

Syllabus
Literature and Cultural Diversity
(7 September 2018 version)

English 129-001/Fall 2018
Office: Greenlaw 421
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Instructor: Dr. Marc Cohen
Off hrs. by appointment.
Mtg: MWF 1:25/Greenl 305

Primary Texts:

The Complete Maus by Art Spiegelman
Interpreter of Maladies by Jhumpa Lahiri
The Joke Is Mightier Than the Sword by Bassem Youssef
Their Eyes Were Watching God by Zora Neale Hurston
This Is How You Lose Her by Junot Díaz
Tickling Giants directed by Sara Taksler, starring Bassem Youssef and Jon Stewart
The Woman Warrior by Maxine Hong Kingston
Secondary materials.

Required Materials:

Laptops with wireless internet access and MS Word.

Course Description:

We will read five works of literature—one novel, two short story collections, one work of creative nonfiction, and one graphic novel. Collectively this literature represents a cross section of contemporary America—a land of many races, ethnicities, languages, national origins, religions, and sexual orientations. The classic novel *Their Eyes Were Watching God* by African American author Zora Neale Hurston is an examination of one woman's struggle with the institution of marriage in the context of the poverty, discrimination, and African American mores in the Jim Crow South. *This Is How You Lose Her*, a short story collection by Junot Díaz and a finalist for the National Book Award, considers the subjects of toxic masculinity and infidelity from a Dominican-American's point of view. Jhumpa Lahiri's Pulitzer Prize-winning *Interpreter of Maladies* introduces us to the complicated lives of a selection of bicultural Indian Americans and Indians. *The Woman Warrior* by Maxine Hong Kingston, winner of the National Book Critics Circle Award for Nonfiction, is a work of creative nonfiction in which the author tries to make sense of her life by examining the biography of her complicated mother, a Chinese immigrant, and the cultural norms that her mother brought with her to America. Finally, in his Pulitzer Prize-winning graphic novel *The Complete Maus*, Art Spiegelman uses the comic book form and the beast fable tradition to tell the story of his Polish-Jewish parents and their victimization at the hands of the Nazis during the Holocaust.

In addition to the above, we will watch a documentary about Bassem Youssef and see his one-man show *The Joke Is Mightier Than the Sword*. Youssef is an Egyptian physician-turned-satirical comedian who created a satirical news program in the style of Jon Stewart's *The Daily Show*. As a result of conflict with the Egyptian government over the content of his satire, Youssef has taken refuge in the United States.

Course Goals:

Develop reading comprehension and interpretation skills.
Develop MLA-style analytical essay-writing skills.
Develop timed-essay writing skills.
Develop literary discussion skills.
Practice collaborative group work.
Develop group presentation skills.

Spirit of the Class:

To expand our multicultural awareness and knowledge.

How We Will Approach the Literature:

For each work of literature we will (1) introduce ourselves to the author, (2) learn the history of the work, (3) establish the genre, (4) learn the story, (5) acquaint ourselves with the major characters, (6) establish the setting, (7) identify the major themes, (8) study ideas and information required for understanding, and (9) identify the work's most prominent formal qualities such as plotting, language, imagery, tone, symbolism, narrator, person, etc. Once we have done the above, we will be in a better position to interpret the meaning of the work—especially the meaning as seen through the lens of race, ethnicity, language tradition, national origin, religion, and sexual orientation.

Course Assignments and Points:

Ten reading quizzes (two quizzes per work of literature). 10 pts. x 10 quizzes = 100 pts.

Two medium-length papers (7-13 pages). 150 pts. x 2 = 300 pts.

A mid-term exam. 150 pts.

A final exam. 150 pts.

Attendance and tardies - 100 pts. - and general participation - 100 pts. = 200 pts.

Group presentation evaluation. Peer eval - 50 pts. and prof. eval - 50 pts. = 100 pts.

Total points: 1000

Reading Quizzes:

There are two quizzes per work of literature. They will ask students to recall the details of the assigned reading (plot and character details). The purpose of these quizzes is to encourage everybody to keep up with the reading. The quiz questions will be reasonable, not focusing on trivia but rather on essential narrative content.

The Papers:

In each of the two papers, students will respond to a question relevant to the work of literature that we will have just read. Students will use the works of literature as the primary source of the papers. Students will utilize a variety of other works including books, articles, and lecture notes as secondary sources. Papers will be formatted using MLA style, and all sources will be cited using that style.

The Mid-term and Final Exam:

These exams will be presented as open-note timed essays. Students will be given the essay prompts in advance so that they can prepare note cards. Note cards may include an outline and quotations. No pre-written essays or portions of essays may be accessed during the exam. Students may not access their books or the internet during the exam.

Group Membership, Presentations, and Activities:

Each student will be assigned to membership of one of five groups. Each group will give two presentations: one will be an interactive theatrical presentation based on contemporary political issue that has relevance to some members of the identity group depicted in the literature (Presentation A); the other will be a guided activity based on cultural tradition associated with the identity group (Presentation B). Fifty percent of your group presentation grade will be assigned by your peers; the other fifty percent will be assigned by the professor based on the quality of the group's work. Students who do best on this assignment attend group meetings, contribute ideas, show leadership, fulfill tasks assigned by the groups, attend the presentations (on time), and do a good job with their roles in the presentations and activities.

Attendance and Tardies:

On-time and regular attendance is valued by the professor. Thus, I will take roll every day. Students who take unexcused, non-emergency absences or who make a habit of entering class after 9:05AM will receive a lower participation grade than their peers. A student who has accrued seven unexcused absences automatically fails the course.

Social Media and Web Surfing Policy:

Please do not text or engage in social media while in the class. I realize that it is tempting to do so and understand that many people are good at multi-tasking. However, because the professor finds it distracting, and because the class is mostly discussion-oriented, it is the policy of the class that these activities are not allowed. Students who engage in these activities generally reveal themselves through their body language. Students who ignore this request disqualify themselves from a high participation grade.

Required Attendance at Final Exam:

The final exam is scheduled for Monday, December 10, 12:00 Noon. This exam will not be rescheduled. Students who have a conflict during the time of this exam should not take the course.

Carolina Performing Arts Ticket Policy: Carolina Performing Arts (CPA) has held tickets for the members of our class to purchase for the following performance: Bassem Youssef on Wed. Nov. 7. CPA will hold your seats until 5 PM on October 24, at which point they will be released for sale to the public. To ensure you can attend this performance, buy your tickets in advance. Student tickets are \$10. Student who are participants in a program that covers ticket purchases at CPA must acquire a voucher in your program office in order to present it at the CPA box office. All students must present their class syllabi (physically or digitally) to purchase tickets under the hold at the Memorial Hall box office at 114 East Cameron Avenue.

Counseling and Psychological Services: CAPS is strongly committed to addressing the mental health needs of a diverse student body through timely access to consultation and connection to clinically appropriate services, whether for short or long-term needs. Go to their website: <https://caps.unc.edu> or visit their facilities on the third floor of the Campus Health Services building for a walk-in evaluation to learn more.

Accessibility Resources & Service: UNC-Chapel Hill facilitates the implementation of reasonable accommodations for students with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health struggles, chronic medical conditions, temporary disability, or pregnancy complications, all of which can impair student success. See the ARS website for contact and registration information: <https://ars.unc.edu/about-ars/contact-us>

Grading Scale:

A	940-1000	B	840-869	C	740-769	D	640-669
A-	900-939	B-	800-839	C-	700-739	D-	600-639
B+	870-899	C+	770-799	D+	670-699	F	-599

General Grading Rubric for Papers:

- F paper: Its treatment of the subject is superficial; its theme lacks discernible organization; its prose is garbled or stylistically primitive. Mechanical errors are frequent. The ideas, organization, and style fall far below what is acceptable college writing.
- D paper: Its treatment and development of the subject are only rudimentary. Although organization is present, it is neither clear nor effective. Sentences frequently are awkward, ambiguous, and marred by serious mechanical errors. Evidence of careful proofreading is scanty or nonexistent. The whole piece gives the impression of having been written in haste.
- C paper: It is generally competent; it meets the assignment, has few mechanical errors, and is reasonably well organized and developed. The actual information it delivers, however, seems thin and commonplace. One reason for that impression is that the ideas typically are cast in the form of vague generalities that confuse readers and prompt them to ask marginally: “In every case?” “Exactly how large?” “Why?” “But how many?” Stylistically, the C paper has other shortcomings as well: The opening paragraph does little to draw the reader in; the final paragraph offers only a perfunctory wrap-up; the transitions between paragraphs are often bumpy; the sentences, besides being choppy, tend to follow a predictable, often monotonous subject-verb-object pattern; and the diction occasionally is marred by unconscious repetitions, redundancy, and imprecision. The C paper, while it gets the job done, lacks imagination and intellectual rigor and hence does not invite a rereading.

- B paper: It is significantly more than competent. Besides being almost free of mechanical errors, the *B* paper delivers substantial information in terms of both quantity and interest. Its specific points are logically ordered, well developed, and unified around a clear organizing principle that is apparent early in the paper. The opening paragraph draws the reader in; the closing paragraph is both conclusive and thematically related to the opening. The transitions between paragraphs are for the most part smooth, the sentence structures pleasingly varied. The diction of the *B* paper typically is much more concise and precise than that found in the *C* paper. Occasionally, it even shows distinctiveness. On the whole, a *B* paper makes the reading experience a pleasurable one, for it offers substantial information with few distractions.
- A paper: Perhaps the principal characteristic of the *A* paper is its rich content. Some people describe that content as “meaty,” others as “dense,” still others as “packed.” The information delivered is such that one feels significantly taught by the author, sentence after sentence, paragraph after paragraph. The *A* paper also is marked by stylistic finesse: The title and opening paragraph are engaging; the transitions are artful; the phrasing is tight, fresh, and highly specific; the sentence structure is varied; the tone enhances the purposes of the paper. Finally, the *A* paper, because of its careful organization and development, imparts a feeling of wholeness and unusual clarity. Not surprisingly, it leaves the reader feeling thoroughly satisfied and eager to reread the piece.

%	Points
100	250
98	245
96	240
94	235
92	230
90	225
88	220
86	215
84	210
82	205
80	200
78	195
76	190
74	185
72	180
70	175
68	170
66	165
64	160
62	155
60	150

%	Points
100	150
98	147
97	145.5
95	142.5
93	139.5
90	135
88	132
86	129
85	127.5
83	124.5
80	120
77	115.5
75	112.5
73	109.5
70	105
68	102

%	Points
100	50
97	48.5
95	47.5
93	46.5
90	45
88	44
85	42.5
83	41.5
80	40
77	38.5
75	37.5
73	36.5
70	35
68	34

Calendar:

Date	Activity	Due
Wed. Aug. 22	Syllabus	
Fri. Aug. 24	<i>Their Eyes Were</i> / Chapters 1-4	
Mon. Aug. 27	<i>Their Eyes Were</i> / Chapters 5-10	Quiz
Wed. Aug. 29	<i>Their Eyes Were</i> / Chapters 11-14	
Fri. Aug. 31	<i>Their Eyes Were</i> / Chapters 15-18	Quiz Group 1 Presentation A
Mon. Sept. 3		Labor Day – No School
Wed. Sept. 5	<i>Their Eyes Were</i> / Chapters 19-20	Group 5 Presentation B
Fri. Sept. 7	Paper #1 Workshop	
Mon. Sept. 10	<i>Maus</i> I, Chapters 1-2	Paper #1
Wed. Sept. 12	<i>Maus</i> I, Chapters 3-4	Quiz
Fri. Sept. 14	<i>Maus</i> I, Chapters 5-6	
Mon. Sept. 17	<i>Maus</i> II, Chapters 1-2	Quiz Group 2 Presentation A
Wed. Sept. 19	<i>Maus</i> II, Chapters 3-4	Group 4 Presentation B
Fri. Sept. 21	<i>Maus</i> II, Chapter 5	
Mon. Sept. 24		Midterm

Wed. Sept. 26	“A Temporary Matter” / <i>Interpreter</i>	
Fri. Sept. 28	“When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine” / <i>Interpreter</i>	Quiz
Mon. Oct. 1	“Interpreter of Maladies” and “A Real Durwan” / <i>Interpreter</i>	
Wed. Oct. 3	“Sexy” / <i>Interpreter</i>	Quiz
Fri. Oct. 5	“Mrs. Sen’s” / <i>Interpreter</i>	Group 3 Presentation A
Mon. Oct. 8	“This Blessed House” and “The Treatment of Bibi Haldar” / <i>Interpreter</i>	
Wed. Oct. 10	“The Third and Final Continent” / <i>Interpreter</i>	Group 1 Presentation B
Fri. Oct. 12	“The Sun, the Moon, the Stars” / <i>This Is How</i>	
Mon. Oct. 15	“Nilda” / <i>This Is How</i>	Quiz
Wed. Oct. 17	“Alma” / <i>This Is How</i>	
Fri. Oct. 19		Fall Break – No Class
Mon. Oct. 22	“Otravida, Otravez” and “Flaca” / <i>This Is How</i>	
Wed. Oct. 24	“The Pura Principle”/ <i>This Is How</i>	Group 5 Presentation A Deadline for purchasing Bassem Youssef tickets
Fri. Oct. 26	“Invierno” / <i>This is How</i>	Quiz, Group 2 Presentation B

Mon. Oct. 29	“Miss Lora” and “The Cheater’s Guide to Love” / <i>This Is How</i>	
Wed. Oct. 31	Paper #2 Workshop	
Fri. Nov. 2	Bassem Youssef	Paper #2
Mon. Nov. 5	<i>Tickling Giants</i>	
Wed. Nov. 7	<i>Tickling Giants</i>	Bassam Youssef’s <i>The Joke Is Mightier Than the Sword</i> at Memorial Hall
Fri. Nov. 9	<i>The Joke Is Mightier Than the Sword</i>	
Mon. Nov. 12	“No Name Woman” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (1-16)	
Wed. Nov. 14	“White Tigers” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (18-53)	Quiz
Fri. Nov. 16	“Shaman” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (54-87)	
Mon. Nov. 19	“Shaman” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (88-109)	Group 4 Presentation A
Wed. Nov. 21	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS	
Fri. Nov. 23	THANKSGIVING – NO CLASS	
Mon. Nov. 26	“At the Western Palace” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (110-160)	
Wed. Nov. 28	“At the Western Palace” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (110-160)	Quiz

Fri. Nov. 30	“A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (161-185)	Group 3 Presentation B
Mon. Dec. 3	“A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i> (186-209)	
Wed. Dec. 5	“A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe” / <i>The Woman Warrior</i>	
Mon. Dec. 10, 12:00Noon – 3:00PM, GL 305		Final Exam