

HUMA 14100: READING CULTURES II

Winter 2021

Course Description

Welcome back to Reading Cultures. This sequence is devoted to cultivating the art of interpretation through close readings of texts from a broad range of times and places. In each case the goal is to work outward from the textual details in order to gain insights into the local emergence and global circulation of objects of interpretation, including oral epics, poetry, folk tales, essays, novels, film, music, and museums. Over the course of the sequence, we will explore questions about memory, home, and belonging; the politics and poetics of storytelling; the role of literature in community; hybridity and the legacy of colonialism; and, of course, the importance of humanistic inquiry in addressing these and many more questions.

This quarter, we will use the theme of travel to chart a course through our readings. What does travel reveal about concepts such as home, community, self, and other? How does travel support or subvert larger political or commercial endeavors? Who can travel and who cannot? How do we understand the close relationship between travel and looking? What happens as the traveler makes a new place and its inhabitants the object of his gaze? Can one observe and appreciate without objectifying?

Learning Goals

By the end of the quarter, you should be able to encounter any text and identify some of the claims, arguments and assumptions it makes. You will learn about the history of travel, including the more recent phenomenon of travel for pleasure. Through the texts we read together, you will develop and respond to questions about the ethics of travel and the interactions between guests and hosts. You will learn to identify a tension within a literary text, and to use that tension to motivate your reader to value your writing. You will continue to develop your ability to anticipate the needs and doubts of your reader, and to tailor accordingly the structure of your argument.

Required Books (available at Seminary Co-op)

Jamaica Kincaid. *A Small Place*. Farrar, Strauss & Giroux. ISBN 0374527075

Homer. *Odyssey*. Norton. ISBN 978-0-393-08905-9

Harriet Jacobs. *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*. Norton Critical Edition.
ISBN 0393976378

Tomás Rivera. *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*. Arte Publico Press.
ISBN 9781558850835

Yoko Tawada. *Where Europe Begins*. New Directions. ISBN 9780811217026

Shorter Required Pieces (available on Canvas)

Layli Long Soldier « 38, » « Whereas »

Feng Menglong « Yang Balao's Extraordinary Family Reunion in the Land of Yue »

Grade Distribution

1) Participation..... 30 %

- 2) Canvas Discussions.....15%
 3) paper 1 (4 pages) 15 %
 4) paper 2 (4-6 pages) 20%
 5) paper 3 (4-6 pages) 20%

READING, WORKSHOP, AND ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE

DATE	TEXT/THEME	ASSIGNMENT	SCREENINGS/ PAPERS
T 1/12	<i>Introduction</i>	Introduction, Wordsworth's "Solitary Reaper"	
Th 1/14	<i>A Small Place</i>	pp. 1-37	
T 1/19	<i>A Small Place</i>	pp. 38-end	
Th 1/21	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 1-4	
T 1/26	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 5-11	Paper 1 due
Th 1/28	<i>Odyssey, Feng Menglong story</i>	Books 12-15, "Yang Balao's Extraordinary Family Reunion"	
T 2/02	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 16-20	
Th 2/04	<i>Odyssey</i>	Books 21-24	
T 2/09	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Intro and Chapters 1-10	
Th 2/11	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Chapters 11-27	
T 2/16	<i>Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl</i>	Chapters 28-41 and "Contexts"	
Th 2/18	<i>And the Earth Did not Devour Him</i>	pp. 77-113	
T 2/23	<i>And the Earth Did not Devour Him</i>	pp. 114-152	Paper 2 due
Th 2/25	<i>And the Earth Did Not Devour Him</i>	No new reading assignment	
T 3/02	Layli Long Soldier poems	"38," "Whereas"	
Th 3/04	<i>Where Europe Begins</i>		
T 3/09	<i>Where Europe Begins</i>		
Th 3/11	<i>Where Europe Begins</i>	Last class!	Writing workshops This week
T 3/16			Paper 3 due

GENERAL POLICIES:

FORMAT OF THE CLASS:

Each week, under “Modules” on our Canvas site, I will post everything you need to do for that week.

Our meetings will follow a general pattern, which I have outlined below:

Week 1: Tuesday and Thursday 80-minute Zoom discussions

Weeks 2-7, 9:

1. Canvas discussion: beginning Friday, finished by Monday
2. Zoom discussion: Tuesday 40 minutes, in half-class groups, during either the 1st or 2nd half of scheduled class time. We will divide into these groups during week 1.
3. In-person class: Thursday 80 minutes, with masks, socially distanced, in-person

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

The success of this discussion-based seminar depends upon your preparation and participation. Please come to Zoom and class having read the material and prepared to share ideas about it. Canvas postings are graded separately, but they provide an opportunity for you to collect your thoughts in advance. I expect you to attend all Zoom sessions, course meetings and writing seminars. If you are absent because of illness, please let me know. If you need to be absent because sports or other planned extra-curricular activities, please let me know in advance. It is possible to make up excused absences either through a short writing assignment or a short conversation with me.

Participation – especially in this hybrid format! – can take multiple forms. If you are a shy person, or work better with time to prepare your thoughts, you might want to take more advantage of the Zoom chat feature to find a way into the conversation, or spend more time participating on the Canvas discussion board. You are also welcomed to schedule a time to talk with me one-on-one, or in small groups, about the ideas you have about our readings.

DEADLINES:

The due dates for all papers are listed above. Please be aware of these due dates as well as of dates for writing workshops. Each quarter, I will give each of you a 48-hour bank of additional time that you can use for any course assignment (NOT writing seminar assignments) throughout the quarter.

For example, maybe you only need 5 extra hours to finish something. That leaves you 43 hours of extension time to apply to the final paper if you would like. Once you have used up your bank of time, for each day that an assignment is overdue, I will deduct 1/3 of a

letter grade (e.g., A- becomes a B+). Please plan accordingly and do your best to manage your time.

CANVAS DISCUSSIONS:

Canvas discussions are meant to help you focus your reading, and to warm up for the first synchronous discussion of the week. Because we will only spend 40 minutes together in our Tuesday Zoom discussions in weeks 2-9, I want us all to bring energy and enthusiasm to the Canvas discussion board. To help make Canvas discussion more dynamic, I will ask 2-3 of you to serve as discussion leaders each week. The job of the discussion leader is to work to keep discussion going by asking additional questions, connecting points that classmates have made, asking classmates to clarify their points, etc. Reading through Canvas discussions is a great way to get yourself thinking about an idea for a paper!

FORMAT OF THE PAPER:

Written work should be titled, typed, paginated, double-spaced, with 1-inch margins all around. All quotations should be properly formatted and cited according to MLA guidelines. Use a 12-point, legible font and black ink. Single-space block quotes. **DO NOT** use a title page. Instead, use a header and format it like this: please type your name, my name, the course title, and the date in the upper, left-hand corner of the first page. (I concede that this is weird – after all it is your paper and not mine! – but those are the MLA guidelines.) **AND USE SPELL CHECK!!** Incorrect spelling undermines the credibility of your writing, and it also frustrates older readers like me, who date back to the antediluvian times of pre-spell check and actual, physical thesauruses and dictionaries.

ETIQUETTE:

If you find it easier to take notes on a laptop, tablet, or cell phone, you are welcome to do that. If you use either cell phone, tablet, or laptop rather than pen and paper, please be sure that what you are doing is related to our class.

ACCESSIBILITY:

Your success in this class is important to me. If the set-up of our learning environment or activities presents any barriers to your full participation, please let me know as soon as possible, and together we'll develop strategies to meet both your needs and the requirements of the course. To this end, I invite you to discuss accessibility measures with me as soon as possible. I promise to maintain the confidentiality of these discussions.

If you have a documented disability, I encourage you to register with Student Disability Services. If you need official accommodations, you have a right to have these met. Here is their contact information:

Address: 5501 S. Ellis Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637
Phone: (773) 702-6000
Email: disabilities@uchicago.edu
<https://disabilities.uchicago.edu/>

Because this process can take some time, I encourage you to let me know as you initiate it, if you think you will need accommodations in our class. Disclosure of disability status is always up to you, and that choice is protected by federal law. If you prefer not to disclose your disability status, we can still have a productive conversation about what specific adjustments might make our meetings and interactions more accessible.

STUDENT SUPPORT:

College-level analysis and writing pose challenges to all incoming students. To help you meet these challenges, you may find it helpful to utilize some of the services provided FREE OF CHARGE by Student Services of The College. Various professional staff and advanced students are committed to helping you address academic challenges in a variety of ways. Visit their [webpage](#) to learn about tutoring and mentoring options, guidance on study skills and time management, and one-on-one assistance to ensure that you are using the best possible strategies for success in your course work.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY:

Obviously, your work should be your own, because the only thing plagiarism teaches is how to plagiarize. I hope we can all agree that that is not what we are here for.

FINALLY:

I am excited about this class, and I hope that you are too. I look forward to working with all of you to create a class environment in which we can all express ourselves freely and respectfully, and hear each other with critical rigor and compassion. I am eager to continue learning with you.