

Prof. Sarah Phillips Casteel  
[sarah.casteel@carleton.ca](mailto:sarah.casteel@carleton.ca)  
1801 Dunton Tower  
office hours: Thursdays 9:30-11:00 a.m.

**ENGL 5004F/CLMD 6102F, Fall 2014**  
**Diaspora Theory**

Mondays 11:35-2:25, 201D St. Pat's

More people than ever before seem to imagine routinely the possibility that they or their children will live and work in places other than where they were born: this is the wellspring of the increased rates of migration at every level of social, national and global life... [W]e may speak of diasporas of hope, diasporas of terror, and diasporas of despair. But in every case, these diasporas bring the force of the imagination, as both memory and desire, into the lives of many ordinary people, into mythographies different from the disciplines of myth and ritual of the classic sort.

Arjun Appadurai, *Modernity at Large*

**Course Description:**

Diaspora is an ancient term that has gained new currency in our contemporary moment. Why has diaspora become ubiquitous across the disciplines, emerging as a central category of analysis for scholars in both the humanities and the social sciences? How does diaspora theory intersect with the study of transnationalism, globalization, and postcolonialism? What is the relationship between "classic" diasporas such as the Jewish and Armenian diasporas and other traumatic histories of dislocation that are increasingly being interpreted through the lens of diaspora theory? What do we stand to gain from the broader application of the term? What risks does the proliferation of the term entail?

This course traces the emergence of diaspora theory from the early 1990s through to the present. Beginning with seminal articulations by James Clifford, Paul Gilroy and others, the course then surveys a series of new directions in diaspora thought. Taking Jewish and Black historical experiences of displacement as our starting points, we will consider a variety of approaches (comparative diasporas, postcolonial diasporas, queer diasporas) as well as modalities (time and memory, space and place, indigeneity and diaspora). Drawn from a range of disciplines, our readings will illustrate how and why diaspora has become a significant focus within area studies, postcolonial studies, cultural studies and ethnic studies. Alongside the theoretical readings, we will also consider memoirs, poetry, film, and visual art that perform their own theoretical work. Examining tensions between positivistic and cultural approaches as well as between high theory and creative genres, our particular focus will be on the expressive forms and aesthetic modes that have been inspired by the lived experience of diaspora.

In the course's final weeks, students will have the opportunity to explore the implications of diaspora theory for the particular genres, media, and ethnic histories that drive their own research interests.

### Course Requirements and Grading Scheme:

15%	<p><b>attendance and participation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• this course is a reading intensive seminar; regular attendance and active participation are vital to students' success in the course</li> <li>• the attendance and participation grade will reflect consistent attendance, active involvement in class discussion, and informed comments about the issues raised by the readings that help to advance the discussion</li> </ul>
20%	<p><b>2 sessions as discussion leader</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• each student will sign up for 2 dates on which to serve as a discussion leader</li> <li>• in advance of the session, the discussion leaders will coordinate with each other how to divide up the readings</li> <li>• at the beginning of the session, each discussion leader will circulate to the class questions that s/he feels will help the other students to identify and evaluate the central arguments and insights of the readings for that week</li> <li>• the discussion leader will then offer a brief summary of the reading(s), pose his/her questions to the class and lead a discussion</li> </ul>
25%	<p><b>conference-paper style presentation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the conference papers are preliminary versions of your final paper that will allow you to test out your ideas and receive some feedback from the class</li> <li>• the papers should be 15 minutes long (roughly 7 double-spaced pages)</li> <li>• paper titles and a brief abstract are due via email by <b>Monday, Nov. 24</b></li> <li>• once I have received the abstracts, I will organize the conference papers into panels to be held during our final class on <b>Monday, December 8</b></li> <li>• please provide me with a hard copy of your presentation on the day of the mini-conference</li> </ul>
40%	<p><b>final paper</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the final paper is an opportunity to explore the implications of diaspora theory for the particular genres, media, and cultural histories that drive your particular research interests</li> <li>• the paper should engage in some form with the diaspora theory that we have studied, testing the theory against particular case studies and cultural contexts; please feel free to discuss potential paper topics and approaches with me, either during office hours, by appointment, or via email</li> <li>• 15 pages, 12-point font, double spaced due on <b>Monday, December 15</b> in the English Department dropbox</li> <li>• late papers will be penalized a third of a letter grade per day late including weekends (i.e. from B+ to B, etc.); extensions will be granted only in cases of serious illness (with doctor's note), bereavement, or religious observance</li> </ul>

### Readings:

All course readings will be available in electronic format via CULearn and the Ares Course Reserves system (<http://libares01.carleton.ca/>) or the library catalogue. *If you find that a required reading is not available for a given week, please notify me immediately by email.* Students are expected to come to class having prepared all of the required readings for a particular week.

**Accommodations:**

Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course are encouraged to 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 at least two weeks prior to assignment deadlines.

**Plagiarism:**

Plagiarism is a serious offence, and all cases will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty. Plagiarism includes copying from a book, article, or another student, downloading ideas or material from the Internet, or otherwise submitting someone else's work or ideas as your own. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Graduate Calendar.

**Schedule of Readings****Week 1 (Sept. 8): Introduction****Week 2 (Sept. 15): Definitions and Taxonomies**

- William Safran, "Diasporas in Modern Societies." *Diaspora* 1.1(1991): 83-99.
- James Clifford, "Diasporas." *Cultural Anthropology* 9.3(Aug. 1994): 302-344.
- Rogers Brubaker, "The 'Diaspora' Diaspora." *Ethnic and Racial Studies* 28-1(Jan. 2005): 1-19.
- Khachig Tölölyan, "The Contemporary Discourse of Diaspora Studies." *Comparative Studies of South Asia, Africa and the Middle East* 27.3(2007): 647-655.

**Sept. 22: class cancelled**

**Week 3 (Sept. 29): Decentering the Jewish Diaspora**

- Daniel and Jonathan Boyarin, "Diaspora: Generation and the Ground of Jewish Identity." *Critical Inquiry* 19.4(1993): 693-725.
- Jonathan Ray, "New Approaches to the Jewish Diaspora: The Sephardim as a Sub-Ethnic Group." *Jewish Social Studies* 15.1(Fall 2008): 10-31.
- Rebecca Kobrin, "Rewriting the Diaspora: Images of Eastern Europe in the Bialystock Landsmanschaft Press, 1921-45." *Jewish Social Studies* 12.3(Spring 2006): 1-38.
- memoir: Eva Hoffman, "The New Nomads." *Yale Review* 86.4(Oct 1998): 43-58.
- screening: *Va, Vie et Deviens* (2005, dir. Radu Mihaileanu) (clip)
- photography: Frédéric Brenner, *Diaspora: Homelands in Exile* (2003)

#### Week 4 (Oct. 6): The Black Atlantic

- Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity." *Theorizing Diaspora*. Ed. Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur. Malden: Blackwell, 2003. 49-80.
- Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990. 222-37.
- Brent Hayes Edwards, "The Uses of Diaspora." *Social Text* 66 19.1(Spring 2001): 45-73.
- memoir: Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*. Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2001. 3-6. 19-29.
- photography: Armet Francis, *The Black Triangle* (1985)

#### Oct. 13: Thanksgiving

#### Week 5 (Oct. 20): Imperial and Postcolonial Diasporas

- Ralph Crane and Radhika Mohanram, "Introduction." *Imperialism as Diaspora: Race, Sexuality and History in Anglo-India*. Liverpool: Liverpool UP, 2013. 1-21.
- David Chariandy, "Postcolonial Diasporas." *Postcolonial Text* 2.1(2006). <http://www.postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/viewArticle/440/839>
- H. Adlai Murdoch, "Introduction: The Caribbean Diaspora and the Metropoles." *Creolizing the Metropole: Migrant Caribbean Identities in Literature and Film*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 2012. 3-17.
- poetry: Louise Bennett, "Colonisation in Reverse." *The Penguin Book of Caribbean Verse in English*. Ed. Paul Burnett. London: Penguin, 2005. 32-33.
- essay: George Lamming, "The Occasion for Speaking." *The Pleasures of Exile*. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 1992. 23-50.

#### Oct. 27: Fall Break

#### Week 6 (Nov. 3): Comparative Diasporas

- Bryan Cheyette, "Introduction: Diasporas of the Mind." *Diasporas of the Mind: Jewish and Postcolonial Writing and the Nightmare of History*. New Haven: Yale UP, 2013. 1-40.
- Lily Cho, "The Turn to Diaspora." *Topia* 17(Spring 2007): 11-30.
- Ella Shohat, "Taboo Memories, Diasporic Visions: Columbus, Palestine, and Arab-Jews." *Taboo Memories: Diaspora Voices*. Durham: Duke UP, 2007. 201-32.
- travel memoir/ethnography: Amitav Ghosh, "Prologue." *In an Antique Land*. New York: Vintage, 1994. 13-19.
- travel memoir: Caryl Phillips, "Anne Frank's Amsterdam." *The European Tribe*. London: Faber and Faber, 1987. 66-71.

### Week 7 (Nov. 10): Time, Memory, Genealogy

- Ranajit Guha, "The Migrant's Time." *Postcolonial Studies* 1.2(1998): 155-60.
- Marianne Hirsch and Nancy K. Miller, "Introduction." *Rites of Return: Diaspora Poetics and the Politics of Memory*. New York: Columbia UP, 2011. 1-20.
- Alondra Nelson, "The Factness of Diaspora: The Social Sources of Genetic Genealogy." In Hirsch and Miller, *Rites of Return* 23-39.
- memoir: Saidiya Hartman, "Prologue: The Path of Strangers." *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*. New York: Farrar, Straus&Giroux, 2008. 3-18.
- screening: Keith Piper, artist commentary on *Ghosting the Archive* (2005)

### Week 8 (Nov. 17): Space, Place

- Yosef Hayim Yerushalmi, "Exile and Expulsion in Jewish History." *Crisis and Creativity in the Sephardic World: 1391-1648*. Ed. Benjamin R. Gampel. New York: Columbia UP, 1997. 3-22.
- Sarah Phillips Casteel, "Introduction: Landscaping in the Diaspora." *Second Arrivals: Landscape and Belonging in Contemporary Writing of the Americas*. Charlottesville: UP of Virginia, 2007. 1-17.
- Esra Akcan, "A Building With Many Speakers: Turkish 'Guest Workers' and Alvaro Siza's Bonjour Tristesse Housing for IBA-Berlin." *The Migrant's Time: Rethinking Art History and Diaspora*. Ed. Saloni Mathur. New Haven: Yale UP, 2011. 174-95.
- installation art: Jin-me Yoon, *Touring Home from Away* (1998-99)
- memoir: André Aciman, "Shadow Cities." *The New York Review of Books*. Dec. 18, 1997. <http://www.nybooks.com/articles/archives/1997/dec/18/shadow-cities/>

### Week 9 (Nov. 24): Decolonizing Diaspora, Queering Diaspora

#### \*N.B. conference paper titles and abstracts due today\*

- Celia Haig-Brown, "Decolonizing Diaspora." *Decolonizing Philosophies of Education*. Ed. Ali A. Abdi. Rotterdam: Sense Publishers, 2012. 73-90.
- Shona N. Jackson, "Introduction." *Creole Indigeneity: Between Myth and Nation in the Caribbean*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota P, 2012. 1-39.
- David Eng, "Epilogue: Out Here and Over There: Queerness and Diaspora in Asian American Studies." *Racial Castration: Managing Masculinity in Asian America*. Durham: Duke UP, 2001. 204-28.
- Jarrod Hayes, "Queering Roots, Queering Diaspora." In Hirsch and Miller, *Rites of Return* 72-87.
- photography: Jin-me Yoon, *A Group of Sixty-Seven* (1996)
- screening: Isaac Julien, *Looking for Langston* (1989) (clip)

### **Week 10 (Dec. 1): The Aesthetics of Diaspora**

- Kobena Mercer, "Diaspora Culture and the Dialogic Imagination: The Aesthetics of Black Independent Film in Britain." *Blackframes: Critical Perspectives on black Independent Cinema*. Ed. M. Cham and C. Watkins. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 1988. 50-61.
- Samantha Pinto, "Introduction: The Feminist Disorder of Diaspora." *Difficult Diasporas: The Transnational Feminist Aesthetic of the Black Atlantic*. New York: NYU Press, 2013. 1-17.
- Aamir R. Mufti, "Zarina Hashmi and the Arts of Dispossession." In Mathur, *The Migrant's Time* 174-95.
- Mark Slobin, "Music in Diaspora: The View from Euro-America." *Diaspora* 3.3(Winter 1994): 243-51.
- artist's manifesto: R.B. Kitaj, "First Diasporist Manifesto." *Diaspora and Visual Culture: Representing Africans and Jews*. Ed. Nicholas Mirzoeff. London: Routledge, 2000. 34-42.

### **Week 11 (Dec. 8): Mini-Conference and Wrap-Up**