

**Carleton University  
Fall 2018  
Department of English**

**ENGL 3940A: Studies in Diaspora Literature:  
Memory, Identity, and the Politics of Home**

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

**Time: Thursday 11:30-2:30**

**Location: Southam Hall 415**

*Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

**Instructor: Dr. Mayurika Chakravorty**

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

**Office: Dunton Tower 1907**

**Office Hours: Tuesday 1:00-2:30 or by appointment**

**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:**

Caryl Phillips, *Crossing the River*

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

Monica Ali, *Brick Lane*

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Michael Ondaatje, *In the Skin of a Lion*

Gloria Anzaldua, Selections from *Borderlands*

We shall also watch and discuss the film *Dirty Pretty Things* (Stephen Frears; 2002) in class and read the following theoretical essays:

James Clifford, "Diasporas"

Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and the Diaspora"

Paul Gilroy, from *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Chapter 1).

Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands"

**[Note: The essays (and brief selections from *Borderlands*) will be uploaded and made available through ARES on the CuLearn course page. The other texts will be available at Octopus Books (116 Third Ave; [www.octopusbooks.ca](http://www.octopusbooks.ca); 613.233.2589).]**

### **Evaluation:**

**10% -- Participation.** Students will be graded in terms of preparedness for the class as well as the level of participation in class discussions.

**10% -- Weekly responses** (min. 150 words) on CuLearn message board (on weekly readings).

**20% -- Group Presentation.** Students will be divided into groups (3-4) and each group will focus on a specific text or theme leading up to a short group presentation in class. Each group will have about *twenty minutes* for the presentation.

**20% -- Essay 1** (6-7 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.

**15% -- Final Project Proposal (5%) and Annotated Bibliography (10%):** The proposal should be about one-page long and the Annotated Bibliography should follow MLA guidelines.

**25% -- Final Project:** For the final project, you will have the option of either writing a second essay (10-12 pages, font size 12, double spaced) **or** doing an individual in-class presentation (15-20 mins. using Powerpoint, Prezi etc.). Both options would require in-depth research and analysis. You must have a substantial thesis statement/argument and demonstrate the use of secondary material. You need to specify your choice (essay or presentation) by September 27.

Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

## **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**

Sep 6 Introduction + watch *Dirty Pretty Things*

Sep 13 Discussion on *Dirty Pretty Things*

Sep 20 *Crossing the River*

Sep 27 *Crossing the River* + Gilroy

#### **October**

Oct 4 Hall + Clifford (*Essay 1 Due*)

Oct 11 *Oscar Wao* + Anzaldua

Oct 18 *Oscar Wao* + Group Analyses

Oct 26 *Fall Break*

#### **November**

Nov 1 Anzaldua + *Brick Lane* + Group Analyses

Nov 8 *Brick Lane* + Rushdie essay + Group Analyses

Nov 15 *Nervous Conditions* (*Final Project proposals* + *Bibliography due*)

Nov 22 *Nervous Conditions* + *In the Skin of a Lion*

Nov 29 *In the Skin of a Lion* + Final Project Presentations

#### **December**

Dec 6 Final Project Presentations + Review

(*Final Project/Essay Due*)

## **Academic Honesty**

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."

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.

## **Academic Accommodation**

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

### **Pregnancy obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor 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: [carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf](https://carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf)

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. [carleton.ca/pmc](https://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: [carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support](https://carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support)

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>