By any measure, the Swiss writer Robert Walser (1878-1956) is a singular figure within 20th-century German literature. The main attribute of his prose work may be its resistance to ready categorization, and (auto-)biographical narratives about him are notable both for their incompleteness and for the oftentimes contradictory portrait they paint of Walser. Depending on the moment he seems to have been both a dandy or an ascetic, both a humorist and afflicted by depression. Walser spent the last 27 years of his life in a mental institution, and even this last part of his life is clouded by some uncertainty as to the extent to which he was suffering from an actual mental illness. Although admirers of Walser’s prose include well-known writers such as Franz Kafka, Hermann Hesse, and Robert Musil, Walser has perhaps never truly become a ‘household name,’ and only with decades of delay were a number of his works finally translated, or re-translated, into English. This provides us with the ready opportunity to devote an entire term to the study of Walser’s work, including one or two of his novels (we will choose from *The Tanners*, *The Assistant*, and *Jakob von Grunten*), a selection of his short prose texts and his “Micrograms” (texts Walser wrote in a near-microscopic pencil script), as well as a selection of important secondary texts on Walser. All readings and discussions will be in English.