**Short Works of Philosophical Fiction: Melville, Camus, Mann, and Kafka**

Great works of literature grow in meaning with multiple readings and deep reflection. One might even say they require it. In this lecture course we will examine four works of fiction that are especially rich in philosophical ideas. In *Bartleby* we find unsettling moral challenges to paradigms we accept; *The Stranger* can be read as an expression of Camus’ nascent existentialism; Mann’s haunting story of Professor Aschenbach in *Death in Venice* leans heavily on Nietzsche’s philosophy of the Apollonian and Dionysian aspects of life; and Kafka’s *Metamorphosis* and “A Country Doctor” both demand and resist a philosophical readings.

Students should read each work before class. Any edition/translation will do.

**Week One, June 4:** Melville, *Bartleby* (In some editions the title is “Bartleby the Scrivener.”)

**Week Two, June 11:** Camus, *The Stranger*

**Week Three, June 18:** Mann, *Death in Venice*

**Week Four, June 25:** Kafka, *The Metamorphosis* and “A Country Doctor” (both in *The Basic Kafka*, Washington Square Press, Pocket Books, as well as other editions)