Spring 1-15-2013

ENG 3907-001: Contemporary Asian Literature

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Contemporary Asian Literature
English 3907—Spring, 2013

Instructor: Tim Engles
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tdengles@eiu.edu

Course listserv: 3907s13@lists.eiu.edu
Office hours: 2:00 – 3:00 p.m. Tues/Thurs, and by appointment

Required texts:

Yu Hua, *To Live* (1993)
le thi diem thuy, *The Gangster We Are All Looking For* (2003)

COURSE POLICIES AND PROCEDURES
(read the following carefully; these words constitute our contract, and I will request your written agreement to them)

Along with Asia’s many booming economies, recent works by authors of Asian descent have gained enormous international respect and popularity. As global forces bring about inevitable change, what in Asian literature remains “Asian”? What problems arise when such literature is read as a window into other cultures? We will examine a wide variety of accessible, prize-winning novels by both Asian and Asian American authors. These works repeatedly dramatize the conflict between national traditions and contemporary demands, with compelling characters who often find themselves caught between conflicting worlds.

Our course will be conducted as an inquiring conversation on these matters, with your active participation central to our work. In some ways, it will be an advantage to have a small group this semester. However, because we are few, the success of our conversations will depend more heavily than usual on everyone’s participation. It is therefore crucial that you keep up with the reading, and that you do so with careful attention.

MORE ABOUT READING: Since one skill you will be developing in this class is the art of textual analysis, you must give the readings more than a quick skimming over. Instead of wolfing them down right before class, set aside enough time to read carefully—take notes as you
read, then decide for yourself, before coming to class, what each author is trying to describe and bring to light. Also, to ensure that your final grade reflects your reading effort, I will occasionally give “pop” quizzes at the beginning of class on required readings. These quizzes will be unannounced and they cannot be made up. I recognize that some students must be absent at times; accordingly, when I compile your quiz grades at the end of the semester into an average score, I will drop the lowest one—if you miss a quiz, that will be your one dropped quiz. If you don’t miss any quizzes, I will still drop your lowest score from your quiz average.

GRADES: Each assignment will be graded on a 100-point scale (90-100 = A, etc.), and your final course grade will be determined in the following way:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>1st formal essay (6-8 pages)</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2nd formal essay (6-8 pages)</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-class presentation</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final take-home exam</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Participation/quizzes/attendance</td>
<td>15%</td>
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</tbody>
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MISSED QUIZZES AND LATE PAPERS: 1) Because the answers to unannounced quizzes come up in class after quizzes are taken, they cannot be made up (even if you come to class late). These quizzes are one way to reward those who attend class regularly and on time. 2) Papers are due at the beginning of class on the due date whether the student is in class or not. Late papers will be penalized fifteen points each day they are late. You may turn in the two essays before their due dates if you know you must miss class that day.

E-MAIL ACTIVITY: Enrollment in this class requires an e-mail account, and you must check it frequently, preferably every day, for messages pertaining to the course. You already have a free EIU e-mail account, which I would prefer that you use. You can use a commercial account for this course, but be aware that free web-based accounts (such as Hotmail or Yahoo) sometimes cause problems with listserv subscriptions. Our class discussions may carry over onto the e-mail listserv, and I will occasionally send messages to the entire class. E-mail is also the quickest way to reach me if I am not in my office; I welcome any questions and comments.

Send me an e-mail message at the above address by Friday, January 11 at 3:00 p.m. to confirm your email address. In your message, also describe yourself in whatever ways you choose (including your major), and also write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with these course policies and procedures.

CLASSROOM ENVIRONMENT: In class, I expect all of you to participate in discussions (class participation will be figured into your final grade). The best way to demonstrate that you are an active, engaged, and interested reader is by contributing regularly to class discussions, and by paying close, respectful attention to what everyone else has to say. I do not plan to lecture in this class; I want us to contribute together to a positive, challenging, interesting learning environment. Also, be aware that many sensitive issues tend to arise within a course on multicultural material, so we must respect the opinions of others—try to respond to ideas, rather than to the person stating them. In my opinion, it’s okay for discussions to become “heated,” as long as we respect each other as people. If you have questions, no matter how simple or
complicated, go ahead and ask me, either in class or via e-mail—chances are that other students have the same question.

ATTENDANCE POLICY: The rule regarding attendance is: be here. I will take attendance, and I expect you to attend class every day, on time, and prepared to discuss the material listed for that day on the "daily schedule." Missing class frequently will lower your final grade as well as your grade on the reading quizzes. In addition, note that coming to class "prepared" means coming to class with that day’s assigned reading—anyone who does not have the day’s assigned reading with them may be considered absent. Regarding tardiness: this is a small class, so late arrivals are disruptive—if for some bizarre reason you wish to get on my bad side, you can easily do so by developing the habit of arriving late for class. If you will not be able to arrive for this class on time because of other commitments, drop it and take another section. Finally, you are responsible for all assignments, whether you attend class or not. Get the telephone number of one or two other students in class, or get a hold of me, so you can find out about any missed assignments before you come to class.

ACADEMIC HONESTY: Keep in mind, of course, the English Department’s policy on plagiarism: “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 a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.”

ENGLISH 3907 – DAILY SCHEDULE
(this schedule may be subject to change; bring the day’s reading material to class—students who don’t do so may be marked absent)

T JAN 8 Introduction to the course and to each other; in-class film-screening: “Two Lies” (1989) by Pam Tom

R JAN 10 Hong Kingston, The Woman Warrior, “No Name Woman” & “White Tigers”

F JAN 11 By 5 p.m. today, carefully read the policies and procedures for this course, and then send a message to Dr. Engles (tdengles@eiu.edu): 1) explain which course you are in (English 3907); 2) describe yourself in whatever ways you choose, including your career aspirations; 3) write a statement to the effect that you have read and agree with the course policies and procedures; and 4) as with all e-mail messages, be sure that you “sign” it by adding your name at the end.

T JAN 15 The Woman Warrior, “Shaman” & “At the Western Palace”

R JAN 17 The Woman Warrior, “A Song for a Barbarian Reed Pipe”; Hwang, M. Butterfly

T JAN 22 M. Butterfly continued

Coming soon: the rest of our Daily Schedule...