

EN 121: Readings in World Literature
Subversive Voices: Protest and Resistance in Contemporary Global Fiction
T/TH 2-3:15 pm, PSY B40

Instructor: Shannon Draucker
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Office Hours: Thursdays 3:30-5:30 pm or by appointment

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will focus on works of contemporary fiction by Caribbean, South American, East Asian, South Asian, African, and Middle Eastern writers. We will explore narratives that interrogate normative gender codes (of both femininity and masculinity), forces of colonialism and imperialism, environmental racism, and other forms of marginalization and oppression. Topics of discussion will include authors' literary imaginations of various strategies of protest and modes of resistance – even those located in unexpected places. We will interrogate the word “subversion” itself and attend to characters who deploy alternative modes of passive resistance or choose not to resist at all.

COURSE MATERIALS

The following **required** materials are available at the BU Barnes & Noble in Kenmore Square, as well as on Amazon. Many are also available at Mugar Memorial Library. You must purchase or rent these editions (searchable by ISBN, provided below).

Gyasi, Yaa. *Homegoing*. Knopf: New York, 2016. ISBN: 9781101947135

Kang, Han. *The Vegetarian*. New York: Penguin, 2016. ISBN: 9781101906118

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1988. ISBN: 9780374527075.

Ngozi Adichie, Chimamanda. *We Should All Be Feminists*. New York: Anchor, 2012. ISBN: 9781101911761

Satrapı, Marjane. *The Complete Persepolis*. New York: Pantheon, 2007. ISBN: 9780375714832

All other required course readings will be available on our class Blackboard site (<http://learn.bu.edu>) under “Content.” These readings are marked [BB] on the syllabus. You are required to bring all required materials to class. I encourage you to print these readings in order to minimize laptop-related distractions.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Exams: There will be a midterm exam, which will consist of short-answer questions and a short essay section. The final will be a take-home exam and will consist of longer essay questions.

Essays: There will be one short midterm essay (5-6 pages) and a longer final essay (7-8 pages). I will provide possible topics for you to pursue, but you will also have the chance to devise your

own topics and research questions. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss your ideas at any stage of the paper. Please use MLA format for your citations.

Discussion Leaders: Each of you will be required to act as a discussion leader on **one class day**. You and a partner will collaborate before your assigned class day to develop a list of questions and concerns for class discussion, related to the text assigned for that day. You might choose to offer a brief presentation on historical background, devise an activity for your classmates, or give your peers a brief writing exercise. Whatever you choose to do, you and your partner will be responsible for leading the class discussion and helping all of us explore and understand that day's fictional work. You will sign up for your discussion leader day at the beginning of the semester. This assignment will make up a large part of your participation grade.

GRADING AND EVALUATION

Your final grade will be calculated as follows:

Participation and attendance: 10%
Midterm exam: 10%
Final exam: 20%
Midterm paper: 25%
Final paper: 35%

Late and Missed Assignments: Unless you make other arrangements with me well in advance of the deadline, graded assignments will be penalized by one-third of a letter grade per 24-hour period that it is late. For example, a "B" assignment submitted after the initial deadline will be reduced to a B-; if more than 24 hours late, it becomes a C+, and so on.

Participation and Attendance: Since this course is a discussion-based seminar, your regular attendance and participation are essential both to your own learning and to your classmates' learning. Under ordinary circumstances, missing more than *three days of class* will automatically lower your final grade by one-third of a letter grade for each class missed. Missing more than *five classes* may lead to a failing grade in the course. Note that these absences need not be consecutive.

If you have a special obligation that will require you to miss several classes (e.g., varsity athletics, religious observances), please talk with me at the beginning of the semester. Exceptional circumstances will be handled on a case-by-case basis.

RESOURCES

Boston University Libraries: The BU Libraries offer a wealth of online and print resources. Research Librarians will introduce you to the many resources the library offers in any field of research. They can work with you to develop a research plan and organize your sources. The Research Center welcomes you for walk-in consultations on the first floor of Mugar Memorial Library or at any other library on campus.

Research appointments can be made at <http://www.bu.edu/common/request-an-appointment/>.

Mugar Memorial Library 771 Commonwealth Avenue Phone: 617-353-2700
<http://www.bu.edu/library>

Educational Resource Center: Offers tutorial assistance to all undergraduate students in a range of subjects, including English classes.

100 Bay State Rd, 5th floor Phone: 617-353-7077 <http://www.bu.edu/erc>

CAS Academic Advising: A central resource for all questions concerning academic policy and practice in the College of Arts and Sciences. The office is headed by the Associate Dean for Student Academic Life and has a staff of fifteen faculty advisors and five academic counselors. All students can receive academic advice and assistance through this office. Students who have not yet declared concentrations can receive pre-registration advising through this office.

100 Bay State Rd. 4th Floor Email: casadv@bu.edu
Phone: 617-353-2400 <http://www.bu.edu/casadvising/>

Here are links to the advising offices of other BU colleges:

CFA: <http://www.bu.edu/cfa/resources/advising/>

CGS: <http://www.bu.edu/cgs/students/fact-sheets/academic-advising/>

COM: <http://www.bu.edu/com/current-students/student-services/>

ENG: <http://www.bu.edu/eng/current-students/ugrad/advising/>

SAR: <http://www.bu.edu/sargent/current-students/academic-services-center/>

SED: <http://www.bu.edu/sed/faculty-staff/handbook/admin-and-org/> (see Student Affairs Offices)

SHA: <http://www.bu.edu/hospitality/academics/advising/>

SMG: <http://management.bu.edu/undergraduate-program/academics/advising/>

Office of Disability Services: Responsible for assisting students with disabilities. If you have a disability, you are strongly encouraged to register with this office. You may be entitled to special accommodations in your courses, such as additional time on tests, staggered homework assignments, or note-taking assistance. This office will give you a letter outlining the accommodations to which you are entitled that you can share with your teachers.

19 Deerfield Street, 2nd floor Phone: 617-353-3658 <http://www.bu.edu/disability>

COURSE SCHEDULE

Note: assignments and readings are listed on the day they are *due*.

Th. Jan 19 – Introduction and overview

Tues. Jan 24 – David Damrosch, “World Literature in Theory and Practice” AND Emily Apter, “Against World Literature” (excerpts) **[BB]**

Thurs. Jan 26 – Sherman Alexie, “The Toughest Indian in the World,” “What You Pawn I Will Redeem” **[BB]**

Tues. Jan 31 – Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (pp. 1-37) **(DL Group 1)**

Thurs. Feb. 2 – Kincaid, *Small Place* (finish)

Tues Feb. 7 – Junot Díaz, “Aguantando,” “How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie” **[BB] (DL Group 2)**

Thurs. Feb. 9 – Díaz, “Negocios” **[BB]**

Tues. Feb. 14 – Gabriel García Márquez, “The Autumn of the Patriarch” **[BB] (DL Group 3)**

Thurs. Feb. 16 – Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *We Should All Be Feminists*

Tues. Feb. 21 – NO CLASS (SUBSTITUTE MONDAY SCHEDULE OF CLASSES)

Thurs Feb. 23 – **Midterm exam (in class)**

Mon. Feb. 27 – Email midterm paper draft to partner by 5 pm

Tues. Feb. 28 – Peer review for midterm papers; Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* (pp. 1-69)

Thurs. March 2 – **Midterm paper due**

Tues. March 7 – NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Thurs. March 9 – NO CLASS (SPRING BREAK)

Tues. March 14 – *Homegoing* (pp. 70-138) **(DL Group 4)**

Thurs. March 16 – *Homegoing* (pp. 133-198)

Tues. March 21 – *Homegoing* (pp. 199-242)

Thurs. March 23 – *Homegoing* (p. 243-end)

Tues. March 28 – Han Kang, *The Vegetarian* (Part One) **(DL Group 5)**

Thurs. March 30 – *The Vegetarian* (Part Two)

Tues. April 4 – *The Vegetarian* (Part Three)

Thurs. April 6 – Jhumpa Lahiri, “When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine,” “Interpreter of Maladies” **[BB] (DL Group 6)**

Tues. April 11 – Salman Rushdie, “The Courter” **[BB]**

Thurs. April 13 – Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (pp. 1-110) **(DL Group 7); research question due**

Tues. April 18 – *Persepolis* (pp. 111-222) AND Saba Mahmood, “Feminist Theory, Embodiment, and the Docile Agent” **[BB]**

Thurs. April 20 – *Persepolis* (p. 223-end)

Tues. April 25 – Final paper workshop and exam review

Weds. April 26 – Email final paper draft to partner by 5 pm

Thurs. April 27 – **Final paper presentations and peer review**

Tues. May 2 – **Final paper due by 5 pm**

Tues. May 9 – Final exam