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ENG 2009G-004: Literature and Human Values: Race, Age, Gender

Weihsin Gui
Eastern Illinois University

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English 2009G Section 004 CRN 90660
“Literature and Human Values: Race, Age, Gender”
Meeting Time/Place: 2:00 – 2:50 PM MWF, in Room 3170, Coleman Hall
Instructor: Assistant Professor Weihsin Gui

Instructor's contact information:

Office: Room 3821, English Department, Coleman Hall

Office Hours: M 3-5 PM, WF 3-4 PM, and by appointment

Email address: wgui@eiu.edu

Work submission e-mail address: weihsingui@ymail.com

Course description: In this course we will look at short stories and novels written in English from around the world. We will consider how questions of race, age, and gender are used by different writers to discuss and debate problems of personal and group identities, cultural traditions, social change, nationalism and globalization. This course aims to develop students' literary reading and writing skills, as well as their global awareness about other countries and cultures.

Course objectives: By the end of this course, students should:

- 1) Become familiar with some major English-language writers and their works from East/Southeast Asia, the Caribbean, Africa, South Asia, and Britain.
- 2) Understand and discuss some of the ways in which these writers use race, age, and gender in literature to discuss personal and group identities, cultural traditions and social change, nationalism and globalization.
- 3) Acquire good reading and writing skills for literary analysis.

Course policies:

* **Attendance** in class is required. If you are absent for more than 4 class meetings your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade. Exceptions will only be made in the event of religious events, participation in University activities, serious illness, or other emergencies. A letter or medical certificate will be required for you to be excused.

* **Participation** is also required. This means taking notes while you are reading, preparing questions for class discussion, and responding to other students' ideas in a thoughtful and respectful manner while offering your own.

* **Class presentation:** You will be required to give 1 in-class presentation and help lead discussion for that day's class meeting. This may be done in a group, or by yourself. A sign-up sheet will be given out during the second week of the course.

* **Writing assignments:** In-class quizzes; Short writing assignments (passage analysis) (1.5-2 pp.each); 2 papers (5 pp. each); Final examination.

***** You must complete all written assignments and the final exam to pass this course.**

* **Grading breakdown:**

- * Participation and class presentation: 10%
- * In-class quizzes 10%
- * Short writing assignments: 20%
- * Final examination: 10%
- * Papers: 50%

--- In-class Quizzes: These quizzes are designed to make sure you are keeping up with the assigned reading. There will be a mix of multiple-choice and “fill-in-the-blanks” questions. If you are absent or late for class on a day when there is a quiz, your grade for that quiz will be ZERO. You will only be allowed to take the quiz if you present a legitimate reason for your absence.

--- **Final examination:** The final examination will be an in-class examination. No books or notes will be allowed. You will be given a choice of several passages taken from the novels in this course. There will be at least 1 passage from each text we have read. You will select 3 of these passages, identify which stories/novels they are from, state the passage's importance to the text as a whole, and then analyze them – just like a regular passage analysis assignment.

* **E-mail submission and "Track Changes."** For this course, you will submit almost all written assignments electronically to me using e-mail. Use this e-mail address for work submission: **weihsingui@ymail.com**.

- If you are using Microsoft Office 2007, you must save your documents as a Microsoft Word 97/2000/2003 document (*.doc). I will be using the "Track Changes" feature to comment on your papers, so you should learn how to use it (try looking it up in MS Office Help).

- When you send me your assignment, the subject/title line of your e-mail should follow this format:

2009.04 [assignment number] [your name]

So if your name is Clive Owen and you are e-mailing me your second passage analysis assignment, the subject line should read: **2009.04 Analysis #2 Clive Owen**

- **It is your responsibility to make sure that your work gets to me punctually.** Use a reliable e-mail client or server, and have a backup in case the first one is temporarily offline. I will not remind you that your work is overdue. **Late work will be lowered by 1 letter grade for every day past the due date.**

* **Students with disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583).

* **Academic Honesty:** All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must be original and independent. Do not resort to prefabricated papers and research materials found on the Internet. Make sure that you understand the meaning of plagiarism and the policy of the English Department:

Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) -- has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of the grade of F for the course, as well as to report the incident to the university's Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.

Texts for this course:

- * Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*
- * Amitav Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*
- * Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*
- * Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold*
- * Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*
- * R.K. Narayan, *The Vendor of Sweets*
- * Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS AND READINGS

PART 1: SOUTH ASIA

WEEK 1 8/25-8/29

Course introduction; Narayan, *The Vendor of Sweets*

WEEK 2 9/3 & 9/5 (9/1 Labor Day)

The Vendor of Sweets (continued)

WEEK 3 9/8-9/12

Ghosh, *The Hungry Tide*

WEEK 4 9/15-9/19

The Hungry Tide (continued)

PART 2: SOUTHEAST ASIA

WEEK 5 9/22-9/26

Shirley Geok-lin Lim, *Joss and Gold*

WEEK 6 9/29-10/3

Joss and Gold (continued)

PART 3: THE CARIBBEAN

WEEK 7 10/6 & 10/8 (No class on 10/10. Fall Break)

Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy*

WEEK 8 10/13-10/17

Lucy (continued)

WEEK 9 10/20-10/24

*** Paper-writing workshop and individual conferences.

*** Paper #1 due on 10/24 Thursday by 4 PM.

PART 4: AFRICA

WEEK 10 10/27-10/31

Chimamanda Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*

WEEK 11 11/3-11/7

Purple Hibiscus (continued)

PART 5: BRITAIN

WEEK 12 11/10 & 11/12 (No class on 11/14. Instructor away for conference)

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

WEEK 13 11/17-11/21

The Remains of the Day (continued)

WEEK 14 THANKSGIVING BREAK: no class meetings

WEEK 15 12/1-12/5

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

WEEK 16 12/8-12/12

White Teeth (continued)

*** Final Examination: Tuesday 12/16 at 2:45-4:45 PM

*** Paper #2 due 12/17 Wednesday by 4 PM.