A Survey of Border Crossings
Fisher 15 – 125
M,W,F 10:05 – 10:55

Course Description:
Often, when we think of borders, we think of our own borders and those who exist beyond them. We may mean geographical borders, like the United States, the Western Hemisphere, or specifically, of Eurocentric origins. The reality is, today it is necessary to define borders because of technology and a rapidly growing global market. What thoughts pop into your head when you think of borders? Why? In this class we will discuss a few categories of borders and crossing over to “the other side.” What does literature, music, art, and film have to teach us about constructing and cultivating borders? And what does it tell us about the advantages and consequences of existing beyond them? How can we think about borders in new ways that reflect a changing global perspective?

Questions:
Why, if virtual reality affords us to move beyond geographical borders, do I have to think about… well… borders?

Do I have a border that I would like to exist beyond? Do I have a border that I would like to strengthen? Why do I feel this way?

How can I understand the different types of borders other people create, why and how?

Required Readings:
The Epic of Gilgamesh
The Story of Job (Blackboard)
Montaigne, “That To Study Philosophy is to Learn to Die” (Blackboard)
Gustave Flaubert, Madame Bovary
Toni Morrison, The Bluest Eye
Frank Chin, Donald Duk
Alejo Carpentier, The Lost Steps
Malidoma Some, Of Water and the Spirit

Web Links: (You can also access these sites from WebCT under “Web Links”
The Book of Job:
Montaigne:

You are required to place all of your work on a flash drive purchased for this class, only.
Film:
*I, the Worst of All*

Grading:
Class journals – 25%
Mid-semester paper – 25%
Final paper – 25%
Presentation – 25%

Course Writing Requirements:
Following each text listed on the syllabus, students are required to submit a single page, typed, double-spaced response to the material. This can be a critique of the work or a development of the ideas put forth by the author. You should be able to demonstrate that you read the work and can apply meaningful connections that enhance comprehension. The best responses are those that can pose a question or extract a question from the themes and subject matter touched upon by the author.

A mid-semester paper will be assigned. This five page, typed, double-spaced paper will focus on one or two texts (film included) that best illustrate a particular question you are interested in exploring. Your thesis must state the question and why the selected texts address the problems or concerns implied.

A final paper will be assigned. This ten page, typed, double-spaced paper connects to your mid-semester paper, in that it approaches the questions from a different angle and using secondary resources to support your work. Thus, this paper challenges the student to take an idea or a thought further. It can be a research paper, but it can also be a creative essay, which will be discussed in class.

Course Presentations:
At the end of the semester, students are required to present their work to the class. Students will have 10 minutes to speak, show clips, and share images that reflect the thesis questions in their mid-semester and final papers. The presentation should be tailored for oral delivery. Students are also required to schedule a time to discuss a paper outline of their presentation at least 2 weeks before they present to the class.

Class requirements:
Your attendance is required. After three absences, you will lose points from your final grade in the class. No absences are allowed on days scheduled for presentations.

Plagiarism will be reported to the Dean of Students so carefully document any sources you use for your presentations.

All assignments must be completed for a final grade.
This is a discussion class so your participation is necessary. I will informally monitor your participation and give you written comments on the quality of your contributions before the end of the semester.

I would like to make this class most useful for you so I encourage you to contact me about any questions or suggestions. In addition, please see me about any particular accommodations in accordance with MTU's ADA policy: MTU complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). If you have a disability and need a reasonable accommodation for equal access to education or services at MTU, please call Dr. Gloria Melton, Associate Dean of Students (7-2212). For other concerns about discrimination, you may contact your advisor, department head, or the Affirmative Action office (7-3310).

Course Schedule:
Week 1 (September 3-5)
W Introduction
F Epic of Gilgamesh

Week 2 (September 8-12)
M Epic of Gilgamesh
W Epic of Gilgamesh
F Epic of Gilgamesh

Week 3 (September 15-19)
M Story of Job
W Story of Job
F Story of Job

Week 4 (September 22-26)
M Story of Job
W Story of Job
F Montaigne

Week 5 (September 29-October 3)
M Film: I, the Worst of All
W Film: I, the Worst of All
F Madame Bovary

Week 6 (October 6-10)
M Madame Bovary
W Madame Bovary
F Madame Bovary

Week 7 (October 13-17)
M Madame Bovary
W Madame Bovary
Week 8 (October 20-24)
M The Bluest Eye
W The Bluest Eye
F The Bluest Eye

Week 9 (October 27-31)
M The Bluest Eye
W The Bluest Eye
F Donald Duk

Week 10 (November 3-7)
M Donald Duk
W Donald Duk
F Donald Duk

Week 11 (November 10-14)
M Donald Duk
W Water and Spirit
F Water and Spirit

Week 12 (November 17-21)
M Water and Spirit
W Water and Spirit
F Water and Spirit

Week 13 (Thanksgiving Break)

Week 14 (December 1-5)
M Water and Spirit
W Presentation
F Presentation

Week 15 (December 8-12)
M Presentation
W Presentation
F Conclusion