**Carleton University**

**Fall 2015**

**Department of English**

**ENGL 3940A: Studies in Diaspora Literatures 1**

*Prerequisite(s): third-year standing or permission of the department*

**Meeting Time: Tuesdays 6:00 pm – 9:00 pm**

**Meeting Place: 3235 Mackenzie Bldg**

*Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

**Instructor: Professor Pius Adesanmi**

**Email:** [**piusadesanmi@gmail.com**](mailto:piusadesanmi@gmail.com)

**Office: 1916 Dunton Tower**

**Office Phone: Ext 1175**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 3 pm – 5 pm (or by appointment)**

**\***Provisional Syllabus

**Overview**

Welcome! The course is proposes an exploration of the theories, literatures, and cultures of diaspora – a major aspect of postcolonial and cultural studies. Using essays, film, and creative fiction from various “diasporic geographies”, we shall explore some of the keywords and concepts of this important field of knowledge – home, exile, migrantion, transnationalism, memory, source-culture, roots and routes – in order to better understand the appeal that they hold for understanding the production of culture in the 21st century.

Course Objectives:

•To situate texts within theoretical, literary, and historical contexts

•To examine both the form and content of the selected filmic and prose works

•To develop students’ textual analysis skills and to build a vocabulary of analytical terms in postcolonial and cultural theory

•To develop students’ critical thinking, reading, and writing skills

**Course Requirements and Procedures**

Requirement: read and reflect on each text well ahead of the date we begin to analyze it

in class.

Attendance: as this course strongly requires students’ active participation, regular attendance is imperative. The course shall be delivered in such a way that your continuous involvement shall be necessary at every stage. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Reasonable circumstances sometimes force people to be late. By all means do come to class if you’re late and be sure to explain things to me after class. Absence will be excused only for certifiable medical reasons and religious observances. **One point** will be subtracted for every unexcused absence.

Conduct: we will strive to create a convivial class atmosphere in which you will be at ease to express your opinions and participate fully in the learning process. Any disruptive conduct will, however, not be tolerated. You are required to avoid habitual lateness, reading newspapers during class, working hurriedly on an assignment due for submission in your next class, sleeping during class, leaving the classroom before the end of the class period, chatting with others on issues not related to the ongoing class discussion, or any other behaviour that interferes with the learning process and distracts everybody else.

Assignments: it is required that students do all assigned tests and examinations according to the instructor’s specifications. Except in cases where necessary permission is granted or a student is able to present evidence of illness or any form of incapacitation, any student who fails to submit assignments on schedule will lose a determined percentage of his/her final grade point.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Academic integrity: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.”* Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University Policies. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar. Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course. For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

Access statement: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible. For more information: <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/academic/>

Students requiring academic accommodation on the basis of a religious observance should make a formal, written request to the instructor for an alternate date and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton’s Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required. For more information see the Student Guide: <http://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf>

Registration policy: during the drop/add period at the beginning of the semester, the Department of English encourages students to visit this and other courses in order to make informed judgments about which courses to take. After the last day for course changes, however, only students registered in the course may remain; no student may late-add (or restore a dropped registration) after the deadlines without petitioning the, instructor, the Department of English, and the Registrar’s office.

Communication: we shall use several lines of communication to ensure a vibrant rapport throughout the course. They include: (1) email to the instructor – **please allow a window of 24 to 48 hours for me to reply**. Students are welcome to send me emails regarding any issue they like to discuss about the course; (2) students can see me at my office or give me a phone call during office hours, or leave a message on my answering machine.

**Examination and Assignments**

Attendance: 5 points

Quiz: 15 points

Mid Term: 30 points (grammar and syntax @10 points; ideas & presentation @ 20 points)

Final exam: 50 points (grammar and syntax @ 10 points; ideas & presentation @ 40 points)

\* This course places a lot of emphasis on good writing and independent critical reasoning. Your tests and essay questions will be structured in a way that encourages sustained critical reasoning. Consequently, elements such as grammar, level of language, presentation/quality of ideas will form a key part of the grading process. In other words, this is a writing attentive course. Please bear in mind the English Department’s definition of writing attentive:

• Students will write at least one examination.

•Students will write a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they are expected to do the following:

1. develop an argumentative thesis across an essay
2. develop complex ideas using correct and effective expression according to academic English practice
3. use and cite evidence from primary texts appropriately

iv. develop literary skills through close critical analysis of texts from a variety of genres

1. develop fluency in genre-specific literary terms of analysis

•Students will be introduced to issues in secondary research (such as critical evaluation of and citation of secondary materials)

•A portion of class time will be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills.

**Grade Distribution**

A+ 90-100

A 85-89

A- 80-84

B+ 77-79

B 73-76

B- 70-72

C+ 67-69

C 63-66

C- 60-62

D+ 57-59

D 53-56

D- 50-52

F 0-49

**Required Texts**

**(Our designated book store is Octopus Books 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1, 613-233-2589. Ask for ENGL 2926)**

Mira Nair, *Mississippi Masala* (movie)

Edwige Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names*

\*Supplementary readings (essays, urls, etc) will be posted on CULEARN/ARES as necessary.

**Course Outline**

Sept 8 Literatures and Theories of Diaspora & the Immigrant Experience

Readings:

Salman Rushdie, “Imaginary Homelands”

<http://philosophy.ucsc.edu/news-events/colloquia-conferences/Rushdie1992ImaginaryHomelands.pdf>

Olu Oguibe, “Interzonality and the Uncertainty of Geographies”

http://www.camwood.org/intzones.htm

15 Mira Nair’s *Mississippi Masala* (Full movie available on YouTube, please watch before coming to class as we shall not screen the movie in class)

Class discussion topic: Problematizing home in Mississippi Masala

22 *Mississippi Masala*

Class discussion topic: History, race, hybridity, and diasporic culture in Mississipi Masala

29 Jhumpa Lahiri’s *The Namesake*

Background to the novel and theoretical approaches

Oct 6 *The Namesake*

Themes, plot, characterization

13 Midterm

20 Edwige Danticat’s *Breath, Eyes, Memory*

Background to the novel

Exploring the idea of “the Black Atlantic”

Nov 3 *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (Quiz question handout)

Themes, plot, characterization

10 NoViolet Bulawayo’s *We Need New Names* (Submission of quiz)

Background to the novel

Exploring Afropolitanism

17 *We Need New Names*

Themes, plot, characterization

24 Comparative critical approaches to all three novels

Dec 1 Revision