

San José State University  
Department of English & Comparative Literature  
Engl 208: Comparative Literature: Global American Immigrant Lit

Spring 2018

<b>Instructors:</b>	Revathi Krishnaswamy & Alan Soldofsky
<b>Office Locations:</b>	FO 125 (Krishnaswamy); FO 106 (Soldofsky)
<b>Telephones:</b>	(408) 924-1384 (Krishnaswamy); (408) 924-4432 (Soldofsky)
<b>Email:</b>	Revathi.krishnaswamy@sjsu.edu; alan.soldofsky@sjsu.edu
<b>Office Hours:</b>	W 1:00-3:00 and by appointment (Krishnaswamy) M, T, W, 3:30 – 4:45 and Th by appointment (Soldofsky)
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	M 7:00-9:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	Clark 111

**Canvas (LMS):** We will be using the university LMS system CANVAS for this class. All course materials, including guidelines, rubrics, and announcements will be made available through canvas. You will also submit all assignments via canvas, unless otherwise instructed. Canvas URL: <https://sjsu.instructure.com/courses/1253047>

## Course Description

America is popularly imagined as the “land of immigrants,” yet immigration remains controversial and hostility toward immigrants is deep and widespread. Similarly, Immigrant literature is acknowledged as a significant expression of American culture, yet the category of immigrant literature is not clearly defined. In addition to questions about whether slave and refugee narratives belong in this category, some writers/scholars contend that the category is too broad to be useful when applied to all immigrant groups, while others claim it is too narrow and pertains only to particular ethnic or refugee/diaspora group it represents. Engaging this debate critically and creatively, our course will propose a new category -- “Global American Lit.” – that relocates American immigrant literature in a global context and reads it from a global perspective.

Eschewing the typical approach to immigrant literature centered on notions of ethnicity, diversity, and multiculturalism within a broad national framework, we will treat America/American lit as part of the world, not apart from the world. We will therefore ask fundamental questions about what constitutes global American lit and how immigrant writing defines, changes, or challenges American identity. What is the relationship between immigration, imperialism, capitalism, democracy, race, class, and gender? Does immigrant writing support the standard narrative about immigrants coming to America and realizing the American Dream? Is the resurgence of white nationalism in the face of capitalist globalization consolidating or displacing America’s privileged place as the preferred destination for immigrants? What tropes of exile or myths of belonging inform the process of imagining home? We will explore these and other questions through close reading of significant literary works (poetry, fiction, non-fiction, drama) by immigrants or their next-gen descendants. We will trace the geopolitical histories, ideological conflicts, literary itineraries, and aesthetic conventions shaping Global American Lit. through four major themes: (i) Imaginary Homelands, (ii) Border Crossing/Transgression, (iii) Writing Back, (iv) Assimilation/Appropriation.

## Learning Objectives

### MA Program LEARNING OBJECTIVES

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend

original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.

5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.
6. Students preparing for teaching careers will receive the appropriate instruction.
7. Students will be prepared for further graduate study.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

1. Explore Global American Lit through literature/film
2. Develop a global approach to the reading, writing, interpretation, and evaluation of literary texts.
3. Gain greater insight into various social, political, and cultural issues relevant to Global American Lit
4. Learn *from* not just about different cultures and literary traditions
5. Understand key concepts and terms in global American literary studies and become familiar with significant debates in the field.

### **Required Literary Texts**

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Americanah* [novel]  
Peter Balakian, *Lucky Black Dog* [poetry]  
Peter Balakian, *Ozone Journal*. [memoir]  
Dana Gioia “The Ballad of Jesus Ortiz” [poetry; pdf on Canvas]  
Juan Felipe Herrera. *Notes on the Assemblage*. [poetry]  
Jamaica Kincaid. *Lucy* [novel]  
Peter Nathaniel Malae, *What We Are* [novel]  
Viet Thanh Nguyen. *The Refugees* [short stories]  
E.C. Osondu: “Voice of America”; “Waiting” (short stories; pdf on Canvas)  
Carmen Gimenez Smith. *Milk and Filth* [poetry]  
Carmen Gimenez Smith. *Cruel Futures* [poetry]  
Lysley Tenorio: “Monstress” ; “Help” (short stories; pdf on Canvas)  
Luis Valdez. *Zoot Suit and Other Plays*. [drama]  
Javier Zamora. *Unaccompanied* [poetry]

### **Films:**

El Norte

### **Other required readings (all available on Canvas):**

Rushdie: Imaginary Homelands  
Kumaravadivelu: Cultural Globalization  
Prasad: The Karma of Brown Folk

## Assignments and Grading Policy

**Assignments:** (More details will be provided in class and on canvas)

- Oral Presentation: You will sign up to make a short oral presentation. Your presentation will explore one of these broad themes -- Imaginary Homelands, Border Crossing/Transgression, Writing Back, Assimilation/Appropriation -- in the context of a specific literary work/author. As part of the presentation, you will prepare a 1-2 page Handout/PPT highlighting the main ideas, which will be posted on Canvas. (SLO 2, 4)
- Reader Response: From weeks 3-12, you will participate in a weekly online discussion on Canvas by posting (i) a 250-300 word critical commentary on the week's readings, including 1-2 discussion questions and (ii) a 50-100 word response to one other student's commentary. Typically due Sunday before class each week.
- Seminar Project Proposal: You will write up a short 2-3 page proposal for a significant writing project you wish to pursue in the class. This could be **either** a work of literary criticism **or** a work of creative writing. In addition to a brief description, you must provide a bibliography of 3-5 sources and outline a plan/schedule for pursuing and completing the project. You will write your proposal in two stages: a rough draft (due week 4) and a revised final version (due week 6) (SLO 4).
- Writing Workshops: We will have two formally scheduled workshops to provide feedback on your writing project. In addition to submitting a draft of your own work for critique, you will be expected to critique the work of others. Detailed guidelines/protocols will be provided in class/Canvas. (SLO 3, 4)
- Final Seminar Project: the final seminar project, a substantive and complete work based on the approved proposal, may be carved out of weekly writings, workshops, and revisions (15-20 pages) (SLO 4, 7).

### Grading:

Oral presentation + handout/ppt	150 (100 + 50)
Project Proposal (2 drafts)	100 (50+50)
Reader Response	150 (10+5x10)
Workshops	300 (100+50x2)
Final Project	300
Total	1000

*Note: 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. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the SJSU academic standards of assessment.*

## **Classroom Protocols**

**Attendance & Participation:** Regular attendance and active participation in class discussions are extremely important. Please arrive on time and stay for the entire class. Before you enter our classroom, please turn off electronic devices that might distract you from attending to your work. You are responsible for all materials assigned, presented and discussed. You are encouraged to take notes in class, but you should have studied the materials before class begins. Since most classes will be based on discussions, presentations and workshops it is crucial to keep up with the readings and take an active as well as thoughtful role in all classroom activities. Your questions, comments, insights, and interpretations are valuable no matter how outlandish they may seem. So, do speak up!

**Conferencing:** We encourage you to visit us in our office hours whenever you need to discuss something important, whether it is an assignment or any other difficulty you may be having with the structure and format of the class. We love ongoing feedback!

## **Dropping and Adding**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html) . [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/) . Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University's [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University's integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. 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) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### **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.

### **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### **Learning Assistance Resource Center**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. [The LARC website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/](http://www.sjsu.edu/larc/).

### **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/).

## **Peer Mentor Center**

The Peer Mentor Center is located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall in the Academic Success Center. The Peer Mentor Center is staffed with Peer Mentors who excel in helping students manage university life, tackling problems that range from academic challenges to interpersonal struggles. On the road to graduation, Peer Mentors are navigators, offering “roadside assistance” to peers who feel a bit lost or simply need help mapping out the locations of campus resources. Peer Mentor services are free and available on a drop –in basis, no reservation required. The Peer Mentor Center website is located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/muse/peermentor/>.

## ENGL 139: Spring 2018 Course Calendar and Reading Assignments—with Links

*NOTE: The calendar lists work assigned by week. The assigned readings will be presented by author book clubs groups who will (with the instructor’s assistance) lead discussions in class on dates listed below:*

*This schedule is subject to change with fair notice via canvas or mysjsu*

Week	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
1	1/29	<p><b>Introduction to course: review of syllabus; explanation of themes (i) Imaginary Homelands, (ii) Border Crossing/Transgression, (iii) Writing Back, (iv) Assimilation/Appropriation.</b></p> <p><b>Lecture: Immigration – policies, principles, practices (Prof. K. lecture)</b></p> <p><b>Readings/Viewings:</b>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJcqxl7kas">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IBJcqxl7kas</a>  <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe79i1mu-mc">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Fe79i1mu-mc</a>  <a href="https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-10/chinese-workers-abandon-silicon-valley-for-riches-back-home">https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2018-01-10/chinese-workers-abandon-silicon-valley-for-riches-back-home</a></p> <p><b>Dorfman:</b>  “Walden on the Rocks”  <a href="http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/11/29/walden-on-the-rocks/">http://www.nybooks.com/daily/2017/11/29/walden-on-the-rocks/</a>  “The Other 9/11” <a href="https://granta.com/the-other-911/">https://granta.com/the-other-911/</a></p> <p><b>Fuentes: “Crystal Frontier” (short story; Canvas)</b></p> <p><b>Discussion (Prof. K. leads)</b></p>
2	2/5	<p><b>Readings: all on Canvas</b></p> <p><b>Kumaravadivelu: <i>Cultural Globalization</i></b></p> <p><b>Prasad: <i>The Karma of Brown Folk</i></b></p> <p><b>JanMohamed &amp; Loyd: <i>Toward a Theory of Minority Discourse</i></b>  (Prof. K. leads discussion)  <b>(Sign up for oral presentation)</b></p>

3	2/12	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Rushdie: “Imaginary Homelands” (on Canvas)  Osondu: “Voice of America”; “Waiting” (on Canvas)  Tenario: “Monstress”  <a href="https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/06/monstress/302749/">https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2003/06/monstress/302749/</a>  <a href="http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/aaldp/vol6/iss1/3/">http://scholarworks.sjsu.edu/aaldp/vol6/iss1/3/</a>  Lecture and Discussion (Profs. K and S. lead)</p> <p>Nguyen: <i>Refugees</i>  Presentations and discussion: (Prof. S. leads)</p>
4	2/19	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Valdez: <i>Zoot Suit</i>  Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</p>
5	2/26	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Adiche: <i>Americanah</i>  Presentations and discussion (Prof. K. leads)</p>
6	3/5	<p><b>Reading:</b>  Adiche: <i>Americanah</i>  Presentations and discussion (Prof. K. leads)</p> <p><b>Proposal Draft #1 Due</b></p>
7	3/12	<p><b>Reading:</b>  Balakian: <i>Ozone Journal; Lucky Black Dog</i>  Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</p> <p><b>Reminder: Peter Balakian Reading &amp; Conversation, April 12, 7:00 PM, Hammer Theater Centre: <a href="http://www.litart.org/peter-balakian/">http://www.litart.org/peter-balakian/</a></b></p>
8	3/19	<p><b>Readings:</b>  Balakian: <i>continued</i>  Zamora <i>Unaccompanied</i>  Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</p> <p><b>Workshop #1</b></p>
9	3/26	<p><b>Spring Break: Watch <i>El Norte</i> on your own</b></p>

10	4/2	<p><b>Reading:</b>  <i>Zamora Unaccompanied</i>  <b>Guests: Javier Zamora; President Papazian</b>  <b>Discussion of Zamora and Balakian (Prof. S. leads)</b></p>
11	4/09	<p><b>Reading:</b>  <b>Herrera: <i>Notes on the Assemblage</i></b>  <b>“187 Reasons” <a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO5tvz3GvrE">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hO5tvz3GvrE</a></b>  <b>Guest: Juan Felipe Herrera</b>  <b>Discussion (Prof. S. leads)</b></p>
12	4/16	<p><b>Reading:</b>  <b>Carmen Gimenez Smith. <i>Milk and Filth; Cruel Futures</i></b>  <b>Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</b></p> <p><b>Reminder: Carmen Giménez Smith reading &amp; conversation with Alan Soldofsky, April 19, 4:00 - 5:00 PM, Steinbeck Center, MLK Library</b></p>
13	4/23	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <b>Gioia: “The Ballad of Jesus Ortiz” (on Canvas); Selected poems from <i>99 Poems</i> (on Canvas).</b>  <b><a href="https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/ballad-jesus-ortiz/#!">https://lareviewofbooks.org/article/ballad-jesus-ortiz/#!</a></b>  <b>Guest: Dana Gioia</b>  <b>Discussion (Prof. S. leads)</b></p> <p><b>Proposal Draft #2 Due</b></p>
14	4/30	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <b>Kincaid: <i>Lucy</i></b>  <b>Presentations and discussion (Prof. K. leads)</b></p>
15	5/7	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <b>Malae: <i>What We Are</i></b>  <b>Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</b></p>
16	5/14	<p><b>Readings:</b>  <b>Malae: <i>What We Are</i></b>  <b>Presentations and discussion (Prof. S. leads)</b></p> <p><b>Workshop #2</b></p>

	<b>5/18 Fri</b>	<b>Seminar Project Due on Canvas</b>
--	---------------------	--------------------------------------