

LITERATURE AFLOAT, IDENTITIES IN MOTION
(ROMS 1108: Cultural Identities, Cultural Differences)



Fall 2017 – Cornell University
TR 11:40 – 12:55pm, Balch 3331 (North Campus)

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Office Hours: TR 1-2pm or by appointment, Klarman G49

I. Course description

Today, traveling has never been as easy: cheap plane tickets, BuzzFeed articles that highlight cities and restaurants, and a backpacking culture have made traveling an accessible luxury. But travel is not always a luxurious experience, and not always a voluntary one. In this course, we will engage with travel and its more profound repercussions, examining texts wherein overseas travel has a direct relationship with identity formation. Particularly, we consider how geographical movement and displacement can affect the ways in which identities are constructed, modified, remembered and forgotten. We will explore various genres of writing that happen during, because of, and instead of travel, looking at specific instances of expatriatism, refuge-seeking, and return voyages. Important themes will include diaspora, generational gaps and differences, immigration, nostalgia, among others. Many of the texts read are in translation, which is another way of discussing how, beyond individuals, ideas can also be received and exchanged overseas. Through this course, students will find a way to reflect – through writing – on the experiences of migration, refuge, and political instability, and engage in other pertinent socio-political issues in today's world. Students will be challenged to think about how writing can be a realized *product* of thinking but also an exploratory *process* in which thoughts are formed.

II. Learning Outcomes

In this course, students will learn to produce writing that demonstrates competency in:

- Forming theses and arguments that reflect a critical standpoint in relation to the texts read.
- Incorporating relevant evidence, organization, and diction in order to support their positions.
- Incorporating effective writing strategies such as active reading, note-taking, drafting, revising, collaboration and the discussion of ideas that maximize the productive relationship between reading and writing.
- Analyzing texts of different genres and keeping them in dialogue with one another.

III. Required Major Texts

Ru - Kim Thuy

“Going to France” - Nhat Linh *

Zong! – M. NourbeSe Philip

Palestine – Joe Sacco

Excerpts *

The enigma of return – Dany Laferrière

While *Daughters of Diaspora* was a great text that many students enjoyed, we didn't spend enough time on it to do its reading justice. I would prolong time spent on *The Enigma of Return* instead.

Daughters of Diaspora – ed. Miriam Decosta Willis

*Available on Blackboard

All other readings will be made available on Blackboard or their online locations will be otherwise indicated. You are expected to print them and bring them to class on the scheduled days.

You are strongly encouraged to highlight and annotate your readings for your own purposes; this is an important practice in active reading.

IV. Assignments & Grading guidelines

15% Class Participation

As a seminar, students are expected to come to class having done the reading and prepared to discuss. I am most interested in your thoughts and interactions with each other; come with ideas written down, or close readings you want to share if that helps.

Conferences: Students must meet with the instructor twice during the semester. If the proposed office hours do not work the student, he or she is responsible for scheduling a time that does.

15% Presentation/ Leading class discussion

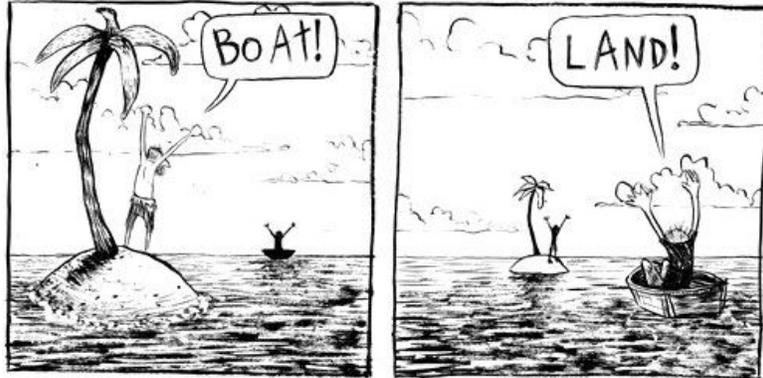
Each class session will be led by a student/pair of students. The student will prepare contextual history or background information of the text or the time period, share his/her own ideas of the readings, and **is required to post at least 3 questions for discussion on Blackboard 2 days in advance.**

Journal entries became some of my students' best and most enjoyed assignment. In the future, I would try to allow reflection to be a larger part of the grade, rather than just participation.

70% Writing Assignments

- **One (1) diagnostic essay, 3 pages** – Ungraded
- **Four (4) 1-2 page journal entries** throughout the semester – 15%
These journal entries are meant to help students think about the texts for their essays. They could be turned in at any point during the semester (except the first) but please note that there are cut-off dates for when a journal entry could be turned in. i.e. the 2nd entry must be turned in *on or before* Sept. 19th, etc. Journal entries must be written on different texts, and 2 must be close-readings.
- **Four (4) 5-6 page critical thinking essays** based on specific themes lent by the texts and discussions – 40%
- **A final 6-7 page “Immigration/Travel Narrative.”** This assignment requires interviewing a person who is a first generation immigrant. (This could be a classmate, a family member, a teacher, etc.) Students must include historical research for contextualization, and an analysis of the interviewee's adjustment to the U.S, as well as block transcriptions of the interview to support their arguments. – 15% (Full rubric breakdown will be distributed later in the semester)

Formatting assignments: Typed, 12 pt. Times New Roman, standard 1-inch margins. Title and page numbers. MLA Citations. All assignments must be turned in as hard copy at the start of the class.



WeKnowMemes

V. Course policies

Late work is heavily penalized. Assignments will be deducted a full letter grade for each day late. Students must speak with the instructor if specific circumstances incur.

Academic Integrity

"A Cornell student's submission of work for academic credit indicates that the work is the student's own. All outside assistance should be acknowledged, and the student's academic position truthfully reported at all times." Proper citations also enhance a student's work, so if one is unsure how to paraphrase, simply acknowledge the whose work is being referred to.

Absences

In a seminar, absences heavily affect the participation grade. Observances of religious holidays must be made known to the instructor. Students are still responsible for work due regardless of attendance. If a student is absent, the work may be sent by email by the start of the hour of class.

Students with Disabilities

Disabilities (from the Office of Workforce Diversity, Equity, and Life Quality): "In compliance with the Cornell University policy and equal access laws, I am available to discuss appropriate academic accommodations that may be required for students with disabilities. Requests for academic accommodations are to be made during the first three weeks of the semester, except in unusual circumstances, so that arrangements can be made. Students are encouraged to register with Student Disability Services to verify their eligibility for appropriate accommodations."

VI. Course plan



Unit 1: Dreams and Diaspora

Week 1

Date	Reading material/activity	Homework (<u>due on the date</u>)
Tues 08/22	First day of class: Syllabus & introduction to class	
Thurs 08/24	"Going to France"	"Where are you going?" – Post to BB.

Week 2

Tues 08/29	“Going to France”	Diagnostic Essay (3 pages)
Thurs 08/31	<i>Daughters of Diaspora</i> - Excerpt	

Week 3

Tues 09/05	<i>Ru</i>	
Thurs 09/07	<i>Ru</i>	Essay 1

Week 4

Tues 09/12	<i>Ru</i>	Journal Entry 1: “What would be different if...” with boxed words
Thurs 09/14	<i>Ru</i>	

Unit 2: Reasons for leaving, reasons for returning

Week 5

Tues 09/19	<i>Zong!</i>	
Thurs 09/21	<i>Zong!</i>	Journal Entry 2: Close Reading

Week 6

Tues 09/26	<i>Zong!</i>	
Thurs 09/28	<i>Zong!</i> / Peer-editing	Essay 2 Draft 1: print 2 copies

Week 7

Tues 10/03	<i>Enigma of the Return</i> - Excerpts	
Thurs 10/05	<i>Enigma of the Return</i> - Excerpts	Essay 2 Revised Draft

Week 8

Tues 10/10	Fall break - No class	
Thurs 10/12	“Return of the Prodigal Son” – Rembrandt	Journal Entry 3: “Speak in the voice of..”

Week 9

Tues 10/17	“Return of the Prodigal Son” Peer editing on introduction Art Curation	Essay 3 Introduction
Thurs 10/19	“Of Cannibals”	Essay 3 Draft

Unit 3: An outside perspective: “Tourism”

Week 10

Tues 10/24	<i>Babel</i>	
Thurs 10/26	<i>Babel</i>	Essay 3 Revised Draft

Week 11

Tues 10/31	<i>Of Hospitality</i> - Excerpts	
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Thurs 11/02	<i>Orientalism</i> - Excerpts	Journal Entry 4: Open
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Week 12

Tues 11/07	<i>Palestine</i> Ch 1-2	Final paper outline
Thurs 11/09	<i>Palestine</i> Ch 3-4	

Week 13

Tues 11/14	<i>Palestine</i> Ch 5-6	Essay 4 Draft 1
Thurs 11/16	<i>Palestine</i> Ch 7-8	

Week 14

Tues 11/21	<i>Palestine</i> Ch 9	Essay 4 **
Thurs 11/23	Thanksgiving - No Class	

Week 15

Tues 11/28	Silsila exhibit at Johnson Museum	Presentation of Final assignment
Thurs 11/30	Presentations	



Silsila by Sama Alshaibi was a productive way to end the course in summing up connections with our previous discussions on migration but also in moving away from the human experience of migration to the environments and spaces those migrations occur in and through. The premise of Alshaibi's work follows a specific trajectory but her art doesn't convey those details, giving the public permission to think about the physical and universal.