

INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI

TIME: WEDNESDAY 8.30-11.30 AM

VENUE: PAV. JEAN-BRILLANT NOT YET DETERMINED

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY 11-14.00 & WEDNESDAY 14.-16.30 OFFICE: C8120

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THEORIZING EXILE AND EXPATRIATION IN ENGLISH STUDIES

Exile is strangely compelling to think about but terrible to experience. It is the unhealable rift forced between a human being and a native place, between the self and its true home. --Edward Said

Seldom do we the living ... feel more 'ourselves,' ...than when spoken through, or motivated, by 'invisible forces.' --James Merrill

In this situation creative writing becomes, for me, a guerrilla activity.
-- Merle Hodge

English Studies is often constructed around nation-based notions of literary production. Literary communities are, thus, apprehended alongside national identities and the ideologies that support them. While such constructions of literary communities are useful, they do not fully describe the alternative worlds of authors who sustain affiliations with multiple nations, nation-states and literary communities. In this course, by bringing a number of writers together under the rubric of "post-national authors," we want to do two things. First, we want to examine the ways in which terms such as expatriation, exile, diaspora and post-nationalism shed light on writers who sit uneasily within national categories. Second, we will study how the rise of such writers compels changes in the constructions of English Studies. This class, then, is intended to give students a sense of the issues propelling the "post-national turn" in global English writing, as seen through the lens of writers such as F. Scott Fitzgerald, James Baldwin, Tônu Onnepalu, Michael Chabon, Jamaica Kincaid, Edwige Danticat and Chris Abani. Please note that our purpose is not to compare these writers or their texts, but to examine critically the historical relationships between their experiences of exile and the effects thereof on narrative form. We will round out our readings of novels, shorts stories and memoirs with essays by Edward Said, James Baldwin, Salman Rushdie, Michael Chabon and Jana Braziel.

Key terms:

Expatriation; exile; dispatiation; diaspora; post-nationalism and minor literatures.

Texts:

Abani, Chris.	<i>GraceLand: A Novel.</i>
Baldwin, James.	<i>Giovanni's Room.</i> "Going to Meet the Man"
Chabon, Michael.	<i>The Yiddish Policemen's Union.</i>
Danticat, Edwidge.	<i>Brother, I'm Dying.</i>
Fitzgerald, F. Scott.	"The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."
Kincaid, Jamaica.	<i>My Brother.</i>
Onnepalu, Tonu.	<i>Border State.</i>

Film:

Fincher, David, dir. *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button.*

Course requirements: Participation 10%; Mid-term 20%; Final Exam 30% and 2 papers 2x 20%.

ENGLISH STUDIES IN COMPARATIST CONTEXTS WINTER 2012

TENTATIVE COURSE SCHEDULE

- January 11 **INTRODUCTION: DIASPORA, POST-NATIONALISM, ENGLISH STUDIES**
Jana Braziel & Anita Mannur, "Nation, Migration, Globalization."
Mohammed Bamyeh, "Postnationalism."
Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile."
- January 18 **DREAMS OF AMERICA**
Chris Abani. *GraceLand: A Novel*.
Salman Rushdie, "Imaginary Homelands."
- January 25 Chris Abani. *GraceLand: A Novel*.
- February 1 Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (Chapter 1)
Frantz Fanon, "Fact of Blackness."
James Baldwin, "Going to Meet the Man," "The American Dream..."
- February 8 **DESIRE AND THE POETICS OF RELATION**
James Baldwin. *Giovanni's Room*.
- February 15 Tonu Onnepalu, *Border State*.
James Baldwin, "Encounter on the Seine."
- February 22 **BORDER DIALOGUES WITHIN THE FAMILY ROMANCE 1**
Jamaica Kincaid, *My Brother*.
Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, "Returning(s): Relocating the Critical Feminist..."
- February 29 **EXAMEN PARTIEL COVERS JANUARY 11-FEBRUARY 15**
- March 7 **FREE WEEK**
- March 14 **BORDER DIALOGUES WITHIN THE FAMILY ROMANCE 2**
Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*.
Jayne O. Ifekwunigwe, "Returning(s): Relocating the Critical Feminist..."
- March 21 Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I'm Dying*.
- March 28 **ALTERNATE HISTORY AND THE JEWISH DIAPORA**
Michael Chabon, "Imaginary Homelands"
 The Yiddish Policemen's Union.
- April 4 Michael Chabon, *The Yiddish Policemen's Union*.
- April 11 **IN GUISE OF A CONCLUSION: THE POSTNATIONAL FANTASY**
F. Scott Fitzgerald, "The Curious Case of Benjamin Button."
David Fincher, *The Curious Case of Benjamin Button*.
- April 18 **EXAMEN FINAL COVERS FEBRUARY 22-APRIL 11**