

# WORLD LITERATURE IN ENGLISH: Near and Far



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

**Course description:** World literature as a field assumes that books travel beyond their designated home to introduce new readers to all the people with whom we share the world. As a set of practices, it creates an opportunity to critique how its categories were assigned in the first place. Who is the ideal reader of a literature from “everywhere?” Who benefits from the markets and exchanges of world literature? In this second-year English literature course, we will read novels, stories, and poems, case histories and debates, listening to the theoretical voices of world literature along with participants and dissidents.

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## LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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UBC's Point Grey Campus is located on the traditional, ancestral, occupied, and unceded territory of the xwməθkwəyəm (Musqueam) people. I acknowledge the land rights of the Musqueam people, who for millennia have passed on in their culture, history, and traditions from one generation to the next on this site.

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## COURSE INFORMATION

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Course Title	Course Code Number	Credit Value
World Literature in English	ENGL 224 001	3 credits

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## PREREQUISITES

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Second-year standing and 3 credits from one of (a) 100-level ENGL or (b) [ARTS 001](#) or (c) [ASTU 100](#) or (d) [ASTU 101](#) or (e) [WRDS 150](#) or (f) [WRDS 350](#). Prerequisites must be met by the first day of class or students will be withdrawn.

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## CONTACT INFO

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Course Instructor(s)	Contact Details	Office Location	Office Hours
Prof. Judith Paltin	judith.paltin@ubc.ca	BUTO 502	M 1-3 pm and by appointment.

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## COURSE INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT

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My preferred pronouns are she/her or they/them. I am an assistant professor of English at UBC in Vancouver, Canada, and earned my Ph.D. in 2013 from the University of California, Santa Barbara. At UBC, I supervise research and teach courses in modern Anglophone literature, modernist studies and critical and cultural theory. I am passionate about teaching English courses that are meaningful and truly interesting to you, that give you questions to ponder, methods of thinking, and ideas to carry forward into your next endeavors. The quickest way to reach me is by email, and even when away, I will try to respond within 48 hours. If you haven't heard from me by then, please kindly let me know I somehow missed your communication.

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## COURSE STRUCTURE AND VITAL INFORMATION

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This course meets MWF from 12-12:50 pm in BUCH-B 313, and for a final exam at a time and place to be scheduled by UBC. This will be announced to you through your Student Service Centre account and in class.

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## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

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The reading schedule shows you which readings we will be discussing each day. For the longer books, I will not expect you to have finished the book the first day we spend with it, but try to finish it as soon

as you can. You should aim to read 30-50 or more pages per day for this course (30-60 minutes or a bit more). Some days you might read more, and some days less... this is my estimate of an average which will provide you with several days off per week. It is infinitely better to finish the current book and THEN take your days off, rather than the other way around. The faster you complete the reading, the better you can participate in discussions and the more you will understand lecture materials. Theoretical readings have fewer pages, but take longer to think about and digest, so please don't try to skim them. Poems take the longest to read, because they demand both thought and "just sitting with them for awhile."

### **INTRODUCTORY: WORLD LITERATURE AS A CONCEPT**

**Sep 4 Course introduction.** Louise Bennett, "Colonisation in Reverse" [Canvas LOCR and on slides in class]. Constantine Cavafy, "Waiting for the Barbarians."

**Sep 6** Martin Puchner, "Readers of the World, Unite!" (available on Canvas under the Library Online Course Reserves tab (LOCR). You might also find it online.) Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*

**Sep 9** Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*

**Sep 11** Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*

**Sep 13** Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body*

**Sep 16** Concepts of World Literature: this pdf containing various excerpts from writers and theorists is available on Canvas in the Library Online Course Reserves (LOCR).

**Sep 18** Shu-Mei Shih, "Global Literature." Jamaica Kinkaid, "Girl."

### **ORIGINS, ENCOUNTERS, OTHERINGS**

**Sep 20** Mahasweti Devi: "The Hunt." Gayatri Spivak, from "Introduction" in *Imaginary Maps*.

**Sep 30** Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman: A Play*

**Oct 2** *Death and the King's Horseman: A Play*

**Oct 4** *Death and the King's Horseman: A Play*.

### **THE PRODUCTION OF LOCALITY**

**Oct 7** Michael North, "Ken Saro-Wiwa's *Sozaboy*: The Politics of Rotten English."

**Oct 9** *Citizen 13660*: The Art of Miné Okubo (lecture with slides—no reading. You should begin reading the Appadurai article for Friday instead.)

**Oct 11** Arjun Appadurai "The Production of Locality."

**Oct 14 Thanksgiving--NO CLASS MEETING**

### **NATIONALISM AS A PROBLEM**

**Oct 16** Edward Said: "Reflections on Exile"

**Oct 18 INSTRUCTOR AWAY AT CONFERENCE.** Expect a substitute teacher or activity. Begin reading Ahmed Saadawi, *Frankenstein in Baghdad*.

**Oct 21** 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?"

**Oct 23** *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

**Oct 25** *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

**Oct 28 Midterm exam (during class meeting)**

**Oct 30** *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

**Nov 1** *Frankenstein in Baghdad*

### **CULTURAL TRANSLATION AND OTHER TRANSLATIONS**

**Nov 4** Jean Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Nov 6** *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Nov 8** *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Nov 11 Remembrance Day--NO CLASS MEETING**

**Nov 13** *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Nov 15 INSTRUCTOR AWAY AT CONFERENCE. Expect a substitute teacher or activity.**

### **HOME AND AWAY/ NEAR AND FAR**

**Nov 18** *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Nov 20** Naoki Sakai: "Translation."

**Nov 22** Tadeusz Borowski, "This Way for the Gas, Ladies and Gentlemen."

**Nov 25** Naguib Mahfouz, "Zaabalawi."

**Nov 27** Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Headstrong Historian."

**Nov 29 Course summary and final exam review**

**Final Exam period: Dec 3- Dec 18.** UBC typically issues an exam schedule around late October.

**Important note:** From time to time, for additional learning opportunities and enrichment, **I introduce other materials during class meetings** which you don't need to read ahead of class, and which may not be listed in the reading schedule, but which you will be expected to remember and understand. I will post lecture slides on Canvas when available, but I assure you the slides cannot replace class attendance.

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### **LEARNING OUTCOMES**

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Upon successful completion of this class students will be able to:

- Explain the cultural and political significance of major works of fiction, poetry, drama, and other media by 20<sup>th</sup>- and 21<sup>st</sup>-century writers with origins and kinship relations outside of Britain and North America that reflect postcolonial, diasporic, feminist, and critical race concerns, among other matters at issue.
- Engage with varieties of textual studies that take account of differential identities and ideations of citizenship and human and land rights, referencing contemporary and historical instances of politicized speech and writing in contexts that are often very culturally complex.
- Identify and integrate into their own research appropriate research sources and methods, and critically evaluate the scholarly quality of research sources.
- Evaluate and participate in lines of argument and critique relating to cultural translation and theories about world literature as a field by cultural theorists and stakeholders of diverse origins.

- Recognize and interpret activist modes of reading and expression.
- Think beyond traditional nation- and period-defined fields of literary and cultural classification.

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### LEARNING ACTIVITIES

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In this course, you will read and analyze a range of writing from regions outside of Britain and North America which will give you the opportunity to identify, define, compare, explain and discuss various aspects and issues of social, political, and literary criticism, postcolonial, gender/sexuality and cultural theory, and historical materials. Our activities include close readings and analysis, lectures providing contextual and background information, library and media research, theoretical discussions, discussions of controversies and issues, and writing activities.

During lectures, you should listen carefully, and think about the material as you take notes, adding your own ideas and connections where you can. I welcome a conversational style during class, with lots of interaction among all of us. If I am talking, feel free to intervene with questions and contributions. Your own curious and imaginative contributions are always welcome in class, as long as you are not talking over other people, failing to share class time fairly, or taking the class too far away from the day's assigned topics for an extended period. Barring that, please explore your venturesome side!

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### LEARNING MATERIALS

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Milton Murayama: *All I Asking for Is My Body* ISBN: 9780824811723 (U Hawaii Press), est. \$14  
Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman: A Play* ISBN: 9780393977615 (Norton), est. \$15  
Ahmed Saadawi: *Frankenstein in Baghdad* ISBN: 9780143128793 (Penguin), est. \$16  
Jean Rhys: *Wide Sargasso Sea* ISBN: 9780393960129 (Norton Critical Edition), est. \$15

Other course materials will be supplied at no charge on Canvas.

Cost estimates are gathered from publishers' websites when available, or from online booksellers; you may be able to pay less online or by buying a used copy. If necessary, you can use a different edition. Not all books have a scholarly critical edition in print, but when you can, please try to select one, such as the one I have recommended here for *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

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### ASSESSMENTS OF LEARNING

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Requirements consist of class attendance and participation, two brief reading responses (minimum 250 words each), an in class midterm exam, an analytical research paper (with preparatory plan), and a final exam during UBC's exam period.

10% Classroom discussion, attendance and participation, evaluated holistically. An attendance sheet will be circulated at the beginning of each class for students to sign-in. No late sign-ins will be allowed for arrivals after 12:30 pm (>halfway through the class period).

10% Two reading responses, 250 words minimum each.

20% Midterm exam. An in-class close-reading essay, passage identification and analysis, and short answer questions.

35% Research essay. This at-home essay of 1800-2200 words will include a library research component (two professional-level secondary sources) and an analysis component (close reading and interpretation or critical analysis). You will prepare and submit a brief prospectus and preliminary bibliography for partial grade credit before drafting the paper.

25% Final examination. A 2.5 hour in-class exam including an essay (a list of potential topics will be circulated ahead of the exam), passage identification and analysis, and short answer questions. The UBC exam schedule for the term is usually published in late October. Please do not schedule your holiday departure from Vancouver until you know when your exams are scheduled.

All of the major assignments are required, i.e., in order to pass the course, you must submit work in each of these categories. A general writing rubric and assignment prompts will be supplied on Canvas. Your written work for this course should take up a critical question or issue of concern to the course (in some cases, specific topics may be assigned), and offer a focused, well-reasoned discussion with reference to a primary course-assigned text, in MLA or Chicago citation style. You may also choose to include real-world examples from high-quality journalistic or historical sources around an issue of concern to the course, or some other form of case study.

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## UNIVERSITY POLICIES

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The following statement is composed by and mandated to appear in the syllabus by the UBC Academic Senate in support of **Senate Policy V-130**.

UBC provides resources to support student learning and to maintain healthy lifestyles but recognizes that sometimes crises arise and so there are additional resources to access including those for survivors of sexual violence. UBC values respect for the person and ideas of all members of the academic community. Harassment and discrimination are not tolerated nor is suppression of academic freedom. UBC provides appropriate accommodation for students with disabilities and for religious observances. UBC values academic honesty and students are expected to acknowledge the ideas generated by others and to uphold the highest academic standards in all of their actions.

Details of the policies and how to access support are available on [the UBC Senate website](#).

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## OTHER COURSE POLICIES

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Our classroom space is intended to be warmly welcoming, enriching, and respectful in all its interactions. I request that you kindly self-monitor your own contributions for civility, including off-topic phone or computer use. Tuning out during class affects other people's experience and takes away from your own impact and learning.

The following policy is adapted from resources and ideas originated by Prof. Koritha Mitchell, @ProfKori: This classroom will be free of hate speech regarding sexual orientation, gender expression, race, ethnicity, national origin, and socio-economic status or background. Students may suggest additions to this list which the class will discuss whether to adopt. This policy means that words that

are slurs such as the N-word or F-word won't be used in this class by any person, even when it appears in our texts and we are quoting the passage. Instead we will substitute the name of the first letter of the word. Dr. Mitchell points out that we can be responsibly and deeply engaged with texts and materials which contain these slurs without "giving them life with our breath" in our learning space.

Readings, discussions, and class materials may reference mature themes, violence, sexual matters, or conflictual ideas (this is a "content warning"). 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.

Please be advised that study at university-level is more than knowing a collection of facts, and class attendance and participation are crucial to developing your academic skills at this level. We will follow the Department of English **attendance policy**, which you may read at:

<http://english.ubc.ca/resources/resources-for-students/#attendance>. 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" (UBC Policy on Academic Concession).

The same webpage ("Resources for Students") also details the English department's agreed-upon marking standards for your reference.

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 face a disciplinary process. 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 excuse. 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.

Students may record in class for personal study purposes only, and may not share any portion of their recordings with any other person not currently enrolled in the course nor upload them to any online platform.

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## LEARNING ANALYTICS

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This course will be using the following learning technologies: Canvas. This tool captures data about your activity and provides information that can be used to improve the quality of teaching and learning. In this course, I plan to use analytics data to:

- View overall class progress
- Track your progress in order to provide you with personalized feedback
- Review statistics on course content being accessed to support improvements in the course
- Track participation in discussion forums

- Assess your participation in the course

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### LEARNING AND OTHER SUPPORT RESOURCES

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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.

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### COPYRIGHT

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All original materials of this course (course handouts, lecture slides, assessments, curation of course readings, etc.) are the intellectual property of the course Instructor. Redistribution of these materials by any means without permission of the copyright holder(s) constitutes a breach of copyright and may lead to academic discipline.

*Finis.*