Contemporary World Literature
ENG 308 -001  Fall Semester 2011

Department: English
Class Meeting: MW 2:30-3:45  Class Location: Ferguson 381
Instructor: Dr. Ericka Hoagland  Office: LA 211  Office Phone: 468-2413
Office Hours: MW 4-6; TTH 3:30-5:30  Email: hoaglande@sfasu.edu

Catalog Description: A close study of works in World Literature (western and non-western) from 1900 to the present. The course will cover works representative of modernism, postmodernism, magical realism, and contemporary trends. Prerequisite: 9 semester hours of English.

Course Description: In Modernism, Peter Childs describes the literature of the early twentieth century as one of “not just change, but crisis” (14). As apt as this description is for modernist literature in particular, Childs’s observation obtains for much of the world literature of the twentieth century as well. In this course, we will explore literature from around the world, written during one of the most tumultuous, fascinating, exciting, and terrifying centuries in human history. Given the sheer breadth and diversity implied in the course title, this class is organized around three of the major literary movements of the twentieth century: postmodernism, magical realism, and postcolonialism. As such, one of the goals of this course is to examine these movements in some detail, establishing what characterizes each movement, and how these movements converge and diverge. Another goal of this course is to reinforce core literary analysis skills – close reading, explication, summary, and revision – both in class discussions and in writing assignments.

As one of the course’s featured authors, Michael Ondaatje writes in The English Patient, “A novel is a mirror walking down the road,” showing us reflections of ourselves, our world (91). Each of the novels and short stories in this course takes their readers down many roads, and as we read those texts we will see some of those roads intersecting in powerful, profound ways. And the mirrors these novels represent will often reflect back painful truths, but also the joys and wonders of the human experience.
Course Goals and Objectives: The general goals and objectives for the course are the following and meet Texas Exemplary Educational Objectives:

1. The student will demonstrate the ability to read complex texts, closely and accurately.
2. The student will demonstrate the ability to comprehend both traditional and contemporary schools/methods of critical theory and apply them to literary texts to generate relevant interpretations.
3. The student will demonstrate knowledge of literary history in regard to particular periods of World, British and American literature.
4. The student will demonstrate ability to effectively conduct literary research.
5. The student will demonstrate the ability to write clear, grammatically correct prose for a variety of purposes in regards to literary analysis.

Required Texts (available at Barnes and Noble Bookstore):


Additional Readings (available online through Blackboard):

Barthelme, Donald. “Balloon.”
Suleri, Sara. “Excellent Things in Women.”

Required Assignments:

25% Focused Close Readings – Over the course of the semester, students will write five single-spaced close readings in which they examine a specific aspect to one of the texts discussed in this course. Such aspects include title analyses, passage analyses, examinations of symbols, settings, and characters, and thematic analyses. Students can choose the focus of each paper, but they cannot write about the same text twice, nor can they engage in the same type of close reading more than once (for example, once a student has done a close reading of a key passage from a text, they cannot repeat this choice for another focused close reading).

30% Norton Critical Edition Project – The central research project for this course is a variation on the Norton Critical Edition, those indispensable texts which bring together a primary
text, selections of critical / scholarly studies of the primary text, bibliographies for further reading / research, a timeline / chronology focusing on significant developments / events in the author’s lifetime and work, and a structured preface which provides readers with a useful introduction to the text, including applicable historical / cultural contexts, plot explication / summary, and review of the central critical themes and scholarship trends regarding the text.

15% Midterm – Covering the literature of the first eight weeks of the course, midterm will be comprised of short answer questions and short essays.

15% Final – The final will cover the second half of the course. Part of the final will involve a comprehensive question examining the three literary movements; the rest of the final will focus on the literature from the last eight weeks of the course, and be comprised of short answer questions and short essays.

15% Participation – To get the most out of any literature course, a student has to be more than just a spectator. Participating in class discussions is an integral part of understanding course material in any class, but especially in a literature course. I expect every student in this course to offer reactions, interpretations, pose questions, and respond to the ideas of others every week, and I will be keeping careful records of who is, and who isn’t, contributing to class discussion.

Grading Scale: The following grading scale is non-negotiable. As a general rule, I do not round up grades. However, should a student have a number grade of, for example, an 88%, I will take into consideration the following elements – attendance/participation, progress throughout the semester, and overall quality of work – at the end of the semester when I calculate final grades, and may make the determination that the student has earned a higher letter grade, in this case, an “A” rather than a “B.” Please note, there is no guarantee that your grade will be rounded up; rather, you have only earned the right for your grade to be considered for such action.

90%-100%: A
80%-89%: B
70%-79%: C
60%-69%: D
59% & below: F

Grading Rubric: While students can expect substantial comments on their drafts and/or in required and informal meetings that are designed to both explain the grade they have received as well as provide comments to aid in improving the student’s work, the grading rubric below offers additional information about the basic requirements of and differences between A, B, C, D, and F papers. Note: this rubric is used for grading papers ONLY.

An “A” paper is an exceptional paper that meets all of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines. Such a paper has a clearly stated and critically sophisticated thesis statement; supporting paragraphs are thoughtful and well-supported; transitions between paragraphs and ideas are smooth; a formal introduction and conclusion are provided and both paragraphs meet the expectations of introductions and conclusions as outlined by the instructor; and there are few to no grammatical errors.

A “B+” paper is a superior paper that meets all of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines; thesis statement is clear but lacks some of the critical
sophistication of an “A” thesis statement; paragraphs are nicely developed and supported; transitions between paragraphs and ideas are generally smooth; the introduction and conclusion are for the most part formally constructed and follow most of the guidelines for introductions and conclusions as explained by the instructor; and has a few grammatical errors.

A “B” paper is a strong paper that meets most to all of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines; the thesis statement is identifiable but lacks the level of clarity and sophistication found in “A” and “B+” papers; paragraphs show attention to development, but not as consistently or as rigorously as “A” or “B+” papers; smooth transitions between paragraphs and ideas are present in places, but not consistent; the introduction and conclusion lack some of the necessary formality and components as stipulated by the instructor; and there are several grammatical errors.

A “C+” is a good paper that meets a large number of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines; the thesis is identifiable, but may be awkwardly constructed and is somewhat lacking in critical depth; paragraphs are fairly developed, but could use more support and development; transitions are abrupt or in some places non-existent; the introduction and conclusion are too informal and are lacking in some of the components outlined by the instructor; and there are several grammatical errors.

A “C” paper is an average paper that meets most of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines; the thesis is identifiable, but its claim is vague, observational, or underdeveloped and is too informal in its construction and critical thinking; paragraphs show some development, but not as much as a “C+” paper; transitions are hard to find between paragraphs and ideas; the introduction and conclusion are too informal and have few of the components outlined by the instructor; and there are many grammatical errors.

A “D+” is a mediocre paper meets only one or two of the requirements of the assignment as outlined by the assignment guidelines; there is no discernible thesis statement; the paragraphs lack structure and critical development; transitions are absent; the introduction and conclusion are awkwardly constructed and do not provide adequate set-up or closure to the paper; and there are many grammatical errors.

A “D” paper is a poor paper that does not meet the requirements of the assignment; the thesis statement is not identifiable; supporting paragraphs are underdeveloped and unfocused; there are no transitions to move from idea to idea or paragraph to paragraph; the introduction and conclusion are hard to follow, have no clear purpose or direction, and do not meet any of the expectations as outlined by the instructor; and the paper has many errors on each page.

An “F” paper does not meet any of the requirements as a whole or those for the introduction and conclusion; the paper has no discernible main idea; paragraphs are short and underdeveloped; the paper does not meet the minimum page length; the paper lacks focus; and there are grammatical errors throughout the entire paper.

**Withheld Grades Semester Grades Policy (A-54):**
Ordinarily, at the discretion of the instructor of record and with the approval of the academic chair/director, a grade of WH will be assigned only if the student cannot complete the course work because of unavoidable circumstances. Students must complete the work within one calendar year from the end of the semester in which they receive a WH, or the grade automatically becomes an F. If students register for the same course in future terms the WH will automatically become an F and will be counted as a repeated course for the purpose of computing the grade point average.

General Course Policies

The syllabus for a course is like a contract between student and teacher. A contract, loosely defined, is an agreement between two or more parties in which the parties agree to follow certain behaviors and meet specific responsibilities. By being in this class, you agree to the conditions listed below, including the course policies which outline acceptable codes of behavior for this course, and the course schedule, which outlines the due dates for all assignments. Should you not meet the expectations outlined by the syllabus, you can expect in turn to incur the penalties described below. That means it is extremely important that you familiarize yourself with the syllabus as thoroughly as possible; if a policy does not make sense, make sure to ask me as soon as possible as I will not allow confusion to be an excuse for not completing an assignment as required or for not meeting class expectations as described below.

Attendance / Lateness Policy: According to university policy, which I follow, students who miss three weeks of class automatically fail. For this class, that means you can miss six classes; the seventh missed class results in an “F” for the course. I do take attendance, and so should you; that is, you should keep a record of the days you miss class so that you know how many absences you have accumulated. While I will not be penalizing you for absences you accumulate up to three weeks of missed classes, you should be aware that every class you miss puts you behind, whether in the form of a missed quiz, discussion of writing assignments or discussion of assigned readings, preparation for quizzes and/or exams, and so on. As such, it is your responsibility, not mine, to catch up on material you missed due to an absence. In other words, I will not “re-teach” a class you have missed, thus it is important that you make contacts in the class should you miss a class and need notes. Furthermore, I follow the university’s policy for excused absences; this policy only excuses absences for official university business, not illness, court dates, doctor appointments, funerals, etc. Finally, students should be aware that not only do I take attendance, but I keep records of tardiness; for every three classes a student is late to class (and I define being late very simply: if you’re not in class when class officially starts, then you are late), I will mark an absence.

Grievances and Concerns Policy: If you are having difficulties with this course, whether it is with a writing assignment, a particular reading, or with the course in general, please do not suffer in silence and/or wait until the end of the term to inform me of these problems or concerns in the evaluations. At that point, there is nothing I can do to address those concerns. Thus it would be best for you, me, and the class to be able to address your concerns while there is still time left in the term to do so. Please talk to me either via email, or in private to discuss any problems or concerns you have with the course and I will do my best to address them. Of course, at the end
of the term, your feedback regarding this course is both welcome and appreciated when it comes
time to fill out the class evaluations.

**Disability Services:** To obtain disability related accommodations, alternate formats and/or
auxiliary aids, students with disabilities must contact the Office of Disability Services (ODS),
Human Services Building, and Room 325, 468-3004 / 468-1004 (TDD) as early as possible in
the semester. Once verified, ODS will notify the course instructor and outline the
accommodation and/or auxiliary aids to be provided. Failure to request services in a timely
manner may delay your accommodations. For additional information, go to
http://www.sfasu.edu/disabilityservices/.

**AARC Policy:** Students are highly encouraged to use the AARC, located in the Steen Library,
for help with their papers. Some rules/guidelines that students should follow with respect to the
Writing Center: 1) set up an appointment (they last thirty minutes), either by signing up on the
appointment sheet located at the AARC, or by setting up an appointment online; 2) As a general
rule, DO NOT DROP IN – you can never be assured of help by doing this, so it is best to sign up
for or set up an appointment; 3) Come in with a complete, TYPED, draft – a typed draft is easier
for the writing consultant to read, and a complete draft gives them more to work with and
respond to; 4) Come in with specific questions about your draft, or specific parts of the paper that
you want the writing consultant to look at; 5) If available, bring the assignment sheet with you so
that tutors can reference it if they need more information about the assignment; and 6) DO NOT
EXPECT THE WRITING CONSULTANT TO PROOFREAD THE ESSAY FOR YOU (that
means fixing spelling and punctuation errors for you) – THEY WON’T. They will, however,
point out grammatical/mechanical errors to you, but it is your responsibility to fix them.

**Academic Integrity (A-9.1):**

Academic integrity is a responsibility of all university faculty and students. Faculty members
promote academic integrity in multiple ways including instruction on the components of
academic honesty, as well as abiding by university policy on penalties for cheating and
plagiarism.

**Definition of Academic Dishonesty:**

Academic dishonesty includes both cheating and plagiarism. Cheating includes but is not limited
to (1) using or attempting to use unauthorized materials to aid in achieving a better grade on a
component of a class; (2) the falsification or invention of any information, including citations, on
an assigned exercise; and/or (3) helping or attempting to help another in an act of cheating or
plagiarism. Plagiarism is presenting the words or ideas of another person as if they were your
own. Examples of plagiarism are (1) submitting an assignment as if it were one’s own work
when, in fact, it is at least partly the work of another; (2) submitting a work that has been
purchased or otherwise obtained from an Internet source or another source; and (3) incorporating
the words or ideas of an author into one’s paper without giving the author due credit.
Furthermore, if you turn in an essay that you wrote for another course for this class, or
incorporate any kind of outside work when outside research is not allowed for the writing
assignment, you are engaging in plagiarism and academic dishonesty.
Please read the complete policy at http://www.sfasu.edu/policies/academic_integrity.asp

These are the penalties for plagiarism in this course: for the first offense, you will receive a zero for the paper and be reported to the appropriate dean for this academic offense; and for the second offense, you will receive a failing grade for the course, and be reported to the appropriate dean of students for this academic offense.

**Late Work and Makeup Policy:** I define a paper as “late” if it is submitted an hour after the official deadline for the paper. A paper that is a full day late will be marked down a half letter grade (thus, if you receive a “B” on the paper, but it is late, its final grade will be a “C+”). A paper turned in two days late will be marked down a full letter grade (a “B” paper will become a “C”). A paper turned in three days late will automatically receive a “D.” If that paper shows poor work, additional deductions may occur. No papers will be accepted after four days.

THERE ARE NO MAKE-UPS IN THIS CLASS. In-class writing tasks and quizzes CANNOT be made up outside of class. Students also cannot make-up formal writing assignments or exams.

**Conference Policy:** Students are encouraged to meet with me to discuss writing assignments, receive help on drafts of papers, to discuss quizzes and / or assigned readings, and general concerns with the course. My scheduled office hours represent the best times to meet with me, and it is a good idea, in order to assure that you will receive my full attention, to schedule a time during my office hours should you wish to talk to me. Should you miss a scheduled meeting with me, I will allow you to set up a makeup meeting, but only if you alert me to being unable to come to the meeting a full twenty-four hours before the scheduled meeting. I reserve the right to not meet with a student should s/he be habitual in missing conferences. My time is precious, too, and I will not devote time to a student who regularly misses meetings when other students need help / guidance. Finally, please be aware that you cannot be guaranteed of my time if you drop in during my office hours, as I may be meeting with another student, so again, if you can, schedule a meeting with me to insure that you get to work with me when you need / want to.

**Turnitin.com Policy:** All papers for this course are REQUIRED to be submitted to the turnitin.com link on the Blackboard site for this course. Each turnitin.com link will be titled according to the paper (e.g., “Short Story Paper”) and will automatically shut down twenty-four hours after the start of class on the paper’s due date. It is your responsibility to remember to submit your papers to turnitin.com AND to alert me to any difficulties uploading the paper to turnitin.com within that twenty-four hour window. Failure to submit a paper to turnitin.com results in an automatic ten point deduction from the paper’s final grade. A paper that scores a 25% or higher on turnitin.com for potential plagiarism / academic dishonesty will be especially scrutinized. Furthermore, such a score could result in serious penalties, including full grade deductions, a zero for the paper, and in worst case scenarios, being reported to the appropriate academic dean for plagiarism / academic dishonesty.

**Email Policy:** All official email from me will go to your SFA email accounts. I also expect emails regarding this course to be professional. What I mean by that is the following: in the subject line type in the class (i.e., “ENG 308”), provide a formal salutation (“Dr. Hoagland,” not “Mrs. Hoagland” – I’m not married to my dad), and a message that involves complete sentences
and appropriate grammar. I don’t answer emails that are casual or familiar, so referring to me as “hey” or “dude,” using “text-speak” and spelling, and avoiding proper punctuation guarantees that I will not answer your email, no matter how urgent the matter discussed in the email might be.

**Additional Policies (aka other stuff you need to know):**

1. Cell phones, ipods, blackberrys, iphones, and any and all electronic devices that beep, ring, play music, buzz, vibrate, and essentially cause distractions should be turned off and stowed in the dark, deep recesses of your bags. I don’t want to see them, and I absolutely don’t want to hear them. If some emergency warrants having your phone handy, you must talk to me first. If I see one of those things out after class starts, you’ll be marked absent for the day.
2. If you fall asleep in class, you will be marked absent for the day. So have some coffee or other caffeinated beverage with you if need be.
3. Don’t interrupt when someone has the floor – it’s disruptive and disrespectful. Furthermore, don’t use this class as a place to do work for another class or to visit with your neighbors/friends; again, this is disrespectful behavior.
4. You can bring snacks to class, just don’t get too elaborate. If your food involves utensils or rotisseries, it’s probably not a good idea to bring it to class.
5. If you have any questions or concerns with the class, don’t suffer in silence: come see me during my office hours or set up an appointment. In general, it is a good idea to keep lines of communication open: I am far more likely to be flexible if you talk to me.

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**COURSE SCHEDULE**

**Week One: August 29th – August 31st**

**Monday:** Introduction to course and major project; overview on key literary movements of the 20th century  
**Wednesday:** Discuss *The English Patient*

**Week Two: September 5th – September 7th**

**Monday:** NO CLASS – LABOR DAY  
**Wednesday:** Discuss *The English Patient*

**Week Three: September 12th – September 14th**

**Monday:** Finish discussion of *The English Patient*  
**Wednesday:** Lecture on Magical Realism; discuss “The Blind Man” & “A Country Doctor”

**Week Four: September 19th – September 21st**
Monday: Close Reading #1 Due; discuss “New Islands” and “The Visit to the Museum”
Wednesday: Selected Primary and Secondary Bibliography Drafts Due; discuss “The Old People” and “The Piano”

Week Five: September 26th – September 28th

Monday: Discuss “Aleph,” “The South,” “My Life with the Wave,” “The Enormous Radio,” “A Very Old Man with Enormous Wings,” and “The Guest”
Wednesday: Close Reading #2 Due; discuss “Gogol’s Wife,” “Major Aranda’s Hand,” and “Journey to the Seed”

Week Six: October 3rd – October 5th

Monday: Discuss Like Water for Chocolate
Wednesday: Chronology Drafts Due; discuss Like Water for Chocolate

Week Seven: October 10th – October 12th

Monday: Lecture on Postmodernism; discuss Innovations preface by Robert L. McLaughlin and “She Unnames Them”
Wednesday: Close Reading #3 Due; discuss “Balloon” and “The Phantom of the Movie Palace”

Week Eight: October 17th – October 19th

Wednesday: Scholarly Contribution Proposals Due; discuss “Yorick,” “The Turn of the Screw,” & “Bonanza”

Week Nine: October 24th – October 26th

Monday: Midterm
Wednesday: Discuss “Lost in the Funhouse” and “Click”

Week Ten: October 31st – November 2nd

Monday: Discuss Invisible Cities
Wednesday: Discuss Invisible Cities

Week Eleven: November 7th – November 9th

Monday: Norton Critical Edition Introduction Drafts Due; Lecture on Postcolonialism; discuss “The Guest”
Wednesday: “Breast Giver,” “Her Three Days,” and “Snapshots of a Wedding”
Week Twelve: November 14th – November 16th

Monday: Discuss “Sarzan,” “A Meeting in the Dark,” and “A Handful of Dates”
Wednesday: Close Reading #4 Due; discuss excerpt from A Small Place, “Excellent Things in Women,” and “My Father, the Englishman, and I”

Week Thirteen: NO CLASS – THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

Monday: Rough Drafts of Scholarly Contributions Due for Peer and Instructor Review by 5 p.m. to MySFA / Blackboard mail system (not Titan email)

Week Fourteen: November 28th – November 30th

Monday: Close Reading #5 Due; discuss “Swimming Lessons” and “My Son the Fanatic”
Wednesday: Discuss Waiting for the Barbarians

Week Fifteen: December 5th – December 7th

Monday: Norton Critical Edition Projects Due; discuss Waiting for the Barbarians
Wednesday: Finish discussion of Waiting for the Barbarians; discuss Final

Week Sixteen: FINALS WEEK

Date and Time of Final TBA