

ENGLISH 4589 Spring 2020

Studying the Margins: Language, Power, and Culture

Movements, Migrations, Memories

MW 12:45-2:05

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Office hours: by appointment

Course Description

At the human level, it is our memories, movements, and migrations that constitute our understandings of margins—be they national, political, social, cultural, religious, and physical/physiological. In this advanced seminar, we shall consider contemporary texts in a variety of genres as we examine how movements, often at the intercontinental and planetary level, form and inform our current sense of human inhabitation of the earth and our responsibilities towards each other in an era of unprecedented mass migrations and human influence on the natural world.

Course Goals

1. A thoughtful sampling of a variety of contemporary works exploring movements, migrations, and margins;
2. Developing awareness and empathy for familiar and unfamiliar ways of longing and belonging in the world today;
3. Inculcating methods and strategies for interpreting complex ideas and language, and explaining those interpretations in precise oral and written work.

Required Materials

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do* (New York: Abrams, 2017)

Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019)

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West* (New York: Riverhead Books, 2017)

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends: An Essay in Forty Questions* (Minneapolis: Coffee House Press, 2017)

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (London: Vintage, 2008)

Books on course reserve at OSUN Library (please plan to visit and browse):

David Herd and Anna Pincus, eds, *Refugee Tales* (Manchester: Comma Press, 2016)

David Herd and Anna Pincus, eds, *Refugee Tales II* (Manchester: Comma Press, 2017)

David Herd and Anna Pincus, eds, *Refugee Tales III* (Manchester: Comma Press, 2019)

Feroz Rather, *The Night of Broken Glass* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2018)

Malik Sajad, *Munnu: A Boy from Kashmir* (New Delhi: HarperCollins, 2015)

Nikesh Shukla, ed., *The Good Immigrant* (London: Unbound, 2017)

Javier Zamora, *Unaccompanied* (Port Townsend: Copper Canyon Press, 2017)

Online Resources:

Shakespeare's plea for refugees:

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/shakespeares-handwriting-in-the-book-of-sir-thomas-more>
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/15/william-shakespeare-handwritten-plea-for-refugees-online-sir-thomas-more-script-play-british-library-exhibition>

On Board(hers):

<https://video.wosu.org/video/boardhers-v24ila/>
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4kp3pDi5pw>

TIDE Keywords:

<http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home/>

Malik Sajad, "An 18-Month-Old Victim in a Very Old Fight"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/19/opinion/sunday/kashmir-conflict.html>

The *Refugee Tales* books' adjoining links:

<http://refugeetales.org/refugee-tales-the-book/>

28 Tales for 28 Days

<https://28for28.org/>

All other course materials will be made available on Carmen.

Course Requirements and Breakdown of Final Course Grade

In-class contributions towards discussions (throughout the term)	20%
Class presentations (two presentations, each lasting 20 minutes)	20%
Mid-term essay	20%
Final project presentation (10-15 minutes)	20%
Final project	20%

Class discussions

This class will concern itself with many challenging texts and critical voices. You will complete and annotate for yourself each day's assigned reading/listening/viewing and prepare thoroughly for each meeting with your own questions, concerns, and associations. Thoughtful and consistent participation will be expected throughout the term.

Class Presentation

Each student will be responsible for two class presentations, each of 20 minutes. The subject of your first presentation will be one of the TIDE Keywords (<http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home/>); the subject of your second presentation will be one of the Refugee Tales (<http://refugeetales.org/refugee-tales-the-book/>). The goal will be to cover as many Keywords and Tales as we can as a class, so try not to repeat a Keyword or a Tale. In your presentation, you will provide a summary of what you learnt from your reading, and take a critical stance about the uses of that knowledge in the world today. Further details about the format of these presentations will be discussed in class.

Mid-term essay (4-5 pages)

In this essay, you will pick a single text from among what we have read in class so far, and subject it to intense critical analysis. Your reading should do *at least* one of the following: help your reader see the moment in a substantially new light; or extend the critical conversation around that text.

Final project

Your final assignment will be a combination of a class presentation (in which you introduce your topic to the class and discuss your critical investments in your topic) and a creative or critical project. If you choose to write a critical paper, you will aim for an original contribution to the conversation around your chosen texts/materials (10 pages, plus endnotes). If you choose to submit a creative project, you will discuss its proposed form with me in advance and prepare your project accordingly, and also write a brief critical essay explaining your stakes and choices (two pages). Either way, this project will involve multiple steps:

1. One paragraph stating your initial research question or creative idea and your methodological orientation towards it;
 2. Critical bibliography summarizing 6-8 relevant texts around your topic of research;
 3. 250-word prospectus
 4. **In-class presentation**
 5. Revision based on presentation feedback
 6. **Submission of final project**
- All due dates are noted in the schedule.

Course Policies

1. Our class is a learning community; remember that every member is an equal and valued participant.
2. Be aware that this is a reading-and-writing intensive class. Remember to make time outside class to review class material, prepare for the following class, and complete assignments in a timely manner. The better your preparation for class is, the better your in-class participation will be, and good participation is vital to good learning.
3. If you require extra time or any other adjustments in order to fulfil course expectations, please let me know in the first few meetings of the term. I will do my best to enable the best learning conditions for you. (For more information on the support available to you, please see here: <https://newark.osu.edu/students/student-life/disability-services.html>).
4. Please try to attend all classes and stay for the entire class duration. If you *must* miss a class, however, please let me know in advance so that we may together plan the best means for you to make up work. It would be smart as well to arrange early in the term to trade notes with a classmate in case you do have to be absent.
5. I expect that the work you turn in will be entirely your own, written specifically for this course. Plagiarism will result in a failing grade for the assignment, and possibly for the course. Understand that I am also *required* to report all academic misconduct to the Office of Academic Affairs, which may impose other penalties. (For further information, please see here: <https://oaa.osu.edu/academic-integrity-and-misconduct>).
6. Please bring the relevant texts, a notebook, and a pencil/pen to class each day. (If you prefer to take notes electronically, do so. However, please make sure that neither you nor those around you are distracted by the technology you are using.)
7. The format for all written assignments for this class is as follows: 1-inch margin on all sides of the page; 12-point Times New Roman font; double-spaced. If the assignment is to be submitted

in print, please print on both sides of the paper, and staple (as applicable). If the assignment is to be submitted electronically, please submit as a PDF.

Land acknowledgment

I would like to acknowledge that the land we are using for our gathering and learning here at OSU and OSUN has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, specifically the Shawnee, Miami, Wyandot and Delaware Nations. I honor and respect the diverse Indigenous peoples connected to this territory on which we gather.

Schedule

Monday, 6 January

Welcome to the course

Browse, listen in, and explore the following:

On Board(hers):

<https://video.wosu.org/video/boardhers-v24ila/>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i4kp3pDi5pw>

Shakespeare's plea for refugees:

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/shakespeares-handwriting-in-the-book-of-sir-thomas-more>

<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/15/william-shakespeare-handwritten-plea-for-refugees-online-sir-thomas-more-script-play-british-library-exhibition>

TIDE Keywords:

<http://www.tideproject.uk/keywords-home/>

The Refugee Tales:

<http://refugeetales.org/refugee-tales-the-book/>

<https://28for28.org/>

Wednesday, 8 January

On Board(hers)

Guest lecture: Dr Lucille Toth

Prepare a two-page essay answering the following question: **What movements are responsible for your being here in this class this semester?** Bring your essay as a hardcopy to submit on Monday.

ESSAYS AND POEMS

Monday, 13 January

Malik Sajad, "An 18-Month-Old Victim in a Very Old Fight,"

<https://www.nytimes.com/2019/01/19/opinion/sunday/kashmir-conflict.html>

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa," <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>

Discussion of the syllabus, course requirements, and assignments

Firming up the schedule for oral reports (two reports—each of 20 minutes—by each student)

Wednesday, 15 January

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends*, pp. 1-53

Monday, 20 January

Martin Luther King Day; no class

Wednesday, 22 January

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends*, complete

Monday, 27 January

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends*

Wednesday, 29 January

Valeria Luiselli, *Tell Me How It Ends*

Monday, 3 February

Reni Eddo-Lodge, “Forming Blackness through a Screen”

Sabrina Mahfouz, “Wearing Where You’re At: Immigration and UK Fashion”

Wednesday, 5 February

Sarah Sahim, “Perpetuating Casteism”

Riz Ahmed, “Airports and Auditions”

Monday, 10 February

Nikesh Shukla, “Namaste”

Musa Okwonga, “The Ungrateful Country”

Wednesday, 12 February

Javier Zamora, *Unaccompanied*, selections

GRAPHIC MEMOIRS

Monday, 17 February

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

Wednesday, 19 February

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

Monday, 24 February

Thi Bui, *The Best We Could Do*

Wednesday, 26 February

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Monday, 2 March

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Wednesday, 4 March

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Mid-term essay due in class

Monday and Wednesday, 9 and 11 March

Spring Break; no class

NOVELS

Monday, 16 March

Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island*

Wednesday, 18 March

Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island*

Monday, 23 March

Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island*

Wednesday, 25 March

Amitav Ghosh, *Gun Island*

Monday, 30 March

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

Wednesday, 1 April

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

One paragraph stating your final project idea due in class

Monday, 6 April

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

Critical bibliography summarising 6-8 texts relevant to your final project due in class

Wednesday, 8 April

Mohsin Hamid, *Exit West*

250-word prospectus due in class

Monday, 13 April 2019

Final project presentations

Wednesday, 15 April 2019

Peer review workshop

Monday, 20 April

Final project due in class together with one-page self-assessment of your learning over the semester

Conclusion to the course