Instructor: Fusco
Office Hours: T 1:00-2:30
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ENG 480A: Studies in Comparative Literature

[Note: English 480A is a course in which texts from different national literatures and linguistic traditions are studied together in order to illuminate a specific historical or formal theme. Readings are in English and English translation. The sample course description, student learning outcomes, reading list, and class schedule that follows relate to the theme “Global Cities, Urban Lives.” However the language on Silver Plan Core Objectives and assessment applies in general to all iterations of the course.]

COURSE PREREQUISITES:

ENG 303: Introduction to Theory and Criticism

COURSE DESCRIPTION

“Global Cities, Urban Lives”

We live on a rapidly urbanizing planet: roughly 70 percent of the world’s people are expected to live in cities by 2050. This course will explore some of the compelling stories being told about this huge historical shift. We’ll consider the role city life has played in shaping modern experience, and ask about how that role is changing as new kinds of cities and city-dwellers come to the forefront on the world stage. Our reading (and viewing) will include fictional and non-fictional narratives, films, and comic art, almost all produced within the last decade. Their settings will encompass longtime global centers like London and New York; emerging megacities like Buenos Aires, Johannesburg, and Mumbai; and imaginary spaces like the science fiction writer China Miéville’s twin cities of Beszél and Ul Qoma. Together they’ll offer sometimes thrilling, sometimes unsettling, always fascinating literary perspectives on the processes of urbanization that are dramatically reshaping our world.

SILVER PLAN CORE OBJECTIVES

This course satisfies the following Silver Plan Core Objective:

CO11 (Global Contexts): Students will apply and evaluate modes of academic inquiry, creative expression, or results of research to problems in historical and contemporary global contexts. Students will articulate connections among local, national, and international contexts and evaluate the ways that historical and contemporary global influences affect their current situations.

ASSESSMENT OF SILVER PLAN CORE OBJECTIVES

The final paper assignment requires students to closely analyze texts from two distinct
global sites, with an emphasis on articulating the connections between them and comparing how their concerns are framed by their particular contexts. Students will need to support their analysis with research. The resulting papers will be evaluated using a rubric keyed to Student Learning Outcomes for CO11.

Course Objectives Students successfully completing this semester of English 480A will be able to:

- demonstrate the way literary representations are shaped by their distinctive local, national, international, and transnational contexts (CO11)
- deploy historical and sociopolitical knowledge and appropriate theoretical concepts to show how literary form can illuminate the contexts out of which texts emerge
- use comparative analysis to identify significant connections and contrasts among texts emerging out of diverse global contexts (CO11)
- mobilize their knowledge of literary urbanism to produce consequential oral and written literary criticism.

COURSE TEXTS The following required texts have been ordered at the university bookstore. They are listed in reading order. All should shortly be available on library reserve. Any additional readings will be made available via WebCampus.

- Teju Cole, Every Day is for the Thief
- Phaswana Mpe, Welcome to Our Hillbrow A
- Itaf Tyrewala, No God in Sight
- Katherine Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers
- César Aira, Shantytown
- China Miéville, The City and the City
- Abdelrahman Munif, Cities of Salt
- Rutu Modan, Exit Wounds

We will also screen two films in class:
- City of God (dir. Fernando Meirelles, 2002)
- Gangster’s Paradise: Jerusalema (dir. Ralph Ziman, 2008)

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADE BREAKDOWN

Short Paper 1 20%

Short Paper 20%

Informal Writing 20%

Final Paper (Assesses CO11) 40%

Papers and other writing. The course requires three formal papers: a 4-6 page paper due in Week 5; a 4-6 page paper due in Week 10; and a final 8-page paper due in Week 16.
Your first two paper assignments will each ask you to look closely at how a text of your choice illuminates some aspect of urban experience in its particular geographic location.

For your final paper (ASSESSES CO 11), you’ll be asked to closely analyze texts from two distinct international urban spaces, with an emphasis on articulating the connections between them and comparing how their renderings of urban experience are framed by their particular contexts. You will need to support your analysis with outside research.

There will be frequent informal writing assignments, to be completed during or outside of class time. In addition, each of you must sign up to formulate discussion questions on the assigned reading (in partnership with other class members) once over the course of the semester. These questions must be circulated to the rest of the class via e-mail at least a day before the class session in question, and will inform the content of my lecture.

GRADE SCALE:

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POLICY ON LATE WORK:

I do not accept late work

ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:

Regular attendance is a minimal prerequisite for effective participation in the class. I will record attendance, and a pattern of frequent absence, tardiness, and/or unpreparedness will most definitely affect your grade. More than three unexcused absences are grounds for failing the course. Your obligations extend beyond merely showing up, though. You are expected to come to class for each meeting on time and prepared to contribute to class discussion. You need to have done the reading in advance, and to have the day’s assigned texts in front of you during class. I will lecture briefly in most classes, but this is a discussion-based course and will not work without regular participation and engagement from everybody in the room. Note below that there is no separate component of the
grade assigned to class participation—in a discussion-centered class it would be misleading to give the impression that participation can be separated out as a small fraction of your overall grade. I will be paying close attention to your preparedness, contribution to class discussion, and effectiveness in in-class activities (including leading discussion). Excellent or unsatisfactory performance in these regards will have a multiplier effect on your overall grade, and exceptionally poor performance may be grounds for failing the course.

ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Cheating, plagiarism or otherwise obtaining grades under false pretenses constitute academic dishonesty according to the code of this university. Academic dishonesty will not be tolerated and penalties can include canceling a student's enrollment without a grade, giving an F for the course or for the assignment. For more details, see the University of Nevada, Reno General Catalog.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Any student with a disability needing academic adjustments or accommodations is requested to speak with the Disability Resource Center (Thompson Building, Suite 101) as soon as possible to arrange for appropriate accommodations. I will gladly comply with whatever measures the DRC recommends.

AUDIO AND VIDEO RECORDING

Surreptitious or covert video-taping of class or unauthorized audio recording of class is prohibited by law and by Board of Regents policy. This class may be videotaped or audio recorded only with the written permission of the instructor. In order to accommodate students with disabilities, some students may be given permission to record class lectures and discussions. Therefore, students should understand that their comments during class may be recorded.

ACADEMIC SUCCESS SERVICES

Your student fees cover usage of the Math Center (775) 784-4422, Tutoring Center (775) 784-6801, and University Writing Center (775) 784-6030. These centers support your classroom learning; it is your responsibility to take advantage of their services. Keep in mind that seeking help outside of class is the sign of a responsible and successful student.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATIONS

Your chance to evaluate this English course will appear two weeks before the last day of classes in the form of a new course on your WebCampus home page. This new course contains only the evaluation survey. These online course evaluations are extremely important to your instructor and to the Department of English, so please take a few minutes to complete your course evaluation when it becomes available. The evaluation is
completely anonymous and your comments can never be connected with your name. Instructors cannot see the evaluation course on WebCampus and will not have access to the contents of these evaluations until after final grades have been posted.

**SCHEDULE OF CLASSES, READINGS, AND ASSIGNMENTS**

WebCampus readings are indicated with a (w)

Week 1, M Introductory class

Week 1, W Rashmi Sadana, “The City as Literary Field” (w)

Week 2, M Teju Cole, Every Day is for the Thief, pp. 3-87

Week 2, W Cole, Every Day is for the Thief, pp. 88-162

Week 3, M Phaswane Mpe, Welcome to Our Hillbrow, pp. 1-62

Week 3, W Mpe, Welcome to Our Hillbrow, pp. 63-124

Week 4, M In-class screening of Gangster’s Paradise: Jerusalem

Week 4, W Discussion of film

Week 5, M Altaf Tyrewala, “Introduction” to Mumbai Noir (w) First paper (4-6 pages) due at the beginning of class today

Week 5, W Altaf Tyrewala, No God in Sight, pp. 1-102

Week 6, M Tyrewala, No God in Sight, pp. 103-202

Week 6, W Katherine Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers, “Prologue” and Chapters 1-3

Week 7, M Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chapters 4-8

Week 7, W Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chapters 9-13

Week 8, M Boo, Behind the Beautiful Forevers, Chapters 14-17 and “Author’s Note”

Week 8, W P. Sainath, “The Colour of Water” (w)

Week 9, M César Aira, Shantytown, pp. 3–85

Week 9, W Aira, Shantytown, pp. 87-162

Week 10, M In-class screening of City of God Second paper (4-6 pages) due at the beginning of class today

Week 10, W Discussion of film
Week 11, M China Mièville, The City and the City, pp. 3-105
Week 11, W Mièville, The City and the City, pp. 106-211
Week 12, M Mièville, The City and the City, pp. 212-314
Week 12, W Abdelrahman Munif, Cities of Salt, pp. 1-153
Week 13, M Munif, Cities of Salt, pp. 154-304
Week 13, W Munif, Cities of Salt, pp. 305-460
Week 14, M Munif, Cities of Salt, pp. 461-627
Week 14, W Rutu Modan, Exit Wounds, pp. 9-98
Week 15, M Modan, Exit Wounds, pp. 103-74
Week 15, W Prep day

Final 8-page paper due in my mailbox by 3 pm on Monday of Week 16