

The Cosmopolitan Imagination (Pathways of World Literature)

Associate Dean Cyrus R. K. Patell

COREP-AD.14

Fall 2011 – 4.0 points

Sundays and Tuesdays 8:30 – 9:45 a.m. / Room N-109

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 10 a.m. – 12:00 p.m.

SYLLABUS

Course Description

Originating in the idea of the world citizen and conceived in contradistinction to nationalism, cosmopolitanism can be understood as a perspective that regards human difference as an opportunity to be embraced rather than a problem to be solved. Does this perspective lie behind all "great" literature, which asks its readers to experience otherness by opening themselves up to another person's words and thoughts? This course uses novels, poems, plays, and films to explore the cosmopolitan impulses behind the literary imagination. *Pre-Requisites:* None.

Learning Outcomes

Students in the course will learn to: develop critical thinking and reading skills that are foundational for success in all college courses; perform close formal analysis of texts and films; produce competent analytical essays; understand the relation of text to context and make connections among a variety of genres, periods, and cultural contexts; identify and analyze exemplary aspects of individual works. These outcomes will be assessed through reading reports, class participation, in-class exercises, and essays as described below.

Assessment

Students must complete all assigned coursework in order to pass the course. All required papers and other documents must be submitted electronically. No extensions will be given on assignments or papers without sufficient extenuating circumstances and prior approval from the instructor.

Reading Reports (20%) – Students are required to submit, electronically, before the midnight preceding each class for which it is assigned, a 300-word reading report that follows one of the two procedures: 1) For non-fiction reading assignments (September 6, 11, 13; October 25; November 22 and 27), you should list and briefly discuss *three* important arguments or insights contained in or suggested by the day's reading or viewing. Each discussion should be approximately 100 words. 2) For works of fiction, drama, or film, you should choose an *exemplary* moment from the assigned work and make a brief argument about *why* it is exemplary. In both cases, each report must conclude with *two* questions prompted by these discussions. Reports will be assessed on the following basis: Excellent, Sufficient, Deficient.

Class Participation (10%) – Students are expected to come to each class fully prepared, having read through or watched the texts or films assigned for the day’s class – *and thought about them carefully*. Participation will be assessed on the basis of both the regularity and the quality of contributions. Students will be asked to initiate class discussions without prior warning and may be asked to perform this function more than once.

In-Class Exercises (10%) – In-class exercises will be conducted in class without previous notice. If you are absent when an in-class exercise is given and do not have a written doctor’s excuse, you will receive a failing mark for that exercise. These exercises are designed to help students identify *exempla* for analysis within the day’s assignments and will be discussed in class. Your worst exercise grade will be dropped from the tabulation of your semester grade.

Two Short Essays (30%) – These essays (length: 900 to 1,000 words) are designed to teach students how to perform close analyses of exemplary textual moments. Topics will be assigned.

Final Essay (30%) – Students will choose their own topics for the final essay (2,500 to 3,000 words), with topic proposals submitted in advance for critique and approval by the instructor.

In-Class Conduct

Students are required to arrive punctually to each class; students arriving late without prior permission from the instructor may not be admitted, at the discretion of the instructor.

Students must silence cell phones before the start of class. The use of electronic devices in class is permitted only for the purpose of note taking or consulting relevant e-texts. Students may not in non-class related online activities during class. Is permitted.

You may drink but not eat during class.

Texts Ordered for the Course

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Anchor)
 Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (Norton)
 Richard Burton, *Arabian Nights* (Norton Critical Editions)
 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of darkness* (Norton Critical Editions)
 E. L. Doctorow, *Ragtime* (Random House)
 Tony Kushner, *Angels in America* (Theater Communications Group)
 Wajdi Mouawad, *Scorched*, Revised Edition (Playwrights Canada Press)
 Tayib Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (New York Review Books Classics)
 William Shakespeare, *Othello* (Folger Shakespeare Library)
 Sophocles, *Theban Plays*, ed. and trans. Peter Meineck and Paul Woodruff (Hackett)
 Rabindranath Tagore, *The Home and the World* (Penguin)

Required Films

Satyajit Ray, *The Home and the World*
 Jacques Villeneuve, *Incendies* [*Scorched*]

Additional Required Readings Available on Blackboard

Aristotle, *Poetics*
 Thomas Bender, "New York as a Center of Difference"
 Stephen Greenblatt, "Culture"
 David Hollinger, Excerpts from *Post-Ethnic America*
 Walt Whitman, Selections

SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS AND DISCUSSION TOPICS

[* Indicates that a reading report is due.]

9/4/11	Introduction
9/6/11	Appiah, <i>Cosmopolitanism</i> (Introduction, Chapters 1 and 2) *
9/11/11	<i>Cosmopolitanism</i> (Chapters 3 to 6)
9/13/11	<i>Cosmopolitanism</i> (Chapter 7 to end) *
9/18/11	<i>Othello</i> (read entire play before class); Greenblatt, "Culture" *
9/20/11	<i>Othello</i> *
9/25/11	Burton, <i>1001 Nights</i> (selections to be announced) *
9/27/11	<i>1001 Nights</i> (selections to be announced) *
10/2/11	Conrad, <i>Heart of Darkness</i> (read entire novel before class) *
10/4/11	<i>Heart of Darkness</i>
10/9/11	Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (read entire novel before class) *
10/11/11	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
10/16/11	Salih, <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> (read entire novel before class) *
10/18/11	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i>
10/23/11	Sophocles, <i>Oedipus</i> (read entire play before class) *
10/25/11	Aristotle, <i>Poetics</i> *
10/30/11	Mouawad, <i>Scorched</i> (read entire play before class) *
11/1/11	Film: <i>Incendies</i> [<i>Scorched</i>] (view film on your own before class) *
11/6/11	EID BREAK
11/8/11	EID BREAK
11/13/11	Tagore, <i>The Home and the World</i> (read entire novel before class) *
11/15/11	<i>The Home and the World</i>
11/20/11	Ray, <i>The Home and the World</i> (view film on your own before class) *
11/22/11	Bender, "New York as a Center of Difference" / Whitman, Selections *
11/27/11	Hollinger, Excerpts from <i>Post-Ethnic America</i> *
11/29/11	Doctorow, <i>Ragtime</i> (read entire novel before class) *
12/4/11	<i>Ragtime</i>
12/6/11	Kushner, <i>Angels in America: Millennium Approaches</i> *
12/11/11	Kushner, <i>Angels in America: Perestroika</i> *
12/13/11	Conclusion