

Literatures of Asia Section 01

ENGL 123D

Spring 2025 In Person 3 Unit(s) 01/23/2025 to 05/12/2025 Modified 01/24/2025

Contact Information

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s): Meghan Gorman-DaRif

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 11:15-1:15 (via Zoom or FOB 216) and by appointment

Class Days/Time: MW 1:30-2:45 (SH 413)

Course Information

This section of Literatures of Asia examines literature in English produced in the last century from a variety of time periods and perspectives in India, with special attention to how authors engage in their texts with the image of the Indian nation and its history. We will pay particular attention to the contexts of colonialism, the caste system, gender and religious identities, and how authors both represent and encourage modes of resistance to dominant discourse, as well as engage with and reimagine particular historical events in India. This course is not meant to be a complete survey in Indian literature, but instead aims to introduce students to some of the themes that have emerged in postcolonial Indian fiction over the last fifty years, and the historical, political, and social contexts from which such writing emerges.

Course Description and Requisites

Course examines the literatures of Asia including the historical, cultural, and political contexts from which they emerge.

Satisfies SJSU Studies Area V: Cultures and Global Understanding.

Prerequisite(s): Completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

Attendance: Your success in this class will largely be dependent on your attendance and active participation in our course discussions, as well as keeping closely up to date with our reading schedule. Staying on top of lecture and reading material will result in a better understanding of the material, which will translate into higher grades across all assignments. Please plan accordingly and develop a schedule to manage the variety of assignments for this course, including readings and written assignments

Scholastic Honesty: Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to all drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the appropriate Dean's office on campus. **Please note that any writing developed through the use of ChatGPT is, by definition, plagiarism (since ChatGPT does not cite or credit its sources).**

☰ Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the [GE website](#).

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and

punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature

Department Office: FO 102

Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (<https://www.sjsu.edu/english>)

Department email: english@sjsu.edu (<mailto:english@sjsu.edu>)

Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area V Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area V course, students should be able to:

1. Analyze historical, social, and/or cultural significance of creative works of human expression (examples include, but are not limited to, written works, images, media, music, dance, technologies,

- designs), from at least one cultural tradition outside the United States;
2. Examine how creative works of human expression [as defined in #1] outside the United States have influenced the United States' cultures;
 3. Explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external influences;
 4. Appraise how the study of creative works of human expression from outside the United States shapes one's own understanding of cultural experiences and practices.

The General Education Learning Outcomes for this course and the coursework that link to those outcomes are described below:

<p>GEALO 1: Analyze historical, social, and/or cultural significance of creative works of human expression (examples include, but are not limited to, written works, images, media, music, dance, technologies, designs), from at least one cultural tradition outside the United States;</p>	<p>Close reading, analysis, critique, and discussion of course texts and outside research as measured by weekly blog posts focused on comparisons between texts, and the final research paper which synthesizes both primary and secondary texts as well as outside research.</p>
<p>GEALO 2: Examine how creative works of human expression [as defined in #1] outside the United States have influenced the United States' cultures;</p>	<p>Course lectures, particularly those focused on recommended secondary texts, as well as second major paper assignment on contextual analysis.</p>
<p>GEALO 3: Explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external influences;</p>	<p>Course lectures, readings, blog posts, and discussions, as well as contextual analysis essays.</p>
<p>GEALO 4: Appraise how the study of creative works of human expression from outside the United States shapes one's own understanding of cultural experiences and practices.</p>	<p>Blog posts, class discussions.</p>

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 3000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

The GE writing requirement will be met in this class by means of weekly blog posts and a series of written assignments with an aggregate word count of 5,000+ words, as follows:

Blog Posts: 300 words/week

Short Writing Assignments: 250-500 words/each

Paper 1: 1000-1500 words

Paper 2: 1000-1500 words

Course Materials

Untouchable (1935) Mulk Raj Anand ISBN: 978-0143027805

Shadow Lines (1988) Amitav Ghosh ISBN: 978-0618329960

The God of Small Things (1997) Arundhati Roy ISBN: 978-0812979657

White Tiger (2008) Aravind Adiga 978-1416562733

Course Requirements and Assignments

There will be a series of short writing assignments leading up to 2 analytical essays. Students will have the opportunity to revise the first essay. Should you choose to revise, the deadline for revisions is one week from the date you receive your paper back with comment. Grade breakdown as follows:

Short Writing Assignments 15%

Essay 1 25%

Essay 2 25%

Weekly Blog Posts 20%

Quizzes 10%

Participation 5%

Blog Posts

You will be asked to contribute to the course blog at least once a week. Your contributions will include both an original post (300 words) and a response to a classmate's post (50-100 words). **Original posts are due Sunday at midnight; responses are due Wednesday by the time class meets.** Blogs should center on the course readings for that upcoming week, focusing on critical analysis through close reading skills and/or addressing texts' social, political, and historical contexts to produce analytical readings as discussed in class. Blog posts should make an argument about some element of the text, as well as providing support for the argument with textual evidence and your own interpretation and analysis of the evidence to support

your point or idea. The audience for this will be your peers - educated readers familiar with the text - therefore, the goal is to produce a value-added piece of writing for the class that hinges on persuading your readers that your interpretation is valid (though debatable). Examples might include: a pattern or theme you have noticed developing in the text, and what you think the author is trying to reveal through it; a close reading of a particular scene in an attempt to get at its possible meaning or implications; the use of outside research to **contextualize** the text and make an argument about it; a consideration of how the text's conditions of production may relate to or influence its meaning, etc. These posts are designed for you to be able to practice your analytical skills, and receive substantive weekly feedback on your writing and critical thinking in preparation for our longer writing assignments, and to encourage attentive reading practices to facilitate class discussion.

Close Reading Exercises and Research Summaries

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to complete structured close reading exercises to practice and fine-tune this skill leading up to essay assignments. In addition, you will also be asked to complete several research summaries in preparation for the research component of papers. These summaries will include an MLA citation of the summarized source, a brief review of the venue of the text, and a concise summary of the text's argument. These assignments are intended to provide support for developing ideas for essays, as well as to provide frequent opportunities for feedback on close reading and research skills necessary for successful completion of the larger writing assignments. **You will be required to complete at least one of the close reading assignments, and at least two of the research summaries.** You can and are encouraged to do more – as they directly contribute to the development of major papers and give you more opportunities to get feedback on your ideas and writing along the way.

Quizzes

You will be quizzed on reading, viewing, and lecture materials covered in readings or during class time. If you are regularly attending class and keeping up with readings, these should be an easy way to keep your grade up – I see them as built-in accountability to encourage you to stay on top of materials.

Participation

As you may have discovered, active participation is key to success the classroom. Active participation will help us develop a community to discuss ideas, collaborate, and discover new insights into the texts through the perspectives of others. Participation includes more than merely attending class, as I expect each of you to arrive prepared by having carefully read assigned readings, and to actively participate in full class discussions and smaller group discussions and in class projects and activities. Part of this active engagement in class and participation in the group dynamic of the classroom is to keep your cell phone away and your computer screen only open to Canvas or note-taking software.

Contextual Analysis Papers

Length: 1000-1,500 words double-spaced, plus a separate Works Cited list. Use standard margins and 12-point Times New Roman font.

Essay Guidelines: The purpose of this essay is to analyze how a text responds to one specific historical issue at the time of writing. The goal is not to write a comprehensive explanation of the whole book, but to focus closely on a set of passages, verbal patterns, or recurring images that can help readers understand one specific aspect of the text's relationship to its particular time and place.

Your **introduction** should briefly introduce the context you're focusing on and state your **thesis**: your central argument about how you think the author represents or implicitly responds to a specific cultural/historical/political issue.

In your **body paragraphs**, provide background information to orient readers to your historical issue, and use textual analysis to explain how you think the author is representing or responding to this issue. You might choose to focus closely on one or two passages or gather a range of quotations from across the book. Your Contextual Analysis Paper will develop the same skills you've practiced in the close reading exercises: analyzing the significance of the author's formal choices, such as their word choice, tone, selection of detail, and use of metaphors. For this paper, you'll be focusing on **how those formal details reveal the author's response to a specific cultural/political/social conflict**.

Research: This assignment requires you to gather evidence from outside of your main literary text. You are required to incorporate **at least 2 (1st paper)-3 (2nd paper) credible scholarly sources**: these could include sources that provide background information on your historical topic, critical essays that make an argument related to your historical topic, or other sources as appropriate such as a relevant primary text. Cite all of your sources within the paper using parenthetical citations (Author #), and include a Works Cited page citing all 2/3 sources in MLA style.

To locate sources in the SJSU library system, visit the MLK Library's English and Comparative Literature research guide: <https://libguides.sjsu.edu/english>. The research guide includes contact information for the English and Comparative Literature librarian, who can help with research questions. For more guidance, please visit my office hours, the Writing Center, or the MLK Library's Research help desk.

For a C or above, your paper must be at least 1000 words long, incorporate 2/3 sources, and include a debatable thesis statement about your selected text's relation to one specific historical context. If your paper meets these basic requirements, I will assess your grade based on the following criteria, listed in order of importance:

- *Argument*: Does the paper develop a compelling argument about how the author represents and responds to a specific historical context, rather than just summarizing the book and listing contextual information? Does the evidence in your body paragraphs support your argument?
- *Historical specificity*: Do you ground claims about the author's historical and cultural context in your research, rather than making assumptions? For example, do you describe specific ways in which people were constrained at particular moments or in particular circumstances under colonialism, rather than vaguely stating that people were oppressed?
- *Organization*: Does the essay develop logically? Do you use transitions and topic sentences to link your paragraphs?
- *Integrating research*: Do you effectively incorporate your three sources? Do you frame each quotation or paraphrase with an explanation of its significance? Do you attribute ideas and phrases to their sources using in-text citations?
- *Presentation*: Is your paper free of grammatical errors and edited for style?

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9 \(PDF\)](http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf) (<http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the [Syllabus Information](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php) (<https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Course Schedule

Below is a table with the proposed weekly agenda for the semester. This is subject to change with fair notice. Notification of changes will be made via Canvas Announcements, or in class. Please make sure that your email on Canvas is your preferred email.

1/27	Introductions, syllabus, key ideas and concepts for the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none">· Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Ania Loomba in Chapter 1, "Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies": "Defining the terms" (pp. 19-39); "Colonialism and Literature" (pp. 81-103) · Introduction to <i>The Empire Writes Back</i>, Ashcroft et al (pp. 1-13) · Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction, 1: Colonialism and the Politics of Postcolonial Critique (pp. 1-11) <p>Recommended:</p> <p>"The global dispensation since 1945", by Neil Lazarus (Chapter 2 of The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies)</p> <p>Sivanandan, "Anticolonialism, National Liberation, and Postcolonial Nation Formation" in (Chapter 3 of The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies)</p>
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2/3	Defining the terms: postcolonialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Read <i>The Postcolonial Studies Reader</i>, Part IV, Nationalism: "Introduction", Frantz Fanon, "National Culture", and Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form" (Canvas) · <i>Grain of Wheat</i>, first half (Chapters 1-8) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Gikandi, "African literature and the colonial factor"
Unit One: Constructing the Nation		
2/10	Discussion: postcolonial literature and the nation, <i>Grain of Wheat</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Grain of Wheat</i>, second half (Chapter 9-end) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "Chapter 4: "Representing decolonization: <i>A Grain of Wheat</i>" in Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, by Simon Gikandi

2/17	Discussion of <i>Grain of Wheat</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Read <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> · Read <i>The Postcolonial Studies Reader</i>, Part IX: Gender, Sexuality and Identity, "Introduction", Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes", and Kirsten Holst Petersen, "Problems of a Feminist Approach to African Literature" <p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel</i>, Chapter 11: "The African novel and the feminine condition" by Nana Wilson-Tagoe · <i>Nation Writ Small</i>, "The Joys of Daughterhood"
	Unit Two: Expanding/Critiquing the Nation	
2/24	Discussion of <i>Joys of Motherhood</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Nervous Conditions</i> (half) · Elleke Boehmer "Independence" (pp. 180-222) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies, Lazarus, Chapter 11, "Feminism in/and postcolonialism, by Deepika Bahri, pp. 199-220) · Derek Wright, "African Literature and Post-Independence Disillusionment"

3/3	Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , feminism and postcolonialism, and Andrade's perspective in <i>The Nation Writ Small</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · <i>Nervous Conditions</i> (half) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "Bildung in Formation and Deformation: Dangarembga and Farah", Susan Z. Andrade
3/10	Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i> and the disillusion after initial perspectives on nationalism/anticolonialist movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Half of <i>God of Small Things</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "The Small Voice of History' In Arundhati Roy's <i>The God of Small Things</i>" by Anuradha Dingwaney Needham · Rob Nixon, <i>Slow Violence and the Environmentalism of the Poor</i>
	Unit Three: Postnational Mapping: Globalization and Climate Crisis	
3/17	Discussion of <i>God of Small Things</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finish <i>God of Small Things</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · "In Desire and In Death: Eroticism as Politics in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things'"

3/24	God of Small Things	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Read half of <i>The Hungry Tide</i>, to “Storms” <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · The Great Derangement, Amitav Ghosh · 41. The Myth of Authenticity, by Gareth Griffiths and 42. “Who Can Write as Other” by Margery Fee, in Post-colonial Studies Reader
SPRING BREAK		
4/7	<i>The Hungry Tide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finish <i>The Hungry Tide</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · ‘Dreams of revolt’, the ‘revolt of nature’: World literature and the ecology of revolution by Sharae Deckard, in World Literature and Dissent
4/14	<i>The Hungry Tide</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Half of <i>Oil on Water</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Marx and Harvey on Primitive Accumulation/Accumulation through dispossession
4/21	<i>Oil on Water</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Finish <i>Oil on Water</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Mark Bould, excerpts from <i>The Anthropocene Unconscious</i>

4/28	<i>Oil on Water</i>	Annotated Bibliography due Friday 5/2
5/5	Conferences for final papers	
5/12	Conferences for final papers	Final paper due 5/16