

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Colorado State University, Academic Partner

Voyage:	Fall 2020
Discipline:	English
Course Number and Title:	E 330 Gender in World Literature
Division:	Upper
Faculty Name:	Brenda R. Weber
Semester Credit Hours:	3

Prerequisites: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

E.M. Forster's *Howard's End* (1912) has received much critical attention, but it is the two-word phrase, "Only Connect!" that has most enduringly remained as instruction for an increasingly fragmented world. Connect to one another, find common ground, celebrate unity. There is probably no better catch phrase to suggest the community typified by Semester at Sea, and really no better way to suggest the value of what literature might provide. But, of course, connection is never such an easy thing, and it is often the attempt to come to terms with both isolation and intimacy that fuels literature. Indeed, Forster's novel is much more about conflict than reconciliation, as he seeks to consider how gender, poverty, and a notion of the nation have created deep-seated social and economic prejudices. Yet connection is still possible in spite of these differences.

This course offers a consideration of contemporary world literature in effort to work through the implications of connection. We will look specifically at gender representations and sexual politics in a wide range of world literature, focusing particularly on the countries we will discover in our voyage. The course considers how historical and cultural processes in various geographic areas shape discourses about normative and non-normative sexual practices and gender roles, as well as how gender is imbricated in other social identity locations such as class, race, and nationality. Focusing on the novel, we will read literary works that reinforce, interrogate, or complicate understandings of femininity, masculinity, and sexuality.

Students will engage in both reflective and analytical writing as they investigate and report on their voyage experiences. Assignments are: a reading journal, a formal paper, and two in-class examinations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Develop familiarity with terms, practices and theoretical foundations of literary studies

- Develop reading, analytical, and critical skills
- Expand comprehension and capacity to communicate complex ideas

REQUIRED BOOKS (9) & SUPPLIES

(descriptions as modified from sales copy)

AUTHOR: Vendela Vida
 TITLE: *The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty*
 PUBLISHER: Ecco
 ISBN: 0062110942
 DATE/EDITION: Reprint 2016

Vendela Vida, *The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty*

A woman travels to Casablanca, Morocco, on mysterious business. While checking into her hotel, the woman is robbed of her wallet and passport—all of her money and identification. Though the police investigate, the woman senses an undercurrent of complicity between the hotel staff and the authorities—she knows she'll never recover her possessions. Stripped of her identity, she feels burdened by the crime yet strangely liberated by her sudden freedom to be anyone she chooses.

AUTHOR: Yaa Gyasi
 TITLE: *Homegoing: A Novel*
 PUBLISHER: Vintage
 ISBN: 1101971061
 DATE/EDITION: Reprint 2017

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing: A Novel*

This novel tells the story of two half-sisters, separated by forces beyond their control: one sold into slavery, the other married to a British slaver. *Homegoing* traces the generations of family who follow, as their destinies lead them through two continents and three hundred years of history, each life indelibly drawn, as the legacy of slavery is fully revealed in light of the present day.

AUTHOR: J. M. Coetzee
 TITLE: *Disgrace*
 PUBLISHER: Penguin
 ISBN: 0140296409
 DATE/EDITION: 2000

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

Set in post-apartheid South Africa, the story follows a middle-aged white professor at a Cape Town university, who is dismissed for having a relationship with a student. This sets off a chain of events that will shatter his pride and leave him utterly disgraced. In his book, Coetzee deals with various themes such as exploitation, personal shame, the subjugation of women, and a country in transition.

AUTHOR: Nathacha Appanah
TITLE: *The Last Brother*
PUBLISHER: Grey Wolf Press
ISBN: 1555975755
DATE/EDITION: 2011

Nathacha Appanah, *The Last Brother*

1944 is coming to a close and nine-year-old Raj is unaware of the war devastating the rest of the world. He lives in Mauritius, a remote island in the Indian Ocean, where survival is a daily struggle for his family. When a brutal beating lands Raj in the hospital of the prison camp where his father is a guard, he meets a mysterious boy his own age. David is a refugee, one of a group of Jewish exiles whose harrowing journey took them from Nazi occupied Europe to Palestine, where they were refused entry, and sent on to indefinite detainment in Mauritius

AUTHOR: Arundhati Roy,
TITLE: *The God of Small Things*
PUBLISHER: HarperPerennial
ISBN: 0060977493
DATE/EDITION: 1997

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Arundhati Roy's modern classic is equal parts powerful family saga, forbidden love story, and piercing political drama. The seven-year-old twins Estha and Rahel see their world shaken irrevocably by the arrival of their beautiful young cousin, Sophie. It is an event that will lead to an illicit liaison and tragedies accidental and intentional, exposing "big things [that] lurk unsaid" in a country drifting dangerously toward unrest.

AUTHOR: Shirley Geok-lin Lim
TITLE: *Joss and Gold: A Novel*
PUBLISHER: Marshall Cavendish
ISBN: 9814302112
DATE: 2011

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold: A Novel*

Li An, a young Malaysian woman of Chinese descent, seeks to understand herself as the country around her struggles to determine its own identity. And much like the politically charged atmosphere of 1969 Kuala Lumpur, Li An must confront the contradictions within. While she supports her nation's fight to break free from the influence of British colonial rule, she cannot deny her love for the English poetry that she teaches.

AUTHOR: Camilla Gib
TITLE: *The Beauty of Humanity Movement*
PUBLISHER: Penguin
ISBN: 0143120603
DATE/EDITION: 2011

Camilla Gib, *The Beauty of Humanity Movement*

Raised in the United States but Vietnamese by birth, Maggie has come to Hanoi seeking clues to the fate of her father, a dissident artist who disappeared during the war. Her search brings her to Old Man Hu'ng's pho stall. The old man once had a shop frequented by revolutionary artists, but now Tu', a hustling young entrepreneur, is his most faithful customer. Maggie, Hu'ng, and Tu' come together during a highly charged season that will mark them forever. This novel explores the indelible legacies of war and art, as well as love's power to renew.

AUTHOR: Anchee Minn

TITLE: *Pearl of China*

PUBLISHER: Bloomsbury

ISBN: 1608193128

DATE/EDITION: 2011

Anchee Minn, *Pearl of China*

In the small southern town of Chin-kiang, in the last days of the nineteenth century, two young girls bump heads and become thick as thieves. Willow is the only child of a destitute family, Pearl the headstrong daughter of zealous Christian missionaries. She will ultimately become the internationally renowned author Pearl S. Buck, but for now she is just a girl embarrassed by her blonde hair and enchanted by her new Chinese friend. The two embark on a friendship that will sustain both of them through one of the most tumultuous periods in Chinese history.

AUTHOR: Kyung-Sook Shin

TITLE: *Please Look After Mom*

PUBLISHER: Vintage

ISBN: 0307739511

DATE/EDITION: 2012

Kyung-Sook Shin, *Please Look After Mother*

An elderly woman, visiting her family in Seoul, is separated from them on a metro platform. When the train pulls away, her family are mortified to realize she has been left behind. Shin reveals the relationships between the mother, her husband and their life in the countryside, as well as with each of her children as they all search for their missing matriarch. It reveals the lives of young and old, while asking big questions about the bonds of family and the struggles with the passage of time.

Students will need a journal for this course.

(A small course reader, electronic, assembled by professor.)

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Depart Hamburg, Germany – September 9

A1—September 11: Vendela Vida, *The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty*

A2— September 13: Vendela Vida, *The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty*

Casablanca, Morocco – September 15-19

A3—September 20: Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing: A Novel*

A4—September 22: Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing: A Novel*

A5—September 24: Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing: A Novel*

A6—September 26: Test 1

Takoradi, Ghana – September 27-28

Tema, Ghana – September 29-October 1

A7—October 3: J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

Community Programming – October 4 (No Class)

A8—October 6: J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

A9—October 8: J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

Cape Town, South Africa – October 9-14

A10—October 16: Nathacha Appanah, *The Last Brother*

A11—October 18: Nathacha Appanah, *The Last Brother*

A12—October 20: Nathacha Appanah, *The Last Brother*

Port Louis, Mauritius – October 22-24

A13—October 25: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

A14—October 27: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Community Programming – October 28 (No Class)

A15—October 30: Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Mumbai, India – November 1-6

A16—November 7: Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold: A Novel*

A17—November 9: Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold: A Novel*

Reflection & Study Day — November 11 (No Class)

A18—November 12: Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold: A Novel*

A19—November 14: Test 2

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

A20—November 21: Camilla Gib, *The Beauty of Humanity Movement*

Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam — November 22-27

A21—November 29: Anchee Minn, *Pearl of China*

A22—December 1: Anchee Minn, *Pearl of China*

Xiamen, China — December 3-8

A23—December 9: Kyung-Sook Shin, *Please Look After Mom*

A24—December 11: Kyung-Sook Shin, *Please Look After Mom*

Busan, South Korea — December 12-15

Study Day — December 17 (No Class)

A25—December 18: Final Reflections and Writing Workshop

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: Graham Greene and the City

Country: Vietnam

Idea: Graham Greene's acclaimed novel, *The Quiet American*, contains a virtual travelogue of Sài Gòn, now called Ho Chi Minh City. This port excursion would visit some of the locations mentioned in his book, including The Notre Dame Cathedral at the end of Đồng Khởi, the Continental Hotel, and the Majestic Hotel. While Greene mentions many other places of interest in the book, specifically those related to government, several have been demolished, but the overall book is filled with a sense of the city in the 1950's.

Objectives: Make connections between literal and figurative geographies; think about cityscapes as places of the imagination.

Assessment: Students will select a specific element from our site visit and write about it in relation to a particular scene, trope, or narrative element in the novel. 5-pages.

Proposal Title #2: Student interchange with University of Ghana

Country: Ghana

Idea: Meet with students of my friend and colleague, Ed Sackey, who is a lecturer in English at the University of Ghana. While we have still to work out all of the details, Dr. Sackey and I plan to have our students read several pieces of common literature drawn from Abena Busia's *Women Writing Africa* and to write a brief analysis of each that can be shared in advance of meeting. We'll set up "pen pal" arrangements between my students and his, so that the site visit would include a face-to-face meeting and the hopes for a continued conversation between our students. I know that Abi is a friend of SAS (she is also how I learned about the experience), and it might be possible to involve her in this exercise in some capacity, although she is in Brazil.

Objectives: Learn more about Ghana, its customs, its people, its histories, and its peoples through mutual exchange and engagement with a group of literature students, who are studying at the University of Ghana.

Assessment: Students will select a specific element from our site visit and write about it in relation to a particular scene, trope, or narrative element in the novel. 5-pages.

Independent Field Assignments

Students will be asked to keep a reading journal that will include 10 reflections written over the course of the journey. I will ask them, in particular, to make connections to ideas from observations or experiences they have while in each port.

METHODS OF EVALUATION

Reading Journal – Making Connections 20%

10 entries	
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 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

None

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

None

Notes:

On occasion, I may show films (in full or excerpt), but I will have my own copies. There will be an electronic course packet that I assemble, with articles corresponding to the course novels.