

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Colorado State University, Academic Partner

<b>Voyage:</b>	Fall 2020
<b>Discipline:</b>	English
<b>Course Number and Title:</b>	E333 Critical Studies of the Popular (Focus: The Coming of Age Narrative)
<b>Division:</b>	Upper
<b>Faculty Name:</b>	Brenda R. Weber
<b>Semester Credit Hours:</b>	3

**Prerequisites:** The standard CSU prerequisite of one (1) college composition course has been waived by the instructor

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

Charles Dickens starts *David Copperfield* (1850) with a sentence both beguiling and amusing, “Whether I shall turn out to be the hero of my own life, or whether this station will be held by anyone else, these pages must show.” The resulting narrative is part novel, part memoir – an entirely fictionalized coming-of-age, or Bildungsroman, story predicated on Dickens’ own life but also a study of what it means to grow up, to develop a point of view, to become the hero of one’s own life, often by enduring the pain and confusion that so often accompanies the loss of innocence in the journey from childhood to adulthood.

In a similar vein, this course will engage in a critical study of the “coming of age” narrative, a story that is typically told as a memoir about adolescence but can also be rendered through stories of self-discovery told from any age. In particular, our readings will think about travel and home places and will focus on the countries we encounter in our voyage.

In addition to critical work analyzing the memoirs, students will be invited to keep a journal and write their own “coming of age” narratives as part of the graded assignments for the course.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Learn about history, identity, and place by reading about the life stories and experiences of “normal” people
2. Develop an appreciation for the formal elements of memoir, including its patterns and variations
3. Practice critical thinking skills to sharpen observational and analytical modes of inquiry
4. Expand the personal voice by thinking through what it means to tell a story of self.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS & SUPPLIES

1. Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*
2. Saidiya Hartman *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*
3. Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*
4. Mahatma Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*
5. Tash Aw, *The Face: Strangers on a Pier*
6. Hoang Chi Truong, *TigerFish*
7. Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*
8. Tara Westover, *Educated*

AUTHOR: Mernissi, Fatima

TITLE: *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*

PUBLISHER: Perseus Books

ISBN: 0201489376

DATE/EDITION: 1995, 1st edition

AUTHOR: Hartman, Saidiya

TITLE: *Lose Your Mother: A Journey Along the Atlantic Slave Route*

PUBLISHER: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux

ISBN: 0374531153

DATE/EDITION: 2008, 1st edition

AUTHOR: Noah, Trevor

TITLE: *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood*

PUBLISHER: Spiegel and Grau

ISBN: 0399588191

DATE/EDITION: 2019 reprint

AUTHOR: Gandhi, Mahatma

TITLE: *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

PUBLISHER: NAVAJIVAN PRESS

ISBN: 8172290810

DATE/EDITION: 1994, 2<sup>nd</sup> edition

AUTHOR: Aw, Tash

TITLE: *The Face: Strangers on a Pier*

PUBLISHER: Restless Books

ISBN: 1632060450

DATE/EDITION: 2016

AUTHOR: Truong, Hoang Chi Truong

TITLE: *TigerFish*

PUBLISHER: Chibeingchi

ISBN: 0999162705

DATE/EDITION: 2017

AUTHOR: Kingston, Maxine Hong  
TITLE: *The Woman Warrior*  
PUBLISHER: Vintage  
ISBN: 0679721886  
DATE/EDITION: 1989 reissue

AUTHOR: Westover, Tara  
TITLE: *Educated*  
PUBLISHER: Random House  
ISBN: 978-0399590504  
DATE/EDITION: 2018, 1<sup>st</sup> ed

A composition notebook or some other journal is also required of students.

Additional readings will be provided to students via a course reader (including excerpts and writing instruction)

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

### Depart Hamburg, Germany – September 9

A1—September 11: Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*

A2—September 13: Fatima Mernissi, *Dreams of Trespass: Tales of a Harem Girlhood*

### Casablanca, Morocco – September 15-19

A3—September 20: Sadiya Hartman, *Lose your Mother*

A4—September 22: Sadiya Hartman, *Lose your Mother*

The slave, Hartman observes, is a stranger—torn from family, home, and country. To lose your mother is to be severed from your kin, to forget your past, and to inhabit the world as an outsider. In the class, we will talk and write about home, belonging, and alienation.

A5—September 24: Joyce Hooley, *Outside my Skin*, excerpts (reader)

A6—September 26: Mary Ashun, *Tuesday's Child*, excerpts (reader)

### Takoradi, Ghana – September 27-28

### Tema, Ghana – September 29-October 1

A7—October 3: Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*

### Community Programming – October 4 (No Class)

**A8—October 6:** Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*

**A9—October 8:** Margaret McCord, *The Calling of Katie Makanya*, excerpts (reader)

**Cape Town, South Africa — October 9-14**

**A10—October 16:** Tara Westover, *Educated*

**A11—October 18:** Tara Westover, *Educated*

**A12—October 20:** Abhimanyu Unnuth, *Slices from a Life*, excerpts (reader)

**Port Louis, Mauritius — October 22-24**

**A13—October 25:** Mahatma Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

**A14—October 27:** Mahatma Gandhi, *An Autobiography: The Story of My Experiments with Truth*

**Community Programming — October 28 (No Class)**

**A15—October 30:** Katherine Boo, *Behind the Beautiful Forevers: Life, Death, and Hope in a Mumbai Undercity*, excerpts (reader)

**Mumbai, India — November 1-6**

**A16—November 7:** Tash Aw, *The Face: Strangers on a Pier*

**A17—November 9:** Tash Aw, *The Face: Strangers on a Pier*

**Reflection & Study Day — November 11 (No Class)**

**A18—November 12:** exam

**A19—November 14:** writing workshop

**Port Klang/Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia — November 15-19**

**A20—November 21:** Hoang Chi Truan, *TigerFish*

**Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam — November 22-27**

**A21—November 29:** Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

**A22—December 1:** Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior*

**Xiamen, China – December 3-8**

**A23–December 9:** Elizabeth Rice, *Rituals of Separation*, excerpts (reader)

**A24–December 11:** Xiaolou Guo, *Nine Continents: A Memoir in and out of China*, excerpts (reader)

**Busan, South Korea – December 12-15**

**Study Day – December 17 (No Class)**

**A25–December 18:** Final Exam

**Arrive Shanghai, China – December 22**

## **FIELD WORK**

Semester at Sea® field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete independent field assignments that span multiple countries.

### **Field Class & Assignment**

[Field Class proposals listed below are not finalized. Confirmed ports, dates, and times will be posted to the Fall 2020 Courses and Field Class page when available.]

**Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class.**

Field Classes constitute at least 20% of the contact hours for each course, and are developed and led by the instructor.

**Proposal Title #1: Mapping the Personal**

**Country: Mauritius**

Idea: I am presently working with Sonia Kotiah, Senior Lecturer and Department Chair of English Studies at the University of Mauritius. I have asked her for introductions to local authors, with the idea that a site visit could include meeting personally with an author whom students will read in the class. (Note: the author I presently have on my syllabus, Abhimanyu Unnuth, passed away in 2018.) Since the island is small, I do think meeting with an author is an excellent possibility, but I'm waiting to hear more from Professor Kotiah about her connections to local authors. Barring this, I have asked Professor Kotiah to consider a day of conversation and exchange between my students and hers (or a class she designates). According to Google Maps, the University is under a 15-minute drive from the Port.

**Objectives:** Learn more about Mauritius, its customs, its people, its histories, and its peoples through exchange with a memoirist or engagement with a group of students from the country.

**Evaluation:** In this class on memoir, students will be keeping reflective journals throughout the voyage. This site visit will have several objectives: urge students to make connections between their readings and their experiences, stimulate them to “find the story” by either using some element of the site visit for a brief personal essay of their own or a reflective essay that offers critical thinking (contradictions, overlaps, insights) about the Mauritius memoir as text and experience.

### **Proposal Title #2: Morocco**

Country: Morocco

Idea: If possible, I'd like to arrange for students to meet with women who have lives similar to that described in Fatima Mernissi's memoir, *Dreams of Trespass*. While Mernissi herself recently passed away, I'd like to work to set up a connection between her important contribution to feminism in Morocco and the present day.

**Objectives:** Establish a clear demonstration of personal resilience and the need to tell one's story.

**Evaluation:** In this class on memoir, students will be keeping reflective journals throughout the voyage. This site visit will have several objectives: urge students to make connections between their readings and their experiences, stimulate them to “find the story” by either using some element of the site visit for a brief personal essay of their own or a reflective essay that offers critical thinking (contradictions, overlaps, insights) about the Mauritius memoir as text and experience.

### **Independent Field Assignments**

Given that this class is about memoir and the importance of claiming one's personal truth and given that students will be pushed far beyond their typical frame of reference, my sense is the entire voyage will relate to this course in terms of experiential learning. The class will introduce them to a range of personal stories and authorize them to write their own. And as Vietnamese author Hoang Chi Truan writes, one does not need to be exceptional to write a memoir. One only needs to claim a voice.

In terms of independent field assignments, then, I will ask students to designate a protected time of writing and reflection for each of our ports. Throughout the voyage, they will be keeping a journal, and I will provide prompts for them to respond to along the way. The port entries would ask the students to write and reflect, perhaps making connections to our readings or expanding on their own sense of values and experiences.

### **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Independent Field Assignment	20%
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One entry for each port visit	
Field Class	20%
Exam 1	20%
Exam 2	20%
Reading and Participation	20%

## GRADING SCALE

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea® coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea® in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the SAS partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	Less than 60%: F
93-96%: A	83-86%: B	70-76%: C	
90-92%: A-	80-82%: B-	60-69%: D	

## ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea® classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

## LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea® provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A letter from students' home institutions verifying the accommodations received on their home campuses (dated within the last three years) is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit verification of accommodations to [academic@isevoyages.org](mailto:academic@isevoyages.org) as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage. More details can be found within the **Course Registration Packet**, as posted to the [Courses and Field Classes page](#) no later than one month prior to registration.

## **STUDENT CONDUCT CODE**

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea® courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

## **RESERVE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY**

None

## **FILMS**

None

## **ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS**

Reader prepared by professor

## **ADDITIONAL RESOURCES**

None