

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS
University of Virginia, Academic Sponsor

Voyage: Spring 2015
Discipline: Modern and Contemporary Literature
ENMC 3500: Modern World Fiction
Division: Upper
Faculty Name: Margery Sabin

Pre-requisites:

COURSE DESCRIPTION

All our destinations on this voyage have undergone profound and turbulent struggles during the twentieth century (and ongoing): nationalist movements against the domination of the West; internal religious, racial, political and economic conflicts, as traditional societies face the pressures of modernity; disillusion and ongoing further struggles. This course will focus on close attention to short fiction (and one film) from three of our destinations: China, India, and South Africa, with some initial attention to Japan and, at the end, North and West Africa. We will read and discuss writing that anticipates or looks back to the major struggles, and then consider later responses of both satisfaction and further troubles. By comparing similar patterns in the different societies and cultures, we will identify parallels, but also conspicuous differences. Some recurring questions will be: why does the turbulent past continue to preoccupy even the most contemporary writers? What traditional features of these cultures remain present in the literature, whether for critique or nostalgia? What forms of expression relate intimate personal experience to public events? What narrative forms seek to separate the private from the public? What challenges of literary interpretation arise for us as Western readers and travelers, removed from direct experience of the life represented in our reading, including in many cases, the original language?

COURSE OBJECTIVES

The course aims to enhance skills of understanding literature in the context of the different cultural settings experienced in the course of this voyage. A comparative approach to older and more recent literature from China, Japan, India, and both South and North Africa will illuminate the common tensions and ambivalence toward the onset of modernity and the influx of Western influences in these regions. The writing assignments, class presentations, and expectations of discussion in the course will also work to develop the students' own skills of analysis and expression in relation to both their reading and their experiences of travel.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

Lu Hsun

Selected Stories
Norton
ISBN 13-978-0393008487
2003 Paperback

Yu Hua
To Live: a Novel
Anchor Books
ISBN 1-4000-3186-9
2003 paperback

Mo Yan
Shifu, You'll Do anything for a Laugh, trans. Howard Goldblatt
Arcade
ISBN-13 978-1611457353
2012 paperback

Amit Chaudhuri, ed.
Vintage Book of Modern Indian Literature.
Vintage Random House
ISBN 0-375-71300-x
2001 paperback

Nadine Gordimer
Life Times
Penguin
ISBN -13 978 014311 9838
2011 Penguin reprint

Charles R. Larson, ed.
Under African Skies
Farrar, Strauss and Giroux
ISBN -13 978-037 4525507
1998 paperback

Ama Ata Aidoo
Sister Killjoy
Longman
ISBN-13 978-058 2308459
1997 paperback

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Ensenada- January 7:

A1- January 9: Introduction; Lu Hsun, “A Call to Arms” (Preface to *Selected Stories*), Silent China” (pdf)

A2-January 11: Lu Hsun stories: “A Madman’s Diary,” “The New Year’s Sacrifice,” “In the Wine Shop” in *Selected Stories*).

A3- January 13: Influence of Lu Xun on Contemporary Chinese Writing: Lu Hsun, “Medicine” (in *Selected Stories*), Mo Yan, “The Cure” in *Shifu*; Yu Hua, “On the Road at Eighteen” (pdf)

Hilo: January 14

A4-January 16: Yu Hua, *To Live: a Novel*

Screening of video *To Live* (on loop from reserve or group screening before next class)

A5-January 19: “*To Live*” Comparison of novel and film

Study Day: January 21 **One page analytic essay due before class 6—specific assignment to be distributed**

A6- January 22: Early relations between Chinese and Japanese in Japan: Lu Hsun: “Mr. Fujino (pdf), “Fan Ainong” (pdf); Hirabayashi Taiko, “Blind Chinese Soldiers” (pdf)

A7-January 24: Japanese stories:” Kenzaburo, “Prize Stock” (pdf); Kawabata, “The Izu Dancer”(pdf), Murakami, “The Elephant Vanishes” (pdf)

Yokohama: January 26-27

In-Transit: January 28

Kobe: January 29-31

A8- February 1: Eileen Chang “Love in a Fallen City” (pdf)

Shanghai: February 3-4

In-Transit: February 5-6

Hong Kong:7-8 **Field Lab at Morningside College, Chinese University of Hong Kong**

A9- February 9: **Submission of Field lab report** and discussion of experience in relation to

reading and writing.

Ho Chi Minh: February 11-16

A10- February 17: Mo Yan, “Shifu, You’ll do anything for a Laugh,” in *Shifu*

Singapore: February 19-20

Study Day: February 21

A11-February 22: Li Xiao, “Grass on the Rooftop” (pdf)

Writing Assignment: Critical Essay on Japanese/Chinese readings; either revision/ expansion of earlier analytic essay or new topic on readings so far. 3 pages due by Feb. 24. To be graded.

Rangoon: February 24-March 1

A12-March 2: Modern India from perspective of women writers: Ambai “Gifts” in *Vintage Book of Modern Indian Literature*; Mahasweta Devi, “The Wet Nurse” (pdf), “Arjun,” in *Vintage*

A13- March 4: South Indian stories: U.R. Anantha Murthy , “A Horse for the Sun” (*Vintage*), Shashi Tharoor, “Charlis and I” (pdf)

Cochin: March 6-11 Field trip to Kathakali dance theater

Study Day: March 12 **Scheduled Conferences on first essays**

A14-March 13: Writing workshop (or continued writing conferences)

A15-March 15: Nadine Gordimer, “Six feet of the Country,” “Which New Era Would That Be?,” “The Smell of Death and Flowers” in *Life Times*.

Study Day: March 17

Port Louis: March 18

A16- March 19: Nadine Gordimer (cont.), “Not for Publication,” “Open House,” in *Life Times*

A17-March 21: Es’Kia Mphahlele, “Mrs. Plum” in *Under African Skies* “Renewal Time” (pdf)

A18- March 23: Bessie Head, “The Prisoner Who Wore Glasses”; Mzamane, “Give Me a Chance,” Sindiwe Magone, “I’m not talking About That Now” all in *Under African Skies*.

Cape Town: March 25-30

Study Day: March 31

A19-April 1: Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*

A20-April 3: *Our Sister Killjoy* (cont.)

**Writing Assignment , due April 5: Written Critical Essay on African readings.
Assignment to be distributed. To be graded.**

A21- April 5: Reflections on relationship between African readings and experience

Tema (Accra): April 7-9

Takoradi: April 10-11

A22-April 12: Ousmane Sembene. “Black Girl,” in *Under African Skies*; Video “Xala” (on loop or group screening); Mohammed Dib, “The End,” (pdf) Driss Chraïbi, “Four Trunks”(pdf) Mouloud Farraguin , from “Les Chemins qui montent” (pdf)

A23: April 14: Writers looking ahead: Mo Yan “*Abandoned Child* (in *Shifu*); Vikram Chandra “Siege in Kailashpada” in *Vintage*; Chun Sue, “born at the wrong time” (pdf)

A24: April 16 Review and Summing up

Study Day: April 18

April 19: Global Lens Exams and Study Day

Casablanca: April 20-24

A25: A Day Finals Final Exam

April 29: Arrive in Southampton

FIELD WORK

Field lab attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Please do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field lab.

Proposal 1: Extended interactive visit to Morningside College, an undergraduate Chinese liberal arts college in Hong Kong to interact with students about their current college experiences, specifically in the study of literature. I have made contact with a former Wellesley colleague, Professor Ann Huss, now Associate Master and Dean of General Education at Morningside College of the Chinese University of Hong Kong, who has provisionally reserved Sunday Feb. 8, 2015 for this visit.

Objectives: Compare experiences of both college study in general and literary interests and tastes with contemporaries in China. Our readings at this time in the course focus a great deal on the differences between generations and ways of thinking about the current generation of Chinese youth

Students will write and submit a field lab report of their observations and reflections about this field visit. Attendance is mandatory and active participation will be evaluated, along with the written report. The class following the field lab will be devoted to discussion of the visit, and comparisons of their experiences to their impressions from the reading they have been doing.

Proposal 2: I also suggest a theater visit to the Kathakali dance theater in Cochin. The current popularity of this traditional theater of south India will be enjoyable in itself and interesting to consider in relation to the representation of traditional art and customs conspicuous in the courses' South Indian readings. I do not at this time have this field experience organized as a project to be graded as it is my second choice.

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

1 page analytic essay Due Jan. 21	Ungraded. Diagnostic.
3-page analytic essay Due Feb.24	15% grade
Field Lab report and participation in visit Feb. 9	15% grade
4-page analytic essay due April 5	20% grade
Class presentation to be scheduled	10 % grade
Class participation (including regular attendance)	20 % grade
Final exam	20% grade

This will be a discussion class, so I regard participation as very important. I give less weight to the first written assignments than to the later ones, in hopes that students will improve in their writing. The final exam will test the students' grasp of the semester's reading as well as their ability to answer some comparative questions about it. The field lab report will allow for a different, more experience-based writing. Some changes in this formula may be called for when the actual makeup of the class is clear. I do not ordinarily pre-determine grades in such a formulaic fashion, in order to be able to recognize differences in the strengths and weaknesses of a variety of students/

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

Joseph S.M. Lau and Howard Goldblatt, eds

Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature
Columbia University Press
(already in SAS library)
2007, 2d edition

Theodore W. Goosen, ed.
Oxford Book of Japanese Short Stories
Oxford University Press
ISBN0-19-283304-9
1997

DVD (in Chinese with English subtitles) “To Live” (already in SAS library) to be put on loop

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

1. Yu Hua
“On the Road at Eighteen”
The Past and the Punishments (also in *Columbia Book*)
pp.3-12
2. Hirabayashi Taiko
“Blind Chinese Soldiers”
Oxford Book of Modern Japanese Stories
pp.182-86
3. Oe Kenzaburo
“Prize Stock”
Teach us to Outgrow Our Madness (page numbers not accessible to me now) (also in *Oxford Book*)

Yasunari Kawabata
“The Dancing Girl of Izu”
The Dancing Girl of Izu and Other Stories (also in *Oxford Book*)
pp.3-33

4. Eileen Chang
“Love in a Fallen City”
Love in a Fallen City, trans.Karen S. Kingsbury
New York Review of Books reprint
pp. 109-169

5. Li Xiao

“Grass on the Rooftop”
Chairman Mao would Not be Amused
Grove pp. 130-156

6. Mahaswata Devi
“The Wet-Nurse”
Truth Tales: Contemporary Stories by Women Writers of India
pp. 25-62
7. Rashi Tharoor
“Charlis and I”
Where the Rain is Born: Writings about Kerala, ed. Anita Nair
(extracted from Tharoor, *India: from Midnight to the Millennium*)
8. “Es’Kia Mphahlele
“Renewal Time”
Renewal Time
pp.209-15
9. Laila Lalani
“The Trip”
Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits
Page numbers not accessible to me now
10. Chun Sue, “born at the wrong time”
Columbia Anthology of Modern Chinese Literature
pp. 480-95
11. Yu Hua
Film of “To Live” for electronic loop (in SAS library)

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

I will myself bring pdfs on a flashdrive for my electronic conference the following hard-to-locate assigned readings:

Lu Hsun, “Silent China,” “Mr. Fujino,” “Fan Ai-Nung”
Mohammed Dib, “The End”
Driss Chraïbi “Four Trunks”
Moulous Farraquin, from “Les Chemins qui montent”

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University’s honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager’s Handbook for further explanation of

what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”