English 3951 FA/FAO: Immigrant Literatures

Course Location: OA 2020, ATAC 5041

Class Times: Wednesday and Friday 8:30-10:00am

Prerequisites: Two FCEs in English, including at least one half-course at the second-year level, or permission of the Chair of the Department

To our Students: Should you require information or documents from our office in another format, please let us know. We are happy to help you. Contact your instructor or our Department of English Administrative Assistant.

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Instructor Information

- Instructor: Holly Morgan
- Office: Simcoe Hall 3010, Desk 14 or Skype/Google Messenger by appointment
- Telephone: TBA
- Email: hmorgan@lakeheadu.ca
- Office Hours: Wednesday 10:00-11:00 or by appointment

Course Description/Overview

Narratives depicting mobility, migration, and displacement challenge static models of national and cultural identity as they interrogate the ways in which multicultural, multilingual, and multinational – and the limitations of such terms – coexist within more narrowly defined categories of citizenship. Produced in the marginal spaces of “in-betweenness,” these narratives, often read as transnational, negotiate identities, cultures, languages and memories across, within, and beyond national boundaries. Texts discussed may include narratives of immigration, assimilation, and diaspora from the twentieth and twenty-first centuries in various genres including fiction, poetry, drama, life-writing, graphic novels, phototexts, theory, and film.

Course Objectives and/or Learner Outcomes

In this course, we will explore the themes of migration and identity in a variety of texts. Examining concepts from the related fields of Postcolonial Studies, Diaspora Studies, and Migration Studies, we will read selected non-fiction, short stories, and novels to consider the ways that the migration process affects characters and authors. Themes and concepts such as diaspora, racism, hybridity, The American Dream, and multiculturalism will be critically examined through selected texts and readings. While the first half of the course considers migration and identity in broader contexts, the second half of the course will focus on immigration in a Canadian context.

By the end of this course, you will be able to:

- read texts of all kinds critically, and assess their rhetorical, ideological and aesthetic strategies.
- communicate ideas effectively and coherently, in both orally and in writing.
- identify the conventions of a variety of genres, and to identify ways in which individual texts work within, or expand the definitions of, that genre.
- analyse specific literary devices and explain how those devices contribute to the meaning of a literary text.
- explain the role of literature in articulating and creating categories of identity.
- explain how a text is produced by, and produces, its historical and cultural context.
- use library resources to research a topic and use what they discover to illuminate a text.
Course Resources

Required Course Texts (all versions are acceptable)

- Selected readings available on D2L, denoted with an (*)

Course Website(s) (if applicable)

- Desire2Learn

Course Schedule

**Week One: Beginnings**
September 7: Introductions
September 9: Defining Immigrant Literatures (or trying to)
Readings: “Three Myths of Immigrant Writing: A View from Germany”, “My Life as an Undocumented Immigrant” (web readings – see D2L)

**Week Two: Constructing Immigrant Writers in America: Bharati Mukherjee**
September 14-16: Who is an Immigrant?

**Week Three: Adichie, Stories, and the Burden of Representation**
September 21 -23: Introduction to Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Readings: *Americananah* Parts 1 and 2

**Week Four: Adichie, Cosmopolitanism, and Afropolitanism**
September 28-30
Readings: *Americananah* Parts 3-4
Week Five: Finishing *Americanah*, Other Migration Factors
October 5 Readings: *Americanah* Parts 5-7
October 7: Positive Negatives: The Comics of Benjamin Dix (short online video clips)
Readings: “Abike” and “Almaz” (links on D2L) *Warning: These works contain representations of violence* Note: There are no classes next week (Reading Week).

Week Six: Immigrant Literatures in Canadian Context
October 18: Canadian Immigration: An Overview
Reading: Himani Bannerjee. Excerpts from *The Dark Side of the Nation*.
October 20: Defining Canadian Immigrant Literatures
Readings: Vassanji, M. G. “Am I a Canadian Writer?”

Week Seven: Diaspora Theories
October 26: What is Diaspora Studies: History of a Discipline
October 28: How to Use Diaspora as a Concept

Week Eight: Farzana Doctor’s *Stealing Nasreen*, Sexuality, and Generational Differences
November 2-4 Readings: *Stealing Nasreen*
Note: Monday, November 7th is the final date to withdraw from classes without academic penalty.

Week Nine: *Stealing Nasreen* and “Out on Main Street”: Conclusions of Queerness
November 9 Readings: *Stealing Nasreen*

Week Ten:
November 16 Watch: *Heaven on Earth* (film on Criterion).
November 18 Readings: *The Magic of Saida* (Prologue and One)

Week Eleven: *The Magic of Saida*
November 23-25 Reading: *The Magic of Saida* (Two and Three)

Week Twelve: Conclusions
November 30: Concluding Saida
Readings: *The Magic of Saida* (Four)
December 2: Conclusions
Assignments and Evaluation

Table of Assignments

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<th>Assignment Title</th>
<th>Weight</th>
<th>Due Date</th>
<th>Details</th>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>Ongoing</td>
<td>A combination of self-assessment (template provided) and instructor assessment</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reflect, Connect, Create</td>
<td>2 x 15%</td>
<td>October 7th, October 28th</td>
<td>Online short writing assignments or creative projects and writing assignment (2-3 pages).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay Proposal</td>
<td>10%</td>
<td>November 4th</td>
<td>An outline of your essay argument, using template provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Essay</td>
<td>35%</td>
<td>November 25th</td>
<td>A 7-9 page research paper on the topic of your choice. See suggested topic list on D2L.</td>
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<td>Final Reflection Take-Home Questions</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>December 2nd</td>
<td>Short essay style questions designed to allow you to demonstrate that you have completed the readings for the term.</td>
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Assignment Policies

- Assignments are due by 11:59pm on the dates indicated, via the D2L Assignment submission folder.
- All assignments are individual assignments. Assignments completed by more than one person will not be accepted, and the submission of the same work as someone else constitutes plagiarism.
- If you require an extension, you must ask for one BEFORE the due date.
- Unless you ask for (and receive) an extension, late assignments will be penalized by 3% per day (to a maximum of 30%), and will not be accepted after 11:59pm on December 2nd.
- All assignments must be in MLA format (8th edition), double spaced, with 1" margins, and in 12 point font.
- Exceptions to these policies are allowed only with a doctor's note or other appropriate documentation.

Details of Assignments

Specific details for each assignment will be uploaded on D2L under the “Assignments” heading.

Attendance and Participation (10%)
Using the template provided on D2L, you will keep a record of your own attendance and participation, and submit this record at the end of the term. I will be maintaining similar records of each student. The record is designed to remind you of your responsibilities
and keep you accountable to yourself. The grade that you give yourself will be averaged with the grade that I award you for a total of 10% of your final course grade.

Reflect, Connect, and Create (2 x 15%)
These short papers invite you to bring together knowledge from lectures and readings and apply them to other avenues of your life, including through creative means. They will be posted on D2L, and your peers will be able to interact with you. All referencing must follow the MLA style manual, and ALL sources must be referenced. Specific guidelines for creative and reflective options to be provided on D2L.

Essay Proposal (10%)
Using the template provided to you on D2L, propose a topic for your final research essay. The template will ask you to identify a thesis statement, as well as locate and summarize selected source texts.

Essay (35%)
This writing assignment will allow you to consider theories relevant to immigrant literatures in relation to one or more of the texts that or a text of your choosing. A list of suggested topics will be posted on D2L, and your instructor is available to provide further guidance regarding topic selection.

Final reflection Take-Home Questions (15%)
Functioning in the place of a final exam, these take home questions will invite you to bring together the theories and concepts addressed in this course. Questions will be provided a minimum of one week prior to the deadline, and the assignment should take you no longer than 90 minutes to write. Please budget your time accordingly.

Marking Standards
All assignments will be marked in accordance with the English Department Marking Standards. Assignment-specific grading guidelines will be available to you on D2L.

Collaboration/Plagiarism Rules
Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's words and/or ideas. Not acknowledging your debt to the ideas of a secondary source, failing to use quotation marks when you are quoting directly, buying essays from essay banks, copying another student's work, or working together on an individual assignment all constitute plagiarism. Resubmitting material you've submitted to another course is also academic dishonesty. All plagiarized work (in whole or in part) and other forms of academic dishonesty will be reported to the Dean, who is responsible for judging academic misconduct and imposing penalties. The minimum penalty for academic misconduct is a 0 on the assignment in question. It might also be subject to more severe academic penalties. See the Code of Student Behaviour.

1 https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english/marketing-standards
2 https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/academic-support/skills-for-success/responsibilities
Course Policies

**Attendance** is expected, and makes up a portion of your participation mark.

**Participation** involves active and enthusiastic engagement with course materials and your peers. You are expected not only to be physically present, but also to be mentally present. Likewise, participation involves both speaking and listening, and should demonstrate clear engagement with both discussion and readings. Avoid using cell phones/ laptops in class unless for class-related activities, and be sure that your contributions to class discussion are relevant to the material being discussed.

**A Note on Respect**

Some of the materials in this course may evoke strong reactions based on your personal beliefs or experiences. It is important to remember that we all come to this space from different backgrounds, and we must maintain a respectful and professional environment at all times. This means that no one is discriminated against for any reason, including but not limited to race, class, gender, sexual orientation, ability, age, and religion. Moreover, some of the materials on this course may present you with information that is incongruent with your own beliefs. For this reason, it is important that we engage with ideas and concepts in such a way that both our tone and diction remain respectful.

You will not be assessed based on your personal beliefs or experiences, but you **must** be respectful of those of others and mindful of the existence of opposing views and demonstrate understandings of the texts and issues being considered.

**University Policies**

- Students in this course are expected to conform to the Code of Student Behaviour.
- **Accommodations:** Lakehead University is committed to achieving full accessibility for persons with disabilities. Part of this commitment includes arranging academic accommodations for students with disabilities to ensure they have an equitable opportunity to participate in all of their academic activities. If you think you may need accommodations, you are strongly encouraged to contact Student Accessibility Services (SAS)\(^3\) and register as early as possible.
- This course outline is available online through the English Department homepage\(^4\) and/or the Desire2Learn\(^5\) site for the course.

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\(^3\) [http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca](http://studentaccessibility.lakeheadu.ca)

\(^4\) [https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english](https://www.lakeheadu.ca/academics/departments/english)

\(^5\) [https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/d2l/home](https://lakeheadu.desire2learn.com/d2l/home)