English 112: World Literature, Modern and Contemporary  
Spring 2014  
TH 2:30-3:50  
Melville Library N3085

Instructor: Katy Johnston  
Office Hours: TH 1:30-2:30 and by appointment  
Office: Humanities 2044  
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Introduction:

This course will explore the formal features and themes of contemporary world literature. We will read across several global literary traditions and discuss the histories of cross-cultural contact and exchange through which those traditions encountered and shaped each other. Central to our discussions will be the experiences of postcolonialism, migration, and immigration, as well as issues of racial, cultural, and linguistic identity. Through close analysis, you will develop original, significant, and persuasive arguments about the novels.

Learning Objectives:

We will be reading non-Western literatures with attention to aesthetic traditions particular to these bodies of literature and awareness of how texts emerge from, respond to and shape historical and cultural contexts. You will learn to read texts closely with attention to nuances of language, content, and form. You will also learn conventions of literary study, including: familiarity with literary terms, genres, devices; knowledge of poetic, dramatic, narrative and rhetorical forms; and some awareness of literary criticism and theory. In every class we will be expected to participate in discussions by listening to others’ perspectives, asking productive questions, and articulating ideas with nuance and clarity. Finally, you will write focused, organized and convincing analytical essays in clear, standardized English prose, making use of feedback from teachers and peers.

Required Texts:

Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place  
Zadie Smith, White Teeth  
Jose Saramago, Blindness  
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, Americanah  
Le Thi Diem Thuy, The Gangster We Are All Looking for  
Mohsin Hamid, How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia

Please bring either a digital or print edition of novels to class on the days when we will be discussing them.
Course Organization and Requirements

**Participation:** You will be asked to complete regular writing assignments, to participate in our online writing community through Blackboard, to contribute to class discussions, and to provide feedback to other students during peer-review sessions. I expect every student to read the texts for the course carefully, give them serious thought, and come to class ready to discuss them. Attendance alone will not earn you full credit for participation.

**Grading:**

Essay 1: 20%
Essay 2: 30%
Response Papers: 20%
Final Exam: 20%
Participation/Quizzes: 10%

**Classroom Etiquette:** To minimize distractions, please turn off your cell phones and put them away during class. Unless you have informed me that you have a family emergency or other specific event that requires you remain reachable, your phone should never be visible. You may use a laptop to take notes, but should not use it for anything else during class. Using your laptop for other purposes during class can be very distracting to other students, so please be respectful of this policy.

**Essay Assignments:** You will write two major analytical essays with original thesis statements supported by close careful readings of the novels. All papers must be typed in 12 point Times New Roman (or equivalent) font, double-spaced, left justified only, with one-inch margins on all sides. A header must appear single spaced in the upper-left corner of your first page, and the header should include your name, the professor’s name, the class title and section, and the date that the essay is due. Every essay should have an original title centered on the first page below the header. Do not underline, italicize, enlarge, or otherwise offset your title. Pages should be numbered at the top-right, and you should include your last name here as well (e.g. “Johnston 2”).

You will submit the final draft of each essay electronically via SafeAssign on Blackboard before class on the day the paper is due. I will not be collecting any paper copies of your final drafts. I will, however, collect one paper copy of your completed draft on the day of peer review.

**Blog Responses:**

You will write thirteen blog entries over the course of the semester that begin with a thesis statement and develop a short but well-reasoned argument about the reading assignment. These entries should be approximately 400-500 words, and should be posted to Blackboard by midnight on the Monday before they are due. Because they are
intended to inform and enrich our class discussions, I ask that you focus your arguments on the pages assigned for that given Tuesday.

**Late Papers:** It is important to stay on top of this workload. Given prior notice, under extraordinary circumstance, I may grant a single extension, but please be sure to check with me first. The drafts for peer review must be completed on time, without exception.

**Academic Integrity:** Each student must pursue his or her academic goals honestly and be personally accountable for all submitted work. Representing another person’s work as your own is always wrong. Faculty are required to report any suspected instance of academic dishonesty to the Academic Judiciary. For more comprehensive information on academic integrity, including categories of academic dishonesty, please refer to the academic judiciary website at [http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/](http://www.stonybrook.edu/uaa/academicjudiciary/)

**DSS Assistance:** If you have a physical, psychological, medical, or learning disability that may impact your course work, please contact Disability Support Services (631) 632-6748 or [http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/](http://studentaffairs.stonybrook.edu/dss/). They will determine with you what accommodations are necessary and appropriate. All information and documentation is confidential. Students who require assistance during emergency evacuation are encouraged to discuss their needs with their professors and Disability Support Services.

**Critical Incident Management:** SBU expects students to respect the rights, privileges, and property of other people. Faculty are required to report to the Office of Judicial Affairs any disruptive behavior that interrupts their ability to teach, compromises the safety of the learning environment, and/or inhibits students’ ability to learn.

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### Course Calendar

Readings are listed on the date they are due.

Please Note: If the University cancels classes for any reason, you should continue to keep up this reading and writing schedule.

**Week 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T 1/28</strong></td>
<td>Introductions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TH 1/30</strong></td>
<td>Jose Saramago, <em>Blindness</em> (1-55)</td>
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**Week 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Topic</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>T 2/4</strong></td>
<td>Jose Saramago, <em>Blindness</em> (56-130: “the formation of a government of unity and national salvation was imminent”)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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**Blog Entry #1 due by midnight on Monday**
World Literature Syllabus

TH 2/6
Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (131-185: “while another woman was washing her companions, one by one, and then herself”)

Week 3

T 2/11
Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (186-269: “but his wife gently guided his hand towards the keyhole”)
Blog Entry #2 due by midnight on Monday

**TRIGGER WARNING:** pages 176-194 include descriptions of rape. We will also be discussing these chapters in class. Know that you can skip these pages and this discussion, no explanation required.

TH 2/13
Jose Saramago, *Blindness* (170-326: finish the novel)

Week 4

T 2/18
Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1-37: “what I became after I met you”)
Blog Entry #3 due by midnight on Monday

TH 2/20
Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (38-81: finish the book)

Week 5

T 2/25
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (1-69: through chapter 4)
Blog Entry #4 due by midnight on Monday

TH 2/27
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (70-152: through chapter 7)

Week 6

T 3/4
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (153-220: through chapter 10)
Blog Entry #5 due by midnight on Monday

TH 3/6
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (221-302: through chapter 13)

Week 7

T 3/11
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (303-386: through chapter 17)
Blog Entry #6 due by midnight on Monday


Week 8

T 3/18  SPRING BREAK

TH 3/20  SPRING BREAK

Week 9

T 3/25  ESSAY 1 DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 2:30 P.M.
Le Thi Diem Thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking for* (1-77: “suh-top!” and “palm”)

TH 3/27  Le Thi Diem Thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking for* (78-158: finish the novel)
Blog Entry #7 due by midnight on Wednesday

Week 10:

T 4/1  Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (1-63: through chapter 4)
Blog Entry #8 due by midnight on Monday

TH 4/3  Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (64-133: through chapter 13)

Week 11

T 4/8  Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (134-199: through chapter 18)
Blog Entry #9 due by midnight on Monday

TH 4/10  Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (200-278: through chapter 29)

Week 12

T 4/15  Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (279-339: through chapter 37)
Blog Entry #10 due by midnight on Monday

TH 4/17
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (340-410: through chapter 48)

**Week 13**

T 4/22
Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (411-477: finish the novel)
Blog Entry #11 due by midnight on Monday

TH 4/24
Mohisn Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (1-55: through chapter 3)

**Week 14**

T 4/29
Mohisn Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (55-115: through chapter 6)
Blog Entry #12 due by midnight on Monday

TH 5/1
Mohisn Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (116-175: through chapter 9)

**Week 15**

T 5/6
Mohisn Hamid, *How to Get Filthy Rich in Rising Asia* (176-228: finish the novel)
Blog Entry #13 due by midnight on Monday

TH 5/8  ESSAY 2 DUE ON BLACKBOARD BY 2:30 P.M.
FINAL EXAM REVIEW

Final Exam Date TBA