



Law and Literature
COMP/FREN 580/LAW 593/ENGL 511
Steve Bishop
T 4-6:30

In the 1970's, scholars of literature and law began to encroach on one other's theoretical terrain. Legal scholars investigated the presence of legal thought in literary works, while literary scholars applied literary concepts to legal discourse. The first formal presentation of this movement was *The Legal Imagination* by an American professor of Law, English, and Classics. The movement has since developed into a variety of approaches (law-as-literature, law-in-literature, hermeneutics, etc.). This predominantly American common law phenomenon also developed in civil law France where influential writers (Barthes, Duras, Foucault, Derrida) treated the law as any other readable discourse. This course investigates the principles behind the Law and Literature movement, the interaction of various intellectual traditions, and the usefulness of such theories in "normal" legal and literary study.

The course will have students of literature, law, history, philosophy, cultural studies, classics, and women studies. Despite its emphasis on American law and literature and French cultural studies, the course is not for any one group of students and rather is meant to be engaging to all those interested in the topic. Readings include Foucault, White, MacKinnon, Derrida, Posner, Levinson, Weisberg, Duras, Barthes, Fish, West, Brooks, Williams, and Montoya. Other texts (readings from ancient Greece, crime fiction, cinema, legal cases) may also be read, though the choice will depend on the class make-up. Questions can be directed to Steve Bishop at 323C Ortega Hall or sbishop@unm.edu.