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Office Hours: TuTh 11:30 am – 12:30 pm or  
by appointment at Stevenson 225

LTWL 109  
Summer 2015  
Hum & Soc Sci 350  
TuTh 1:00 pm – 4:30 pm

### **Books, Boxes, and Boats: Migration Stories**

This course surveys different narratives of labor migration through various cultural objects such as literature, film, ships, and *balikbayan* boxes. The class aims to provide a better understanding of labor migration through literature and culture by examining both the larger picture of capitalism or the structural causes of global migration and the smaller stories of labor migration. The discussions around globalization, labor, and capitalism will receive expository and critical attention with the reading of Rediker, Tadiar, and Marx. The conversations around subaltern, alternative, or “from below” histories will be examined through reading Chakrabarty, Ghosh, Hau’ofa, Gilroy, and Eng. The course also plans to develop a concept of figuration and experience from interpreting the assigned literary works and cultural objects. How might figuration and experience as modes of reading help access different stories of labor migration? The course aims to deepen our understanding of the world by looking at labor migration across different historical periods and geographical contexts. Students will be able to critically analyze literary texts and cultural objects not only within its historical and social contexts but also in relation to various theoretical approaches. Course materials will be examined through different fields of study ranging from postcolonial studies, Marxist interpretation of literature and culture, to World and Asian American literature.

#### **Required Texts:**

Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies*  
Monique Truong, *Book of Salt*

#### **Course Reader:**

Carlos Bulosan, “Be American”  
Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” in *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* and “The Two Histories of Capital” in *Provincializing Europe*  
Jose Dalisay, *Soledad’s Sister*  
David Eng, “Ends of Race”  
Paul Gilroy, “The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity”  
Eveli Hau’ofa, “Our Sea of Islands”  
Karl Marx, selections from *Capital*  
Marcus Rediker, selections from *The Slave Ship*  
Neferti Tadiar, “Domestic Bodies” and “Sexual Economies in the Asia-Pacific Community”  
Lisa Yun, “Historical Context of Coolie Traffic to the Americas”

#### **Required Film:**

Melissa Angela Peñafiel, *Putting Itlaw* or *White Light* (10 minutes, with English subtitles)  
Hannah Espia, *Transit* (93 minutes, with English subtitles)

#### **Course Requirements:**

4 Weekly Response Papers (2 pages each) – 40%

Presentation – 5%  
Final Paper (8 pages) – 35%  
Attendance and Active Participation – 20%

### Weekly Response Papers

Write a critical response from the week's readings through one of the approaches below:

1. Close reading or analyzing a key passage from any the readings.
2. Picking a passage that defines the center of the literary text and discuss its significance.
3. Analyzing the literary texts in relation to the secondary readings or the theoretical texts.

Use this as an opportunity to explore your ideas, work through complicated concepts or key terms, ask questions, and draw connections. For instance, how might your passage relate to the overarching themes of the class or how does it articulate with other readings or class materials? Full 2 pages, double-spaced, one-inch margins, and due weekly in lecture. No late, e-mailed, or unstapled papers will be accepted.

### Presentation

Students are required to do a brief presentation based on one of their weekly response papers. No more than five minutes long. The presenter will then pose one analytical discussion question at the end of the presentation. Make sure your question cannot easily be answered with a yes or a no and that it is a type of question that can provoke further thinking and questions. This is different from a clarification question that you ask in order to understand a concept or fact you do not understand or know. Questions should be emailed to the instructor by Wednesdays 9 pm.

### Final Paper

This assignment is the culmination of your work in the course around a topic of your choosing with instructor approval. **Final paper proposals will be due on July 14<sup>th</sup>** and will be part of your final paper grade. Topics should be developed in consultation with the instructor. Here are some possible topics:

1. An expansion of one of your weekly response papers.
2. Analyze a theme running through one of the assigned literary texts.
3. Compare and contrast two literary texts or a literary text with a theoretical text from the secondary readings.

All papers will be graded based on the quality and its critical engagement with the class materials. Papers will be assessed not on its "correctness" but on the extent on how well you prove your claims or how your paper formulates a plausible interpretation of your topic. Writing counts.

## Final Paper Proposal

You need to turn in a proposal as part of your final paper grade and your proposal needs to be approved before starting your final paper. Turn in a typed proposal answering all of the following questions:

1. What is the topic you are interested in pursuing and why?
2. What is your provisional thesis or argument if you are able to formulate one at this point?
3. How does this topic relate to materials or frameworks read for the course? Which of the readings or key concepts are particularly relevant to this topic?
4. What problems, limits, or anxieties do you anticipate in pursuing and framing materials, writing up, and setting parameters of this topic?

## Attendance and Active Participation

More than two absences may result in a fail. Come prepared to share your ideas and questions in class. Please do not be late and always bring all the reading materials to class. Read all the required texts and complete all the assignments. You will only get out of this course what you let yourself get out of them.

### **Course Schedule:**

#### **Week One – Labor and Migration from the Atlantic to the Indian Ocean**

6/23 Introduction  
To be read in class:  
Marcus Rediker, *The Slave Ship* (selections from pp. 41-72)  
Paul Gilroy, “The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity” (pp.1-19)

6/25 cont. of Rediker and Gilroy  
Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (pp. 3-176)  
**Response Paper 1 Due**

#### **Week Two – Alternative Histories in the Indian Ocean**

6/30 Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (pp. 177-385)  
Dipesh Chakrabarty, “The Two Histories of Capital” (pp.62-71)

7/2 Amitav Ghosh, *Sea of Poppies* (pp. 386-496)  
Dipesh Chakrabarty, “Postcoloniality and the Artifice of History” (pp. 174-179)  
**Response Paper 2 Due**

#### **Week Three – Houseboy Labor**

7/7 Monique Truong, *Book of Salt* (pp. 1-175)  
Lisa Yun, “Historical Context of Coolie Traffic to the Americas”

7/9 Monique Truong, *Book of Salt* (pp. 176-261)  
David Eng, “Ends of Race”

### **Response Paper 3**

#### **Week Four – Feminization of Labor in Asia/Pacific**

7/14 Jose Dalisay, *Soledad's Sister* (pp. 1-113)  
Neferti Tadiar, "Domestic Bodies"

**Final Paper Proposal Due**

7/16 Jose Dalisay, *Soledad's Sister* (pp. 116-194)  
Neferti Tadiar, "Sexual Economies in the Asia-Pacific Community"

**Response Paper 4 Due**

#### **Week Five – Balikbayan Box: Material Cultures in Labor and Migration**

7/21 Karl Marx, "The Fetishism of Commodities" from *Capital*  
Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands"  
Melissa Angela Peñafiel, *Putting Ilaw* or *White Light* (to be watched in class)

7/23 Carlos Bulosan, "Be American"  
Hannah Espia, *Transit* (to be watched in class)

**Final papers are due on Friday, July 24<sup>th</sup>, 12-12:30 pm at Stevenson 225. No late papers will be accepted.**