anthology of World Literature*, which moves from Homer to Thomas Mann.
2. Classics 139 or 140 3 hours
The first of these is the complete Greek drama in English translation; the second is Latin literature in translation. Both are in the established offerings of the Department of Modern and Classical Languages.
3. Comparative Literature 166 3 hours
This course will be a reconstitution of English 166, *Literary Criticism*; as modified it will stress European, British, and American critics and critical theories, will require critical papers based upon reading primary works often of foreign literature, and will invite professors from the foreign literatures into the class for lecture and discussion.
4. British or American Literature 9 hours
Students will meet with faculty advisors in order to plan these courses so as to form sound and coherent programs in coordination with the next requirements.

5. A Foreign Literature (e.g., French, German, Portuguese, Spanish) . . . 8 hours
Normally a student will have the equivalent of two years of foreign language study before he enters into a foreign literature.

Thus the undergraduate major in Comparative Literature comprises 29 semester hours—a happy number, it is felt, for it both fulfills and invites. Students planning to major in the program will be urged to minor in literature (British, American, or any foreign literature), or in anthropology, art history, history, or philosophy. Students planning to minor in Comparative Literature—well, they must bide their time. The Departments will plan that bridge when they have crossed the major one. Temporarily at least, the program will be administered by an inter-departmental committee.

The proposal has certain beauties. One, no additional courses, and thus expenses, need be adopted. Two, no new faculty member, and thus expense again, need be added. Three, it permits sufficient flexibility to provide for the special background and taste of students electing the program.

Will there be such students at all? Both Departments think so—think that some of their own majors will leave them for the new program. Think that some students now majoring in (hush!) philosophy, history, anthropology will also be attracted. Think that students will enter the University specifically for the program. And in time, they believe that enrollment in English and in Modern and Classical languages will increase too because of the program. But best of all, they believe that students at the University of New Mexico will now be encouraged to seek a richer, fuller, international literary education. It is, they feel, a consummation devoutly to be wished.

News, News, News!

The Renaissance Society of America, established in January in New York City, has taken over as an official publication the quarterly, *Renaissance News*, hitherto published by its editor, Professor Frederick W. Sternfeld, with assistance from the Dartmouth College Library. Counting library subscribers to *RN*, *RSA* begins life with about 1000 members. Its officers are Professors John H. Randall, Jr., Columbia, president; Josephine W. Bennett, Hunter, executive secretary, and Edwin B. Knowles, Pratt Institute, treasurer. Professor Sternfeld will continue as editor of *RN*, and Professor William Perry will be editor of the first volume of the society's Publications.

PRSA, Vol. I, will be composed of a bibliography of Renaissance books in the fields represented by the *RSA* membership and a

number of "desiderata" articles—treatments of what has recently been done and/or needs to be done, in Renaissance art, history, music, philosophy, and the various literatures. *RMMLA* members having 10 to 20 pp. papers of this nature are invited to write the editor about them at 1804 Main Building, University of Texas, Austin.

PROFESSOR WILLIAM F. J. DEJONGH,
University of New Mexico:

You write us: "Somebody must be going somewhere." If a professor allows to be printed where he is going, he pays the penalty by receiving too many invitations to set forth his experiences in addresses before this and that club in town and on the Campus. And if he prefers to frequent foreign libraries and makes no pretence at being a keen observer of politics or economic conditions and can report no dramatic or sensational discoveries or experiences, he makes a disappointing address. I much prefer—I even make an effort—to keep my travel movements to myself.

PROFESSOR PAUL SCHACH, *University of Nebraska:*

Recent publications: "The Pennsylvania-German Contribution to the American Vocabulary," *The Historical Review of Berks County*, XIX (1953) pp. 2-7. "Comments on some Pennsylvania-German Words in the Dictionary of Americanisms," *American Speech*, XXIX (1954), pp. 45-54.

Prof. Schach was made Secretary-Treasurer of the Society for the Advancement of Scandinavian Study for the year 1953-54.

PROFESSOR LULU L. CUTHBERTSON,
The Pueblo Junior College:

Beginning next September we are offering a course in Humanities to include studies in Music, Art, Drama, English Literature, French, Spanish, and German Literature. The course will be offered in English, but presented by faculty members from the various departments.

UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO:

RAY MOLONEY, instructor in Spanish for the last six years here, has completed his doctoral study and accepted a position at Ohio University.

RODOLPHE-LOUIS HÉBERT, Assistant Professor of French, spent the Christmas holidays in France.

MISS GISELA JUNGBLUTH, instructor in German, has been awarded a Woodrow Wil-