

ENG 524: Studies in World Literature
Topic: Immigrant and Refugee Literature
Fall 2022

Instructor: Dr. Marla Zubeł
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Office: CH 116
Office Hours: Wed. 10:00 – 12:00
& By appointment

Meeting Time & Location:
Wed., 5:30-8:15 p.m.
CH 103

Course Description

This course will explore representations of displacement, exile, border crossings, diasporic community, alienation and belonging in works of twentieth and twenty-first century literature written by and about immigrants and refugees. We will consider the following questions: What kinds of narrative strategies and aesthetic choices do refugee and immigrant writers employ to render their experiences? Who is the intended audience for these works and what are the ethics of publishing and consuming narratives of trauma and suffering by marginalized people? What other kinds of stories does refugee and immigrant literature offer, and how do these stories challenge stereotypical representations about the plight of refugees and/or the threat of immigrants perpetuated by the popular news media? We will also consider whether and how immigrant and refugee literature constitutes a transnational form of world literature that requires new frameworks of analysis that extend beyond the study of national cultures and languages.

Required Texts

You must bring the appropriate text with you to class on the day of the assigned reading

- Julian Alvarez, *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* (978-1565129757)
- Gloria Anzaldúa, *Borderlands/La Frontera* (978-1879960749)
- Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (978-0735212206)
- Yuri Herrera, *Signs Preceding the End of the World* (978-1908276421)
- Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy: A Novel* (978-0374527358)
- Dinaw Mengestu, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* (978-1594482854)
- Course Packet (PDF on Blackboard)

Cost of Course Materials

If you buy used copies of the books online, the cost will be about \$38.00 for all six books. If you buy the books new it will cost around \$68.00. This does not include the cost of printing the course packet, should you choose to do so. **The new Big Red Backpack program will automatically charge you \$72 per class to rent the books** (course packet printing costs are not eligible). So, you may wish to opt out of the program. Note that opting out means you are opting out of the program for all your classes this semester. **The deadline for opting out of the Big Red Backpack Program is Friday, August 26th. Failure to opt out will result in an automatic charged to your student account of \$24 per credit.**

Evaluation

Participation: 150 points, or 15% of grade

Discussion Leader Presentation: 250 points or 25% of grade

Short Writing Assignments (12): 25 points each for a total of 300 points, or 30% of grade

Literary Analysis Essay (10-12 pages double-spaced): 300 points, or 30% of grade

Total possible points: 1000

Overview of Assignments

Attendance: We are still in the middle of a pandemic; if you are not feeling well, I want you to stay home. If you are feeling up to it, you may choose to join us on zoom, even if you are enrolled in the in-person section, but that is not a requirement. **Excessive absences will result in a failing participation grade.**

Participation: Participation from everyone is required for successful and engaging class discussion. To earn higher than a C in participation, you are expected to complete reading assignments on schedule, come to each class prepared with ideas and notes from the reading, and share your ideas during class discussions. Frequent and excellent comments will earn you an A in participation.

Short Writing Assignments: Each week you will post to Blackboard a 300-400 word response to the assigned reading. These posts should demonstrate thoughtful engagement with the themes, characters, narrative structure, and/or formal elements of the text. These short papers are less formal than your longer essay, but I expect them to be clearly written and proofread. **Responses will be due by Tuesday at midnight. Late responses will only be accepted under special circumstances.** These responses are meant to promote critical reflection on the assigned readings *before* we discuss them in class.

Discussion Leader Presentation: Students will sign up to facilitate our discussion of one of the assigned readings on a given week. This presentation will consist of biographical information about the author, context of the literary work, discussion of themes/narrative structure/literary form, a close reading of 1-2 key passages, and a list of questions for further discussion. More information about expectations for this assignment will be provided in class.

Final Essay: A formal essay of literary analysis and interpretation, with a length of 10-12 pages. It may be comparative or focus on just one literary text. You will also be required to incorporate appropriate secondary sources. Topic will be determined by students. An abstract will be due several weeks before the essay is due.

Policies and Resources

COVID-19: All students are strongly encouraged to [get the COVID-19 vaccine](#). In accordance with WKU policy, **all students must call the WKU COVID-19 Assistance Line at 270-745-2019 within 4 hours of testing positive for COVID-19 or being identified as a close contact to someone who has tested positive. The CDC currently advises anyone testing positive (whether or not they have symptoms) to isolate for five days. If after five days symptoms are improving and you have been fever-free for 24 hours, you may end isolation. However you must continue to wear a mask in public for an additional five days.**

WKU's COVID Assistance Line is available to answer questions regarding any COVID-19 related issue. This guidance is subject to change based on requirements set forth by federal, state, and local public health entities. Please refer to the Healthy on the Hill website for the most current information: www.wku.edu/healthyonthehill.

Late Assignments: I would like for all work to be submitted on the day it is due. This is so that you don't fall behind with class, and so that I don't fall behind with the grading. I understand that certain circumstances (illness, acute personal crises, etc.) might necessitate an extension. Please be in touch with me if you are experiencing something like that, so that we can agree on a new deadline.

Plagiarism and Academic Integrity: Plagiarism is the presentation of another's work as your own. To avoid plagiarizing, students must properly document any ideas or language taken from another source. *Students found to have plagiarized will receive a zero for the assignment; any additional instances will result in a failing grade for the course.* Further disciplinary action may also be taken. WKU's website describes academic integrity as "an essential component of an academic community. Every student is responsible for fostering and maintaining a culture of academic honesty by committing to the academic values of honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust, respect for self and others, fairness, and justice." The following is the definition of plagiarism that we abide by at WKU: "Plagiarism is defined as any use of another writer's words, concepts, or sequence of ideas without acknowledging that writer properly. This includes not only direct quotations of another writer's words, but also paraphrases or summaries of another writer's concepts or ideas without acknowledging the writer properly (i.e., citing them)." <http://www.wku.edu/csa/policies/plagiarism.php> If you are confused about plagiarism—what it is, how to avoid it—please don't hesitate to speak with me.

Communication and Office Hours: The best way to contact me is by email. I will respond to all messages received during the week within 24 hours. Emails received over the weekends may not receive a response until Monday. If you would like to meet with me, the best way to make an appointment is via the Calendly link on the course Blackboard page. I will be available for one-on-one appointments via zoom and in-person in my office.

Technology Use: The use of cell phones is not permitted in class. Please have your phones turned off and put away at the start of class. Laptops are permitted for taking notes, but please be aware that at any moment I may ask to see the screen to confirm that you are indeed using your laptop for this purpose.

Resolving Complaints about Grades: The first step in resolving a complaint about grades is for the student to attempt to resolve the problem directly with the course instructor. See the Student Handbook, available at <http://www.wku.edu/handbook/> for additional guidance.

Title IX Misconduct/Assault Statement: Western Kentucky University (WKU) is committed to supporting faculty, staff and students by upholding WKU's Title IX Sexual Misconduct/Assault Policy (#0.2070) at <<https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/index.php?policy=182>> and Discrimination and Harassment Policy (#0.2040) at <https://www.wku.edu/policies/docs/251.pdf>. Under these policies, discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct based on sex/gender are prohibited. If you experience an incident of sex/gender-based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct, you are encouraged to report it to the Title IX Coordinator, Deborah Wilkins, 270-745-5396 or Title IX Investigators, Michael Crowe, 270-745-5429 or Joshua Hayes, 270-745-5121.

Please note that while you may report an incident of sex/gender based discrimination, harassment and/or sexual misconduct to a faculty member, WKU faculty are "Responsible Employees" of the University and **MUST** report what you share to WKU's Title IX Coordinator or Title IX Investigator. If you would like to speak with someone who may be able to afford you confidentiality, you may contact WKU's Counseling and Testing Center at 270-745-3159.

ADA Accommodation Statement: In compliance with University policy, students with disabilities who require academic and/or auxiliary accommodations for this course must contact the Student Accessibility Resource Center located in Downing Student Union, Room 1074. The SARC can be reached by phone number at 270-745-5004 [270-745-3030 TTY] or via email at sarc.connect@wku.edu. Please do not request accommodations directly from the professor or instructor without a faculty notification letter (FNL) from The Student Accessibility Resource Center.

Important Dates

- Aug. 26: Last day to opt out of Big Red Backpack program
- Aug. 29: Last day to add a class/ last day to drop class without a grade
- Sept. 5: Labor Day - No class
- Oct. 13-14: Fall Break - No class
- Oct. 23: 60% point in the semester. Students who stop attending class or participating in online class before this date will be assigned an FN rather than an F.
- Oct. 31.: Last day to withdraw from a class with a W.
- Nov. 23-25: Thanksgiving Break - No class
- Dec. 5-8: Finals Week

ENG 524: Reading Schedule

Wed. 8/24 **Introduction: Definitions and Terms: Refugee, Immigrant, Human Rights**
1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights
1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees
Hannah Arendt, “We Refugees”
Giorgio Agamben, “Beyond Human Rights”
Viet Thanh Nguyen, “On Being a Refugee, and American—and a Human Being”

Wed. 8/31 **What is Immigrant and Refugee Literature?**
Edward Said “Reflections on Exile”
Claire Gallien, “‘Refugee Literature’: What postcolonial theory has to say”
Jocelyn Frelier – “Refugee Literature in the Age of the ‘Global Migrant Crisis’”
Nam Le, “Love and Honor and Pity and Pride and Compassion and Sacrifice”

Unit One: Crossings Borders

Wed. 9/7 Bridget Anderson, et al., “Why No Borders”
Edwidge Danticat, “Children of the Sea”
Warsan Shire, “Home”
In-class screening: *The Fire at Sea* (2016) Dir. Gianfranco Rosi

Wed. 9/14 Yuri Herrera, *Signs Preceding the End of the World*

Wed. 9/22 Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

Wed. 9/28 Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

Unit Two: Stranger in a Strange Land

Wed. 10/5 Aleksandar Hemon. “Blind Jozef Pronek and Dead Souls”

Wed. 10/12 Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy: A Novel*

Wed. 10/19 Dinaw Mengetsu, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*

Wed. 10/26 Dinaw Menegetsu -*The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*

Wed. 11/2 Viet Thanh Nguyen, “The Other Man” and “Fatherland”
Moja Kahf, selected poems from *E-mails from Scheherazad*

*****Final Essay Abstract Due*****

Unit Three: Hybrid Identities

Wed. 11/9	Gloria Anzaldúa, selections from <i>Borderlands / La Frontera: The New Mestiza</i>
Wed. 11/16	Julia Alvarez, <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i>
Wed. 11/23	Thanksgiving Break
Wed. 11/30	Julia Alvarez, <i>How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents</i> Mahmoud Darwish, "Here the Bird's Journey Ends" In-class screening: <i>La Ciudad</i> (1998) Dir. David Riker
Mon. 12/5 – 12/8	Finals Week – No Class.

*****Final Paper Due Wed., 12/7, by midnight on Blackboard*****