

CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
Migration and Diaspora Studies  
Arthur C. Kroeger College of Public Affairs

Winter Term 2022

**Diaspora Literatures**  
MGDS 5002B/CLMD 6102W/ENGL 5004W  
Wednesdays, 6:05-8:55 pm, Online (links on Brightspace)

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This is an online course. All seminars will be conducted via videoconferencing. Please use the Brightspace course website to access seminars and group activities.

**I. Course description:**

Diaspora literature is an incredibly wide genre of texts. Even within the smaller confines of diaspora fiction—the focus of this course—the range of styles, subject matters, forms, and politics is enormous. What makes a novel or a short story collection “diasporic”? How does a fictional account of immigration, ethnic cleansing, home and host territories, tensions between belonging and not belonging, the possibility of return, impact the conditions of twenty-first century life? Do authors of diasporic fiction write to celebrate their diasporic communities, to critique them, or some mixture of both?

In order to attempt to answer these questions, in this course we will look at novels from a wide range of diasporic communities (Jewish, Black, Indian, Palestinian, Chinese, Japanese) living in diverse locales (Canada, America, Pakistan, Kuwait), read in tandem with cutting-edge theory; of particular interest will be the ways the novels under study fictionalize the relationship between diasporic, Indigenous, and national forms of collective belonging. In this course, we will unpack the radical potential of diasporic community and belonging, and map out how the fiction represents diasporic relationships to the home country and host countries.

**II. Preclusions:** None.

**III. Learning Outcomes:**

- Critically engage with complex fictional works.
- Analyze the different ways that theories and experiences of diaspora can be narrated/turned into fiction.
- Communicate effectively in oral and written form for academic and professional audiences, with an ability to synthesize and critically evaluate material as well as advance original arguments.

#### **IV. Texts:**

The following novels and short collections are required reading for this course, and are available at the bookstore. Academic articles will be available on our brightspace page and through the library's journal database.

#### Required Texts:

*Frying Plantain*, Zolika Reid Benta  
*The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, Michael Chabon  
*Burning Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie  
*A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar  
*How Much of These Hills is Gold* by C Pam Zhang  
*Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie

#### **V. Course calendar:**

##### **January 12**

Introduction

What *is* Diaspora Literature?

##### **January 19: Theory**

David Chariandy, "Postcolonial Diasporas"  
 Stéphane Dufoix, excerpt from *Diasporas*  
 Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora*.

##### **January 26: Africa, African-America, Networks of Global Movement**

*Americanah*, part 1

##### **February 2:**

*Americanah*, part 2

##### **February 9: Rewriting the American West, The Chinese American Diaspora**

*How Much of These Hills is Gold* by C Pam Zhang

##### **February 16: Little Jamaica; Short Story Collections**

*Frying Plantain*

**February 23: NO CLASS READING WEEK**

**March 2: Fictional Jewish Diasporas**

*The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, Part 1

**March 9**

*The Yiddish Policemen's Union*, Part 2

**March 16: Palestinian Diasporas**

*A Map of Home* by Randa Jarrar

**March 23: Japan, Pakistan, America: Three Diasporic Nodes**

*Burning Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie, Part 1

**March 30**

*Burning Shadows* by Kamila Shamsie, Part 2

**April 6**

Conclusion

FINAL ESSAYS DUE FRIDAY, APRIL 15.

**VI. Evaluation:**

Your final grade will be based on:

**Presentation** (20%) Presented in class

**Seminar Paper** (25%) Due one (1) week after presentation.

**Final Essay** (40%) Due Friday, April 15.

**Class participation** (15%)

**Presentation:**

Each student will be required to give a fifteen minute conference-style presentation, focused on a particular element of that week's primary text. A signup sheet will be distributed on the first day of class.

**Seminar Paper:**

A short paper, 7-10 pages, based on your presentation. Each paper should have at least three (3) secondary sources, preferably academic articles found through the library's journal database. The essay should be written in full sentences and paragraphs, and be double spaced size 12 Times New Roman.

**Final Essay:**

Your final essay, 16-20 pages, can be on any topic you choose, as long as its subject matter is diasporic fiction. More info on the final paper will be distributed later in the semester.

**Participation:**

Every student is expected to do the reading and participate in class discussion. The participation grade will be based on two factors:

1. Every week, before class, each student will post a short response—100 to 250 words—to the assigned readings on our Brightspace page.
2. Participation in class discussion.

**References for Written Work:**

I prefer MLA style citations and works cited list, but will accept other forms (please let me know before hand).

**Evaluation of an academic essay**

“A”: This is an outstanding answer in the context of module/topic aims and objectives with respect to: synthesis of material, innovative use of material, originality and critical ability. It demonstrates thorough understanding of topic with wide evidence of additional study and outstanding communication and presentation skills. It begins with a thesis that is not only clear in itself but it is also clearly and effectively introduced. The thesis paragraph will be sophisticated in its approach to the subject matter. The entire essay will consistently pursue its argument and will demonstrate an interpretive command of the ideas and methods involved in the assignment. It has something important to say and says it extremely well. Each part of the essay will move logically and clearly to the next part; there will be no problems in development or coherence. Conclusions will not merely repeat what has already been said. Excellent grammar and usage contribute to clarity and precision of the essay. There will be only minor and occasional technical errors: infrequent typos, an inconsistent verb tense in a difficult context, one or two poor word choices, or an unsuccessful attempt at rhetorical flourish, for example.

A “B” essay establishes a clear thesis, if not an outstanding one, and pursues it consistently. It provides a full answer to the question with thorough understanding of topic, substantial detail supported by reasoned argument, with evidence of further study. It suffers from no more than one

or two factual errors, conceptual inconsistencies, non sequiturs, or problems in development and coherence, but not such as to impair the clear development of the main argument: Occasional difficulty with word choice, one or two awkward syntactic sequences, overuse of passive voice, a few errors in punctuation and spelling.

A “C” essay rather ineffectively establishes a central thesis and only partially develops the argument. It is weak in organization and expression. Though the essay will show an understanding of the basic ideas and information involved in the assignment, it will make errors in interpretation or confuse significant facts. It will tend in important places to rely on unsupported generalizations or undeveloped ideas. There will be more than a few problems in diction or word choice. The essay is also likely to contain several unclear sentences, awkward transitions, and three or four basic sentence faults. It also tends to rely exclusively on course material.

A “D” essay does not clearly introduce or define its central thesis and thus tends to be discursive. Its main idea is likely to emerge haphazardly. Transitions will be awkward or unclear and paragraphs will tend to be brief, dis-unified, and underdeveloped. Significant factual or conceptual errors will show inadequate command of course materials. The essay will tend to oversimplify its subject matter and to commit several logical fallacies. The writing will be unclear because of serious basic sentence faults, clichés, colloquialisms, or very inexact word choices. It may also include irrelevant material.

An “F” essay lacks a discernable central thesis and shows little or no understanding of the basic ideas involved in the assignment. A main idea is likely never to emerge. The essay may make one or two weak attempts to support generalizations. It has a tendency to list fact or make broad statements without transition or development. There is clear evidence that the writer has not understood the readings, discussions, or assignment. There will be extensive instances of basic sentence faults, diction problems, logical fallacies, and incoherent paragraphing.

NOTE: 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.

Please note that all written work must be typed in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced with standard 1-inch margins. You are encouraged to use the MLA style for citations but may choose another style used in your respective disciplines.

### **Completion of Work:**

Students who need extensions for their assignments must get in touch with the professor to determine a new submission date.

Work can be submitted through our Brightspace page. Any item received after the due date will receive a late penalty of one grade point per day, i.e. an essay which received an A grade will be awarded an A- if it is one day late, a B+ if two days late and so on.

### **VII. Statement on Plagiarism**

## PLAGIARISM

The University Academic Integrity Policy defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This includes 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. Examples of sources from which the ideas, expressions of ideas or works of others may be drawn from include but are not limited to: books, articles, papers, literary compositions and phrases, performance compositions, chemical compounds, artworks, laboratory reports, research results, calculations and the results of calculations, diagrams, constructions, computer reports, computer code/software, material on the internet and/or conversations.

Examples of plagiarism include, but are not limited to:

- any submission prepared in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, paraphrased material, algorithms, formulae, scientific or mathematical concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings without appropriate acknowledgment;
- submitting a computer program developed in whole or in part by someone else, with or without modifications, as one’s own; and
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s work and/or failing to use quotations marks.

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.

## WITHDRAWAL WITHOUT ACADEMIC PENALTY

January 31, 2022: Last day for a full fee adjustment when withdrawing from **winter** and **fall/winter (full year)** courses (financial withdrawal). Withdrawals after this date will create no financial change to winter term fees and will result in a permanent notation of WDN appearing on your official transcript.

April 12, 2022: Last day for academic withdrawal from **winter** and **fall/winter (full year)** courses.

## VIII. Requests for Academic Accommodations

### 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:** 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 accommodation regarding a formally-scheduled final exam, you must complete the Pregnancy Accommodation Form ([click here](#)).

**Religious obligation:** 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 [click here](#).

**Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities:** The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing, and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term, and 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 me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (if applicable).

### **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 where 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: <https://carleton.ca/equity/sexual-assault-support-services>

### **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 will be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>

### **COURSE SHARING WEBSITES and COPYRIGHT**

Classroom teaching and learning activities, including lectures, discussions, presentations, etc., by both instructors and students, are copy protected and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s). All course materials, including PowerPoint presentations, outlines, and other materials, are also protected by copyright and remain the intellectual property of their respective author(s).

Students registered in the course may take notes and make copies of course materials for their own educational use only. Students are not permitted to reproduce or distribute lecture notes and course materials publicly for commercial or non-commercial purposes without express written

consent from the copyright holder(s).

### STATEMENT ON CLASS CONDUCT

The Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures affirm that all members of the University community share a responsibility to:

promote equity and fairness,

respect and value diversity,

prevent discrimination and harassment, and

preserve the freedom of its members to carry out responsibly their scholarly work without threat of interference.

**Carleton University Equity Services states that “every member of the University community has a right to study, work and live in a safe environment free of discrimination or harassment”.** [In May of 2001 Carleton University’s Senate and Board of Governors approved the Carleton University Human Rights Policies and Procedures. The establishment of these policies and procedures was the culmination of the efforts of the Presidential Advisory Committee on Human Rights and a Human Rights Implementation Committee.]

### GRADING SYSTEM

Letter grades assigned in this course will have the following percentage equivalents:

A+ = 90-100 (12)	B = 73-76 (8)	C - = 60-62 (4)	F= 0-49 (0) – Failure: no academic credit
A = 85-89 (11)	B - = 70-72 (7)	D+ = 57-59 (3)	
A - = 80-84 (10)	C+ = 67-69 (6)	D = 53-56 (2)	
B+ = 77-79 (9)	C = 63-66 (5)	D - = 50-52 (1)	

The following additional final course grades may be assigned by instructors: DEF Official deferral of final exam (see "Petitions to Defer")

**GNA** Grade not available. This is used when there is an allegation of an academic offence. The notation is replaced with the appropriate grade for the course as soon as it is available.

**IP** In Progress – a notation (IP) assigned to a course by a faculty member when: At the undergraduate level, an undergraduate thesis or course has not been completed by the end of the period of registration.

**WDN** Withdrawn. No academic credit, no impact on the CGPA. WDN is a permanent notation that appears on the official transcript for students who withdraw after the full fee adjustment date in each term (noted in the Academic Year section of the Calendar each term). Students may withdraw on or before the last day of classes.