

**Carleton University  
Fall 2015  
Department of English**

**ENGL 4947A: Issues in Diaspora Literature:  
Memory, Identity, and the Politics of Home**

*Prerequisite: fourth-year standing or permission of the department*

**Time: Thursday 2:35 pm – 5:25 pm**

**Location: Paterson Hall 100A**

*Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

**Instructor: Dr. Mayurika Chakravorty**

**Email: mayurika.chakravorty@carleton.ca**

**Office: DT 1915**

**Phone: 613-520-2600 (X 2317)**

**Office Hours: Monday 12:00-1:30 pm**

**Course Description:**

Writers in the diaspora have produced some of the most powerful texts dealing with the questions of identity, home, and belonging as well as the processes of assimilation and acculturation. Focusing on the writings of diasporic authors living in the West (specifically North America and Britain, this course will explore representative fiction that record the experiences of transnational mobility including exile and migration (forced and voluntary). Some of the issues that we shall focus on include indigeneity, belonging, and the notions of home and homelessness. We shall also analyze the relationship of territory to creative imagination and the formation of complex identities problematized by the nostalgic tension between the home and the world. The course will engage with the categories of religion, ethnicity, caste, and gender, and their implications in the everyday life of the diaspora. The course will also introduce the students to the broad theoretical co-ordinates within diaspora studies that address the ideologies of the home and the nation, politics of identity and the affective dimensions of migration and diaspora.

**Course Material:**

*Fiction*

Caryl Phillips, *Crossing the River*

Junot Diaz, *The Brief and Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*

Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*

Chimamanda Adichie, *Americanah*

*Theoretical Essays*

James Clifford, "Diasporas"

Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and the Diaspora"

Paul Gilroy, from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*

Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands"

Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Diasporas Old and New: Women in the Transnational World."

John McLeod, from *Postcolonial London: Rewriting the Metropolis*

We shall also read brief selections from Gloria Anzaldúa's *Borderlands* and watch the film *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears; 2002).

**[Note: The essays will be available online/CuLearn or put on reserve in the library. The textbooks will be available at Carleton University Bookstore]**

**Evaluation:**

**20%** -- Attendance + Participation. Students will be graded in terms of preparedness for the class as well as the level of participation in class discussions.

**[\*\*\*NOTE\*\*\*: Students are expected to attend all classes, having read and reflected upon the materials according to the syllabus. **Absence from more than 5 classes per term may result in a 'Failed' final grade, regardless of submitted assignments or class presentations.**]**

**10%** -- Weekly responses on CuLearn message board (on weekly readings).

**20%** -- Seminar Presentation. (approx. 30 minutes). Group presentations (2-3 students in a group) must be well-researched and presented in either paper-format or Powerpoint/Prezi etc. Must focus on a specific text or author. Dates to be fixed in consultation with the class.

**15%** -- Research Paper 1 (6-8 pages, font size 12, double spaced). May be written on a single text or on a dominant theme recurrent in more than one text discussed in class.

**25%** -- Research Paper 2 (10-12 pages, font size 12, double spaced). Must include at least two or more texts/authors from the syllabus. Must have a substantial thesis and demonstrate the use of secondary material. The title and a brief outline of the paper should be handed in by a stipulated date. The paper will be due on the last day of class.

**10%** -- Annotated bibliography (for Research paper 2). Must follow MLA guidelines and each entry should summarize the major focus and argument(s) of the texts consulted. Must be handed in by a stipulated date.

## Course Policies

-- All Assignments are mandatory. In the case of late submission of an assignment, there will be a penalty of 5% of the total mark per day unless there is a pressing and well-documented reason and the student has informed me beforehand.

-- All assignments need to be handed in class (in addition to an electronic copy submitted through CuLearn). Please do not drop in the department drop-box (unless specified in the syllabus or in class) or slip it under my door. 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.

-- To ensure active participation and lively discussion in class, I do not recommend the use of laptops in class. However, if you wish to type your notes on the computer, you may do so using a word-processing software (e.g. MS Word). But absolutely no internet browsing/e. mail checking/social-networking in class. Cell-phones need to be put away in silent mode during class hours.

-- Please come to class on time (and prepare to stay for the entire class) to be marked present for the day. If you have a pressing reason (e.g. a doctor's appointment) for late arrival or early departure, please inform me in advance. Given that this is a 3-hour class, there will be a short break in between.

-- In this class, you will be using CuLearn to communicate with me or with one another, submit assignments, post reflections or questions about the readings etc. You are responsible for ensuring that you have a Carleton computer/email account and for checking this account on a regular basis. I will be using CuLearn to post announcements, reminders, and grades as well as to email about anything related to this class. Please use the "mail" function in CuLearn to send me any messages. This will help to ensure that you have a record of any sent message in case it does not reach me.

-- Although it is expected that we shall discuss a wide variety of perspectives on the topics discussed in this class, we are also required to do so in a respectful manner. Racist, sexist, homophobic, or ableist comments are unacceptable. To this end, students must familiarize themselves with the regulations concerning conduct and academic standing as outlined in the Undergraduate Calendar.

## Schedule of Classes:

### September

3 Introduction + Watch *Dirty Pretty Things*

10 Discuss *DPT* + McLeod

17 Discuss *Crossing the River* + Gilroy

24 Discuss *Crossing the River* + TBA

### October

1 Discuss Hall + Clifford

8 Discuss *Oscar Wao* + Anzaldua

15 Discuss *Oscar Wao* + Anzaldua  
**(First Research Paper Due)**

22 Discuss *Sea of Poppies* + Rushdie

29 **Fall Break; No Classes**

### November

5 Discuss *Sea of Poppies* + TBA

12 Discuss *Brick Lane* + Spivak **(Presentations)**  
**(Annotated Bibliography due on November 16)**

19 Discuss *Brick Lane* **(Presentations)**

26 Discuss *Americanah* **(Presentations)**

### December

3 Discuss *Americanah* + Review.  
**(Second Research Paper Due)**

## **Academic Honesty (PLAGIARISM)**

All students are expected to be aware of and abide by the University's academic integrity policy. Plagiarism is a serious offence which cannot be resolved directly with 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.

The University Senate defines plagiarism as "*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one's own.*" This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else's published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one's own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another's data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another's works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs."

For more information please go to: <http://www2.carleton.ca/studentaffairs/academic-integrity>

## **Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term because of disability, pregnancy or religious obligations. Please review the course outline promptly and write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website [http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student\\_guide.htm](http://www.carleton.ca/equity/accommodation/student_guide.htm).

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must register with the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) for a formal evaluation of disability-related needs. Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that your Instructor receives your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. You can visit the Equity Services website to view the policies and to obtain more detailed information on academic accommodation at <http://carleton.ca/equity/accommodation>.

**For Religious Observance:**

Students requesting academic accommodation for religious observance should make a formal, written request to the instructor for alternate dates and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Please make 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. Accommodation will be worked out directly, and on an individual basis, between the student and instructor. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student. If you have any questions about this, please refer to the Equity Services website (<http://www.carleton.ca/equity/>) for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodations policies. You may also contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

**For Pregnancy:**

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Studies Advisor in Equity Services (<http://www.carleton.ca/equity/>) to complete a Letter of Accommodation. The student must also make an appointment with me to discuss her needs at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.