

ENGL 242C: Reading Prose Fiction
“Beyond the Nation Form: Reading Contemporary Transnational Literature”
Fall 2014
Class Meetings: Monday-Thursday, 10:30-11:20 A.M.
DEN 304

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Office Hours: Wednesday & Thursday, 9:00-10 A.M. and by appointment

Class URL: <https://catalyst.uw.edu/workspace/smccoy3/46477/>



Course Description

In his book *Modernity at Large* (1998), Arjun Appadurai writes, “The United States, always in its self-perception a land of immigrants, finds itself awash in...global diasporas, no longer a closed space for the melting pot to work its magic, but yet another diasporic switching point. People come here to seek their fortunes, but they are no longer content to leave their homelands behind” (172). Appadurai points to the ways in which the United States has become increasingly home for emerging global diasporas. These diasporas have been instrumental in shaping U.S. culture and history. Thus, this course takes up the central concern of reading contemporary transnational literature in our present moment. To that end, we will study several texts published in the post-9/11 era and take up central questions that deal with the ambiguity of race, ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, and national belonging in a variety of ways. The critical questions for this class: how does transnational literature mediate U.S. national belonging and claims to citizenship? How does this grouping of texts complicate the boundaries of the U.S. nation-state? What roles might imperialism and Empire-building play in the production of nationalism and by extension, the mediation of national belonging? Furthermore, what new ‘imagined communities’ might this literature create?



Course Objectives

1. Students are expected **comfortable** and **confident** in discussing and writing about literature.
2. Students are expected to become familiar with **campus resources** and **library-based research and writing**.
3. Students are able to better understand (at least conceptually) **race, class, and gender** within a transnational context.
4. Through the use of **intensive writing and reading**, students should become proficient in writing skills through the purposeful use of course texts in development of claims and arguments situated in political, social, historical, and cultural contexts.
5. Students are expected to become **insider experts** and contribute to the burgeoning field of contemporary transnational literature.
6. Students should understand the investments, contexts, and effects of the kind of close/critical reading skills or approaches under study/use by the field of contemporary transnational literature.
7. Students have an appreciation for and knowledge of the field of contemporary transnational literature and its relationship



to history, culture, society, and politics.

8. Students are able to *critically reflect* on their reading practices in written assignments and develop **metacognition**. Loosely speaking, metacognition is "thinking about thinking," or "self-reflection." But it is also a very powerful way to build your self-assessment, transfer, and self-efficacy skills, each critical to your becoming a successful writer and reader.

Required Materials:

Novels:

- Lahiri, Jhumpa. *The Namesake* (2003)
- Diaz, Junot. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
- Mengestu, Dinaw. *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (2008)
- Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Americanah* (2013)

Other Materials Needed:

- *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers 7th Edition*. Modern Language Association. 2009.
- A valid UW Net ID and password (and remember to check your e-mail on a daily basis or have a forwarding e-mail set up).
- Course Packet—available at Ave Copy Center.

Recommended Materials:

Birkenstein, Cathy and Gerald Graff. *They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing*. New York: Norton, 2009.

Student Responsibilities:

As a student in this class, you are responsible for processing and understanding the course material as well as finding out *how* to demonstrate the writing strategies presented in class in your writing assignments. You are responsible for coming to class prepared to engage with your peers and share your thoughts on the course material. In the unlikely event you cannot come to class a particular day, it is your responsibility to ask your peers what occurred in class and whether or not there were any changes to the syllabus/class assignments/daily readings. In addition, you should check your email daily because I will often send you reminder emails, changes to the syllabus, etc. We are only in class two days a week and it is vital that you check your UW account regularly. ***Although changes may or may not be announced in class, you will still be held accountable for them. I will always give you advance notice of any changes made to the syllabus either in class or via e-mail. It is your responsibility to be aware of these changes.***

Evaluation:

Your final course grade will be divided and weighed accordingly based on a 4.0:

Response Papers—10 total.....	20%
Participation in class.....	10%
Paper 1 (4-5 pages).....	20%
Paper 2 (4-5 pages).....	20%
Revised Paper.....	20%
In-class critical reflection.....	10%
Total=	100%

Criteria for Graded Essays:

Six Criteria for Graded Writing in This Class

- 1) **Central Purpose:** Are the reasons for your writing clear, appropriate, and fully responsive to the prompt?

- 2) **Details:** Do you offer your readers sufficient details and examples that are both relevant and effective in developing and supporting the paper's central purpose?
- 3) **Organization:** Can your reader easily follow and understand your paper from beginning to end? Are there writing elements, like transitions and topic sentences, which maintain a coherent, narrative flow?
- 4) **Fullness:** Do you do enough to carry your case? Is the document substantial enough to leave the desired impression upon the reader?
- 5) **Fluency:** How fluid, sophisticated, and effective is your writing at the sentence and paragraph level? Are sentences and word choices varied, clear, and appropriate?
- 6) **Presentation:** Is your paper well-edited and spell-checked? Have you reviewed your verb tense/agreement, punctuation, and other grammatical elements? Have you followed all guidelines pertaining to formatting, citation standards, and other rules of appearance as they are described in the course syllabus

The Grid:

On papers for this class you'll find in addition to comments a set of six numbers, like:

CP:3 O:1 D:2 Fu:3 Fl:4 Pr:2

These numbers correspond to each of the criteria described above in "Six Criteria for Writing in This Class" (i.e., the first number is the score for criteria item 1, "Central Purpose," the second number is a score for "Details," and so on). In general, all count equally towards the final grade for the assignment.

The point of these numbers is to give you a quick mini-grade on each of the criteria we use to score papers. You can get a score from 1 (not very good at all) up to 6 (as good as it gets) in each category. The number represents our judgment about how well your paper has done on that one category, as measured against both our general sense of how well 100-level students ought to perform, and the performances of other students in the class. As we assign each number, we have in mind the following general sense of what they mean:

- 1 Not enough sense of this category to be functional in college level work. (e.g., a paper that hasn't any specific details to explain or clarify the argument.)
- 2 A sense of what this category is asking for, but not much more. (e.g., a paper that offers specific details, but doesn't explain or develop them sufficiently to be effective.)
- 3 Functional success with this category, but not yet showing full control. (e.g., some exploration of a few details, for example, but without fullness, or without consistency.)
- 4 Functional success with this category, with some lapses and/or inconsistencies. (e.g., full exploration of details, for example, but not with all, or without consistency or clear relevance.)
- 5 Success with this category but a success not rhetorically integrated throughout the draft. (e.g., a paper with a good sense of how to use details and to develop them far enough to make them useful to the argument, but not well deployed throughout the paper.)
- 6 Full success with this category. (e.g., a paper with insightful and well-developed details, all relevant and effectively informative.)

The relationship between these numbers and the final score you get will not always be exact (we don't just add them up), but there is a very strong correlation. Six 6's, for example, would undoubtedly earn a 4.0.

Criteria for In-Class Writing, Critical Response Papers, and Reflection Essays:

Engaged Critical Intelligence (ECI)

Unless otherwise noted, all shorter assignments will be graded based on your demonstration of “Engaged Critical Intelligence” (ECI). These assignments won’t be graded based on whether or not you provided the “right” answer but for the level of engagement they show:

Fully responsive and thoughtfully undertaken: check +

Responsive but less completely thought through: check

Marginally responsive, or not well thought through: check –

You will always receive credit when you turn in your assignment, but the ECI you demonstrate will factor into your participation grade in this class.

Late Paper Policy and Incomplete Papers:

Failure to turn in a paper on time will negatively impact your grade. For each day your paper is late, I will deduct .5 from your total score. Thus, if you turn in a paper late, the best you will score is a 3.5. If you have an unforeseen circumstance that arises, please contact me via e-mail **no later than 24 hours before an assignment is due**.

Submission Guidelines for Graded Essays:

All graded essays will be submitted via Catalyst Tools. Submission guidelines for these essays:

- **Correct MLA header**
- Times New Roman 12 pt. Font,
- 1” margins (be sure to check the default—it is often set to 1.25” instead of 1”)
- correct MLA citations
- correct MLA formatting
- Works Cited page on ALL assignments
- Double-spaced

Class Participation and Attendance Policy:

Class participation is essential to successful completion of this class. This includes (but not limited to) coming to class and engaging with your peers, turning in assignments on time, attending conferences (two times a quarter) with me, coming to class on time, going to the writing centers, visiting me during office hours, taking notes in class, participating in peer review, etc.

Things that will negatively impact your participation grade include (but not limited to) texting in class, talking in class when another person is speaking, not taking notes in class, not participating in peer review, not speaking in class and engaging with peers, not attending class, arriving late to class, and turning in assignments late.

If for some reason you are not able to attend class, it is your responsibility to contact peers and ask what you may have missed. DO NOT contact me (your instructor).

At any time during the quarter you are worried about your participation grade, I highly encourage you to visit me during office hours.

Civility in the Classroom:

We will be discussing social, cultural, and political topics that may be uncomfortable for some. The goal of these discussions is not to make everyone think alike; in fact, criticism and dissent are highly encouraged. However, with that said, it is important that respect is exercised in the classroom. Therefore, if you disagree with what someone is saying or a position that is being

articulated in discussion, please do so respectfully. Discussing controversial topics in a respectful manner is an important skill to acquire in the university classroom and only civil opinions will matter. I reserve the right to dismiss any student who behaves in an inappropriate or threatening manner. Acts of violence (both physical and verbal) will not be tolerated.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism, or academic dishonesty, is presenting someone else's ideas or writing as your own. In your writing for this class, you are encouraged to refer to other people's thoughts and writing--as long as you cite them. As a matter of policy, any student found to have plagiarized any piece of writing in this class will be immediately reported to the College of Arts and Sciences for review.

Important Campus Resources:

MLA Guidelines and Formatting

Purdue OWL is an excellent resource for MLA formatting guidelines and citations. Visit their website here:
<https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/>

Writing Centers

The Odegaard Writing and Research Center and the CLUE (Center for Learning and Undergraduate Enrichment) writing center are both available to assist you whenever you need extra help or tutoring for writing. When visiting (or planning to visit) the writing center, please obtain your tutor's signature on the assignment(s) to show proof. OWRC is available by appointment only and the CLUE writing center is on a first-come, first-serve basis. I strongly encourage you to use the tutors at these writings center and please remember that they are not there to proofread your essays and correct grammatical mistakes. They are interested in the "higher order" concerns of your writing rather than your ability to demonstrate correct grammar.

- Odegaard Writing and Research Center: <http://depts.washington.edu/owrc>
- CLUE Writing Center: http://depts.washington.edu/clue/dropintutor_writing.php

Classroom Support Services

Need a laptop or video equipment for a class? CSS allows students to borrow equipment for free! To reserve equipment, please visit their website 24 hours in advance: <http://www.css.washington.edu/STFEquipment> They are located in the basement of Kane Hall.

Accommodations

If you need accommodation of any sort, please let me know so that I can work with the UW Disability Services Office (DSO) to provide what you require. This syllabus is available in large print, as are other class materials. More information about accommodation may be found at <http://www.washington.edu/admin/dso/>.

UW SafeCampus

Preventing violence is everyone's responsibility. If you're concerned, tell someone.

- Always call 911 if you or others may be in danger.
- Call 206-685-SAFE (7233) to report non-urgent threats of violence and for referrals to UW counseling and/or safety resources. TTY or VP callers, please call through your preferred relay service.
- Don't walk alone. Campus safety guards can walk with you on campus after dark. Call Husky NightWalk 206-685-WALK (9255).
- Stay connected in an emergency with UW Alert. Register your mobile number to receive instant notification of campus emergencies via text and voice messaging. Sign up online at www.washington.edu/alert

For more information visit the SafeCampus website at www.washington.edu/safecampus.

Counseling Services

The Counseling Center is staffed by psychologists and mental health counselors who provide developmentally-based counseling, assessment, and crisis intervention services to currently-enrolled UW students. The center is open all year, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., Monday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday; 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Tuesdays. To schedule an initial appointment, please call the

Counseling Center (206) 543-1240 or stop by the Center at 40 Schmitz Hall. Or visit their [URL:http://counseling](http://counseling).

FIUTS (The Foundation for International Understanding Through Students)

Provides opportunities for students from all over the world to connect. Consider going to a *FIUT's Friday*: Every Friday during the summer, FIUTS organizes a Friday outing for students and friends (canoeing and visiting Discovery Park were two recent excursions). You do not have to make a reservation in advance, and there are two outings left, on August 30th and September 5th. See what event is planned at <http://www.fiuts.org/events/calendar>

Q Center

The University of Washington Q Center is a primarily student run resource center dedicated to serving anyone with a gender or sexuality: UW students, staff, faculty, alum, and community members. It hosts student groups and regular programming events, as well as includes a queer centered library, and Student Blog. You can access the Q Center website at <http://uwqcenter.wordpress.com/> or stop by 450 Schmitz hall Monday-Friday between 9am-5pm.

ENGL 242C- AUTUMN QUARTER 2014 (Subject to change with advance notice!)

WEEK 1	in-class activities	homework
Wed 9/24	First Day of Class Overview of Syllabus Important Dates, Grading Rubric Writing for Literature: Low Stakes and High Stakes Writing Assignments	Read: "Guide to Effective Reading" on Commonsense Prepare: Brainstorm for "My Reading Life"
Thur 9/25	In-class Pre-Test: "My Reading Life"	Read: Inderpal Grewal, "Becoming American: The Novel and the Diaspora" and Benedict Anderson, "Imagined Communities" (both in course pack) Write: Response Paper #1, due Monday (in class hard copy)
WEEK 2		
Mon 9/29	Contemporary Transnational Literature: Context and Criticism Close-Reading and Cultural Studies: A Brief Overview Due Today: Response Paper #1 (hard printed copy)	Read: <i>The Namesake</i> , Chapters 1-3
Tue 9/30	Jhumpa Lahiri's <i>The Namesake</i> Context and Criticism	Read: <i>The Namesake</i> , Chapters 4-5
Wed 10/1		Read: <i>The Namesake</i> , Chapters 6-7
Thu 10/2		Read: <i>The Namesake</i> , Chapters 8-9 Write: Response Paper #2
WEEK 3		
Mon 10/6	Due Today: Response Paper #2	Read: <i>The Namesake</i> ,

		Chapters 10-11
Tue 10/7		Read: Roderick Ferguson, “Immigration and the Drama of Affirmation” (on commonspace)
Wed 10/8	Discuss Ferguson	Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Prologue and Chapter 1
Thu 10/9	Junot Diaz’s <i>The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> Context and Criticism	Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapters 2 and 3 Write: Response Paper #3
WEEK 4		
Mon 10/13	Due: Response Paper #3	Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapter 4
Tue 10/14		Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapter 5
Wed 10/15		Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapter 6
Thu 10/16	Introduction to Library Research	Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapter 7 Read: Etienne Balibar, “The Nation Form” (in course pack) Write: Response Paper #4
WEEK 5		
Mon 10/20	Due: Response Paper #4	Read: <i>Brief Wondrous Life</i> , Chapter 8 until the end
Tue 10/21	How To Write an Introduction Sample Introductions in class	Read: Kwame Anthony Appiah, “The Trouble with Culture” (on commonspace)
Wed 10/22	Discuss: Appiah, “The Trouble with Culture” How to Do a Peer Review Order of Importance in High Stakes Writing	Norm: Sample Essay on Commonsplace
Thu 10/23	Norming Session for Essay 1 Criteria Scores and Explanation	Write: Essay 1 for In-Class Peer Review on Monday Write: Response Paper #5
WEEK 6		
Mon 10/27	In-class Peer Review of Essay 1 Due: Response Paper #5	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears</i> , Chapters 1-3 Write: Revise Essay 1; Due tomorrow on Catalyst by 10:30 A.M.
Tue 10/28	Dinaw Mengestu’s <i>The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears</i> (2008)	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven</i>

	Context and Criticism Essay 1 Due Today in Catalyst Dropbox by 10:30 AM!	<i>Bears</i> , Chapters 4-6 Read: Eduardo Bonilla-Silva, “Rethinking Racism” and Ian Haney Lopez, “The Social Construction of Race” (both in course pack)
Wed 10/29	Discuss: Bonilla-Silva, “Rethinking Racism” and Ian Haney Lopez, “The Social Construction of Race”	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears</i> , Chapters 7-9 Write: Mid-term course evaluation
Thu 10/30	Due today: Mid-term course evaluations	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears</i> , Chapters 10-12 Read: Etienne Balibar, “Is There a Neo-Racism?” (in course pack) Write: Response Paper #6
WEEK 7		
Mon 11/3	Due: Response Paper #6	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears</i> , Chapters 13-15
Tue 11/4		Read: Arjun Appadurai, “Patriotism and Its Futures” (in course pack)
Wed 11/5	Discuss: Appadurai, “Patriotism and Its Futures”	Read: <i>The Beautiful Things that Heaven Bears</i> , Chapter 16
Thu 11/6		Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 1-7 Write: Response Paper #7

WEEK 8		
Mon 11/10	Chimamanda Adichie’s <i>Americanah</i> (2013) Context and Criticism Due: Response Paper #7	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 8-13
Tue 11/11	UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 14-18
Wed 11/12	Discuss: <i>Americanah</i>	Read: H. Samy Alim and Geneva Smitherman, “A.W.B” (in course pack) Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 19-24
Thu 11/13	Discuss: Alim and Smitherman, “A.W.B”	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 25-33 Write: Response Paper #8

WEEK 9		
Mon 11/17	Chimamanda Adichie, “We Should All Be Feminists” Due: Response Paper #8	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 34-38 Read: Peggy McIntosh, “White Privilege” (in course pack)
Tue 11/18	Discuss: McIntosh, “White Privilege”	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 39-45
Wed 11/19	Peer Review Today of Essay 2	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , Chapters 46-50
Thu 11/20	Essay 2 due today in Catalyst Dropbox by 10:30 AM!	Read: <i>Americanah</i> , 47-55 Write: Response Paper #9
WEEK 10		
Mon 11/24	Due: Response Paper #9 In class viewing: Chimamanda Adichie, “Why We Should All Be Feminists”	
Tue 11/25	Revision Tips and Strategies for Successful Writing	Write: Start Revising a Paper of Your Choice
Wed 11/26	Student-Teacher Conferences	
Thu 11/27	UNIVERSITY HOLIDAY—NO CLASS	Write: Response Paper #10
WEEK 10		
Mon 12/1	Due: Response Paper #10	
Tue 12/2	Revision Workshop on Final Paper	Prepare: Brainstorm for your in-class Reflection Essay
Wed 12/3	In-class Post-Test: Reflection Essay	
Thu 12/4	Final Day of Class Course Evaluations	Revision of A Paper of Your Choice Due in Catalyst Dropbox by Saturday, 12/6 at noon!

Holidays: Veteran’s Day—November 11th; Thanksgiving Holiday—November 27th and 28th

Last Day of Instruction: Friday 12/5

Finals Week: Saturday 12/6-Friday 12/12

Final Paper Due: Saturday, 12/6 at NOON (12 PM PS)

