SYLLABUS

"Reading makes immigrants of us all."

--Jean Rhys

Reading about immigrants, through their memoirs and fiction, makes us all more sophisticated students of literature, history, and culture. From 1880-1920, massive immigration from eastern and southern Europe challenged and transformed the United States. During the past thirty years, another dramatic influx of newcomers, primarily from Latin America and Asia, has also forced a fundamental reexamination of national and individual identities. Unlike their predecessors, who generally embraced the paradigm of "the melting pot," participants in "the new immigration" tend to be ambivalent about both the homelands they left behind and their new place of residence. The memoirs and fictions we will be studying record the experience of personal and cultural transformation during a period of global crisis. Most of these authors are translinguals, writers who came to English as a second or third language, and their books reflect the additional ordeal of inventing a new self expressed in a new language.

August 30  
Introduction

September 6  
Mary Antin, *The Promised Land*

September 13  
*The Promised Land*; Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*

September 20  
Eva Hoffman, *Lost in Translation*

September 27  
Ariel Dorfman. *Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*

October 4  
*Heading South, Looking North: A Bilingual Journey*; Gish Jen. *Typical American*
October 11  Gish Jen. *Typical American*

October 18  Reports on Other Cultures of Immigration  
**First Paper Due**

October 25  Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*

November 1  *Jasmine* ; Dinaw Mengestu, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*

November 8  Mengestu, *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears* Andrew X. Pham. *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam*

November 15  Edwidge Danticat, *Brother, I’m Dying*

November 22  *Brother, I’m Dying*; Andrew X. Pham. *Catfish and Mandala: A Two-Wheeled Voyage Through the Landscape and Memory of Vietnam*

November 24  Thanksgiving holiday

November 29  *Catfish and Mandala*; Junot Diaz. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

December 6  Junot Diaz. *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*  
**Second Paper Due**
December 8-9  Student study days

December 15  Final Exam 10:30 a.m.–1:00 p.m.

Required Texts:


Dinaw Mengestu. *The Beautiful Things That Heaven Bears*. Riverhead. B00X1P3WG.


Requirements and Expectations:

In addition to the small sample of immigrant writing that the entire class will examine together, students will pursue individual projects from the large and growing treasury of texts about what it means to change countries. Students will be responsible for two class presentations, two papers, and a final exam.

ENGLISH 6063/7083 is an M.A.- and Ph.D-level study of immigration narratives. It is offered on the premise that those who sign up for it are able and eager to undertake sophisticated study of notable fiction and nonfiction on the theme. Students are expected to have read their assignments carefully by the date specified and to come to class prepared for active engagement in analysis of the texts.
The professor is pleased to share his insights into the works being studied, but he finds no pleasure--and no point--in summarizing their contents to students who have not done the reading. He is glad to teach and gladder to learn, from students who come to class equipped for the day's topic and for consistent effulgence. Weekly class attendance for the entirety of each session is expected and required, and absence from more than three sessions will result in a lowered grade.

In addition to assigned readings, class attendance, and active, informed, and scintillating contributions to class discussions, students will be responsible throughout the semester for two written papers, two oral presentations, and a final exam. The final grade will be a function of: paper #1 (25%) + paper #2 (35%) + class work, including quizzes, discussions, and oral presentations (15%) + final exam (25%) = 100%.

During his office hours or by appointment, Professor Kellman is available for questions, comments, or further discussion. He also welcomes telephonic and electronic communications. To facilitate further thoughts about our subject, to provide a practical means for conveying occasional information about course procedures, and to receive supplemental information about American literature, the course maintains a Blackboard site that each member of the class should consult at least once a week.

Because class meetings can accommodate only one speaker at a time, please do not engage in private conversations. As a courtesy to everyone, cell phones, iPods, video games, radios, internet connections, and other electronic distractions must be turned off throughout each session. Please refrain from dining during our sessions. Once class has begun, please remain seated until its conclusion.

In cooperation with the Office of Disability Services, the class accommodates student disabilities.

UTSA issues the following official caveat: "The University expects every student to maintain a high standard of individual integrity for work done. Scholastic dishonesty is a serious offense that includes, but is not limited to, cheating on a test or other work, plagiarism (the appropriation of another's work and the incorporation of that work in one's own work), and collusion (the unauthorized collaboration with another person in preparing work offered for credit)."