

ENGL 3331/CRN 28372: World Literature
“Intimate Public Spheres and the Politics of Translation”
Tu 12-1.20pm on zoom and asynchronous online
Dr. Marion Christina Rohrleitner
Spring 2021

Instructor: Dr. Marion Christina Rohrleitner

Virtual office hours (on email or zoom): Tuesdays 1.30-3.30pm, and by appointment

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Course content description:

In this class, we will read a total of **nine primary texts** - five novels, two novellas, one graphic novel, and one memoir. (Don't panic, most of them are only around 200 pages :). Our authors hail from geo-cultural spaces as diverse as Puerto Rico, Indochina/Vietnam, Germany, Colombia, Morocco, Zimbabwe, Iran, Mexico, and New Zealand, and they write in Spanish, French, German, or English. In addition, our authors' mother tongues include Arabic, Farsi, Māori, Shona, and Vietnamese; in our discussions we will address, for instance, colonial histories, which are one reason why European languages continue to dominate the publishing industry. All assigned texts are contemporary works that were published between 1981 and 2011, but they are set between 1898 and the early 2000s. Many texts engage with pivotal historical, cultural, and social events phenomena, such as the aftermath of Spanish colonization and the Spanish American War in the Caribbean and South America, the impact of French colonization on what is now Vietnam and Morocco, the Holocaust and its effect on national and individual identities in Germany and Austria, decolonization movements and their influence on shifting gender norms in Southern Africa and New Zealand, the 1979 Islamic revolution in Iran, and the 1985 earthquake in Mexico City.

The main thematic focus of our class is on representations of the **"intimate public sphere"** (Lauren Berlant's term) in contemporary fiction and non-fiction from around the globe; we will look, for example, at the culturally specific relationships between what is considered to be private - and part of the domestic or intimate sphere of family dynamics- and the realm of citizenship and the power dynamics between (gendered, racialized and classed) individuals and the state. About half of our texts focus on representations of romantic and/or sexual relationships, the other half are coming-of-age narratives in contemporary world literature; all texts address how values perceived as private are impacted by changing political and social environments – and vice versa.

Course goals:

- Define, trace the evolution of, and articulate differences between world and comparative literature
- Identify major theorists and be able to participate in key debates in the field of world literature
- Become aware of and theorize the possibilities and limitations of translation and recognize the force of markets in the dissemination of world literature
- Become more competent close readers of culturally and generically diverse texts
- Familiarize yourself with canonical and emerging contemporary writers from four continents
- Become conversant in some key aspects of postcolonial, feminist, affect, and translation theory
- Participate in scholarly debates on the complex relationship between literature and history in world literature
- Become fluent in the relationship between (classed, raced, gendered, etc.) individuals and the state
- Produce different genres of writing on world literature, such as film reviews, research papers, and personal reflection essays

Course delivery:

This is an online course that combines asynchronous and synchronous instruction. We will meet at the designated course time every Tuesday, from 12-1.20pm, on zoom. On Thursdays and Fridays we will engage in conversations on the discussion board, following up on or preparing for our zoom meetings on Tuesday.

Required texts:

Please note that I require you to **use hardcopies** of all assigned texts. Ebooks usually do not have page numbers and therefore make focused in-class discussion and documentation of your close readings impossible. You do not have to purchase your books at the UTEP bookstore if you can find more affordable copies online or in local bookstores, but please make sure to purchase the **assigned edition** whenever possible, so we are literally “on the same page” when we read and discuss the novels. To this end I added the correct ISBN numbers to the reading list below, in the order in which we will read the texts. All texts with the exception of *Whale Rider* are available at the UTEP bookstore.

Rosario Ferré. *Sweet Diamond Dust and Other Stories*. ISBN 0452277485.
Marguerite Duras. *The Lover*. 0007205007
Bernhard Schlink. *The Reader*. 9780375707971
Gabriel Garcia Márquez. *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*. 9781400034710
Fatima Mernissi. *Dreams of Trespass*. 978-0201489378
Tsitsi Dangarembga. *Nervous Conditions*. 978-0954702335
Marjane Satrapi. *The Complete Persepolis*. 978-0375714832
Guadalupe Nettel. *The Body Where I Was Born*. 978-1609807511
Witi Ihimaera. *The Whale Rider*. 978-0152050160

Note: Texts marked on the syllabus with an asterisk (*) are scholarly articles, available on JSTOR or MLA/Ebsco. It is paramount that we, as members of the College of Liberal Arts, frequently use databases that contain these scholarly articles; **if we do not access them, the university might cancel these (fairly expensive) subscriptions**, which will make future scholarly research all but impossible. I will therefore only post sources not readily available on these databases but will ask you to access the assigned scholarly articles yourselves. This will ensure that we keep our subscriptions and that you hone your research skills.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation

40%

A word of fair "warning": This is a reading, writing, and thinking intensive course – but I promise it will be worth your time. Students are expected to do all the required readings before or during the week in which they are due. Active participation in weekly zoom meetings, on the discussion board, and by posting short videos at the beginning and end of the course are **essential** to your success in this course. By active participation I mean acquiring all of the required books at least one week before we discuss the assigned text, doing all of the assigned readings, coming to each of our zoom meetings on time and with specific questions and comments in hand, and making contributions to the discussion board (see more specific guidelines below). Since this is a junior level class, I expect every one of you to ask concrete questions and offer specific comments on the assigned readings, volunteer questions and responses to both me and your classmates, actively participate in group work, and be active listeners to my mini-lectures and to your classmates' comments. You will be assessed not only the quantity but the **quality** of your contributions to class discussion. **Your attendance and participation grade consists of written and oral components:**

1. **Written participation on the discussion board**

- submit a total of **4 (1 for each unit) "quibbles" (a question or a critical comment)** over the course of the semester on one of the passages assigned in the novel and/or on the assigned scholarly article assigned for that Thursday on the discussion board on **Thursday by noon**. Each question/comment should be 150-200 words (excluding quotations) and raise a specific question/critical comment about to a clearly identified passage in the assigned novel and/or scholarly article. Be sure to incorporate the passage you are referencing via parenthetical documentation (will come in handy when you draft your research paper).

- submit a total of **4 responses (1 for each unit)** to your peers' questions or "quibbles" on the discussion board **by 5pm on Friday** over the course of the semester. Each response should be 150-200 words (excluding quotations), engage directly with your peers' questions or comments, and push all of our thinking further. Feel free to respond right after your peers submit on Thursday afternoon (during "class") for a more immediate exchange.
- Each question and each response can earn you **up to 50 points**, and will be graded on intellectual merit, originality of thought, and the quality and accuracy of your writing. You can therefore earn up to 400 points total for your 4 questions and 4 responses. These online conversations should demonstrate your sincere engagement with the primary and secondary sources and showcase your critical thinking and writing skills. They are also intended to help prepare you for our conversations on zoom the following Tuesday and for developing your ideas for the research paper.

2. Oral participation: weekly zoom meetings and 2 short videos

- submit 2 short (3-10 minutes) **videos** on BB: one introducing yourself and your interest in World Literature in the first week of classes, and one during exam week based on a letter you write to your "younger" self on the most important lessons you are taking away from the course. The final video replaces a final exam and should therefore be specific in your review of the course. Your first video can earn you 25 points, the final video up to 75 points, for a total of 100 points. Specific guidelines will follow.
- attend and actively participate in at least **12 our 15 zoom meetings on Tuesdays** from noon to 1.20pm. By active participation I mean coming to class with your book and concrete questions and comments in hand, offering to read specific passages, responding to my and your peers' questions, contributing to and leading an active conversation in breakout rooms. If you only attend and do not actively participate you will earn 10 points per zoom meeting. If you participate with meaningful comments you can earn up to 25 points per zoom session. In order to be counted as present you must **turn on your video**; feel free to use any background of your choosing. You may miss up to three zoom meetings without repercussions – this is intended to give you some flexibility in this online class. If you attend and participate in all 15 meetings, you can get extra credit for up to 75 points (25 points each).

Film review

20%

Texts associated with world literature are often adapted for the screen, which is another important - and often problematic - mode of translation. Based on a list of feature films, documentaries, or TV shows I will provide in the second week of classes, you are asked to write a professional journalistic film review, modeled in style, tone, and length after an existing publication that focuses on cultural production, such as *The Atlantic* or *The New Yorker*. Your review needs to feature a **minimum of 1000 words**, excluding title and apparatus. I will provide you with a list of suggestions and some successful samples in the second week of classes; note that this assignment requires you to engage in detail with an additional visual text. In your review you are also required to **connect** your film to one of the texts on our syllabus in a meaningful way. The deadline for your review is the **Friday of the last week in we discuss the text** that is relevant to your film, i.e. if you choose to write a review of Jean-Jacques Annaud's 1992 adaptation of *The Lover*, your review will be due on Friday, February 12; if you choose to do a review of Niki Caro's (controversial) adaptation of *Whale Rider*, your review will be due on Friday, April 30, and so on. Note that the film you review does not have to be an adaptation of one of the assigned texts; it can also just be thematically connected. For example, you could review the South African feature film *Life, Above All*, which features teenaged Chanda as the main protagonist and is set in contemporary Johannesburg, and connect it to the struggles of Tsitsi Dangarembga's young heroine Tambu in *Nervous Conditions*, set in the late 1960s in Rhodesia. It would be productive to use your review as a starting point for your final project to streamline the research process. Feel free to contact me early on with ideas early on - I look forward to discussing these ideas with you!

Project proposal and annotated bibliography

10%

Your submission consists of one document, made of two parts:

1. a **proposal**, consisting of 2-3 paragraphs, in which you offer an original tentative thesis on one or more of the assigned texts, and clearly showcase how your essay will contribute to existing scholarly conversations about the text of your choice. Ideally, focus on one of the key terms and/or key debates and offer a different and/or dissenting view.
2. an **annotated bibliography** featuring at least 3 scholarly articles taken from JSTOR and/or MLA/EBSCO only (NO Explicator please!). Only one of these 3 articles may be taken from the syllabus. I will post a sample project proposal and annotated bibliography on BB 2 weeks before the deadline. One week before your submission (**by noon on Monday, April 24**) you need to send me an informal email letting me know your primary text(s) and your research question/tentative thesis.

Your project proposal and annotated bibliography are due as ONE word.docx attachment on BB **by 5pm on Monday, May 3**. The purpose of this exercise is to increase accountability and responsibility for your scholarly work and to share your work with and receive feedback from a larger and well-informed public of peers. I strongly encourage you to come by for office hours to discuss your ideas and sources with me prior to submitting your proposal to maximize effectiveness. I will provide constructive feedback as quickly as possible. We will workshop these proposals in groups on **Zoom on Tuesday, May 4**, at noon.

Research Paper

30%

Your final project in this class is a research paper on one (or possibly more) of the texts assigned in this class in which you articulate an original argument that engages current theories and debates on contemporary world literature. Ideally, you will build on your work for your film review. Because this is a junior level class, and 23 of the registered students are seniors, there will be several students who wish to apply for graduate school in the following year; to do so, they need a writing sample – the work produced in this class can be used as the beginning of such an important document that is evidence of your ability to do independent research, engage current scholarship, and show your familiarity with scholarly writing in our academic discipline. In your research papers, students will offer a critical intervention in existing scholarly debates on the text, using your close readings and a clearly outlined theoretical framework. If productive and of interest to you, you are encouraged to connect our texts to current events. Your paper will be 10-12 pages long (Times New Roman font size 12, double spaced), excluding the works cited list, which forms the last page of your document. Feel free to draw on your research for your film review and/or your work on the discussion board. More details will be posted 3 weeks on BB before the deadline. The firm deadline for submission, as a word.docx attachment on BB, is **5pm on Tuesday, May 11**.

Grade breakdown

Attendance and Participation: 800 points	A= 1800-2000 90-100%
Film review: 400 points	B= 1600-1799 80-89.9%
Proposal and Annotated Bibliography: 200 points	C= 1400-1599 70-79.9%
<u>Research paper: 600 points</u>	D = 1200-1399 60-69.9%
Total: 2000 points	F = 0-1199 0-59.9%

Students with special needs:

If you have a documented disability and require specific accommodations, you will first need to contact the Center for Accommodations and Support Services (CASS) in the East Union Bldg., Room 106, within the first two weeks of classes. The Center for Accommodations and Support Services can be reached in the following ways:

Web: <http://www.utep.edu/cass>

E-Mail: cass@utep.edu

Phone: (915) 747-5148 voice or TTY

Fax: (915) 747-8712

I am very happy to make any reasonable accommodations for students with challenges and limitations due to disabilities, including learning disabilities. Please see me personally in the first two weeks, or make an appointment, to discuss any special needs you might have so that I may assist you in the best way possible. This is especially important in an online class. Thank you.

A word on blackboard and email netiquette:

Please check blackboard (BB) and your webmail **every day during the week**, especially if I announce to class that I will send you an email with an update. If you have any problems accessing blackboard, contact the IT help desk first. Inaction is not an acceptable response to technical difficulties. Please contact me on webmail (mcrohrleitner@utep.edu) if you have any urgent questions regarding assignments or course content. Responding to emails sent by your or your peers in a timely manner (within 24 hours during the week and 48-72 hours on the weekend and during holidays) is good professional practice and will be part of your participation grade. When sending me an email, remember to always put your course title in the subject line, to address me in an appropriate way, and to sign your emails with your full name, so I know who you are and in which context you are writing me. Do not send emails without proper address, signature, or messages that sound like an informal text message. This is a professional setting, and I expect everyone to act and write accordingly. Thank you! **Please note that I will not read or respond to emails during the weekend.**

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is an offense against academic honesty and any instance of plagiarism will immediately be handed over to the Dean of Students without exception, who will decide on your penalty. Be aware that we take all instances of plagiarism very seriously. Each plagiarized assignment will automatically receive 0 points. I do not accept revisions or late submissions, or assignments that do not meet the minimum length requirement of original work, therefore you will fail each even partially plagiarized assignment. Every time you use someone else's ideas or words in your papers you must reference the source - this is true for **both** direct quotations and paraphrasing of ideas. The same rules that apply to print sources also apply to web-based sources. You may safely assume that if you find a source on the Internet, so will I. If you have any questions or uncertainties, contact me well before your paper is due.

I also strongly encourage you to consult the following useful website:

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/589/2/>

Syllabus

Week One: January 19-24

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| Tuesday, January 19 | Zoom meeting #1: Introductions of students, professor, and course
Course expectations, goals, assignments, syllabus, etc.
What is World Literature? Why World Literature?
Some definitions and scholarly debates. |
| Thursday, January 21 | Discussion board: submit one "quibble" (a specific question or critical comment) on one of the assigned articles on World Literature for this week
* Damrosch, David. "What is World Literature"? <i>World Literature Today</i> , vol. 77, no. 1, 2003, pp. 9-14.
* Bassnett, Susan and David Damrosch. "Introduction: World Literature Meets Translation Studies." <i>Journal of World Literature</i> , vol. 1, 2016, pp.295–298.
* Dawes, Kwame. "Meeting at the Crossroads: Mapping Worlds and World Literature." <i>The Comparatist</i> , vol 36, 2012, pp. 292-299.
All articles available on BB and as pdf attachments on email. |
| Friday, January 22 | Introductory video due via email or on BB (Yuja or you tube link) by 5pm. |

UNIT ONE: Love in the Time of Colonialism: Puerto Rico and Indochina/VietNam

Week Two: January 25- 31

Tuesday, January 26 Zoom meeting #2
Discuss questions on syllabus, responses to last week's articles, databases, etc.
Sweet Diamond Dust (3-34)

Thursday, January 28 *Sweet Diamond Dust* (35-80)

Week Three: February 1-7

Tuesday, February 2 Zoom meeting #3
Sweet Diamond Dust (81-85)
*Jaffe, Janice A. "Translation and Prostitution: Rosario Ferré's *Maldito Amor* and
Sweet Diamond Dust." *Latin American Literary Review*, vol. 23, no. 46, 1995, pp.
66-82. Available on Jstor

Thursday, February 4 *The Lover* (7-49)

Week Four: February 8-14

Tuesday, February 9 Zoom meeting #4,
The Lover (50-101)

Thursday, February 11 *The Lover* (102-123)
*Ruddy, Karen. "The Ambivalence of Colonial Desire in Marguerite Duras's *The
Lover*." *Feminist Review*, no. 82, 2006, pp. 76-95. Available on Jstor.

UNIT TWO: Love in the Time of Fascism and Violence: Germany and Colombia

Week Five: February 15-21

Tuesday, February 16 Zoom meeting #5
The Reader (Part I: 3-83)

Thursday, February 18 *The Reader* (Part II: 87-163)

Week Six: February 22-28

Tuesday, February 23 Zoom meeting #6
The Reader (Part III: 167-218)
*Niven, Bill. "Bernhard Schlink's *Der Vorleser* and the Problem of Shame." *The
Modern Language Review*, vol. 98, no. 2, 2003, pp. 381-396. Available on Jstor.

Thursday, February 25 *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (3-47)
*Fochi, Anna. "The 'Acculturation' of the Translating Language: Gregory Rabassa
and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *Chronicle of a Death Foretold*." *Negotiating
Difference in the Hispanic World: From Conquest to Globalisation*, edited by Eleni
Kefala. Wiley-Blackwell, 2011, pp. 56-69. I will make this source available to
you as a pdf on BB.

Week Seven: March 1-7

Tuesday, March 2 Zoom meeting #7
 Chronicle of a Death Foretold (48-120)

UNIT THREE: Coming of Age on the Eve of Decolonization: Morocco and Rhodesia/Zimbabwe

Thursday, March 4 *Dreams of Trespass* (1-55)

Week Eight: March 8-14

Tuesday, March 9 Zoom meeting #8
 Dreams of Trespass (57-155)

Thursday, March 11 *Dreams of Trespass* (157-242)
 *Bourget, Carine. "Complicity with Orientalism in Third-World Women's Writing: Fatima Mernissis's Fictive Memoirs." *Research in African Literatures*, vol. 44, no. 3, 2013, pp. 30-49. Available on Jstor.

SPRING BREAK: March 15-21

Week Nine: March 22-28

Tuesday, March 23 Zoom meeting #9
 Nervous Conditions (1-77)

Thursday, March 25 *Nervous Conditions* (78-121)
 *Gorle, Gillian. "Fighting the Good Fight: What Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions* Says about Language and Power." *The Yearbook of English Studies*, vol. 27, 1997, pp. 179-192. Available on Jstor.

Week Ten: March 29-April 4

Tuesday, March 30 Zoom meeting #10
 Nervous Conditions (122-208)

UNIT FOUR: Girlhood revisited: Challenging gender norms in Iran, Mexico, and New Zealand

Thursday, April 1 *Persepolis* (3-110)

Week Eleven: April 4-11

Tuesday, April 6 Zoom meeting #11
 Persepolis (111-222)

Thursday, April 8 *Persepolis* (223-341)
 *Kelp-Stebbins, Katherine. "Global Comics: Two Women's Texts and a Critique of Cultural Imperialism." *Feminist Media Histories*, vol. 4, no. 3, 2018, pp. 135-156. I will make this source available to you as a pdf on BB.

Week Twelve: April 12-18

Tuesday, April 13 Zoom meeting #12
 The Body Where I Was Born (7-71; up to page break)

Thursday, April 15 *The Body Where I Was Born* (71-110)

* Perez Limón, Lilia Adriana "Visualizing the Nonnormative Body in Guadalupe Nettel's *El Cuerpo en que nació*." In *Mexican Literature in Theory*, edited by Ignacio M. Sánchez Prado. Bloomsbury Academic, 2018, pp. 211-226.
I will make this source available to you as a pdf on BB.

Week Thirteen: April 19-25

Tuesday, April 20 Zoom meeting #13
 The Body Where I Was Born (111-175)
 Guest: Dr. Sara Potter

Thursday, April 22 *Whale Rider* (1-54)

Week Fourteen: April 26-May 2

Monday, April 26 Send short email to me with selected primary text and tentative thesis **by noon**

Tuesday, April 27 Zoom meeting #14
 Whale Rider (55-92)

Thursday, April 29 *Whale Rider* (93-150)
 *Kennedy, Melissa. *Striding Both Worlds: Witi Ihimaera and New Zealand's Literary Traditions*. Rodopi, 2011, pp. 115-135.
 I will make this source available to you as a pdf on BB.

Week Fifteen: May 3-9

Monday, May 3 Submit final project proposals and annotated bibliographies on BB by 5pm.

Tuesday, May 4 Zoom Meeting #15
 Workshopping final project proposals and annotated bibliographies

Week Sixteen: May 10-14

Tuesday, May 11 Final project/research paper due by 5pm

Friday, May 14 Submit final videos by 5pm (in lieu of a final exam)

Fin