HU 3545 Literature Across Borders (Summer 2015) (Online)

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Course Description and Goals:
What is literature across borders? How do we understand the notion of the border in a literary context? How do we read such a literature? How do literary texts from beyond the “borders” we live in challenge us, appeal to us, speak to us and ultimately enrich us, to the point of deepening our knowledge of ourselves and our understanding of our own history, culture and identity?

This course brings together acclaimed writers of our time to engage students on what is local, topical or universal in our human condition. It is designed with the primary goal of providing participants with exposure to literary texts that they are unlikely to be familiar with. The course will primarily focus on novels, and it is through this medium and genre that we will explore the idea of border crossing. Taking the border as a dynamic and polysemic notion, the course seeks to explore the ways in which besides being artifacts, literary texts also produce valuable knowledge about others, and us.

Required Resources:
Canvas<http://www.courses.mtu.edu>
Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place, New York, Farrar, Straus, Giroux, 1988
Gabriel Garcia Márquez, No One Writes to the Colonel, New York, Perennial Classics, 2005

Weekly assigned secondary readings are organized into folders in “Files”, while web links may be found in “Pages”.*
**Policy & Participation:**
This class is taught on Canvas. Because success in this course is based on active engagement with the text and interaction between class participants in an online forum, you are expected to complete all readings and assignments in a timely manner, in order to effectively participate in the class, and contribute to the mutually beneficial virtual learning community that the instructors seek to foster. Please note that late submissions and other participations will affect your performance and your overall grade. If you anticipate not having access to the internet at some point, plan ahead of time, and contact me to discuss arrangements made to insure continue participation in the class.

**Homework**
Homework is assigned weekly, and will include the primary texts, additional reading as well as materials from other sources relevant to the topics explored. Homework will include tests or quizzes, essays and short written assignments, interactive assignments such as discussion board, and viewing/listening and comprehension activities, etc. Some of these assignments will be P/N while others will be graded. Always save electronic copies of your works for future reference, or in case you need to resubmit something. Check Canvas regularly for information and updates about the readings and assignments.

**Discussion Board**
I expect you to read the texts reflectively, and demonstrate ability to comprehend or analyze them beyond merely summarizing. In your reflections, avoid simplistic and superficial statements limited to expressing likes/dislikes. This means when appropriate, your response must demonstrate an attentive reading, a clear awareness of the issues/questions explored, and of their complexities. Students’ output should show a control of the topic explored, significance, depth and coherence of arguments in their responses.

When participating in the class forum, participants must demonstrate a critical engagement in the course, and are expected to respond to their peers’ posts. Needless to say, such interactions should be respectful and conducted in a spirit of collaboration.

**Communication with class**
I will read all submitted works, and provide feedback in a timely manner. I will monitor discussions, and provide feedback or intervene when necessary. I will either respond to the class, or send individual feedback.

**Recommendations**
Show some enthusiasm and be patient, because literary texts don’t lend themselves to our intellect the same way as other artifacts do. Don’t be concerned about sounding stupid. Contact me immediately if you are experiencing difficulties. **Appointments** may be made to chat or skype with me. Allow a 24-hour response time.
**Course Requirements:**

Introduction and Feedback P/N  25 pts
4 multiple-choice short-quiz every other week  50 pts
2 short essays (20+30)  50 pts
2 2-paragraph written assignments  25 pts
Discussion forum P/N (x4)  50 pts

**Note:** Late submissions are discouraged. Contact instructor if you anticipate a late submission

**Grading Scale:**

A =  94-100
AB=  88-93
B=  84-87
BC=  78-83
C=  74-77
CD=  68-73
D=  60-67

**Grading Standards for Formal Essays In General:**
Complexity and range of analysis, significance of conclusions, logic and coherence of arguments, etc. are the focus of my grading. However, rhetorical development and writing style are inseparable from these features.

Essays should be free of spelling and grammatical errors. Use the spelling and grammar checkers on Microsoft Word before you print your final draft of the essay. Note that the spelling checker will not catch homonyms used out of context. Also note that since the grammar checker is designed for business writing it will suggest that you change some sentences and phrases (because they are long, for instance) that are quite acceptable for academic analysis.

**Academic Integrity**

Taking the work of others and passing it off as your own is academic theft and will be punishable by failing the assignment/course or dismissal from school. Cases of plagiarism will be turned over to the Dean of Students' Office. See details about Michigan Tech’s Academic Integrity definitions, policies, and enforcement procedures at [http://www.sa.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/airc/](http://www.sa.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/airc/) and [http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html](http://www.studentaffairs.mtu.edu/dean/judicial/policies/academic_integrity.html).

**University Policies**

Student work products (exams, essays, projects, etc.) may be used for purposes of university, program, or course assessment. All work used for assessment purposes will not include any individual student identification.

Michigan Tech has standard policies on academic misconduct and complies with all federal and state laws and regulations regarding discrimination, including the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990. For more information about reasonable accommodation for or equal access to education or services at Michigan Tech, please call the Dean of Students Office, at [906] 487-2212 or go to [http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructional-resources/syllabus/syllabus-policies](http://www.mtu.edu/ctl/instructional-resources/syllabus/syllabus-policies).
**Synopsis of course**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week</th>
<th>Theme and Primary texts</th>
<th>Videos Files*</th>
<th>Works Due</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 May 11</td>
<td><strong>Approaching literature across borders: Literary and historical backgrounds</strong>&lt;br&gt;Post-Civil War Colombia: <em>No One Writes to the Colonel</em> pp 3-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Individual Introduction</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 May 18</td>
<td><em>No One Writes to the Colonel</em> pp 31-End</td>
<td>“García Márquez: A Witch Writing”</td>
<td>Discussion Board 1 Mini-quiz 1</td>
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<td>3 May 25</td>
<td><strong>Post-Apartheid South Africa: <em>Disgrace</em></strong>&lt;br&gt;Chapter 1-8</td>
<td>“Land Wars – South-Africa”</td>
<td>Mini-quiz 2 2-Paragraph Assignment 1</td>
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<td>4 June 1</td>
<td><strong>Reflections on borders</strong>*&lt;br&gt;<em>Disgrace</em> Chapter 20-End</td>
<td>“Witness To Apartheid”</td>
<td>Discussion Board 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 June 8</td>
<td><strong>The border within: <em>Identity</em></strong>&lt;br&gt;Chapter 1-30</td>
<td></td>
<td>Short-essay 1</td>
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<td>6 June 15</td>
<td><strong>Colonialism and its legacy</strong>*&lt;br&gt;<em>A Small Place</em> Page 3-37</td>
<td>“The civilizing mission”</td>
<td>2-Paragraph Assignment 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7 June 22</td>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong></td>
<td>“Touristic paradises”</td>
<td>Discussion Board 4 Mini-quiz 4</td>
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**Note:** Assigned readings and other activities are to be covered by dates indicated. All materials pertaining to the course will be made available online. Verify accessibility ahead of time and notify me about any difficulty.

*Links are provided for short online videos. See Files, Announcements, Pages and Assignments on Canvas for additional course materials*

**This syllabus is subject to change at any time for pedagogical and/or unexpected circumstances. You will be notified of such changes if they take place.**