

**Senior Seminar: Transnational Literature and Film**  
**ENGL 485, Section 01**

Professor Rashna Richards

Office: 307 Palmer

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Semester: Fall 2012

Class: M 3:00-5:30

Room: 206 Palmer

***Course Description***

Literary and film studies have long been dominated by nationalist paradigms, but these fields have been reinvigorated by their engagement with transnationalism in the last two decades. Transnationalism enables us to challenge fixed, Eurocentric assumptions about personal and cultural identities and consider constructions occurring between real and imagined boundaries. In this senior seminar, we will assess the recent transnational turn in literary and film studies. Drawing on the transnational approach, we will examine texts that explore the impact of migration, diaspora, and globalization and their intersections with issues of race, gender and sexuality, nationality, and liminality. Our literary and cinematic texts will allow us to complicate fictions of racial and cultural purity; consider how people, products, and discourses circulate; and explore the thorny nexus between the local, national, and global in a transnational world.

**Standard of Work:** This course is a senior seminar, and it serves as a rigorous capstone experience for the English major. Your commitment to all assignments, readings/viewings, and policies is absolutely essential for succeeding in this class.

***Course Policies***

**Attendance:** You are required to attend all classes. You should not email me about your absences. If you miss a class, it is your responsibility to get information and/or handouts from a classmate. You are allowed two class absences over the course of the semester, no questions asked, for extracurricular activities or medical/personal emergencies. After the third absence, each subsequent absence will result in a deduction of 20 points from your final course grade. After four absences, you will fail the course.

**Tardiness:** You are required to be on time. Habitual tardiness, even if it's only a couple of minutes, will hurt your participation/professionalism grade.

**Late Work:** I do not accept late work. If you do not plan on being here when an assignment is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. You will receive a zero on an assignment if it is not turned in when it is due. Please note that you are required to complete all assignments in order to receive a passing grade.

**Class Participation:** You are required to come to class prepared with the assigned reading for that day. I expect constructive verbal contribution to each class meeting. A student who disrupts

class, interrupts another student's presentation, or in any way creates a hostile environment will be subject to disciplinary action. A student who reads the newspaper, chats with a neighbor, or simply dozes off should expect a low participation grade even if they have contributed to class discussions on other occasions. I will likely say nothing at the time of the incident, but disruptive behavior will adversely affect your participation/professionalism grade.

**Electronic Devices:** The use of all electronic devices is forbidden in this class. You should turn off all electronic devices, including laptops, before class begins.

**Food or Drink:** I don't mind if you bring something to drink, but please avoid bringing any food into the classroom.

**Consultation:** I'll be happy to talk with you about any questions or concerns you have about the class. Feel free to stop by during my office hours. If those times don't work, I can make an appointment to meet with you at a time that is mutually convenient. If you have questions about an assignment, do not wait until the last minute. Remember, I want you to do well in the class and am always willing to work with you.

**Email:** It is always preferable to meet in person to discuss any questions or concerns, since the impersonal medium of electronic communication is a poor substitute for a genuine face-to-face conversation. However, I'm available by email for simple queries (expect a response during business hours: 9am-5pm Monday-Friday). Please regard email correspondence as formal communication. It is always best to ask specific rather than general questions in an email and abide by rules of professional etiquette. It is not advisable to email me the evening before an assignment is due asking for help because there is very little I can do at that point; besides, last-minute emails are very unprofessional. Email is absolutely not the medium for negotiating special requests, addressing grade concerns, or discussing ideas for assignments; those issues must be handled in person.

**Format of Assignments:** All written assignments need to be typed and double spaced, in 12 pt. font, using Times New Roman, with one-inch margins on all sides. The format and citations must conform to MLA specifications, or the assignment may not be accepted. You do not need a title page; instead, include your name, my name, course name/number, and date in the top left corner of the first page. Be sure to number and staple your pages; also, proofread your work before printing up the final draft. I do not accept any assignments via email. A paper copy is expected at the beginning of class on the day the assignment is due.

**Intellectual Honesty:** All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, google or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. You are advised against posting your work on the internet, since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. You are also advised to save drafts of your work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and, if convicted, the student will receive an F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be

penalized as appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, please consult me.

**Disability Issues:** Students with documented disabilities may be entitled to specific accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In every case, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

### *Course Evaluation*

#### **Grade Distribution**

Participation/Professionalism	15%	150 points
Proposal	10%	100 points
Writing Projects	10%	100 points
Oral Presentation	15%	150 points
Seminar Paper	50%	500 points
<b>Total</b>	<b>100%</b>	<b>1000 points</b>

**Assignments** (Additional guidelines will be provided when each assignment is introduced.)

**Participation/Professionalism:** You are required to contribute comments and questions that further class discussion. Simply agreeing or disagreeing with your classmates and/or the readings is not enough. You are expected to add thoughtful ideas to the debate by engaging with the texts in a sophisticated manner. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Failure to follow any course policies or guidelines will hurt your professionalism grade.

**Proposal (3-4 pages):** Halfway through the semester, you will write a proposal describing the kind of research you plan to undertake for the seminar paper. Your proposal should serve as a blue print for the final project.

**Writing Projects:** In preparation for the seminar paper, you will be asked to complete various writing projects, including in-class writing, short drafts, etc. A cumulative grade will be assigned for writing projects at the end of the semester.

**Oral Presentation:** Near the end of the semester, you will make a formal presentation of your research. In this presentation, you will offer an overview of your research questions as well as your critical intervention.

**Seminar Paper (20-25 pages):** The final project for this course is an article-length research paper that will offer a fresh, provocative analysis of some aspect of transnational literature and/or film. While you're welcome to use course texts, you are encouraged to explore other primary sources in order to make an original contribution to transnational studies.

## Grading Guidelines

**A** = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90; **B+** = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80  
**C+** = 79-77; **C** = 76-74; **C-** = 73-70; **D+** = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **D-** = 63-60; **F** < 60

**A range (100-90):** Excellent work; exemplary in argument and organization; professionally presented; free of mechanical errors.

**B range (89-80):** Good, solid work; substantive in argument and organization; meets all requirements, but needs some revisions; no more than five mechanical errors.

**C range (79-70):** Satisfactory work; addresses the assignment adequately, but requires some significant revisions of content and/or mechanics.

**D range (69-60):** Below average work; misses one or more central aspects of the assignment; inadequate focus and/or development; awkwardly written; requires extensive rewriting.

**F range (< 60):** Unacceptable work; fails to meet the requirements of the assignment; incomplete or irrelevant material; lack of focus or development.

## Course Texts

- Adiga, Aravind. *The White Tiger*. New York: Free Press, 2008. Print.
- Jay, Paul. *Global Matters: The Transnational Turn in Literary Studies*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 2010. Print.
- Salih, Tayeb. *Season of Migration to the North*. Trans. Denys Johnson-Davies. 1969. New York: New York Review Books, 2009. Print.
- Sebald, W. G. *The Emigrants*. Trans. Michael Hulse. New York: New Directions, 1996. Print.
- Handouts—marked with an \* in the schedule

## Course Schedule (subject to change)

### Week 1: Introductions

**Aug. 27** Introduction to the course  
 Rich, "Prospective Immigrants Please Note"\*  
 Clips: Coppola, *Lost in Translation* (2003); Basu, *Kites* (2010)

### Week 2: No class

**Sept. 3** No classes: Labor Day Recess

### Week 3: What Is Globalization?

**Sept. 10** Jay, *Global Matters*, 15-72

### Week 4: What Is Transnationalism?

**Sept. 17** Jay, *Global Matters*, 73-90  
 Ezra and Rowden, "What Is Transnational Cinema?"\*  
 Clips: Boyle, *Slumdog Millionaire* (2008)

**Week 5: Migration I**

- Sept. 23 Screening of Kaurismäki's *Le Havre* (2011) [in Blount at 4pm]  
 Sept. 24 Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

**Week 6: Migration II**

- Oct. 1 Watch: Sembene, *Black Girl* (1966)  
 Gabriel, "Third Cinema Updated"\*  
 Landy, "Politics and Style in *Black Girl*"\*  
 Clips: Nava, *El Norte* (1984)

**Week 7: Diaspora I**

- Oct. 8 Sebald, *The Emigrants*  
 Workshop for Proposal

**Week 8: No class**

- Oct. 15 No classes: Fall Recess

**Week 9: Diaspora II**

- Oct. 22 **Proposal due**  
 Watch: Frears, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985)  
 Hall, "The Local and the Global"\*  
 Swamy, "Politicizing the Sexual, Sexualizing the Political"\*  
 Clips: Rashid, *Touch of Pink* (2004)

**Week 10: Globalization I**

- Oct. 29 Adiga, *The White Tiger*

**Week 11: Globalization II**

- Nov. 5 Watch: Nair, *Monsoon Wedding* (2001)  
 Banerjee, "'Traveling Barbies' and Rolling Blackouts"\*  
 Clips: Anand, *Salaam Namaste* (2005)

**Week 12: Workshop**

- Nov. 12 **5-page draft of Seminar Paper due**  
 Workshop for Seminar Paper

**Week 13: Conferences**

- Nov. 19 Conferences for Seminar Paper

**Week 14: Presentations**

- Nov. 26 **Oral Presentation due**

**Week 15: Final Reflections**

- Dec. 3 Lahiri, "Unaccustomed Earth"\*

- Dec. 7 **Seminar Paper due at noon (leave in box on office door—307 Palmer)**

### **Further Reading**

- Caroline Brettell, *Anthropology and Migration: Essays on Transnationalism, Ethnicity, and Identity* (Altamira, 2003)
- Kenneth Chan, *Remade in Hollywood: The Global Chinese Presence in Transnational Cinemas* (Hong Kong UP, 2009)
- Nataša Đurovičová and Kathleen Newman, eds., *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives* (Routledge, 2010)
- Elizabeth Ezra and Terry Rowden, eds., *Transnational Cinema: The Film Reader* (Routledge, 2006)
- Winfried Fluck, Donald E. Pease, and John Carlos Rowe, eds., *Re-Framing the Transnational Turn in American Studies* (Dartmouth, 2011)
- Katja Garloff, "The Emigrant as Witness: W. G. Sebald's *Die Ausgewanderten*" (*German Quarterly*, 77.1, 2004)
- Patricia Geesey, "Cultural Hybridity and Contamination in Tayeb Salih's *Season of Migration to the North*" (*Research in African Literatures*, 28.3, 1997)
- Paul Giles, *The Global Remapping of American Literature* (Princeton UP, 2011)
- Inderpal Grewal, *Transnational America: Feminisms, Diasporas, Neoliberalisms* (Duke UP, 2005)
- Inderpal Grewal and Caren Kaplan, *Scattered Hegemonies: Postmodernity and Transnational Feminist Practices* (U of Minnesota P, 1994)
- Peter Hitchcock, *The Long Space: Transnationalism and Postcolonial Form* (Stanford UP, 2010)
- Ana Cristina Mendes, "Exciting Tales of Exotic Dark India: Aravind Adiga's *The White Tiger*" (*Journal of Commonwealth Literature*, 45.2, 2010)
- Chandra Talpade Mohanty, *Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke UP, 2003)
- Hamid Naficy, *An Accented Cinema: Exilic and Diasporic Filmmaking* (Princeton UP, 2001)
- Hamid Naficy, ed., *Home, Exile, Homeland: Film, Media, and the Politics of Place* (Routledge, 1999)
- Gonzalo Navajos, "Transnational Aesthetics: Literature and Film Between Borders" (*Ciberletras*, 14, 2005)
- Patricia Pisters and Wim Staat, eds., *Shooting the Family: Transnational Media and Intercultural Values* (Amsterdam UP, 2005)
- Jahan Ramazani, *A Transnational Poetics* (U of Chicago P, 2003)
- Constance S. Richards, *On the Winds and Waves of Imagination: Transnational Feminism and Literature* (Garland, 2000)
- Saskia Sassen, *The Global City: New York, London, Tokyo* (Princeton UP, 2001)
- Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, eds., *Multiculturalism, Postcoloniality, and Transnational Media* (Rutgers UP, 2003)
- Ella Shohat and Robert Stam, *Unthinking Eurocentrism: Multiculturalism and the Media* (Routledge, 1994)
- Michael Peter Smith and Matt Bakker, *Citizenship across Borders: The Political Transnationalism of El Migrante* (Cornell UP, 2008)

- Mads Rosendahl Thomsen, *Mapping World Literature: International Canonization and Transnational Literatures* (Continuum, 2008)
- Nicholas Van Hear, *New Diasporas: The Mass Exodus of Dispersal and Regrouping of Migrant Communities* (Routledge, 1998)
- Alike Varvogli, *Travel and Dislocation in Contemporary American Fiction* (Routledge, 2012)
- Mike Velez, "On Borderline between Shores: Space and Place in *Season of Migration to the North*" (*College Literature*, 37.1, 2010)
- Steven Vertevoc, *Transnationalism* (Routledge, 2009)
- Rebecca L. Walkowitz, "The Location of Literature: The Transnational Book and the Migrant Writer" (*Comparative Literature*, 47.4, 2006)
- Rob Wilson and Wimal Dissanayake, eds., *Global/Local: Cultural Production and the Transnational Imaginary* (Duke UP, 1996)