

Studies in Folklore and Literature:
Novels, Ethnography and Cultural Experience
 ENG 7650 001 CRN: 26576
 Th 6:00 – 9:00 p.m.
 5057 Woodward, #9304
 Winter, 2008

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 Office Hours: T & TH 3-5 p.m.,
 & by app't
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Course Description

Critical interest in an expanded literary canon demands evaluating different types of cultural texts in complex ways. James Clifford and George Marcus's *Writing Culture: The Poetics and Politics of Ethnography* (1986) has been an influential signpost pointing to the writing of literature, ethnography, literary and cultural criticism as "blurred genres." In this seminar, we'll continue the exploration at the crossroads with James Clifford as guide, beginning the journey with his *The Predicament of Culture* (1988) and continuing with his *Routes* (1997). Class praxis will include reading paired novels/short stories/poetry, viewing art works and films with examining ethnographies and criticism to interrogate Clifford's findings. We will read authors who have written ethnographies and novels, who write novels as if they were ethnographies and who write ethnographies as if they were novels in "an unfinished series of paths and negotiations."

Texts

(All texts are required and are available for purchase at Marwil's Bookstore and online, and for reading on three-hour reserve at Purdy-Kresge Library.)

- Clifford, James. *On the Edges of Anthropology: Interviews*. Chicago: Prickly Paradigm Press, LLC, 2003.
- . *The Predicament of Culture: Twentieth-Century Ethnography, Literature and Art*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1988.
- . *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Harvard UP, 1997.
- Conrad, Joseph. *Heart of Darkness*. Edition with Conrad's "Congo Diary." NY: Penguin, 2007.
- Gottlieb, Alma and Philip Graham. *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and A Writer Encounter Africa*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 1994.
- Narayan, Kirin. *My Family and Other Saints*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2007.
- . *Storytellers, Saints, Scoundrels: Folk Narrative in Hindu Religious Teaching*. Philadelphia, U of Pennsylvania P, 1989.
- Norman, Howard. *In Fond Remembrance of Me: A Memoir of Myth and Uncommon Friendship in the Arctic*. NY: North Point Press, 2005.
- . *The Museum Guard: A Novel*. NY: Picador USA, 1998.

Additional readings & film clips

Other readings will be posted on ERes/Blackboard as noted in the syllabus or as agreed upon by seminar members. Selected film clips will be shown occasionally within seminar discussions.

Blackboard-assisted course

Please check the Blackboard website for this course regularly as I will post some full-text readings noted in the syllabus as well as announcements, class information, assignments, and website links. To access Blackboard and to communicate by email, you will need to activate your

WSU Access ID at <http://computing.wayne.edu/accessid/activate.php>. You should do this even if you have another email address. If you do use another email address, you should have email that is sent to your WSU account forwarded to you by going to <http://computing.wayne.edu/email/forwarding.php>.

Course requirements

Course requirements are four short commentaries related to course readings with variable due dates, a longer paper on a topic of the student's choice due April 17, 2008, and class participation including a work-in-progress report on the research project, attendance, and discussion:

1. Commentaries (40%)

These four 3-page commentaries (10% each) should be tied fairly tightly to course readings and/or discussion. Each student has an option to select a point in reading or discussion that s/he would like to explore critically, drawing on in-class readings with outside references optional. MLA Commentaries' due dates are flexible, usually within one to two weeks after assigned class readings as they are designed to facilitate and deepen discussion. Please turn in hard copies of commentaries to instructor, and post copies online through Blackboard's discussion board. Rewrites are possible.

2. Longer research paper (40%)

This paper (c. 15-20 pages, double-spaced) is a wide-open one, drawing on any topic or critical interest the student might have, but still related in some ways to broad seminar themes. It may be connected to a master's essay or dissertation chapter already in progress, to other ongoing projects, or to new topics moving beyond class readings. Please plan an individual consultation with the instructor whose goal is to have students write research pieces that contribute to work already begun, to future graduate work or conference presentations or to article manuscript production. Fuller guidelines will be given separately.

3. Work-in-progress oral report (10%)

A work-in-progress report is an oral presentation, outlining your research paper topic, your critical approach, problems, questions, findings, etc. that will be given in the seminar from February 28 to April 19, depending on when each student signs up for the presentation. Each student may also take questions, comments and suggestions from the floor. The class presentation grade will be part of the class participation grade, and will be determined by organization, clarity of development, support for argument/issues and relevance to class focus. Presentation and Q & A times may vary according to each student's design, but 15-20 minutes has been the norm. Most students distribute an outline of their presentations to seminar members. (The other 10% of the class participation grade is attendance and discussion).

Syllabus (in process)

1. Jan. 10

Introduction

2. Jan. 17

Readings: Gottlieb, Alma and Philip Graham, *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*, pp. x-xix, 3-141.; Clifford, *Predicament of Culture*, Introduction, Part I: Discourses, chapters 1-2, pp. 1-91.

3. Jan. 24

Readings: Gottlieb, Alma and Philip Graham, *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*, pp. 142-318.

4. Jan. 31

Readings: Clifford, *Predicament of Culture, Part I: Discourses*, chapter 3, pp. 92-113; Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* including introduction and Conrad's "Congo Diary."

Film clips *Apocalypse Now*

5. Feb. 7

Readings: Clifford, *Predicament of Culture, Part II: Displacements* and *Part III: Collections*, chapters 4-10, pp. 115-251; selected poems of Aimé Césaire (ERes/Blackboard).

Film clips from French ethnographic filmmaker Jean Rouch

6. Feb. 14

Readings: Clifford, *Predicament of Culture, Part IV: Histories*, chapters 11-12, pp. 253-346; selections from Said, Edward, *Orientalism* (ERes/Blackboard); Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology*, pp. i-iii, 1-22.

7. Feb. 21

Readings: Clifford, *Routes: Prologue: In Media Res* and *Travels*, chapters 1-4, pp. 1-106; Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels*, pp. 1-110.

8. Feb. 28

Readings: Narayan, *Storytellers, Saints and Scoundrels*, pp. 111-252; Narayan, *My Family & Other Saints*, 1-104; Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology*, pp. 23-42.

9. March 6

Readings: Narayan, *My Family & Other Saints*, pp. 105-237; selections from Behar, Ruth & Deborah Gordon, eds. *Women Writing Culture* (Berkeley, U of California P,) Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology*, pp. 43-78.

work-in-progress reports

10. March 13

NO CLASS—SPRING BREAK

11. March 20

Readings: Clifford, *Routes, Contacts*, chapters 5-8, pp. 107-240; Norman, Howard, *The Museum Guard: A Novel*

work-in-progress reports

12. March 27

Readings: Norman, Howard, *The Museum Guard*; Kirshenblatt-Gimblett, Barbara. "Exhibiting Jews," chapter 2 in her *Destination Culture: Tourism, Museums, and Heritage* (Berkeley: U of California P, 1998), pp. 79-128. (ERes/Blackboard).

work-in-progress reports

13. April 3

Readings: Clifford, *Routes, Futures*, chapters 9-12, pp. 241-347; Norman, *In Fond Remembrance of Me*; Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology*, pp. 79-93.

work-in-progress reports

14. April 10

Readings: Clifford, *Routes, Futures*, cont., esp. chapter 12 "Fort Ross Meditation," pp. 299-347; Clifford, *On the Edges of Anthropology*, pp. 95-121.

15. April 17 **conclusions/new directions**

Research papers due/student evaluations

Class matters:

Attendance

The English Department attendance policy is as follows:

Enrolled students in any English classes must attend one of the first two class sessions; otherwise, they may be required to drop the class. The instructor will not add students to the class after the third class session. In addition, the instructor counts attendance as part of the class participation grade based on % of classes attended. Students are allowed up to 2 **excused** absences that require advance notice to instructor; 3 or more **unexcused** absences, however, will lose attendance points and may constitute withdrawal.

Late Assignments

To be discussed per each assignment.

Paper Format

Papers should be typed, double-spaced, one-inch margins, no larger than 12 pt. type, no binders.

Paper Revision

To be discussed per each assignment.

Plagiarism

The College of Liberal Arts & Sciences Policy on Plagiarism states:

The principle of honesty is recognized as fundamental to a scholarly community. Students are expected to honor this principle and instructors are expected to take appropriate action when instances of academic dishonesty are discovered. An instructor, on discovering such an instance, may give a failing grade on the assignment or for the course. The instructor has the responsibility of notifying the student of the alleged violation and the action being taken. Both the student and the instructor are entitled to academic due process in all such cases. Acts of dishonesty may lead to suspension or exclusion.

The instructor's policy, on a case-by-case basis, follows the English Department 's guidelines based on college and university guidelines.

Incompletes (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)

The mark of "I" (Incomplete) is given to either an undergraduate or a graduate student when he/she has not completed all of the course work as required for the term and when there is, in the judgment of the instructor, a reasonable probability that the student can complete the course successfully without again attending regular class sessions. The student should be passing at the time the grade of "I" is given. A written contract specifying the work to be completed should be signed by the student and instructor and filed with the English Department.

Students receiving incompletes must finish their assignments by the end of a year or the grade will be replaced by an "F." The University will not allow any extensions past the year's deadline.

Withdrawals (REVISED UNIVERSITY POLICY)

The grade of "WN" replaces the "X" grade and applies to any student who has never attended class, or did not complete any assignments, or did not participate in credit-earning activities by the withdrawal date. If a student decides not to go to class after having received a grade for any component of a course, these grades will be issued only as follows: "WP" (Withdrawal with a passing grade earned to date) or "WF" (Withdrawal with a failing grade earned to date.).

Educational Accessibility Services

If you have a physical or mental impairment that may interfere with your ability to complete successfully the requirements for this course, please contact the Educational Accessibility Services Office in Room 1600 of the David Adamany Undergraduate Library to discuss appropriate accommodations.