

Ithaca College  
Department of English

ENGL 107  
INTRODUCTION TO LITERATURE

Fall 2009  
Prof. Laura Murphy

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We will discuss ground-breaking works of 20<sup>th</sup> century literature from around the world, exploring a variety of literary genres including fiction, drama, and poetry, as well as memoir and the graphic novel. The primary focus of the course will be to learn the basic foundations of literary analysis, improve close reading practice, and develop writing skills for use across the curriculum. In an attempt to think about the way writers address (in both form and content) the increasing connectedness of the people around the world, we will organize our readings around three very loosely-defined concepts, those of Home, The Road, and Abroad. Questions of what constitutes nation and citizenship, what determines center and periphery, and what encourages, dissuades, and compels the movement of people will help us complicate our notions of home, travel, and migration, while providing a framework from which to utilize the tools of critical literary analysis.

**Required Texts**

Mary Karr, *Liar's Club*  
Pepetela, *The Return of the Water Spirit*  
Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans*  
Suzan-Lori Parks, *Red Letter Plays (In the Blood)*  
Junot Diaz, *The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*  
Toni Morrison, *A Mercy*  
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*  
Sean Tan, *The Arrival*

**Options for obtaining the texts:**

All texts have been ordered at the school bookstore. They should be available immediately for purchase, in both used and new copies. However, I strongly encourage you to buy used books online, which can save you significant money (up to 80 percent even). Amazon.com includes many vendors of used books. But alibris.com, abebooks.com, and powells.com also have an extraordinary number of used books. Shipping can take around a week, so it's best to order them all immediately. If you choose this option, I recommend trying to get the same edition of the book as the one we're using in class. Not having the book will never be considered a valid excuse for not reading.

### **Meetings and Attendance:**

Attendance and participation are integral to a worthwhile educational experience; therefore, they are both required in this course. You are allowed two absences without any explanation. Students missing more than two unexcused class meetings will be severely penalized. Students missing more than five class meetings (the equivalent of two and a half weeks) for any reason **will automatically fail the course**. Participation will comprise 10% of the course grade. Students should expect to contribute something *thoughtful* to *each* class period.

### **Assignments and Grading:**

Students will be required to write two 5-page essays during the semester. There will also be a mid-term and a final exam. There will be frequent pop-quizzes to ensure that students are keeping up with the reading. Improvement is strongly rewarded; as a result, assignments are weighted more heavily as the semester proceeds to encourage steady improvement in writing and intellectual engagement.

Papers are assessed on:

- clarity and organization
- analysis and intellectual engagement
- originality
- precision of argument
- evidence/substantiation
- thoughtful, measured use of sources (when appropriate)
- re-vision

The grading breakdown is as follows:

First Paper	20%
Midterm	15%
Second Paper	25%
Final Exam	20%
Quizzes	10%
Participation	10%

### **Late Paper Policy:**

Papers turned in after the due date will receive a lowered grade. For each day that a paper is late, the grade will be lowered one-third of a grade. Thus, an A paper turned in one day late will receive an A-. Turned in two days late, it will be a B+.

Extensions: Turning papers in on-time is integral to the learning process in this course, as feedback on papers prepares students for more significant engagement in the course and for improvement on future papers. Extensions will be granted *only* in extreme cases, and *must* be requested at least *four* days in advance of the due date to be considered. It is usually better to decide ahead of time to take the grade deduction than to expect an extension. Extensions are *rarely if ever* granted.

**Plagiarism:**

The instructor of this course has no tolerance for plagiarism of any kind. This includes, but is not limited to, copying another student's work, purchasing or in any other way procuring written work from a source online or elsewhere, utilizing published resources either word-for-word or in paraphrase, and misrepresenting the sources used for research. You will be held responsible for knowing, understanding, and complying with the college's plagiarism policy which is copied below. If a student is suspected of plagiarism, they will immediately be referred to the appropriate college authorities and will likely fail the assignment and possibly the course. If you are unclear about plagiarism, please discuss this with the instructor immediately.

Whether intended or not, plagiarism is a serious offense against academic honesty. Under any circumstances, it is deceitful to represent as one's own work, writing or ideas that belong to another person. Students should be aware of how this offense is defined. Plagiarism is the unacknowledged use of someone else's published or unpublished ideas, whether this use consists of directly quoted material or paraphrased ideas. Although various disciplines follow styles of documentation that differ in some details, all forms of documentation make the following demands:

- That each quotation or paraphrase be acknowledged with a footnote or in-text citation;
- That direct quotations be enclosed in quotation marks and be absolutely faithful to the wording of the source;
- That paraphrased ideas be stated in language entirely different from the language of the source;
- That a sequence of ideas identical to that of a source be attributed to that source;
- That sources of reprinted charts or graphs be cited in the text;
- That all the sources the writer has drawn from in paraphrase or direct quotation or a combination of paraphrase and quotation be listed at the end of the paper under "Bibliography," "References," or "Works Cited," whichever heading the particular style of documentation requires.

A student is guilty of plagiarism if the student fails, intentionally or not, to follow any of these standard requirements of documentation.

## SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

1	Aug 27	Introductions/What is close reading?	
<i>Being At Home</i>			
2	Sept 01	Karr, <i>Liar's Club</i> , 1-96	
	Sept 03	Karr, <i>Liar's Club</i> , 97-157	
3	Sept 08	Karr, <i>Liar's Club</i> , 158-247	
	Sept 10	Karr, <i>Liar's Club</i> , 248-320	
4	Sept 15	Pepetela, <i>The Return of the Water Spirit</i> , 1-54	<b>THESIS DUE</b>
	Sept 17	Pepetela, <i>The Return of the Water Spirit</i> , 55-102	
<i>On The Road</i>			
5	Sept 22	Ishiguro, <i>When We Were Orphans</i> 1-81	
	Sept 24	Ishiguro, <i>When We Were Orphans</i> , 82-159	<b>PAPER #1 DUE</b>
6	Sept 29	Ishiguro, <i>When We Were Orphans</i> , 160-245	
	Oct 01	Ishiguro, <i>When We Were Orphans</i> , 246-336	
7	Oct 06	<b>MID-TERM</b>	
	Oct 08	Parks, <i>In the Blood</i> , PG#s	
8	Oct 13	Parks, <i>In the Blood</i> , PG#s	
	Oct 15	<b>FALL BREAK</b>	
9	Oct 20	Diaz, <i>The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> , 1-75	
	Oct 22	Diaz, <i>The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> , 76-165	
10	Oct 27	Diaz, <i>The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> , 166-261	
	Oct 29	Diaz, <i>The Brief, Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao</i> , 262-335	
<i>Living Abroad</i>			
11	Nov 3	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> , 1-100	
	Nov 5	Morrison, <i>A Mercy</i> , 101-165	
12	Nov 10	Smith, <i>White Teeth</i> , 1-70	<b>THESIS DUE</b>
	Nov 12	Smith, <i>White Teeth</i> , 71-152	
13	Nov 17	Smith, <i>White Teeth</i> , 153-217	

Nov 19      Smith, *White Teeth* 218-294

**PAPER #2 DUE**

THANKSGIVING BREAK

14      Dec 01      Smith, *White Teeth*, 295-385  
            Dec 03      Smith, *White Teeth*, 386-448

15      Dec 08      Sean Tan, *The Arrival*, Books I, II & III  
            Dec 09      Sean Tan, *The Arrival*, Books IV, V & VI

**FINAL EXAM**