ENGL 2000-R11
Texts and Contexts: Contemporary Fiction
Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays, 6-9pm
Summer I 2020

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Course Description
This online hybrid course will examine some major writers of contemporary fiction, with particular emphasis on writers of color. Possible authors include Junot Diaz, Gish Jen, Jhumpa Lahiri, and others. Writing instruction will be a major part of the course. All real time sessions will occur from 6:00-7:30, and most will be followed by an asynchronous session of some kind.

Required Text
Jhumpa Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth* (available in the university bookstore).

Course Requirements
Midterm and Final Paper (35% each): Two 7-8 page papers analyzing one of our literary texts, using the critical and theoretical concepts discussed in class. The final paper will take the place of the final exam.

Close Readings (20%): A series of writing assignments designed to help you develop the skills necessary for insightful literary analysis. You will ultimately be expected to produce four close readings over the course of the semester.

Class Participation (10%): You will be expected to contribute actively to class discussion, both in real time and on asynchronous discussion boards. For guidelines on your class participation grade, see the sheet attached.

Policies
Attendance: You are allowed two absences. If you exceed the number of allowed absences, you will automatically fail the course. You will be counted absent if you come to class more than 15 minutes late, come to class late on a regular basis, come to class unprepared, or miss a scheduled appointment with the instructor.

Late Work: You are allowed two late assignments. If you exceed the number of allowed late assignments, you will automatically fail the course. If you do not submit late work within 24 hours of the original due date, you will automatically receive an F on the assignment.

Classroom Etiquette: You will be expected to behave respectfully toward your instructor, your classmates, the course materials, and the learning environment. If you behave disrespectfully on a consistent basis or in a particularly egregious way, you will be subject to penalties determined solely by the instructor’s discretion.
Plagiarism: Plagiarism is any act, deliberate or not, that misleads a reader about the source of ideas, language, or data in a piece of written work. The deception may be deliberate, in which case the plagiarism is a reflection of the personal integrity of the writer, or it may be accidental and a result of carelessness or ignorance of rules of attribution. In either case, the result is plagiarism and constitutes an act of academic dishonesty. If you plagiarize, you will be subject to severe disciplinary sanctions, including automatic failure in the course, suspension, or even expulsion from the University.

Accommodations: Under the Americans with Disabilities Act and Section 504 of the Vocational Rehabilitation Act of 1973, all students, with or without disabilities, are entitled to equal access to the programs and activities of Fordham University. If you believe that you have a disabling condition that may interfere with your ability to participate in the activities, coursework, or assessment of the object of this course, you may be entitled to accommodations. Please visit the Office of Disability Services online at <https://www.fordham.edu/info/20174/disability_services>.

Criteria for Class Participation
Your class participation will be graded on a scale from zero-to-four, four being the highest. Please note that, although I will make every effort to include as many voices as possible in discussion, it is ultimately up to you to participate in class.

Preparation
- Absent. (0 points)
- Present, not disruptive. (1 point)
- Adequate: knows basic reading facts, but does not show evidence of trying to interpret or analyze them. (2 points)
- Good: knows reading facts well, has thought through their implications. (3 points)
- Excellent: has analyzed reading exceptionally well, relating it to other course materials (e.g., other primary and secondary readings, other discussions, other courses, etc.). (4 points)

Frequency
- Does not participate. (0 points)
- Minimal. Tries to respond when called upon but does not offer much. (1 point)
- Adequate. Does not offer to contribute to discussion, but contributes to a moderate degree when called upon. (2 points)
- Good. Contributes well in a consistent and ongoing way. (3 points)
- Excellent. Contributes in a very significant, active, and ongoing way. (4 points)

Sophistication
- Does not participate. (0 points)
- Minimal. Offers brief contributions, showing little engagement with the conversation. (1 point)
• Adequate. Offers straightforward, unelaborated information (e.g., plot summaries straight from the reading). (2 points)

• Good. Offers interpretations and analysis of course material (i.e., more than just facts) to class. Responds to other students’ points; thinks through own points; questions others in a constructive way; offers and supports suggestions that may be counter to the majority opinion. (3 points)

• Excellent. Offers analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of readings: puts together discussion threads to develop new questions that take the class further into the material. Keeps analysis focused; responds very thoughtfully to other students’ comments; contributes to cooperative argument-building; suggests alternative ways of approaching material; and helps class analyze which approaches are appropriate. (4 points)

A Note on Our Historical Moment
Public events since the 2016 Presidential Election have legitimated ugly actions and set a tone that is fundamentally at odds with the aims of higher education. It is the values and pedagogies associated with the Fordham mission, however, that will continue to set the tone in our classroom. In the language of the university mission statement, these values include a “commitment to research and education that assist in the alleviation of poverty, the promotion of justice, the protection of human rights, and respect for the environment.” Members of this class can expect to continue an education that promotes “understanding of and reverence for ways of life other than their own,” and to continue their preparation “to live in and to contribute to an increasingly multicultural and multinational society.” As with all courses of study at Fordham, the aim of ours is to foster “life-long habits of careful observation, critical thinking, creativity, moral reflection, and articulate expression.” Fordham’s full mission statement is available online at: http://www.fordham.edu/info/20057/about/2997/mission_statement
Schedule of Readings and Assignments

The class will be divided into two groups. One group will hand in interpretive questions on the day’s reading, while the other group will submit close reading exercises. The groups will alternate from class to class. By the end of the semester, you should have a total of 4 close readings and 4 sets of interpretive questions.

Tuesday, May 26
Welcome to the Course
Real Time: Icebreakers and course expectations
Asynchronous: Review the lesson on “How to Do a Close Reading” on Blackboard

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Unit 1: Jhumpa Lahiri

Wednesday, May 27
Preparation: Read “Unaccustomed Earth” (3-59).
Close reading #1 due for Group A; interpretive questions #1 due for Group B
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: On our BB discussion board, find the forum on “Unaccustomed Earth,” and find the thread on the passage selected for discussion. Then do the following:
1) make at least one noteworthy observation at least 150 words in length;
2) pose an interpretive question about your observation;
3) find a question from another student, and explain why you think it’s worth examining;
4) offer a hypothesis that addresses the question you’ve selected.
You must complete these tasks before our next class meeting.

Thursday, May 28
Preparation: Read “Heaven-Hell” (60-83).
Close reading #1 due for Group B; interpretive questions #1 due for Group A.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before, but this time on “Heaven-Hell.”

Tuesday, June 2
Preparation: Read “A Choice of Accommodations” (84-127).
Close reading #2 due for Group A; interpretive questions #2 due for Group B.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before.

Wednesday, June 3
Preparation: Read “Only Goodness” (128-173).
Close reading #2 due for Group B; interpretive questions #2 due for Group A.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before.
Thursday, June 4
Preparation: Read “Nobody’s Business” (174-219).
Close reading #3 due for Group A; interpretive questions #3 due for Group B.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before.

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Unit 2: Writing Instruction
Tuesday, June 9
Preparation: None.
Real Time: No real-time session today.
Asynchronous: Review the lesson on thesis statements on Blackboard. Afterward, go to our BB discussion board, and find the forum on “Thesis Statements.” Post a thesis statement of your own devising, and explain whether and why you think it satisfies the criteria for successful thesis statements. Then find a fellow student’s thesis statement, evaluate whether it meets the criteria for successful thesis statements, and explain why or why not. You must complete this task before our next class meeting.

Wednesday, June 10
Preparation: Read all posts on the BB forum on thesis statements.
Real Time: We’ll workshop some of your thesis statements.
Asynchronous: Review the lesson on introductions on Blackboard.

Thursday, June 11
Preparation: Draft an introduction on one of the stories we read in the previous unit. Boldface your statement of the initial position, your destabilizing condition, your central and larger questions, and your thesis statement.
Real Time: We’ll workshop some of your introductions and conclusions.
Asynchronous: Review the lesson on conclusions on Blackboard.

Tuesday, June 16
Preparation: Revise your introduction, and draft a conclusion to go along with it.
Real Time: We’ll workshop some of your introductions and conclusions.
Asynchronous: Review the lesson on main claims and body paragraphs on Blackboard.

Wednesday, June 17
Preparation: Revise your introduction and conclusions, and draft a list of supporting main claims and at least one body paragraph.
Real Time: We’ll workshop some of your main claims and body paragraphs.
Asynchronous: None. Use the extra time to work on your midterm paper. I will be available for online meetings to help you with your papers from 7:30-9:00pm EST.

Thursday, June 18
Preparation: Continue working on your midterm papers
Real Time: I will be available for online meetings from 6-9pm.
Asynchronous: None.

Midterm papers will be due via Blackboard by Midnight, Friday, June 19
Revisions will be due 48 hours after I return the papers to you

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Unit 3: Jhumpa Lahiri, Continued

Tuesday, June 23
Preparation: Read “Once in a Lifetime” (223-51).
Close reading #3 due for Group B; interpretive questions #3 due for Group A.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: The usual.

Wednesday, June 24
Preparation: Read “Year’s End” (252-93).
Close reading #4 due for Group A; interpretive questions #4 due for Group B.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before.

Thursday, June 25
Preparation: Read “Going Ashore” (294-333).
Close reading #4 due for Group B; interpretive questions #4 due for Group A.
Real Time: We’ll conduct a collective close reading.
Asynchronous: As before.

Final Papers due via Blackboard by Midnight, Friday, June 26

Important Administrative Dates

Wednesday, May 27
Last day to drop/add

Monday, June 15
Last day to withdraw without incurring a WF, last day to designate a course pass/fail