

HUMA 14000

Reading Cultures I: Collection, Travel, Exchange

Autumn 2022



Course description

The Reading Cultures sequence is devoted to the cultivation of the art of interpretation through the close reading of objects across a broad range of times and places. In each case the goal is to work outward from the textual details – construing the term 'text' generously so as to include any form of cultural production – and develop insight into the local emergence and global circulation of objects of interpretation. In the process, the sequence explores questions about memory, home, and belonging; the various historical forms of cultural production, from epic to folk tale, music, film, and novels; about texts as formative sources of human community, inter-personal obligation, and transcendence; and, of course, about the role of humanistic inquiry in addressing all these questions. During this quarter, we will in particular look at the topic of “collections” - many of the texts we will discuss take the form of collections or anthologies, broadly defined.

Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, you will be better able to:

- Analyze textual and visual sources in a way that attempts to see these sources on their own terms and acknowledges your positionality as a reader.
- Defend your written arguments in a way that is text-based, specific, and increases readers' understanding.
- Trust your curiosity, interpretations, excitement and interests.
- Respectfully be in community through discussion and thoughtfully listen.

Required texts

- Eve L. Ewing, *1919*
- Ovid, *The Metamorphoses* (trans. Allen Mandelbaum; Harcourt)
- *The Arabian Nights* (trans. Husain Haddawy; Norton)
- Pu Songling, *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* (trans. John Minford; Penguin)
- Zora Neale Hurston, *Mules and Men* (Harper Perennial)
- *Wild Tales* (2014), Dir. Damián Szifron

All books listed above are available at Seminary Co-op and the film *Wild Tales* is available for rental on Youtube. Walter Benjamin's essay "The Storyteller" and Agnès Varda's film *The Gleaners and I* will be made available on the course Canvas website.

Course requirements

- Attendance and participation: 25% of final grade. Please keep in mind that this course is a graduation requirement for all University of Chicago students.
 - Weekly Canvas posts: Starting on Week 2, you should post a 60-word response to one of the texts discussed that week, either on Tuesday or Thursday. Your response should be published on Canvas by 11:59pm the night before class.
 - Writing workshops: You are required to attend three writing workshops led by your Writing Instructor throughout the quarter, on top of the regular classes. Attendance is mandatory and is a requirement to graduate from the College. Should you miss any seminar, you will not receive credit for the Humanities Writing Seminar course.
 - Participation: it means punctual arrival to class and it implies that you have read all of the assigned materials carefully and that you engage actively in class discussion. You should come to class prepared with specific observations, questions, and discussion points about the readings.
- Essay 1 (3-4 pages): 20% of final grade. Due on: October 18th, 11:59pm.
- Essay 2 (4-5 pages): 25% of final grade. Due on: November 8th, 11:59pm.

You may have one 24-hour extension on the deadline for essays 1 or 2. If you need one, please inform me as soon as you can. Otherwise, there will be a penalty on all written assignments turned in late. Late papers will receive a grade reduction for every day they are late (i.e.: A- to B+, B+ to B etc.). Essays should be uploaded to Canvas.

- Essay 3 (5-6 pages): 30% of final grade. Due on: December 7th, 11:59pm.

Calendar

Week 1

- Tuesday, September 27th: Course introduction
- Thursday, September 29th: *1919*

Week 2

- Tuesday, October 4th: *1919*

Essay Prompt 1

- Thursday, October 6th: *Metamorphoses*, books 1 and 3

Week 3

- First Writing Workshop
- Tuesday, October 11th: *Metamorphoses*, books 4, 5, and 6

Draft Paper 1 due (uploaded to Canvas)

- Thursday, October 13th: *Metamorphoses*, books 14 and 15

Week 4

- Tuesday, October 18th (at the Oriental Institute): *Arabian Nights*, “Introduction” (xi-xxxvi) & pp. 3-80

Paper 1 due (on Canvas)

- Thursday, October 20th: *Arabian Nights*, pp. 189-248

Week 5

- Tuesday, October 25th: *Arabian Nights*, pp. 416-518

Essay Prompt 2

- Thursday, October 27th: *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, Author’s preface (pp. 453-67), 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 8, 13, 14, 18, 25

Week 6

- Second Writing Workshop
- Tuesday, November 1st: *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio* 27, 30, 34, 35, 40, 41, 44, 48, 54

Draft Paper 2 due (on Canvas)

- Thursday, November 3rd: *Strange Tales from a Chinese Studio*, 59, 62, 65, 71, 78, 82, 89, 96, 97, 104

Week 7

- Tuesday, November 8th: *Wild Tales* (2014), by Damián Szifron

Paper 2 due (on Canvas)

- Thursday, November 10th: *Mules and Men*, Part 1, Books 1-5

Week 8

- Tuesday, November 15th: *Mules and Men*, Part 1, Books 6-10
- Thursday, November 17th: *Mules and Men*, Part 2

Essay Prompt 3

Week 9: Thanksgiving break

Week 10

- Third Writing Workshop
- Tuesday, November 29th: *The Gleaners and I* (2000), by Agnès Varda

Draft Paper 3 due (on Canvas)

- Thursday, December 1st: “The Storyteller,” by Walter Benjamin Week 11
- Tuesday, December 6th: **Paper 3 due (on Canvas)**

Class policies

- Absences: Absences are excused for personal illness, family emergencies, jury duty, and religious holidays; they usually require a note from Student Health Services or from your advisor. If you have to miss a class, you are responsible for informing me in advance. You are allowed one unexcused absence for the quarter. Every other unexcused absence will negatively

impact your class grade. If you have five or more unexcused absences, you cannot pass the course.

- **Classroom etiquette:** In order to foster an academic environment where everyone feels comfortable sharing their thoughts, please participate in class in a considerate way. Listen to your classmates with generosity and if you wish to speak, raise your hand. We will discuss delicate issues such as violence and discrimination throughout this quarter so I expect class discussion to proceed in a manner that is respectful of diversity in all its forms and across all dimensions of identity, social location, and experience.
- **Required texts:** Always bring a hard copy of the text of the day.
- **Use of electronics:** If you use a laptop or a tablet to take notes, please refrain from accessing any social network or any other webpage. It can be distracting both to you and to your classmates. Similarly, do not use your cell phone during class.
- **Recording:** Students are not allowed to record a class without permission of the instructor. University guidelines can be found in the following link:

<https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/administrative-policies/additional-administrative-regulations/petitions-audio-video-recording-on-campus/>

Covid-19 protocol

If you have tested positive for Covid-19, the university guidelines recommend that you return to in-person activities only after 5 days have passed since your test result AND IF you have had no fever or other Covid-related symptoms in the last 24 hours. Additionally, it is recommended that you wear a face mask indoors up to day 10 after testing positive. As an instructor, I cannot impose any rules but I suggest you use your common sense and think of your own health as well as that of your classmates and teachers. If you have any Covid-related symptoms, the university also recommends that you isolate and get tested.

In case I contract Covid-19, I will let you know about it at least two hours before our class and, if my symptoms are mild, I will send you a Zoom link so we can keep up with our calendar without a significant setback.

Disability services

A student who wishes to request an academic modification or adjustment should complete a Request for Disability Accommodations Form, available on the Student Disability Services website. Once you are registered with SDS, please email me as soon as possible so that we can take the necessary steps. Please review the university's guidelines:

<https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/university-policies/disability-accommodations/>

Academic honesty and plagiarism

Always use your own words. When quoting from any source –books, articles, Wikipedia, the Web – always (a) indicate that you are quoting, (b) identify what you are quoting, and (c) provide footnotes identifying your source. When paraphrasing or summarizing another’s views, be sure to provide footnotes identifying your source. “It is contrary to justice, academic integrity, and to the spirit of intellectual inquiry to submit another’s statements or ideas as one's own work. To do so is plagiarism or cheating, offenses punishable under the University's disciplinary system. Because these offenses undercut the distinctive moral and intellectual character of the University, we take them very seriously.” You can find our academic honesty guidelines at <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu/academic-policies/academic-honesty-plagiarism/>

The University of Chicago: Humanities Common Core
Reading Cultures 2: Mobility
Winter 2023

Course description: In the winter quarter of the Reading Cultures sequence we will continue to refine and deepen the interpretive and analytical skills we began to develop in the fall, now turning to the theme of travel and mobility, as it appears in various cultural contexts—for instance: from Homeric Greece to the period of antebellum slavery in the United States or the Texas-Mexico borderlands of the 1940s. We will explore how travel has been involved in ideas about the development of the self, and how questions of movement and location play a part in the formation and performance of identity. Our particular focus will be the concept of cross-cultural travel. How has the movement of people between different cultures shaped and facilitated new visions of the world?

Required texts (all available at Seminary Co-op Bookstore):

Homer, *Odyssey*. Trans. Emily Wilson. ISBN 978-0393089059

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

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

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

Yoko Tawada, *Where Europe Begins: Stories*. New Directions, ISBN 978-0811217026

Other materials will be made available on the course Canvas website.

Two films will also be discussed: Rainer Werner Fassbinder, *Ali Fear Eats the Soul* (1974) and Alfonso Cuarón, *Y Tu Mama También* (2001).

Requirements:

--- All assigned readings and materials, regular attendance, active participation in class discussion, completion of mini-assignments such as “bring a word from the reading to class” or “come with a question about the reading,” in-class presentations. (Total: 25% of final grade)

--- Three writing assignments:

- Essay 1 (3 pages) 20% of final grade

- Essay 2 (4 pages) 25% of final grade

- Essay 3 (5 pages) 30% of final grade

Submitting assignments on time is essential for me to be able to provide feedback on your work. With that in mind, grades for late work will be reduced by one-third a letter grade (i.e. from a B+ to a B) for every day past the due date. All papers must have 1” margins on all sides, be double-spaced and use Times New Roman 12 font. Essays should be submitted as electronic copies on Canvas. Participation means punctual arrival to class. It also implies that you have read all of the assigned materials carefully and that you engage actively in class discussion. You should come to class prepared with specific observations, questions, and discussion points about the readings. Each of you will be responsible for making comments in every class.

Each of you is also responsible for holding one in-class presentation (ca. 7 minutes). The schedule for presenters is listed below (going by alphabetical order of last names).

Attendance:

Because class discussion is at the heart of this course, you are required to be in class, and what we do in the course of our class meetings will determine a portion of your grade. I will take student attendance at the beginning of each class. Absences are excused for personal illness, family emergencies, jury duty, and religious holidays. You are allowed 1 unexcused absence for the quarter. Every other unexcused absence will negatively impact your class participation grade. Participation means punctual arrival to class. Using your phone during class or going outside repeatedly will negatively affect your class grade. Please be in touch with me if you have a condition that requires you to leave the classroom during class time. Coming late to class or being disruptive during class time will also negatively impact your final grade. *If you have more than five absences, you cannot pass the course.*

Please keep in mind that this course is a graduation requirement of all University of Chicago students. You are expected to attend all writing seminars led by your Writing Specialist. Attendance is mandatory and is a requirement to graduate from the College.

Schedule (subject to change):

Week 1:

T (Jan 3): Introduction

Th (Jan 5): Homer, *The Odyssey*: books 1-4

Week 2:

T (Jan 10): Homer: books 5-10
Essay Prompt 1

Th (Jan 12): Homer: books 11-14

Week 3

T (Jan 17): Library Visit, books 11-14 cont.

Th (Jan 19): Homer: books 15-20

Week 4

T (Jan 24): Homer: books 21-24 cont.

Th (Jan 26): *Ali Fear Eats the Soul* Rainer, Werner Fassbinder (1974)
Paper 1 due (on Canvas by 10 am)
Essay Prompt 2

Week 5

T (Jan 31): Jacobs, *Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl*: Intro and chapters 1-10

Th (Feb 2): Jacobs: chapters 11-27

Week 6

T (Feb 7): Jacobs chapters 28-end; Jacobs: “Contexts:” pages 160-200

Th (Feb 9): Kincaid, *A Small Place*: pages 1-37

Week 7

T (Feb 14): Kincaid: pages 38-end

Th (Feb 16): Film discussion: *Y tu mamá también* (Alfonso Cuarón; 2001)
Paper 2 due (on Canvas by 10 am)

Week 8

T (Feb 21): Rivera, *And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*: first half

Th (Feb 23): Rivera, second half
Essay Prompt 3

Week 9

T (Feb 28): Tawada, “Where Europe Begins” [only the individual story within the collection]

Th (Mar 2): Tawada, “A Guest”

FINAL PAPER: must be uploaded to Canvas by Thursday, March 9, 2023 at midnight.

Diversity

In my experience, productive discussion and learning arise in an inclusive classroom that is welcoming of diverse perspectives, experiences, and backgrounds. I aim, then, to cultivate such an environment by structuring the course and activities in a manner that is respectful of diversity in all its forms and across all dimensions of identity, social location, and experience. I expect class discussion to proceed in the same spirit. I welcome suggestions on how to enhance the inclusivity of the class, so please do be in touch with any thoughts or questions about this.

Academic Integrity:

Please note that an important element of academic integrity is fully and correctly attributing any materials taken from the work of others. Feel free to consult with me before completing assignments if you have concerns about the correct way to reference the work of others. More generally, please familiarize yourself with the University’s policy on academic honesty, which applies to this course. Of course, I do not anticipate any problems with

academic integrity. In the unlikely event that any concerns do arise regarding this matter, I will forward all related materials to the College for further review and action. Acting with academic integrity means, in brief, not submitting the statements, work, or ideas of others as one's own. Always use your own words. When quoting from any source –books, articles, Wikipedia, the Web –always (a) indicate that you are quoting, (b) identify what you are quoting, and (c) provide footnotes identifying your source. When paraphrasing or summarizing another's views, be sure to provide footnotes identifying your source. Failure to maintain academic integrity on an assignment will result in a penalty befitting the violation, up to and including failing the course and further University sanctions. For more information, consult the student manual: <https://studentmanual.uchicago.edu>

Special Accommodations:

This class respects and welcomes students of all backgrounds, identities, and abilities. If there are circumstances that make our learning environment and activities difficult, please let me know. I am committed to creating an effective learning environment for all students, and I can do so if you discuss your needs with me as early as possible. I will not inquire about your reasons for adjustments; I will ask only about your learning needs. Please work with Student Disability Services to acquire specific accommodations due to a disability and an Accommodation Determination Letter. Reach them here: 773-702-6000, or at disabilities@uchicago.edu.

Zoom Etiquette (in case we have to switch to Zoom)

Should we need to switch to Zoom: There is an expectation that students in this course will be actively engaged and on camera while on Zoom. If a student requires an exception, they will need to reach out to the instructor directly.

Always mute yourself when not speaking. To be recognized in class, use the "raise hand" icon under "participants" or just raise your hand. You may also use the "chat" function to make comments or ask questions.

Recording and Deletion Policies

The Recording and Deletion Policies for the current academic year can be found in the Student Manual under Petitions, Audio & Video Recording on Campus.

- Do not record, share, or disseminate any course sessions, videos, transcripts, audio, or chats.
- Do not share links for the course to those not currently enrolled.

Paper guidelines and grading rubric: “A” or “A-” papers meet these standards. Consult the helpful information at:

<https://writing-program.uchicago.edu/undergrads/wic0intro>.

1.FORMAT:

- your name, the date, and course information in the header/footer of the first page
- double-spaced
- 1” margins
- 12-point type
- page numbers
- quotations properly formatted and cited

2. ARGUMENTATION:

a. Thesis statement (claim): The thesis is a significant and nuanced claim. For a claim to be nuanced, it must be something with which an intelligent and reasonable person could disagree, and to be significant it must state a hypothesis about the resolution of the problem the introduction introduces.

b. Evidence: Each claim is supported by appropriate evidence from the text. You must analyze (and not just summarize) the evidence placed before the reader.

c. Reasoning: The claim or series of claims this paper makes and the evidence used to support these claims are connected through sound reasoning and explicitly stated; this is also called a warrant and we will expand later in the quarter.

d. If abstract concepts (e.g., heroism, society, humanity, pride) are important to the argument of this paper, then these concepts are defined in terms of the text.

e. Logical development: Each paragraph in this paper builds upon the one that precedes it as an element in a logically unfolding argument.

3. DESIGN:

a. Set-Up and Wrap-Up: The introduction and conclusion are coherent and compelling. The intro grabs the reader's attention, articulates a problem in the text, and presents the beginnings of a solution. The conclusion does not simply repeat the points made in the introduction but rather ties up the multiple strands in the paper, articulates what the paper has accomplished, and also reflects upon the larger implications of the paper's argument.

b. Macro-Organization: You have made good use of the space allowed to make your argument. Good macro-organization: logical order of the paragraphs, each with a different point. Poor macro-organization: pointless paragraphs, repetition, irrelevant details, and stylistic verbosity.

c. Micro-Organization: At the paragraph and sentence level, good micro-organization is achieved when each individual paragraph has a clear point, and every point is well placed (generally at the beginning or end of a paragraph, containing a strong "topic sentence"). Poor micro-organization is marked by irrelevant details, or by a paragraph containing two closely related but ultimately distinct sub-claims/points or topics, or by distracting wordiness. (Example: "wordiness" is preferred over "stylistic verbosity and prolixity").

d. Mechanics: All quotations are properly introduced and smoothly integrated into your prose. This entails avoiding an over-reliance on lengthy quotations or unnecessary clusters of quotations, as well as being attentive to where the reader will want more specific information about an idea. The paper is free from grammatical errors and errors of idiom. The paper is properly formatted. The paper uses consistent citation style (endnotes, footnotes, or bibliography).

The following **standards**, developed by Harry Edmund Shaw and taken from Frederic V. Bogel and Katherine K. Gottschalk, ed's, *Teaching Prose* (New York: W.W. Norton, 1984), pp. 150-151, will additionally be used in grading all written assignments in this course:

A Detailed understanding of the text; sound organization; few or no mechanical mistakes; clear, unambiguous sentences, perhaps with a touch of elegance—in the best A papers, a lively and intelligent voice seems to speak; it has something interesting to say, says it clearly and gracefully to an appropriate audience, and supports it fully.

B Clear thesis, organization, and continuity; probably some minor mechanical errors but no major ones; slightly awkward style at times; ideas that are reasonable and are anchored

in the text—thought has obviously gone into the paper; it is solid but not striking; the writer has a definite point to make and makes it in an organized and competent way, and to a definite audience...it's "good but not great."

C A weak, fuzzy thesis and perhaps illogical arguments to support it; a certain amount of confusion about what the text at hand actually says; many mechanical errors and perhaps some major ones (such as incomplete sentences); examples given for their own sake or to demonstrate that the writer has read the text, not to prove a point; organization rambles or disappears; words are misused; diction is inconsistent; proofreading is weak; the intended audience is unclear—there are some ideas here, but the writer needs help and work to make them clear to another reader.

D Thesis missing; major mechanical problems; poor organization; serious misreadings of the text; stretches in which the writer simply gives a narrative account of the essay for no apparent purpose; the paper is much shorter than the assigned length—the writer doesn't really have a point to make and has serious problems in writing and reading at an appropriate level.

F The paper is plagiarized in part or as a whole, or it shows general weaknesses even greater than those of a D paper.

**HUMA 14100 - Reading Cultures III: Exchange
Spring 2023**

CORE TEXTS TO PURCHASE:

Honoré de Balzac, *Père Goriot*. Penguin.
Richard Wright, *Native Son*. Harper

CORE TEXTS AVAILABLE ON CANVAS:

Mauss, *The Gift*. Trans. Jane Guyer. UChicago Press.
Karl Marx, *The Marx-Engels Reader*, ed. Robert C. Tucker. Norton.
James Baldwin, "Many Thousands Gone," and "Everybody's Protest Novel"
Herman Melville, "Paradise of Bachelors"
Xiao Hong, "Hands"

COURSE SCHEDULE

WEEK 1

Mon March 20 Karl Marx, "Communist Manifesto" (1848)
Wed March 22 Marx, excerpt from *Capital* (1867)
Friday March 24 Assignment 1 Due on Canvas by midnight

WEEK 2

Mon March 27 Honoré de Balzac, *Old Goriot* (1835), Chapter 1-2
Wed March 29 Balzac, Chapter 3

WEEK 3

Mon April 3 Balzac, Chapter 4-5
Wed April 5 Balzac, Chapter 6
Friday April 7 ESSAY 1 DUE on Canvas by midnight

WEEK 4

Mon April 10 Herman Melville, "The Paradise of Bachelors and the Tartarus of Maids" (1855)
Wed April 12 Puccini, *Il Tabbaro* (1910/1994)

WEEK 5

Mon April 17 Marcel Mauss, *The Gift* (1925), Introduction and Chapter 1

Wed April 19 Mauss, Chapter 4

Friday April 21 Assignment 2 Due on Canvas by midnight

WEEK 6

Mon April 24 Xiao Hong, "Hands" (1936), + Introduction

Wed April 26 *Modern Times*, dir. Chaplin (1936)

Friday April 28 ESSAY 2 DUE on Canvas by midnight

WEEK 7

Mon May 1 Richard Wright, *Native Son*, pp 1-120

Wed May 3 Wright, pp 120-210

WEEK 8

Mon May 8 Wright, pp 210-340
In Class: Nikki Giovanni, "Nikki-Rosa"

Wed May 10 Wright pp 340-430
Optional: Wright, "How Bigger Was Born"

Friday May 12 Assignment 3 Due on Canvas by midnight

WEEK 9

Mon May 15 Baldwin, "Everybody's Protest Novel," "Many Thousands Gone"

Wed May 17 *Parasite*, dir. Bong (2019)

WEEK 10 – no class meetings

Tues May 23 ESSAY 3 DUE on Canvas by midnight