

COML 1025, ENGL 0039, NELC 1960, SAST 1124, THAR 1025

Narrative Across Cultures

Fall 2023 MW 3.30-4.59
Professor Ania Loomba.
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Office hours:

Professor Loomba W 2-3 [in person in FBH 242; and by zoom at

<https://upenn.zoom.us/j/2158986326>]

[sign up in advance is required **for both** at

https://docs.google.com/document/d/1alz7HtRwcMd98SUieAT1nIh5oXbJLGHxubm_5G0ckE/edit]

If you have class at that time, please let me know so I can give you other options.]

Apurva Prasad: TBA

How does literature both connect cultures across time and space and speak about what is specific to each culture? In this course we will read several types of stories written in different periods and in different parts of the world, ranging from classical Greek and Sanskrit drama to modern African, European, American and Asian novels. Many of these texts are very well known, have had long afterlives, and have been adapted and rewritten in distant spaces and times. In some cases, we will engage with these retellings. Others directly embody the coming together or friction between cultures and peoples. By studying them, we can reflect on how literary texts reflect the cultures in which they were produced and have a capacity to travel across cultures.

Fulfills Sector 1, 2 and 6 of the English Standard Major; Sector III: Arts & Letters, and Cross Cultural Requirement of the [College's General Education Curriculum](#)

Texts

- Sophocles, *Antigone*) PDF on Canvas
- Kalidasa *Shakuntala* PDF on Canvas
- *Mahabharata* on Shakuntala PDF on Canvas
- William Shakespeare, *Othello* PDF on Canvas
- David Henry Hwang, *M. Butterfly* (Plume) ISBN 9780452272590
- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy* PDF on Canvas
- Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* (Vintage International) ISBN 9781400034710
- Shyam Selvadurai, *Funny Boy* (Harcourt Brace) ISBN 9780156005005
- Arundhati Roy, *God of Small Things* (ISBN 9780812979657)
- Amitav Ghosh, “The Imam and the Indian” PDF on Canvas

COURSE LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Appreciate varied ways of apprehending the world in different periods and cultures.
- Explore techniques of story-telling across these periods and cultures.
- Reflect on the relationship between literature, history, and politics.
- Learn to read actively, interpret analytically, think critically, and write/speak persuasively.
- Learn to evaluate ideas from multiple perspectives and to formulate informed opinions on complex issues of critical importance.

Requirements will include weekly “commonplace” posts, or reflections on your reading experience, a mid-term paper and a final paper.

It is important to me to create a class environment in which everyone feels safe and included. I will do my very best to address everyone with their correct pronouns and names, and to pronounce names correctly. But if I do slip up, I very much hope that someone in the class will correct me.

Requirements:

***Regular attendance.**

Attendance is mandatory. Please submit a class absence report for each absence. Three absences and more will result in grade penalties **from your overall grade**. You are responsible for finding out what you have missed from others in the class (it will be a good idea to find one or more class partners who can keep you abreast).

* Completion of all required readings, thoughtful class participation in discussions.

*Thoughtful posts +/- 200 words (each student must write two and **upload by 10 am**), and engagement with other people’s posts. 30 %

*In class exam 1: 15%

*In class exam 2: 20%

*End of semester take home exam (10+ pages): 35%

Cell phones are not allowed to be used in class. Tablets and laptops must be used only for reading and accessing class materials, or for writing and uploading in-class papers.

Accessibility:

I am committed to making this class accessible for everyone. Each of us learn differently, so I encourage you to speak with me as soon as possible about your individual learning needs so that I can better accommodate them as we move through the semester.

If you have a medical, physical, psychological, or learning disability that may affect your work in the course, please contact Penn’s Office of Student Disabilities Services at (215)-573-9235. The office is located in the Weingarten Learning Resources Center at Stouffer Commons (2702 Spruce Street in Suite 300). All services are confidential. The Critical Writing Program is also available to all students.

Academic Integrity:

All work submitted for this course must be the student’s own and be written exclusively for this course. Any student who violates basic codes of academic conduct will immediately fail the assignment and be reported to the University Office of Student Conduct for disciplinary action. If you are unsure about the specifics of what constitutes plagiarism, cheating, or other academic

violations, please see the Codes of Academic Integrity website provided by Penn:
<https://catalog.upenn.edu/pennbook/code-of-academic-integrity/>

Weekly schedule (subject to minor adjustments)

8/30 Introduction

9/4: No class Labor Day

9/6: *Antigone* lecture

9/11 *Antigone* lecture and discussion (**Group 1 posts**)

9/13 *Antigone* discussion

9/18 *Shakuntala* lecture

9/20 *Shakuntala* discussion (**Group 2 posts**)

9/25 *Mahabharata's Shakuntala* (11-43 of Romila Thapar); lecture and discussion

9/27 *Othello* lecture

10/2 *Othello* lecture and discussion (**Group 3 posts**)

10/4 *Othello* discussion

10/9 IN CLASS PAPER 1

10/ 11 *M Butterfly* lecture

10/16 *M Butterfly* lecture and discussion (**Group 4 posts**)

10/18 *M Butterfly* discussion

10/23 *Our Sister Killjoy* lecture

10/25 *Our Sister Killjoy* discussion (**Group 1 posts**)

10/30 *Our Sister Killjoy* discussion

11/1 *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* lecture

11/6 *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* discussion (**Group 2 posts**)

11/8 *Chronicle of a Death Foretold* discussion

11/13 **IN CLASS PAPER 2**

11/15 *Funny Boy* lecture

11/20 *Funny Boy* discussion (**Group 3 posts**)

11/ 22: No class Friday schedule. Happy Thanksgiving.

11/27 *God of Small Things* lecture

11/29 *God of Small Things* discussion (**Group 4 posts**)

12/4 *God of Small Things* discussion

12/6: Amitav Ghosh “The Imam and the Indian”

12/ 11: Last class wrap up.

Final exam due: December 14 11.59 pm