

San José State University  
Humanities & Arts/English & Comparative Literature  
**English 117B: Global Film, Literature and Cultures**  
Spring 2016

**Instructor:** Dr. Julie Sparks

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**Professor Office:** Faculty Office Building 128

**Office Hours:** TBA

**Class meets:** Fridays 9:30-12:15

**Classroom:** Sweeney Hall 413

**Prerequisites:** Completion of GE core; Satisfaction of Writing Skills Test;  
Upper-division standing

**GE/SJSU Studies Category:** GE Area V: Culture, Civilization, and Global Understanding

**Course Description**

The focusing theme of this course will be journeys, especially journeys by young people. We will watch films from all over the world and read stories that depict people leaving home to seek their fortune, to escape strife or chase adventure, to find their father or seek a lover, or just to see the world beyond their little village.

By experiencing these vicarious adventures, students will learn to appreciate and understand the narratives that create and define cultural identity, explore cultural interaction, and illustrate cultural preservation and cultural difference over time. We also examine how the films utilize the approaches to story-telling differently from traditional fictional forms: especially plays, short stories and poetry. We will look at films and read texts that are written in, set in, or depict multiple time periods and world cultures.

The course is open to upper division students of any major and satisfies the Gen Ed requirement for Area V, global engagement.

**Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

1. Students shall be able to compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S. through the media of film and literature.
2. Students shall be able to identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture.
3. Students shall be able to explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures.
4. Students shall hone their reading, writing, researching, and critical thinking skills through the practice of intellectually challenging analyses.

Course objectives 1-3 will be accomplished through the readings, class discussions,

student research and presentations, while the various written assignments and the presentation will allow us to accomplish objective 4 and to assess our level of accomplishment in objectives 1-3.

**Required Readings:** The good news: this is a cheap class in terms of book costs. Most of the readings will be available as PDF files I will post online. The text of the play, *Man and Superman*, is also available online (Project Gutenberg), but I'd recommend the Barnes & Noble edition cited below because it is inexpensive (\$8) and has helpful footnotes. The play is also widely available in libraries.

However you get them, though, ALL of the readings need to be brought to class on the day we are reading them, as we will be doing *close* reading that requires physical access to the actual words. It is also essential that you read the works in full before class, and it's strongly recommended that you annotate them. There will be quizzes and reading responses to check comprehension, and these will be a significant portion of your grade.

- Excerpts from *Testament of Youth*, *The Motorcycle Diaries*, *Chasing Che* (memoirs)
- Excerpts from *Desert Flower* (memoir/biography)
- Andrew Lam essays: "Child of Two Worlds," "Letter to a Young Refugee," "Lost Photos"
- *Man and Superman* (play) by Bernard Shaw (Barnes and Noble Classics edition recommended)
- "A Gravestone Made of Wheat" (short story) by Will Weaver
- Reviews, analyses, and background articles on films and fiction (too numerous to list here).

**Required Films** These we will watch in class. Others you can watch on your own for your other projects and (if you wish) to write about for extra credit (see course Web site).

Films we'll all watch: **Swades** (India), **Ridicule** (France), **The Beautiful Country** (Vietnam/US), **Desert Flower** (Somalia/England), **Testament of Youth** (England/France), **Sweet Land** (US), **The Motorcycle Diaries** (South America), **Before Sunrise** (Austria)

**Other Readings** Supplementary reading material, in addition to the works listed above, will help give you historical background and cultural context for the main readings and films. Most of these will be posted on the course Web site. Shorter readings will be handed out on paper, as in days of yore.

**Academic Policies** You are responsible for reading the SJSU academic policies available online: <http://www.sjsu.edu/english/comp/policyforsyllabi.html>

**Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act** If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

## Academic Integrity

The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit, **or submitting your own work that you wrote for another class**) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student submitting them unless otherwise specified. **Turniti.com:** To receive credit, all essays for this class and all extra credit must be submitted to Turnitin.com. Late submissions to Turnitin could be penalized—if I have to keep asking. . .

## Classroom Protocol

**Attendance and Participation: It is very important that students come to this class regularly and come prepared to participate.** This means that reading assignments should be finished before the class period when they will be discussed, and that students should get to class on time to turn in homework and/or take quizzes. There will be frequent, unannounced in-class writing of some sort, and these cannot be made up by students who miss class, even for illness or some other reason beyond your control. Poor attendance and weak participation will significantly reduce your learning experience and your grade.

**Professionalism and maturity:** Perhaps this should go without saying, but students will be expected to treat each other and their professor with courtesy and respect. This includes the little things, like getting to class on time, turning your cell phones off in class, and refraining from toying with electronic devices and chatting with buddies in class. Professionalism also involves the more serious matter of avoiding rude or hostile remarks. We will be discussing some emotionally potent issues, so it will be important for us all to express ourselves carefully and try to keep our cool. Students who fail in this regard might be asked to leave the classroom.

**Late work:** I realize everyone has emergencies now and then—I might have some as well-- but accepting late homework opens the door to chaos. Therefore: quizzes and other in-class writing **CANNOT BE MADE UP. LATE HOMEWORK WILL NOT BE ACCEPTED.** In some cases I will take **late essays**, but the **grade will be reduced** a grade for every day they are late, and one week late is the limit. This policy provides incentive to meet deadlines, which are even more crucial in the workplace than in school. **All assignments are to be submitted on paper** (not electronically) in class, not slid under my office door or into my mailbox. **Please do not ask for exceptions to these policies** because you put me in an awkward position and provoke the ire of your classmates. One reduced grade on an essay or a couple of missed quizzes will not destroy your grade. Doing extra credit assignments will protect your grade from occasional lapses.

**Extra Credit:** To soften the no-late-homework policy and to encourage you to seek enriching extra learning experiences, I will periodically urge you to attend campus cultural events and write about those for extra points. Film comparison write-ups from an approved list will also be accepted. There is a 30-point maximum per semester, per student. (The other assignments will be worth 1000, total). Extra credit can be turned in any time, but it will be graded when I have time. Please do not nag! The final deadline for extra credit is the last day of regular class.

**Absences:** If you are not in class, contact classmates to get assignments, directions, handouts, notes, etc. Please don't make your absences extra work for me. With 4 classes to teach and several hundred student essays to grade, I already have as much work as I can manage.

<b>Assignments</b>	<b>percent of course grade</b>
5 in-class Quizzes (Short answer)	25%
Paper #1 paper with research, bibliography (2000 words)	30%
Paper #2 + Presentation on film club film (1000 words)	25%
Homework film responses, small in-class assignments	20%

**Grading Policy** 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.

In written assignments for English 117B, this scale is based on the following criteria:

A [90-92=A-, 93-96=A, 97-100=A+] = Excellent: The "A" essay is articulate and well developed with fluid transitions and a clear and persuasive use of evidence, which is drawn from the literary text itself, lecture materials (when appropriate), and research materials. An "A" essay contains a fresh insight which teaches the reader something new about the subject matter.

B [80-82=B-, 83-86=B, 87-89=B+] Above average: The "B" essay demonstrates a good understanding of its subject, a clear and persuasive use of evidence, a certain level of ease of expression, and solid organization. However, it usually lacks the level of originality and creativity that characterizes the insight found in an "A" essay.

C [70-72=C-, 73-76=C, 77-79=C+] = Average: The "C" essay makes a good attempt at all the assignment's requirements. It has a reasonable understanding of its subject matter but its ideas are frequently simplistic or over-generalized. The writing style is also more bland and repetitive than the style shown by "A" and "B" essays and it often contains flaws in grammar, punctuation, spelling and/or word choice. It may also use textual evidence out of context.

D [60-62=D-, 63-66=D, 67-69=D+] = Below average: The "D" essay is poorly organized and generally unclear. It has inappropriate or inadequate examples, is noticeably superficial or simplistic, and/or contains some serious mechanical and grammatical problems. A "D" essay may also reveal some misunderstanding of the assignment requirements.

F = Failure: An "F" essay has not addressed the requirements of the assignment and is unacceptable work in terms of both form and content.

**Tentative Schedule** Please note: Any schedule adjustments we might need will be announced in class and by email. Homework questions are not specified below, but will be due most days.

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, major assignments due dates
1	F 1/29	Introduction to the Course, brief in-class writing.  <b>Begin Film: <i>Swades</i></b>
2	F 2/5	<b>Finish Film: <i>Swades</i></b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss <i>Swades</i>, themes, genre, context,</li> <li>• Discuss Paper #1 Analysis with research</li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> Film reviews, context articles for <i>Swades</i> (posted online)
3	F 2/12	<u>Due:</u> homework on <i>Swades</i> <b>topic proposal for paper #1</b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Watch Film: <i>Ridicule</i></b>, discuss</li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> Film reviews, historical analysis/background on <i>Ridicule</i>
4	F 2/19	<u>Due:</u> response questions for <i>Ridicule</i> and <i>Swades</i>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch <b><i>The Beautiful Country</i></b></li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> Andrew Lam essays
5	F 2/26	<b>Quiz</b> on Andrew Lam essays (short answer and ID)  <u>Due:</u> working bibliography for research paper  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• discuss of <i>The Beautiful Country</i>, relate to Lam</li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> <i>Desert Flower</i> excerpt
6	F 3/4	Watch <b><i>Desert Flower</i></b>  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the film, the relationship between biography &amp; film</li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> Background readings on <i>Testament of Youth</i>
7	F 3/11	Watch film: <b><i>Testament of Youth</i></b>  <u>Read for next time:</u> Excerpt from <i>Testament of Youth</i> , poetry of WWI
8	F 3/18	<b>Quiz</b> on <i>Testament of Youth</i> readings  <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: <i>Testament of Youth</i>, relationship between memoir &amp; film.</li> <li>• Discuss film club project</li> </ul> <u>Read for next time:</u> finish paper #1 (schedule a conference if you want one)

9	F 3/25	Due: Essay #1 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Watch Film: <i>Sweet Land</i>, discuss</li> </ul> Read for next time: “Gravestones Made of Wheat” (short story)
10	F 4/1	*****Spring Break*****
11	F 4/8	Quiz on “Gravestones Made of Wheat” Due: topic proposal, film club project <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss Shaw, <i>Arms and the Man</i>. Begin in class: <i>Arms and the Man</i></li> </ul> Read for next time: the rest of <i>Arms and the Man</i>
12	F 4/15	Quiz on <i>Arms and the Man</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: <i>Arms and the Man</i>, Relationship between stage drama &amp; film.</li> </ul> Read for next time: readings on <i>Arms and the Man</i>
13	F 4/22	Watch film: <i>Motorcycle Diaries</i> , discuss Read for next time: Excerpts from <i>The Motorcycle Diaries</i> , <i>Following Che</i>
14	F 4/29	Quiz on <i>Motorcycle Diaries</i> and related readings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss: Relationships among memoir, biography, iconography, film</li> <li>• View &amp; discuss: film portraits of <i>Columbus</i>, <i>Pocahontas</i>, <i>Gandhi</i>, etc.</li> </ul> For next time: finish paper #2
15	F 5/6	Due: Essay #2 Bonus film (if we’re all caught up): <i>Before Sunrise</i>
16	F 5/13	Summary of course ideas, brief in-class writing Begin student presentations
	F 5/20	Final Exam finish student presentations 7:15-9:30 AM