

This syllabus has been provided as a reference tool for students considering this course. It has been modified to follow Senate regulations. Current students enrolled in any undergraduate course must obtain the most recent syllabus from their course instructor or from their course website. This is not the latest version.



Department of English & Writing Studies

Topics in Postcolonial Literature

Nostalgia in North America: Modern and Contemporary Diasporic Literature and Theory English 3882G (001)

Winter 2014

Instructor: Alicia Robinet

Date/Time: Tuesday 3:30pm-5:30pm
Thursday 4:30pm-5:30pm

Location: 3M 3250

Prerequisites

At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

Course Description

This course will focus on North American diasporic literature. We will pair our readings of diasporic literature and diaspora theory in order to gain an historical understanding of this concept, and to enable students to probe how this concept has shifted over time. Focusing on the 20th and 21st centuries, we will explore what characterizes diasporic literature, and how theory enables us to rethink the possibilities for diasporic communities. We will also consider recent interventions that broaden and complicate the concept of diaspora, such as scholarly discussions about the Newfoundland diaspora or the queer diaspora. We will consider these questions, and more, in our course readings: What is useful about the concept of diaspora? How does it connect with understandings of globalization and cosmopolitanism? How does reading literature from the perspective of diaspora studies open up-or close off-possibilities for communities negotiating between home- and hostland?

Objectives:

Successful students who complete the course will be better able to:

- Know, comprehend, and analyze the concept of “diaspora” as it is used in literary theory;
- Know, comprehend, and analyze diaspora literature;
- Gain transferable skills that will stem out of the course’s focus on close reading, writing, research, and presenting that will extend beyond the limits of this course.

Methods of Evaluation

Participation	10%
Response Paper and Presentation	25%
Term Paper	30%
Final Exam	35%

Always bring the assigned texts to our class for discussion and detailed analysis.

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

Week One Introduction

January 7 Discussion of course policies, goals, expectations, and evaluations.
January 9 Introduction of key terms and theoretical foundations.

Week Two Historicizing Diaspora

January 14 A.M. Klein, "Heirloom," "Haggadah," "Childe Harold's Pilgrimage": Available online through the library website - Klein, A.M. *Complete Poems*. 2 vols. Ed. Zailig Pollock. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1990.

Jon Stratton, "(Dis)placing the Jews: Historicizing the Idea of Diaspora" (PDF available on Project MUSE)
PRESENTATION 1: PROF. ROBINET
January 16 Historicizing cont'd

Week Three (Group A) Literature of the Black Atlantic

January 21 Ralph Ellison, "Flying Home" (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP A (Response due Group A)
January 23 Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora" (available on Project MUSE)

Week Four (Group B) Reconsidering the Black Atlantic

January 28 Lawrence Hill, *The Book of Negroes*
PRESENTATION GROUP B (Response due Group B)
January 30 Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity (course pack)

Week Five (Group C) Reflections on Return

February 4 Lawrence Hill, *The Book of Negroes* (cont'd)
PRESENTATION GROUP C (Response due Group C)
February 6 William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies: Myths of Homeland and Return" (available on Project MUSE)

Week Six (Group D & E) Imagining Diaspora

February 11 Jhumpa Lahiri, "The Third and Final Continent" (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP D (Response due Group D)
Rohinton Mistry, "Squatter" (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP E (Response due Group E)
February 13 Vijay Mishra, "The Diasporic Imaginary: Theorizing the Indian Diaspora" (PDF available online via Scholars Portal)

Week Seven Reading Week

Week Eight (GROUPS F & G) Diasporic Memory

- February 25 Fred Wah, *Diamond Grill* (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP F (Response due Group F)
Madeleine Thien, *Simple Recipes* (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP G (Response due Group G)
Response due Groups H, I, J, K, L
- February 27 Lily Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora" in *Topia* Number 17 Spring 2007 (search e-journals, *Topia*, GetitatWestern, available through *Free E-Journals*)

Recommended reading: Lily Cho, "How taste remembers life: Diaspora and the Memories That Bind" from *Eating Chinese: Culture on the Menu in Small Town Canada*

Week Nine (GROUP H) Diaspora and Gender

- March 4 Theresa Hak Kyung Cha, *Dictée*
PRESENTATION GROUP H
- March 6th Sneja Gunew, "Resident Aliens: Diasporic Women's Writing" (available online: search e-Journals *Contemporary Women's Writing*, Vol. 3 p. 28, available from Highwire Press Journals)

Week Ten (GROUP I) Borders

- March 11 Guillermo Verdecchia, *Fronteras Americanas*
PRESENTATION GROUP I
- March 13 Avtar Brah, "Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities" (Chapter 8 in Avtar Brah's *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* available online as an electronic resource)

Week Eleven (GROUP J) Diasporas within the Nation

- March 18 David French, *1949* (available online)
PRESENTATION GROUP J
- March 20 Jennifer Bowering Delisle, "A Newfoundland Diaspora?: Moving through Ethnicity and Whiteness" (available online)

Week Twelve (GROUP K) Indigeneity and Diaspora

- March 25 Gregory Scofield, selections (course pack)
PRESENTATION GROUP K
- March 27 Sophie McCall, "Diaspora and Nation in Metis Writing" (available online)

Week Thirteen (GROUP L) Queer Diasporas

- April 1 Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night*
PRESENTATION GROUP L
TERM PAPER DUE (EXCLUDING GROUP L)
- April 3 Gayatri Gopinath, "Impossible Subjects: An Introduction to Queer Diasporas" (available online through MLA: Chapter 1 of *Queer Diasporas: Gender, Sexuality, and Migration in Contemporary South Asian Literature and Cultural Production*)
Recommended reading: Rinaldo Walcott, "Homopoetics: Queer Space and the Black Queer Diaspora" (2007) in *Black Geographies and the Politics of Place*

Week Fourteen Conclusion and Exam Review

- April 8 Exam Review
**Term paper due Group L

Assignments:

Students are fully responsible for submission of essays. Students should also keep backup copies. Essays not submitted in class should be deposited in one of the essay boxes outside the English Department General Office, University College, Room 173.

Late Assignments: All assignments are due at the beginning of class on the scheduled due date. Assignments handed in after the commencement of class on the scheduled due date will be assessed a late penalty of 1%. Any assignments submitted after the due date will be assessed a late penalty (2% per day, including weekends). Assignments must be submitted either directly to the Professor at the beginning of class or submitted as late and handed into the secure essay drop-off box outside the English Department office. No assignments will be accepted more than 10 days after the due date.

Extensions will only be granted with medical certification or under other extenuating circumstances and should, when possible, be arranged with the Professor in advance. For further information, please see the section on "Academic Accommodation" in this syllabus.

Participation: Active participation is a key to an engaging and lively class. Students should come prepared to discuss the week's readings, and to contribute to the week's presentations by answering any questions or asking questions of their own. Attendance to a class at this level needs to be consistent. Your participation grade will take into account the quality and consistency of your contributions to discussion, active listening (eg. no texting and laptop use during presentations), your engagement with class presentations, and your thoughtful contributions to your classmates' presentations.

Response Paper and Presentation: The group presentation (10%) will focus on the assigned reading, but it can engage the ideas from all of the week's readings, and the readings to date. The presentation should provide some summary of the reading, but must extend beyond summary to analysis. This part of the presentation should last 10 to 15 minutes. Students should prepare at least one discussion question each to ask the class based on the presentation. These questions can be integrated during the presentation, or can be asked at the end. Each student will be responsible for one question and should submit it along with the completed peer and self-evaluation about how his or her group prepared the presentation.

For the rest of the assignment (15%), each student will be required to submit a 600-800 word response paper about the presentation text(s). This portion of the assignment is to be done INDIVIDUALLY. The response paper should maintain an academic voice and style, but the response can be more exploratory than a traditional academic essay. This is a space to ask challenging questions of the readings, to share your close readings of the text at hand, to consider how the critical or theoretical article changed your initial reading of the text, or to reflect on how the week's readings shape our understanding of diaspora. This assignment should help form the ideas for your presentation. We will discuss the criteria for presentation evaluations and formulate a rubric as a class. Attendance on the day of your presentation is mandatory; without supporting documentation to justify your absence, you sacrifice the presentation portion of your grade for this assignment. *Note: Students from Groups A, B, C, D, E, F, and G will submit their response papers on the same day as their presentation. Groups H, I, J, K, and L will submit the response papers about their presentation text on Tuesday, February 25th.

Term Paper: Your term paper, or formal essay, will focus on one or two texts from the course, excluding the text you have already written on for your response paper/ presentation. The paper

should be 2000-2500 words (8-10 pages) in length and needs to integrate with careful consideration no less than three scholarly books or articles. The paper needs to follow proper MLA formatting. You should visit my office hours in advance of the paper due date to discuss your ideas. I will distribute topics in advance of the paper deadline.

Attendance:

Please note that students who are repeatedly absent from classes may be refused permission to write the final examination. (See 2012 U.W.O. Calendar, p. 35.) Students are responsible for knowing and abiding by the relevant Senate and departmental policies on such matters as: when and how to request academic accommodation for missed or late work; plagiarism; consequences of absenteeism; and other rights and responsibilities.

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism:

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking:

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.