

P1 English 233D-01: Exile in Modern and Postmodern Novels

Fall 2006, St. John Fisher College

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Office Hours (no appointment necessary):
Wednesdays 12-2; Tues/ Thurs 9-9:30 a.m.
and by appointment. To make an appointment, you can phone, e-mail, or contact me in person.

course website: <http://www.jadwin.net/233>

Course Description, Goals & Structure

If, as the critic Edward Said has said, "an exile is one who inhabits one place and remembers or projects the reality of another," then the task of the exiled artist is to determine how (and whether) to transform the figure of rupture back into a figure of connection. Exile is peculiarly American: all of us (or our ancestors) came here "from the old country." Moreover, even natives can feel alien in the rapidly changing landscape of the contemporary world.

English 233 will focus on the cultural alienation felt by foreigners and that felt by natives. We will discuss the psychological effects of exile, examining exclusions traditionally based on race, age, sexual orientation, gender, religion, ethnicity, and class. We will examine the surprising benefits of being an outsider, including penetrating insight and appreciation of tradition. Finally, we will explore the exile's dilemma of deferring experience in anticipation of an imagined better world.

In this discussion-oriented course, lectures will convey only part of the course's content. Students will be encouraged to discuss course issues in small- and large-group settings, and participation will be an important component of the final grade. Class time will be spent discussing student papers that address shared study topics. Students will write brief responses to other students' presentations. Presenters will be responsible for leading discussion after delivering a paper.

This course is part of the new core tier "Perspectives on the Arts," or P1. In *Perspectives on the Arts* students will learn some of the tools necessary for fully appreciating the depth and scope of creative expression found in the literary and visual arts. Works of art will be studied in terms of their cultural and historical provenance, in terms of their formal compositions, and in terms of other theoretical and critical perspectives. Students will gain skills that will allow them to describe and interpret works of art. Some courses will ask students to demonstrate their knowledge through written arguments, and some courses will ask students to demonstrate their knowledge through the creation of original works of art. *Goals:*

1. Students will have at their disposal ways of identifying the cultural assumptions implicit in artistic representations (In *Perspectives on the Arts* "cultural assumptions" is understood to mean the unavoidable influences of the culture in which the creator of a work of art is embedded.)
2. Students will discern how design or form influences meaning.
3. Students will be able to analyze a work from a variety of perspectives (e.g., creative, cultural, critical, aesthetic)
4. Students will construct an argument using evidence to draw conclusions and support a thesis.

This course may also be used to satisfy the WGST elective requirement.

Required texts

Margaret Atwood, *The Handmaid's Tale*
Peter Høeg, *Smilla's Sense of Snow*
Zora Neale Hurston, *Their Eyes Were Watching God*
Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*
Hanif Kureishi, *My Beautiful Laundrette* - screenplay and film (film available at the library)
George Orwell, *1984*
Annie Proulx, *The Shipping News*

Requirements

Participation (20% of your final grade): Participation means talking, asking questions, making jokes, showing that you are part of the dialogue and not just an observer taking notes or a prisoner "doing time." Simply showing up does not equal class participation. Students who consistently lead and speak during discussions will receive high participation grades; those who never or rarely speak will receive low ones.

Papers (20% each of your final grade): Each student will write *and present to the class* two short papers (4-6 double-spaced typed pages) focusing on the reading designated for lecture/discussion on a particular due date. A due-date sign-up sheet, paper-writing guidelines and topics will be available at the beginning of the semester.

Exams (20% each of your final grade): The midterm and final (both cumulative) will test your completion of course readings and your analytical skills. The first section of each exam will feature identification and vocabulary questions; the second section will test your ability to analyze a textual excerpt in detail - a technique we will practice throughout the term.

Late papers will be penalized at the rate of 1 full grade per day or portion thereof. Failure to present a scheduled paper will result in an F for that essay. In general, students will be granted extensions or makeups on presentations only if they are hospitalized. If illness prevents you from delivering your paper, arrange for another class member to present it for you.

Attendance & Participation

In a discussion course, class members' *attendance and participation* are very important. As discussants we concentrate on building a community where people cooperate in interpreting and creating meaning.

The *attendance* policy in this course is consequently very strict. Make sure you understand it fully and that you're prepared to abide by it before you decide to stay in this course. You are entitled to miss the equivalent of one week of class meetings for any reason. Additional absences will lower your grade regardless of the circumstances, because this is not the kind of class you can make up if you're absent. Students absent for 3 weeks of class or more may receive an F for the course (FA). There's no difference between "excused" and "unexcused" absences. If you have a serious emergency, such as a death in the family, auto accident, hospitalization, etc., please contact me as soon as possible so that we can work with the Dean of Students to make arrangements, as you may need to withdraw from the course. Students with perfect attendance will receive a bonus in their final grade calculation.

If you miss class, you are still responsible for any deadlines or assignments and for whatever material was covered that day. Arrange for someone to deliver your assignments to me, to pick up handouts, go over class with you or lend you notes. **Extra handouts and worksheets will be available on the front of my office door (and eventually on the course website).**

Participation is required, not optional, and means more than warming a seat on a regular basis. It means talking and listening actively - asking questions, offering opinions, laughing, making jokes and initiatives, etc. Students who have trouble speaking up are urged to take advantage of this opportunity to practice their skills here. Set daily goals for yourself, such as "I will ask a question or speak once today," and you will be impressed with your own improvement. Students who never or rarely speak in class - as well as students who fail to pay attention, talk while others are speaking, or fall asleep in class - will receive low grades for participation.

Course Website

The course website features downloadable copies of course materials, including printable and downloadable handouts; study questions; paper topics; paper-writing guidelines, and other materials. There are links to related topics, and I encourage you to suggest additional ideas for the course website.

Academic Honesty Policy

We often do our best work in collaboration with others, and throughout your life you will consult with other people, in person and in print, as you develop your ideas. However, while it is entirely legitimate to consult others, it is unethical to take their ideas and pass them off as your own. The best way to guard against plagiarism is to acknowledge the source(s) of your ideas. If you borrow someone else's ideas, whether you use a direct quote, summary, or paraphrase, clearly indicate who it belongs to. In writing you'll use MLA-style citations. (See the course website for a link to an online MLA style guide.) When speaking, explain where you got your information. Sometimes it's hard to tell when and what you need to cite. Familiarize yourself with the section of the Student Handbook on plagiarism, and talk with me if you have questions.

Ignorance about plagiarism does not excuse it. Students who are found to have plagiarized will be disciplined as detailed in the Student Handbook, up to and including failing the course.

Statement for Students with Diagnosed Disabilities

In compliance with St. John Fisher College policy and applicable laws, appropriate academic accommodations are available to you if you are a student with a disability. All requests for accommodations must be supported by appropriate documentation/diagnosis and determined reasonable by St. John Fisher College. Students with documented disabilities (physical, learning, psychological) who may need academic accommodations *must* make an appointment with the Coordinator of Services for Students with Disabilities in the Student Development Center, Kearney 211. *Late notification will delay requested accommodations.*

Schedule of Readings and Due Dates

Complete each scheduled reading before coming to class on the day the reading is due. You'll probably want to read more over the weekends when you (perhaps) have more time. Note that the readings *average* about 150 pages per week (sometimes more, sometimes less). Though it's easier to read 150 pages of fiction than 150 pages of a textbook, you'll still need to pace yourself and schedule plenty of reading time.

If it becomes necessary to change assignments and due dates, I will give you plenty of notice.

1	9/7	Introduction to class members, course themes and course structure.
2	9/12 9/14	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , chapters 1-7. <i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , chapters 8-15.
3	9/19 9/21	<i>Their Eyes Were Watching God</i> , chapters 16-20. <i>1984</i> , Part I.
4	9/26 9/28	<i>1984</i> , Part II. <i>1984</i> , Part III and "Appendix."
5	10/3 10/5	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> , "No Name Woman" (<i>reread at least once</i>) <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , "White Tigers" (<i>reread at least once</i>)
6	10/10 10/12	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> , "Shaman" (<i>reread at least once</i>) <i>The Woman Warrior</i> , "At the Western Palace" (<i>reread at least once</i>)
7	10/17 10/19	<i>The Woman Warrior</i> , "Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe." (<i>reread at least once</i>) Review for midterm and discuss writing issues and questions.
8	10/24 10/26	MIDTERM Go over midterm and writing issues and questions.
9	10/31 11/2	<i>The Shipping News</i> , chapters 1-12. <i>The Shipping News</i> , chapters 13-28.
10	11/7 11/9	<i>The Shipping News</i> , chapters 29-39. <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , Parts I-IV.
11	11/14 11/16	<i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , Parts V-X. <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> , Parts XI-XV and "Historical Note."
12	11/21 11/23	<i>Smilla's Sense of Snow</i> , first third. No class today - enjoy your Thanksgiving break.
13	11/28 11/30	<i>Smilla's Sense of Snow</i> , second third. <i>Smilla's Sense of Snow</i> , final third.
14	12/5 12/7	<i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i> , both film and screenplay. <i>My Beautiful Laundrette</i> , both film and screenplay.
15		FINAL EXAM, date and time t.b.a. by Registrar's office.