

ENGLISH 208-05 SI:
TOPICS IN GLOBAL LITERATURE
History, Trauma, and Identity in Recent World Fiction

Professor Christian Moraru

Spring 2021
Jan. 19 - April 28
Online & Asynchronous

GL - Global, GLT - Literature, IGS - International and Global Studies

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COURSE DESCRIPTION: An English course in the major also open to all undergraduates in sophomore standing, this Topics in Global Literature online class examines how contemporary international fiction comes to terms with the increasing transnational mobility, chosen or imposed, of people, values, and cultural symbols, and with the bearings of this process on human identity. This section deals specifically with representations of geocultural and linguistic displacement, migration, and exile following certain traumatic events of the post-World War II era, when people become more and more aware of the broader world shaping—rooting, uprooting, and rerouting—individual lives.

The course has a global focus twice. First, it has a cross-cultural, transnational, and, indeed, planetary scope, covering as it does several literary and cultural traditions, Western and non-Western, and spanning continents. Second, the novels discussed here are recent and speak to a growing feeling worldwide that we have entered the new age of “time-space compression,” “network society,” and the “global village,” in which peoples, cultures, and communities around the world are more interconnected and more fluid, but perhaps also more vulnerable than ever before. All texts are in English or in English translation.

This is a thematic survey of contemporary U. S. and international fiction, in which the material is lodged at the intersection of the postcolonial, the transnational, and the postmodern, categories and movements that will also be addressed in our class. The approach is comparative in that we will seek to see how these texts talk to each other over national, linguistic, geographic, and cultural divides and how, in doing so, they foreground the notion of territorial and cultural boundaries as well as these boundaries’ increased porousness and multiple transgressions after World War II and especially after the Cold War. The course is broad and foundational in nature; it does not assume extensive familiarity with the works at hand and their specific traditions.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES (SLOs) FOR ENG 208 AS A GLT COURSE:

Students who have successfully completed this course will be able to

1) demonstrate the reading skills required for the study of literary texts (UNCG General Education Learning Goal 3);

- 2) identify and/or describe some of the varied characteristics of literary texts (LG3);
- 3) demonstrate orally, in writing, or by some other means, a fundamental ability to use some of the techniques and/or methods of literary analysis (LG 1 and 3);
- 4) identify and/or describe some of the various social, historical, cultural, and/or theoretical contexts in which literary texts have been written and interpreted (LG3).

COURSE-SPECIFIC SLOs: Students who successfully complete the course will be able to:

- 5) explain, primarily in writing, the overall impact of post-World War II globalization trends, in particular of increasing contemporary interconnectedness, on literature and culture;
- 6) describe in writing the effects of such trends on the particular works discussed;
- 7) analyze in writing the assigned novels and short stories from the thematic/stylistic standpoint of the course;

TEACHING METHODS AND ASSIGNMENTS FOR ACHIEVING LEARNING OUTCOMES (All are keyed to SLOs 1-7):

COURSE FORMAT: This is a 3-week online class in which students complete short responses to each book and a final writing assignment in response to background information, reading guidelines, and prompts offered by the instructor.

ENGLISH 208 CANVAS WEBSITE: The course is run on a designated Canvas website.

EVALUATION, REQUIREMENTS, AND GRADING:

The assignments and final grade breakdown are as follows:

1. **Shorter responses** (one response per novel): 70% (each response is 10% of the final grade)

Guidelines: Students turn in a **1 double-spaced-p. response** for each novel on the dates set in the weekly syllabus (see below). These are brief essays answering the questions formulated by the instructor; the questions are located in the course units or modules (one module per book). The responses, while less formal than the final paper, will argue a personal viewpoint on a specific issue mentioned in the question. The response will be analytic and will use textual evidence as appropriate. Its structure (introduction-argument-conclusion) is comparable to the final paper, and students can develop a response into the bigger essay they submit on April 28.

2. **Final paper:** 30%

Guidelines: This will be a **4-5-p., double-spaced, thesis-based** essay. The format of the essay should be MLA. Before submitting the paper, students prepare and **send by e-mail** to the instructor a brief 1-paragraph paper proposal in which they describe their project, indicating its thesis, focus, and related matters. This paper must essentially develop, from the viewpoint of our general theme, a reading of a work or a comparative reading of two, possibly three works among those studied in our class.

The essay should include:

- a) an introduction mentioning the work or works under discussion, the thematic focus of the project, and the thesis*;
- b) an outline of, and any necessary context for, the primary source(s);
- c) the argument or treatment of evidence (analysis);
- d) the conclusion

Students should use the same MLA format for the essay. Research (secondary sources) is not required, but, if used, it must be fully referenced.

*A thesis is basically a point you are making about an object, event, occurrence, or, in our situation, a primary source such as a book or poem. In all these situations, the thesis would be comparable to a case you would make in court. The thesis is, in other words, the core claim or contention around which your essay would revolve. The essay's bulk—or the argument—would have to prove or illustrate that thesis through detailed textual analysis.

REQUIRED READINGS (Books in print only, latest pbk.):

1. Jonathan Lethem, *Girl in Landscape*. New York: Random House, 1999.
2. Mohsin Hamid. *Exit West*. New York: Riverhead, 2017.
3. Ben Lerner. *Leaving the Atocha Station*. Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2011.
4. Don DeLillo. *Zero K*. New York: Scribner, 2016.
5. Emily St. John Mandel. *Station Eleven*. New York: Knopf, 2015.
6. Joseph O'Neill. *The Dog*. New York: Pantheon Books, 2014.
7. Michel Houellebecq. *Submission*. Trans. Lorin Stein. New York: Picador, 2016.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY: Students are required to sign the Academic Integrity Policy on all major work submitted for the course. They need to be familiar with, and abide by, the relevant standards, expectations, and policies described in UNCG's *Undergraduate Bulletin*, which is available at <http://sa.uncg.edu/handbook/academic-integrity-policy/>

Note on plagiarism: Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of others' materials both in form (wording) and substance (ideas). Any paper bearing a student's name signifies that the student is the author, namely, that the words and the ideas are his or hers, with exceptions indicated by quotations marks and paraphrases. Evidence of plagiarism will result in one or more of the following: a failing grade for the assignment, an "F" for the whole course, and/or a report filed with the Dean. Also, students must consult the UNCG policies on plagiarism.

DAILY SYLLABUS & DUE DATES:

Week 1

T 01/19

W 01/20

R 01/21

F 01/22

Week 2

M 01/25

T 01/26

W 01/27

R 01/28

F 01/29

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Leaving the Atocha Station* due**Week 3**

M 02/01

T 02/02

W 02/03

R 02/04

F 02/05

Week 4

M 02/08

T 02/09

W 02/10

R 02/11

F 02/12

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Girl in Landscape* due**Week 5**

M 02/15

T 02/16

W 02/17

R 02/18

F 02/19

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Exit West* due**Week 6**

M 02/22

T 02/23

W 02/24

R 02/25

F 02/26

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *The Dog* due**Week 7**

M 03/01

T 03/02

W 03/03

R 03/04

F 03/05

Health and Wellness Day. Classes dismissed

Week 8

M 03/08

T 03/09

W 03/10

R 03/11

F 03/12

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Zero K* due

Week 9

M 03/15
T 03/16
W 03/17
R 03/18
F 03/19

Week 10

M 03/22
T 03/23
W 03/24
R 03/25
F 03/26

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Submission* due

Week 11

M 03/29
T 03/30
W 03/31
R 04/01
F 04/02

Spring holiday

Week 12

M 04/05
T 04/06
W 04/07
R 04/08
F 04/09

1-p. (double-spaced) response to *Station Eleven* due

Week 13

M 04/12
T 04/13
W 04/14
R 04/15
F 04/16

Week 14

M 04/19
T 04/20
W 04/21
R 04/22
F 04/23

Week 15

M 04/26
T 04/27
W 04/28

Last day of classes
Final paper due

Required UNCG Syllabus Language

Approved by the Faculty Senate on July 1, 2020

As UNCG returns to face-to-face course offerings in fall 2020, the campus community must recognize and address concerns about physical and emotional safety. As such, all students, faculty, and staff are required to uphold UNCG's culture of care by actively engaging in behaviors that limit the spread of COVID-19. Such actions include, but are not limited to, the following:

- [Wearing a face covering that covers both nose and mouth](#)
- Observing [social distance](#) in the classroom
- Engaging in proper hand washing hygiene when possible
- [Self-monitoring for symptoms of COVID-19](#)
- Staying home if you are ill
- Complying with directions from health care providers or public health officials to quarantine or isolate if ill or exposed to someone who is ill.
- Instructors will have seating charts for their classes. These are important for maintaining appropriate social distance during class and facilitating contact tracing should there be a confirmed case of COVID-19. Students must sit in their assigned seat at every class meeting and must not move furniture. Students should not eat or drink during class time.

A limited number of disposable masks will be available in classrooms for students who have forgotten theirs. Face coverings will also be available for purchase in the UNCG Campus Bookstore. Students who do not follow masking and social distancing requirements will be asked to put on a face covering or leave the classroom to retrieve one and only return when they follow these basic requirements to uphold standards of safety and care for the UNCG community. Once students have a face covering, they are permitted to re-enter a class already in progress. Repeated issues may result in conduct action. The course policies regarding attendance and academics remain in effect for partial or full absence from class due to lack of adherence with face covering and social distancing requirements.

For instances where the Office of Accessibility Resources and Services (OARS) has granted accommodations regarding wearing face coverings, students should contact their instructors to develop appropriate alternatives to class participation and/or activities as needed. Instructors or the student may also contact [OARS](#) (336.334.5440) who, in consultation with Student Health Services, will review requests for accommodations.

Approved by the Faculty Senate Executive Committee on July 30, 2020

Health and well-being impact learning and academic success. Throughout your time in the university, you may experience a range of concerns that can cause barriers to your academic success. These might include illnesses, strained relationships, anxiety, high levels of stress, alcohol or drug problems, feeling down, or loss of motivation. Student Health Services and The Counseling Center can help with these or other issues you may experience. You can learn about the free, confidential mental health services available on campus by calling [336-334-5874](tel:336-334-5874), visiting the website at <https://shs.uncg.edu/> or visiting the Anna M. Gove Student Health Center at 107 Gray Drive. For undergraduate or graduate students in recovery from alcohol and other

drug addiction, The Spartan Recovery Program (SRP) offers recovery support services. You can learn more about recovery and recovery support services by visiting <https://shs.uncg.edu/srp> or reaching out to recovery@uncg.edu

COVID-19 Spartan Shield Video

UNCG Chancellor Frank Gilliam has challenged us to create a Culture of Care at UNCG where we all wear face coverings and social distance, less to protect ourselves but rather more to protect everyone around us. It shows that you care about the well being of everyone around you. We have created this video featuring your student body presidents to better explain how and why this is so important.

Please watch this video before the first day of classes.

<https://youtu.be/Mb58551qxEk>