

ENG 162W: Literature and Place
T/Th 8:00AM-9:15AM, Kiely Hall 319
Instructor: Saba Riazi
Office: Klapper 353
Office Hours: T/TH 1-3pm by appointment
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“There are no unsacred places;
there are only sacred places
and desecrated places.”-Wendell Berry

COURSE DESCRIPTION: This semester we will explore ways in which humans interact with the environments they inhabit in varied, complex and different forms and in diverse locations of planet earth and beyond. Our readings will consist of works of poetry, novels, short stories, essays and non-fiction, and our point of departure will be literary examples examining this human-environment relation within United States. We will then move to other countries, imaginary and re-imagined places and outerspace. You will also be choosing a place of your interest, to research and analyze towards your final paper.

162W is a general education course that satisfies the Literature requirement (LIT) for the Queens Core under the CUNY General Education structure called Pathways.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Exploring the interplay of humans and their environment through literary texts.
- Contextualizing the texts with emphasis on temporal and historical factors forming these works of literature, while positing the human-environment relationship.
- Practicing close reading and critical interpretation skills in order to develop a disciplinary language to discuss structure, tone, voice, etc.
- Using research as a method to produce, shape and refine ideas about a place.
- Gaining fluency in writing analytical and coherent essays, which adhere to academic writing standards.

REQUIRED COURSE TEXTS AND MATERIALS:

Most of books and essays will be provided for you digitally on our course site, however there are a couple of books you would have to purchase or borrow.

<http://literatureandplaceglobal.qwriting.qc.cuny.edu/>

To purchase:

- Diaz, Natalie. *When my Brother Was an Aztec*. , 2012.
- Duras, *The Lover*. Translated by Barbara Bray. New York: Pantheon Books, c1985.
- Calvino, Italo. *The Baron in the Trees*. Translated by William Weaver. London: Vintage Books.

Texts available on course site:

- Basso, Keith H., *Wisdom Sits in Places : Landscape and Language among the Western Apache*. Albuquerque :University of New Mexico Press, 1996.
- Dillard, A. *Pilgrim in Tinker Creek*. New York: Harper &Row.
- Rulfo, Juan. *Pedro Paramo* :University of Texas Press, 2001.
- Darwish, Mahmoud. *Memory for Forgetfulness: August, Beirut, 1982*. University of California Press.
- Chekhov, Anton. *Cherry Orchard*.
- Calvino, Italo. *Invisible Cities*. Trasnlated by William Weaver. London: Vintage Books.
- Calvino, Italo. *Cosmicomics*. Translated by William Weaver. London: Vintage Books.

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus and calendar according to class needs.

WRITING FORMAT: MLA formatting. 12-point Times New Roman, double-spaced.

WEEKLY ASSIGNMENTS AND DUE DATES:

- **In-Class writing:** We will have short freewriting sessions at the beginning of each class to reflect on the reading. These are low-stakes and informal writings meant to initiate discussion and exploration about the text at the beginning of the class.
- **Weekly Writings (response) due Mondays 5pm:** Each week you will write a response of 200-400 words based on the prompt provided on the course site which pertains to our portion of reading. Your writing will be submitted digitally on the course site each **Monday before 5pm** so that your classmates have a chance to read them. Late submissions after 5pm will not be accepted. You will hand me a **hard copy** of your **reading response** every Tuesday. This hard copy can be handwritten, but if I can't read it, you will not be graded.
- You must read your classmates' responses and **comment on at least 1 writing. Minimum 75 words. Due by midnight on Monday.**
- **Weekly Creative Blog:** Each **Tuesday night by 10pm**, one or two of you (depending on the number of students) will be assigned to write a **blog post**. Only once during the semester will you get this chance. This blog post will be of an imaginary city or landscape, or of any place of your interest. You may accompany the post with a photo that best represents your imaginary location. You will sign up for a date to create this blog post on the first day of class. **Minimum 200 words.**
- **Comments on Creative Blog Posts:** If you are not assigned to write the blog, you will be expected to **comment on both** of the posts (If there are two). Your comment is a creative response revealing and adding another aspect or more details of the environment the blog writer has presented. You can imagine this comment as a continuation to your classmate's writing. This will be an opportunity for us to collectively imagine a place utilizing the elements we discuss in our close reading. These comments are due on **Wednesdays 5pm. Minimum 75 words on each blog.** You must read your classmates' responses. We will discuss this collective work on Thursdays in class.

FORMAL ASSIGNMENTS:

- **Research Proposal:** In this research proposal you will present a place you would like to explore in New York City. The proposal will contain 2 photos and information about the place and why you are interested in further investigating it. Information may be consisted of the history of the place, noteworthy facts, and the reason why it piqued your curiosity, while posing at least 2 questions about the place, which you will be exploring in your draft. We will share this research on course site. **Minimum 1500 words.**
- **Draft of Essay:** This draft is the backbone of your final paper. This must contain at least two textual citations related to your topic. One would be a citation from a source of your choice, and one from a scholarly source. Your essays must adhere to elements of academic writing containing a clear thesis, motive, key terms and evidence, along with a

well thought out analysis and structure. For this writing, a hard copy in class is due on 4/16. **Minimum 1500 words.**

- **Final Essay:** Your final essay is a substantial revision from your midterm essay containing new material and taking the given feedback into consideration, towards refining language, theses, better structural work, and analysis. **Minimum 2000 words.** Final draft will be both posted on course site and handed to me in hard copy.

**Weekly assignments are not in effect when formal assignments are due.*

GRADING:

Grading rubric for weekly writings

- 3/3: Response paper effectively communicates the idea proposed by the prompt, demonstrating strong knowledge of text. Correct format using Standard English. No grammar mistakes.
- 2/3: Acceptable response to prompt. Some knowledge of text. Correct format using Standard English. No grammar mistakes.
- 1/3: Unclear response: Undeveloped idea. Mechanical errors. Grammar mistakes.

Grading Creative Blog post: You will only be assigned to write a creative blog once, but this opportunity will compose 5% of your grade. So do not miss your blog post when it's your turn.

Grading Comments: Compose 5 percent of your final grade, so they are a necessary component of our weekly exercises. They also demonstrate your engagement with class and our discussions.

Final Grade scale:

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Weekly responses: 25%
- Blog posts: 5%
- Comments: 5%
- Midterm paper: 20%
- Final paper: 20%

CLASS POLICY:

- **NO PHONES OR LAPTOPS:** Your presence and participation in class is essential to me; therefore the use of phones and laptops is prohibited. You will make copies of pdf of books provided online.
- **LATE PAPERS:** will not be accepted unless due to extenuating circumstances and unless you communicate the need for an extension ahead of time
- **SAFE ENVIRONMENT:** By sharing our writing, we are sharing our thoughts; therefore the vulnerability we each bring into class is our material and our forte. No topic is off-limits in my classroom as long as respecting one another is observed in its most fundamental sense. Our differences and diversity is what will make this class interesting, thought provoking for all of us, so although we are free to express our thoughts and disagreements with utmost respect, any attack, abuse, mockery of one another's opinion, thoughts, writing, on the basis of sex, gender, sexual orientation, age, political belief,

race, ethnicity and other differences, will absolutely not be tolerated. If you have a critique or you disagree with an opinion, take a deep breath and give it a moment to verbalize your opinion, it's always interesting to hear different viewpoints. If you are being critiqued, take a deep breath and remember the critique is on your work, and not a personal attack. Let's make this class safe for all of us, by also voicing our admiration for one another's work when we feel it's necessary. Tell your classmates how much you love their work if you do. It's free currency.

- **ATTENDANCE:** Your presence and participation in class, as well as your **punctuality** is highly important to me. Tardiness to class, is disruptive and disrespectful. Being late to two classes is grounds for one absence. More than two absences, will deprive you from half a letter grade for each absence.
- **EMAILING POLICY:** I urge you to email and communicate with me in case of questions or concerns. Your emails must adhere to academic standards. You can read more about this here: <https://medium.com/@lportwoodstacer/how-to-email-your-professor-without-being-annoying-af-cf64ae0e4087>
- **PLAIGIARISM AND ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:** Plagiarism, cheating, obtaining unfair advantage, falsification of records and official documents will not be tolerated and I will have to report in case it occurs and you will fail. You can visit CUNY's policy on academic integrity here: <http://www2.cuny.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/page-assets/about/administration/offices/legal-affairs/policies-procedures/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

CAMPUS RESOURCES

SPECIAL ACCOMODATION: If you have a special condition that requires accommodation in class, please inform me and the Office of Special Services in 171 Kiely Hall ([718-997-5870](tel:718-997-5870)).

THE WRITING CENTER: Tutors at Writing Center are trained to help you revise your assignments. Although this is not a copywriting service, you can visit the center to discuss an idea, outline or your revisions. Please plan at least a week ahead for an appointment. You can also get online help by visiting the website: <http://qcpages.qc.edu/qcsw/>

TRIGGER WARNING: Our classroom provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas and discussions. Our readings will include content that present controversial issues, difficult and otherwise offensive language. Students attending this class must be prepared to discuss, confront and brave the nuanced and highly sensitive arguments regarding politics and identity. We will not shy away from dissecting these issues, which pertain to our material, while sustaining a respectful and generous environment of respect, kindness and understanding. It's important to understand these issues, although tangled with our identities, can be looked at and discussed objectively, if the factors of respect, well intentions, curiosity and problem solving reins the spirit of class.

COURSE CALENDAR

- T 1/29 Discussing syllabus
R 1/29 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 1
- T 2/5 “When My Brother Was an Aztec” by Natalie Diaz
R 2/7 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter I
- T 2/12 NO CLASS-** Post writing response on *Wisdom sits in places* by 13/2 -5pm
R 2/14 *Wisdom sits in places* pp.1-70 (Including Preface) – No creative blog this week
- T 2/19 *Wisdom sits in places*, pp. 70-152
R 2/21 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter2
- T 2/26 *Pilgrim in Tinker Creek* pp. 1-86
R 2/28 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 3
- T 3/5 Research Proposal due – Proposal Presentation
R 3/7 Proposal Presentation
- T 3/12 *Pedro Paramo*
R 3/14 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 4
- T 3/19 *Memory for Forgetfulness* pp1-55
R 3/21 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 5
- T 3/26 *Memory for Forgetfulness* pp.56-107
R 3/28 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 6
- T 4/2 *Cherry Orchard* pp.20-112
R 4/4 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 7
- T 4/9 *Cosmicomics* pp.1-39
R 4/11 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 8
- T 4/16 Draft of final essay due
R 4/18 *Invisible Cities* – Chapter 9
- NO CLASS 4/23 – SPRING BREAK
NO CLASS 4/25 – SPRING BREAK
- T 4/30 *The Baron in the trees* – pp.1-150
R 5/2 A short story will be assigned
- T 5/7 *Lover* by Marguerite Duras –Part I
R 5/9 A short story will be assigned
- T 5/14 *Lover* by Marguerite Duras – Part II
R 5/16 Final Essay Due