

SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

Voyage: Spring 2014
Discipline: English Literature
ENSP 1559-101: International Short Story
Division: Lower
Faculty Name: John N. Serio

PREREQUISITES: None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

As a form of literature, the short story is among the richest. With its sharp focus, usually on one character or incident, the short story provides lasting insight and enduring enjoyment. As we voyage around the world, we will read stories from different countries that will serve as excellent portals into the lives, interrelationships, and issues facing local inhabitants. We will explore the social, political, religious, and economic forces at work in the respective cultures and the impact local customs have in defining people's position and role in society. These stories, often by internationally acclaimed authors, will represent as many countries on our voyage as possible. We will approach the short story as a distinct art form, one that gives shape both to the inner life and to the outer reality. They will learn to examine the various functions of setting, style, characterization, point of view, symbol, and theme as each contributes to the artistry of expression. Students will sharpen their critical thinking and writing skills through class discussion and expository essays.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

- To teach students an appreciation of the pleasures and significance of short fiction.
- To help students gain insight into the various countries on our voyage by reading a wide range of international writers from our ports of call.
- To explore how the short story enables readers not only to penetrate deeper into themselves, but also to step outside of themselves to appreciate and understand others.
- To demonstrate how the elements of fiction—plot, setting, style, characterization, point of view, symbol, irony, and theme—may be used to elucidate both the meaning and the artistry of the short story.
- To sharpen students' critical thinking and analytical skills through discussion and expository writing.

REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS:

AUTHOR: Barbara H. Solomon, Editor
TITLE: *Other Voices, Other Vistas: Short Stories from Africa, China, India, Japan, and Latin America*
PUBLISHER: Signet Classic
ISBN #: 0-451-52840-9
DATE/EDITION: 2002

AUTHOR: Daniel Halpern, Editor
TITLE: *The Art of the Tale: An International Anthology of Contemporary Short Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin
ISBN #: 978-0-14-007949-4
DATE/EDITION: 1987

TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

Key: V=Other Voices, Other Vistas; T=Art of the Tale; PDF=In Course Folder

- A1- January 16:** Introduction The Elements of Fiction (PDF)
W. Somerset Maugham (England), "The Appointment in Samarra" (PDF)
- A2- January 18:** Kobe Abe, "The Magic Chalk" (V, 315–328)
Sawako Ariyoshi, "The Tomoshihi" (V, 329–347)
- January 20-21: *Hilo*
- A3- January 22:** Yuko Tsushima, "The Silent Traders" (V, 413–424)
Yukio Mishima, "Patriotism" (T, 459–475)
- A4- January 24:** Yasunari Kawabata, "The Moon on the Water" (V, 348–359)
Yasunari Kawabata, "One Arm" (T, 351–363)
- A5- January 28:** Wang Anyi, "The Destination" (V, 115–140)
Ding Ling, "Sketches from the 'Cattle Shed' " (V, 141–155)
- A6- January 30:** Wang Meng, "Kite Streamers" (V, 156–180)
Chen Rong, "Regarding the Problem of Newborn Piglets in Winter" (V, 181–194)
- February 1-5: *Yokohama, Transit, Kobe*
- A7- February 6:** Lu Wenfu, "The Man from a Peddlers' Family" (V, 195–213)
Can Xue, "The Child Who Raised Poisonous Snakes" (PDF)
- February 8-13: *Shanghai, Transit, Hong Kong*
- A8- February 14:** T. Coraghessan Boyle, "Greasy Lake" (T, 133–140)
Laurie Moore, "How to Become a Writer" (PDF)
- A9- February 16:** Duong Thu Huong, "Reflections of Spring" (PDF)
Tim O'Brien, "The Things They Carried" (PDF)
- February 17-22: *Ho Chi Minh City*
- A10- February 24:** Anita Desai, "Pigeons at Daybreak" (V, 219–228)
Mahasweta Devi, "Dhowli" (V, 229–257)
- February 25-26: *Singapore*
- A11- February 28:** Ruth Praver Jhabvala, "The Interview" (V, 258–271)
Khushwant Singh, "The Wog" (V, 291–310)
- March 2-6: *Rangoon*
- A12- March 7:** R. K. Narayan, "A Horse and Two Goats" (V, 272–290)
R. K. Narayan, "Naga" (T, 502–508)
- A13- March 10:** In-Class Essay/Examination
- A14- March 18:** Chinua Achebe, "Civil Peace" (V, 27–34)
Chinua Achebe, "The Sacrificial Egg" (T, 5–8)
- March 11-16: *Cochin*
- A15- March 21:** Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "A Meeting in the Dark" (V, 95–110)
Charles Mungoshi, "Who Will Stop the Dark?" (V, 74–94)
- March 23: *Port Louis*
- A16- March 24:** Nadine Gordimer, "African Emergent" (V, 35–51)
Nadine Gordimer, "Once Upon a Time" (PDF)
Nadine Gordimer, "The Life of the Imagination" (T, 331–340)
- A17- March 27:** Bessie Head, "The Collector of Treasures" (V, 52–73)
Zoë Wicomb, "You Can't Get Lost in Cape Town" (PDF)

A18- March 29:	Ama Ata Aidoo, “A Gift from Somewhere” (PDF) Ama Ata Aidoo, “Nowhere Cool” (PDF)
March 30-April 4:	<i>Cape Town</i>
A19- April 6:	Margaret Atwood (Canada), “Rape Fantasies” (PDF) William Trevor (Ireland), “Beyond the Pale” (T, 711–729)
A20- April 9:	Flannery O’Connor, “The Artificial Nigger” (T, 533–547) Richard Wright, “Big Black Good Man” (T, 786–795)
April 11-15:	<i>Tema</i>
A21- April 16:	Paul Bowles (U.S.), “A Distant Episode” (T, 124–132) Abdeslam Boulaich, “Cowardice” (T, 122–123) Mohammed Mrabet, “Doctor Safi” (T, 481–487)
A22- April 19:	Mercè Rodoreda, “Rain” (T, 633–637) Tobias Wolff, “Hunters in the Snow” (T, 774–785) Woody Allen, “The Kuglemass Episode” (PDF)
A23- April 22:	A Day Finals
April 23-26:	<i>Casablanca</i>
April 30:	<i>Arrive in Barcelona</i>

Note: There will be two out-of-class essays, format and dates to be announced, and possibly pop quizzes.

FIELD WORK

FIELD LAB (At least 20 percent of the contact hours for each course, to be led by the instructor.)

Proposal #1 (preferred)

Ho Chi Minh City: The Vietnam War, the War Remnants Museum, and the Cu Chi Tunnels

Having learned about the Vietnam war through our readings, students in this all-day Field Lab will experience first-hand aspects of the war through the eyes of the Vietnamese. In the morning, we will visit the War Remnants Museum to witness the consequences of the war on the Vietnamese people. In the afternoon, we will tour the Cu Chi Tunnels to examine the incredible complex of tunnels that the Viet Cong built near Saigon, a marvel of their ingenuity and determination.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be required to write a critical essay on their experience. In particular, they will be asked to relate what they have witnessed and learned to their readings. How has the day’s Field Lab enhanced their understanding of the stories about the Vietnam War that we have read? What, in particular, struck them the most and provided insight into, not only the Vietnam War itself, but also the literary expression of it?

Proposal #2

Cochin: Kerala and *The God of Small Things*

Were this Field Lab selected, I would add Arundhati Roy’s *The God of Small Things* to our reading list, since it is set in this area of Kerala. We will have a guided tour of the sites mentioned in the book, such as

Kottayam, and explore the various political, religious, and cultural milieu that frames the novel. This Field Lab will help students to achieve a more in-depth understanding of the unusual characteristics of Kerala that are woven into the fabric of the novel: its combination of communism, the Syrian Christian religion, and the caste system. If time permits, we will attend a performance at the Kerala Folklore Museum of a Kathakali performance, since the dramatic enactment of scenes from the *Ramyana* figures prominently in the novel.

FIELD ASSIGNMENTS

Since the Field Lab constitutes 20% of the coursework, students will be required to write a critical essay relating what they have learned on the Field Lab to the major themes in the novel. How has what they have learned about the politics (communism), religion (Syrian Christianity and Hindu), and culture (especially the caste system) of Kerala enhanced their understanding not only of the book but also of Indian culture?

METHODS OF EVALUATION / GRADING RUBRIC

- 30% Class participation/attendance/quizzes (the Socratic method of teaching will be employed and students will be encouraged to volunteer their contributions to class discussion and not simply respond when called upon)
- 30% Two in-class essays and/or examinations
- 20% Formal critical essay
- 20% Formal critical essay on Field-Lab Assignment

RESERVE LIBRARY LIST

AUTHOR: Kate Figes, Editor
TITLE: *The Penguin Book of International Women's Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group USA
ISBN #: 9780140261882
DATE/EDITION: 1997

AUTHOR: Daniel Halpern, Editor
TITLE: *Art of the Story: An International Anthology of Contemporary Short Stories*
PUBLISHER: Penguin Group USA
ISBN #: 9780140296389
DATE/EDITION: 2000

ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

PDFs of required works will be supplied.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

None

HONOR CODE

Semester at Sea students enroll in an academic program administered by the University of Virginia, and thus bind themselves to the University's honor code. The code prohibits all acts of lying, cheating, and stealing. Please consult the Voyager's Handbook for further explanation of what constitutes an honor offense.

Each written assignment for this course must be pledged by the student as follows: “On my honor as a student, I pledge that I have neither given nor received aid on this assignment.” The pledge must be signed, or, in the case of an electronic file, signed “[signed].”

African literature includes slave narratives, protests against colonization, calls for independence, as well as narratives about African cultural pride and hope for the future. In this course, we read literary works that reflect an array of African literary expression, including short stories by Chinua Achebe, the Father of African Literature (Nigeria); Nadine Gordimer (South Africa); Bessie Head (South Africa); Charles Mungoshi (Zimbabwe); and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o (Kenya). (Optional) Other Voices, Other Vistas: Short Stories from Africa, China, India, Japan, and Latin America by Barbara H. Solomon. Signet. ISBN 978-0451528407. Short stories, Latin American Short stories, Japanese Short stories, Indic Short stories, Chinese Short stories, African (English) Short story genre Short stories Translations Translations into English. Material Type: Fiction. Add a review and share your thoughts with other readers. Be the first. Tags. Add tags for "Other voices, other vistas : short stories from Africa, China, India, Japan, and Latin America". Be the first. Similar Items. A few short stories in Other Voices, Other Vistas such as The Tomoshihi and The Silent Traders showcase this problem. One can see this is a very touchy subject on which long-standing members of Japanese society have formed very strong opinions. The Tomoshihi and The Silent Traders display the two opposing views on the issue of modernization - deciding which way is right - clinging to traditional values or moving with the fast paced unfamiliar world - is a seemingly impossible task. Other Voices, Other Vistas: Short Stories from Africa, China, India, Japan, and Latin America. By Barbara H. Solomon. New York, N.Y., U.S.A.: Signet Classic, 2002.