

Instructor: Teresa Villa-Ignacio
Tiffany_Villa-Ignacio@brown.edu

CO81.11/COLT 0810V
Summer 2008
MW1:30-5:30pm

Literature in a Globalizing Age

Course Description

“Literature in a Globalizing Age” is an introductory-level literature course focusing on contemporary literary texts and the socio-historical context of globalization. The course introduces you to different techniques for understanding literature, prepares you to pursue additional study in literature and the humanities and social sciences in general and fosters the development of your critical thinking skills. By the end of the course you will be able to perform close readings and comparative readings of literary texts, identify pertinent issues of globalization as they emerge in literary texts, use the library to do interdisciplinary research on these issues, and present your research both orally and in written form.

The course will focus on three issues: relations of identity and difference, representations of lived globality, and the emergence of a new global aesthetic.

1) Relations of Identity and Difference: While the definitions of self and other have been a perennial source of debate, we will examine how these terms are reconfigured in an age in which such diverse factors as transnational migration, transnational corporatism and internet technology, to name only a few, are shaping contemporary lives. We will ask whether and how older terms such as “imperialism,” “colonialism,” “postcolonialism,” etc. are useful in the context of globalization. Taking into account critiques of globalization as a totalizing discourse, we will discuss the poetics of negotiating totalizing discourses and singular experience as demonstrated in these literary texts.

2) Representations of Lived Globality: While the phenomena of consumerism, virtual communications, terrorism and damage to the environment are not exclusive to globalization, we will observe how our literary texts foreground these phenomena and ask whether, how and why they may be transformed by processes of globalization.

3) The Emergence of a Global Aesthetic: Keeping in mind the aforementioned tension between totalization and singularity, we will inquire whether these texts thematically and formally call for a planet-encompassing awareness in the reception of literature and other arts, which could be termed a “global aesthetic,” and/or whether the texts critique such a possibility.

Required Texts

Manfred B. Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Ian McEwan, *Saturday*

Don DeLillo, *White Noise*

Course Packet (readings from Course Packet indicated by “P”)

Course Websites

Course Website: <http://mycourses.brown.edu> (login with userid and password)

Library Course Website:

<http://dl.lib.brown.edu/gateway/program.php?programid=156&task=home>

Course Requirements

Attendance and Participation (10%)

Five Journal Entries on Current Events (webct postings) (10%)
One 15 min. Presentation (20%)
Four 2pp. Response Papers (20%)
One Final Research Paper (40%)

Note on Attendance

More than two (2) unexcused absences will result in lowering the final grade by one letter.

Week 1: Interdisciplinary Approaches to Globalization

Monday, June 23

Introduction
Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies" (handout)

Wednesday, June 25

Steger, *Globalization: A Very Short Introduction*

Week 2: Nationalism, Imperialism and Literary Production

Monday, June 30

Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
* Response Paper 1 Due

Wednesday, July 2

Anderson, from *Imagined Communities* (P)
Said, from *Culture and Imperialism* (P)
Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" (P)
* Presentation 1: The Olympic Games

Week 3: Postmodernism and Postcolonialism

Monday, July 7

Smith, *White Teeth*
* Response Paper 2 Due

Wednesday, July 9

Jameson, "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism" (P)
Bhabha, from *The Location of Culture* (P)
* Presentation 2: *Babel*

Week 4: Terror

Monday, July 14

McEwan, *Saturday*

* Response Paper 3 Due

Wednesday, July 16

Habermas and Derrida, from *Philosophy in a Time of Terror* (P)

* Presentation 3: *Poems from Guantánamo: The Detainees Speak*

Week 5: Consumerism and The Environment

Monday, July 21

DeLillo, *White Noise*

* Response Paper 4 Due

* Final Paper Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due

Wednesday, July 23

Held, “Catastrophe in the Making” (P)

French, from *Vanishing Borders* (P)

*Presentation 4: *An Inconvenient Truth*

Week 6: Virtuality

Monday, July 28

selected blogs (TBA)

Wednesday, July 30

* Mini-Colloquium on Final Papers

Conclusion

*** Final Papers Due Wednesday, August 6 at 12pm**