

Fall/Winter 2019-2020

AP/EN 4400 6.0A (Y)

Diaspora Literatures

Course Director:

Modupe Olaogun
Email: olaogun@yorku.ca
Office: Room 732 Atkinson College
Telephone: 416 736 2100, ext. 22223

Delivery Format:

Seminar

Time:

Fridays 11:30am-2:30pm

Description:

This course interprets “diaspora” broadly and addresses some of the literary texts by migrant minorities and their descendants in Canada, Britain, the USA and the Caribbean. It considers the criteria that have been used to define diaspora; it reflects upon the different situations and dynamics that produce diasporas; and it investigates the relationship between diaspora and other trans-national phenomena, as well as between diaspora and national literatures. Using a selection of texts that include poetry and fiction, we examine the changing contexts of migration and settlement and how these contexts shape the writers’ imagination. Diaspora literatures, by virtue of the nature of migration and the receptiveness of places of arrival, often present certain themes, such as separation, loss, memory, nostalgia, community formation, citizenship, identity, and so on. The course shows how the different circumstances, as well as the aesthetic choices by the writers, mediate specific iterations of these themes.

We begin with theoretical materials that suggest frameworks for analysis in order to delve into the imaginative texts. The goal is to enable students to gain a textured understanding of diaspora through attention to the structures of narration or poetic reflection; the linguistic, rhetorical and figurative resources deployed by the writers; as well as the values and themes derived from the texts. In the process, students develop valuable analytical and critical skills that will serve them in other courses and/or in their careers. The teaching format is a combination of lectures and discussion. Students get a chance to test their ideas through seminar presentations.

Category:

C

Historical Requirement:

N/A

Requirements:

Reading Responses—fall/winter (2x10% = 20%)
Seminar presentation, with essay (20%)
Test—end of fall term (25%)
Research Paper—end of winter term (25%)
Class Participation (10%)

Reading List:

Theory/Case Studies will use the following journal articles/book chapters, electronically available through York University library:

James Clifford, “Diasporas,” *Cultural Anthropology*, 9.3 (August 1994): 302-338.

Vijay Mishra, “The Diasporic Imaginary,” from *Literature of the Indian Diaspora: Theorizing the Diasporic Imaginary*, pp. 1 – 21.

Nabuko Adachi, “Introduction: Theorizing Japanese diaspora,” from *Japanese Diasporas: Unsung Pasts, Conflicting Presents and Uncertain Futures*, pp. 1 – 23.

Carole Boyce Davies, “Introduction: Migratory Subjectivities: Black women’s writing and the re-negotiation of identities,” from *Black Women, Writing and Identity: Migrations of the Subject*.

Imaginative Texts

Anita Badami, *Can You Hear the Nightbird Call*

Esi Edugyan, *Half Blood Blues*

Marlene Nourbese Philip, *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks*.

Shani Mootoo, *Moving Forward Sideways Like a Crab*

Julie Otsuka, *The Buddha in the Attic*

Leila Aboulela, *The Translator*

Open To:

Year 4 Honours