WORLD CULTURES - UN1002.OA.101
Summer 2008, Room 100 EERC, MTWR 8:05-9:20am

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

"The very process of constructing a narrative for oneself—of telling a story—imposes a certain linearity and coherence that is never entirely there. But that is the lesson, perhaps, especially for us immigrants and migrants; i.e., that home, community and identity all fall somewhere between the histories and experiences we inherit and the political choices we make through alliances, solidarities and friendships.” —Chandra Talpade Mohanty

What is culture? Where is it found? How is it consumed? By whom? What sense or meaning does it make? How do we experience and communicate other cultures? How do those other cultures experience and communicate us? How can we become more mindful border crossers in a world where different languages, ideologies, religions, political systems, and philosophies compete, cooperate, mingle, meld, and transform? Through the exploration into these and other questions, students can expect to develop a better understanding of their location and/or dislocation in a complex world, to gain new insights into the nature of contemporary world issues, and to better understand and experience expressions of difference.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Ayaan Hirsi Ali. Infidel.
Jhumpa Lahiri. The Namesake.
Words Without Borders, editors. Literature from the Axis of Evil.

INSTRUCTOR INFORMATION

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EXPECTATIONS & GRADING

First, simple & straightforward, fulfill your responsibilities, seldom early & never late. Attend class & visit office hours, complete all assignments in & out of class on deadline, read, take notes, participate, be engaged & be engaging. Late assignments will not be accepted & no coursework can be made up without written documentation from the Dean of Students Office.
Second, please bear in mind that integrity & ethics are central to any community searching for truth. Anything less than total commitment to integrity & ethics undermines the efforts of the entire community. Every member is responsible. Every member is culpable. Be kind. Be honest. Be curious. Be adventurous. Work hard. Leave the campground better than you found it. Those who cannot keep the compact will be asked to leave.

Third, in terms of access, Michigan Tech encourages ALL qualified persons to participate in its programs & activities. If you anticipate needing any type of accommodation in this course or have questions about physical access, please contact Prof. Seigel as soon as possible &/or visit the Office of Student Affairs or phone 487-2951.

Fourth, concerning grading, students can expect the following:

A (4) = Excellent. Student exceeded all course expectations.
A/B (3.5) = Very good. Student exceeded most course expectations, but not all.
B (3) = Good. Student met all course expectations, exceeding many.
B/C (2.5) = Above average. Student met all course expectations, exceeding some.
C (2) = Average. Student met all course expectations.
C/D (1.5) = Below average. Student met some, but not all course expectations.
D (1) = Inferior. Student met few course expectations.
F (0) = Failure. Student met very few to none of the course expectations.

COURSEWORK

Attendance & Participation (25%): Engage. Come to class every day, on time, prepared, & take part thoughtfully & conscientiously. Sit in your assigned seat as attendance will be taken daily. I reserve the right to fail students who amass more than three unexcused absences (only excuses documented through the Dean of Students Office are accepted). Attend all assigned films. Attend all assigned outside events. Attend films. Meet your deadlines, all of which are final & cannot be made up unless accompanied by documentation from the Dean of Students Office. Read daily, in small bites & stay current. Take notes. Visit office hours. Be a human being.

Weekly Quizzes (25%): There will be a 15 question quiz every Thursday week starting the first week. Questions will cover all available course materials covered during that week. Quizzes will not be cumulative. Quizzes cannot be made up unless an excuse is documented through the Dean of Students Office.

Film Response Essays (25%): There will be a 6 response essays, due every Monday starting second week. Response papers should be a minimum of 500 words, single spaced. The assignment is to respond, to address in some form, at the least one of the following: What was your reaction to the film shown; how did the film connect to the books we’ve read, to our discussion, to current events, etc.; what did you you learn or what were you exposed to that you previously hadn’t been? Make sure you do a little preparatory research - i.e. express something more than just your own opinion (though that counts, too). Cite your sources -- you should have a minimum of three in every response.

Final Exam (25%): There will be a 100 question final exam. Questions will cover the course materials. The final exam cannot be rescheduled, nor can it be made up unless an excuse is documented through the Dean of Students Office.
COURSE CALENDAR, SUMMER 2008

Week 1
Mon. 06.30: Introduction to the course.
Tue. 07.01: Literature from the Axis of Evil.
Wed. 07.02: Literature from the Axis of Evil. Film 6pm - TBA.
Thu. 07.03: Literature from the Axis of Evil. Quiz.

Week 2
Mon. 07.07: Literature from the Axis of Evil. Response 1 Due.
Tue. 07.08: Literature from the Axis of Evil.
Wed. 07.09: Infidel. Film, 6pm - TBA.
Thu. 07.10: Infidel. Quiz.

Week 3
Mon. 07.14: Infidel. Response 2 Due.
Tue. 07.15: Infidel.
Wed. 07.16: Infidel. Film, 6pm - TBA.
Thu. 07.17: The Namesake. Quiz.

Week 4
Mon. 07.21: The Namesake. Response 3 Due.
Tue. 07.22: The Namesake.
Wed. 07.23: The Namesake. Film, 6pm - The Namesake.

Week 5
Tue. 07.29: A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier.
Wed. 07.30: A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier. Film, 6pm - Hotel Rwanda.

Week 6
Mon. 08.04: A Long Way Gone: Memoirs of a Boy Soldier. Response 5 Due.
Tue. 08.05: A Thousand Splendid Suns.
Wed. 08.06: A Thousand Splendid Suns. Film, 6pm - The Kite Runner.
Thu. 08.07: A Thousand Splendid Suns. Quiz.

Week 7
Mon. 08.11: A Thousand Splendid Suns. Response 6 Due.
Tue. 08.12: A Thousand Splendid Suns.
Wed. 08.13: Film in class - TBA.
Thu. 08.14: Film in class - TBA.
Fri. 08.15: Final Exam.