

# World Literature: Near and Far

ENGL 224-005: WORLD LITERATURE IN ENGLISH  
UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA | Term 2 Winter 2018



Robert Delaunay, 1912-1913, Premier Disque, 134 cm (52.7 inches) Private collection. Image credit: Wikimedia.

## Contact Info

Prof. Judith Paltin

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## Vital Info

- Course meets: MWF from 2-2:50 in **BUCH B213**
- My office hours: W 11:30-1:30 and by appointment

## Course Description

World literature as a category assumes that texts travel beyond their designated home in the world to be read “elsewhere.” This course will give students an opportunity to critique the designations of world literature and its accompanying cultural and political frameworks. What are “home” and “away” in the context of world literature? Who is the ideal reader of world literature? Where does world literature situate exilic, diasporic, transnational, or polylingual writers? How does it represent a global popular? What forces structure the markets, circulations, and exchanges of world literature? We will study case histories, debates around framing narratives, and current issues of controversy, reading theoretical voices along with participants and dissidents. The course will also extend your abilities to pull together and analyze research sources, to organize and support sound and interesting arguments, and to revise and edit for clarity and tone.

## Book List

1. Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*
2. Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*
3. Ahmed Saadawi: *Frankenstein in Baghdad*
4. Mahasweta Devi: *Imaginary Maps*
5. Jean Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea*
6. Ken Saro-Wiwa: *Sozaboy*
7. Some briefer materials will be available on Canvas and distributed in class.

## What You Will Do

In this course, you will read and analyze a range of writing which will give you the opportunity to identify, compare, explain and discuss various aspects and issues of literary criticism, postcolonial, gender/sexuality and cultural theory, and historical materials.

Requirements consist of class attendance and participation, two brief interventions (entries of at least 200 words) in an online discussion forum, a research paper, and a final exam. We will follow the Department of English attendance policy, which you may read at: <http://english.ubc.ca/resources/resources-for-students/#attendance>. The same webpage also details the department’s agreed-upon marking standards for your reference. Please know that “Religious observance may preclude attending classes or examinations at certain times. In accordance with the UBC Policy on Religious Holidays, students who wish to be accommodated for religious reasons must notify their instructors in writing at least two weeks in advance, and preferably earlier” (UBC Policy on Academic Concession).

20% Attendance and participation, including two online entries, evaluated holistically

40% Research essay (proposal and preparatory bibliography, 5%; final draft 35%)

40% Final examination

All of the major assignments are required, i.e., in order to pass the course, you must submit work in each of these categories. I will be available in office hours or by appointment for individual conferences about your papers or other course-related matters as you may wish.

The course adheres to the university's strict rule against plagiarism. If you represent the words, productions or ideas of anyone else as your own, you become subject to the disciplinary processes of the university concerning plagiarism, and may fail the course or be expelled from the university. If you have any questions about what counts as plagiarism, please ask me (before you submit the assignment).

Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day of lateness, and no papers will be accepted more than a week late unless they are accompanied by a memo from Arts Advising or a medical note. I do not accept computer breakdowns or accidental file deletions as excusing emergencies—you should frequently back up your work to a cloud account or flash drive, so that you can upload it to the assignment page on time from any connected device.

## Course Schedule

Jan 2 – Course Introduction

Jan 4 –Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 7 – Gail Ching-Liang Low: “The Natural Artist: Publishing Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* in Postwar Britain,” *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 9 – *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 11 – *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 14 – Tim Parks, “The Nobel Prize for Literature Is a Scandal All by Itself,” Claire Armitstead: “Awards for women, writers of colour, small presses – why are there so many books prizes?” *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 16 – *All I Asking for Is My Body*

Jan 18 – Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*

Jan 21 – Shu-Mei Shih, “Global Literature,” *Midaq Alley*

Jan 23 – *Midaq Alley*

Jan 25 – *Midaq Alley*

Jan 28 – Arjun Appadurai “The Production of Locality,” *Midaq Alley*

Jan 30 – *Midaq Alley* - **Intervention #1 due**

Feb 1 – Ahmed Saadawi: *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 4 – Partha Chatterjee : excerpts from “Nationalism as a Problem,” *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 6 – *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 8 – *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 11 – Frantz Fanon “On National Culture,” *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 13 – *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

Feb 15 – Mahasweta Devi: *Imaginary Maps*

**Feb 18- 22 - No class: Reading Week**

Feb 25 – Gayatri Spivak’s introduction to Devi’s *Imaginary Maps*, *Imaginary Maps*

Feb 27 – *Imaginary Maps*

Mar 1 – *Imaginary Maps*

Mar 4 – Spivak: excerpts from “Can the Subaltern Speak?” *Imaginary Maps*

Mar 6 – *Imaginary Maps* - **Intervention #2 due**

Mar 8 – Jean Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Mar 11 – Naoki Sakai: "Translation," *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Mar 13 – *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Mar 15 – *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Mar 18 – *Wide Sargasso Sea* - **Preparatory paper précis (=summary) and bibliography due**

Mar 20 – Ken Saro-Wiwa: *Sozaboy*

Mar 22– *Sozaboy*

Mar 25 – Michael North, “Rotten English,” *Sozaboy*

Mar 27 – *Sozaboy*

Mar 29 – *Sozaboy*

Apr 1 – Edward Said: "Reflections on Exile," *Sozaboy*

Apr 3 – Course wrap-up

**Final paper due**

Exam period Apr 8-26 - **Final examination, TBA**

## Please Also Know

Our classroom space is intended to be welcoming, inclusive, and respectful in its interactions, and I request that you self-monitor your own contributions for civility (including off-topic phone or computer use). Readings, discussions, and class materials may reference mature themes, violence, sexuality, or conflictual subject matter. If you feel you do not wish to read one of the assigned texts because it may significantly distress you, please see me well in advance of the assigned reading’s due date to request a substitute reading assignment; if we cannot agree on an appropriate substitution, you may be obliged to follow the original schedule of readings to complete the course.

There is a student Writing Centre with coaching available in the Chapman Learning Commons in Barber: please see <http://learningcommons.ubc.ca/tutoring-studying/writing/> for more information. Anyone with a documented disability is gently encouraged to contact the Access and Diversity Office in Brock Hall, 1203- 1874 East Mall (tel. 604.822.5844) for accommodations and support services. Other helpful programs are the academic services described at <http://students.ubc.ca/success>, and UBC Counselling Services tel. 604.822.3811 or, after hours, for anyone in distress, the Vancouver Crisis Line, tel. 800.784.2433. I am a resource person with UBC’s Positive Space Campaign. As its website announces, “the Positive Space Campaign is an initiative intended to help make UBC more receptive to and welcoming of its lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans\* (transgender, transsexual, trans-identified), two-spirit, queer, questioning, intersex and asexual (LGBT\*TQIA+) communities, individuals and issues of sexual and gender diversity on campus.” If you would like more information about this campaign, or to be put in touch with campus resources, please feel free to talk to me, or to contact the Equity and Inclusion Office in Brock Hall, tel. 604.822.6353.