LOOKING FOR JUST THE RIGHT World Literature Course
This Spring Semester??

HOW ABOUT--

“Vladimir Nabokov’s Lolita: From Banned Novel to World-Renowned Film”

Spring, 2015
T/Th: 4:00-5:15 p.m.                                                       World Lit. 018/118
Prof. K. McKenna

Vladimir Nabokov’s literary masterpiece, Lolita, has enjoyed a broad and varied range of critical and popular success since its initial appearance in 1955. One of the more controversial novels of the 20th century (banned in many countries, including the U.S.), Lolita has attracted an equal amount of attention from its two award-winning film versions (Stanley Kubric’s, 1966, and Adrian Lynne’s, 1998).

Both then and, to a certain extent, now, many readers of Nabokov’s novel have miscomprehended “what the novel is about,” preferring to focus, instead, on rather prurient or uninformed misreadings. To avoid this kind of trap and to locate the source of the genius in Nabokov’s oeuvre, this course begins with an examination of some of the Russian author’s early works (his “creative” autobiography, Speak Memory, and the novellas King, Queen, Knave; Pnin; and Laughter in the Dark) before moving to the main focus of the course—his Lolita (“...light of my life, fire of my loins. My sin, my soul. Lo-lee-ta: the tip of the tongue taking a trip of three steps down the palate to tap, at three, on the teeth. Lo. Lee. Ta”).

Primary attention in this course will be directed both to the novel itself as well as to Stanley Kubric’s and Adrian Lynne’s film versions of Lolita, with particular analysis of how the genius of the creative “word” is transformed into literary as well as cinematic texture.

Those first-year students enrolling under the World Lit. 018 rubric will be required to write 3 essays (6-8 pages each) on various works over the course of the semester. Upper-division students (W. Lit. 118) will have the option to write 2 essays (8-10 double-spaced pages each) or to opt to write a research paper (20-25 pages) on a topic of their choosing related to any of the novels read in this course. Film students are encouraged, but not required, to build their essays or research paper around cinematic aspects of Nabokov’s works.