

Representing the Global Village (Fall 2024)



COML 0022-640/ENGL 0022-601

Study of a Theme in Global Literature
Sector III, Cross-Cultural Analysis

Instructor: Hannah LeClair

What is it like to leave home, and what does it mean to return? This course introduces students to literary study by examining representations of the village in texts from around the globe.

Marc Chagall, *I and the Village* (1912)

Course Prospectus:

Rural-to-urban migration has been a defining experience of capitalist modernity since the Industrial Revolution, and in contrast to the city, the village is often viewed with nostalgia—as a place of origin, a site of belonging, or a point of departure. The idea of “the global village” (a phrase coined by media theorist Marshall McLuhan in the 1960s) has long been invoked as a way of picturing the relationship between the local and the global in an interconnected world. Can fiction help us imagine what it means to be in community in our globalized present? And how might literary representations of the village—often envisioned as a place where older lifeways and deeply-rooted forms of community persist—help us to understand the uneven effects of globalization in the context of histories of race and empire? As we survey literature from Africa, Asia, Europe, and the United States, we will discover how literary methods can help us investigate these questions about belonging, resistance, tradition, and change together.

Readings may include:

- novellas by George Eliot
- short stories by John Berger and Annie Proulx
- novels by Chinua Achebe and NoViolet Bulawayo
- theory and criticism by Raymond Williams, Phil Neel, and others
- podcasts like NPR’s *This American Life* and Erica Heilman’s *Rumble Strip*.

Students can expect assignments such as:

- weekly reading responses
- regular in-class presentations
- final project: writing a research paper or recording a scripted podcast