

## HUMS 633: Literary Classics From the Third World

6/28/2010-7/15/2010

Monday-Thursday 9-12

285 Court Street

Professor Indira Karamcheti

# 110, in 285 Court St

Hours: after class and by

app't.; 860-685-3625

The last half of the twentieth century has seen the establishment of a canon of literary classics from many places in the Third World: India, Africa, South America, the Caribbean, etc. Some authors have become not only recognizable to, but indispensable for, the educated First World reader: Chinua Achebe, Salman Rushdie, V.S. Naipaul, Gabriel Garcia Marquez among them. How do these authors shape their worlds and what issues concern them? What in their works and formal methods appeals so much to the readers of the First World? In this regard, we will also consider how canons come to be: what are the criteria by which certain books and authors become "classic"?

We will read Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, V.S. Naipaul's *A House for Mr Biswas*, García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children*, stories from Jhumpa Lahiri's *Unaccustomed Earth*, and Chimamanda Adichie's *The Thing Around Your Neck*, as well as other selected short stories and critical articles. The readings pair established authors, who have achieved the status of "classic," with authors currently regarded as their literary heirs to the throne.

Students will write two short papers and a final research paper. There will be some in-class, ungraded writing.

### REQUIRED TEXTS (all are ordered and available from Broad Street Books):

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

V.S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr Biswas*, Vintage

García Márquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, Perennial Classics

Jhumpa Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*

Chimamanda Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*

Articles are indicated by an asterisk (\*) in the schedule. Those available on line will have the link on the syllabus; those not so available will be emailed to you.

### SCHEDULE:

Mon., June 28: Introduction: What Is a "Classic"? the "canon"? and what is the relationship between the two?

Finish *Things Fall Apart*: we will begin discussion of it today

Read Achebe, "Colonialist Criticism" \*

Read interview with Achebe: <http://www.villagevoice.com/2008-02-19/art/things-fall-apart-thinsp-turns-50-this-year/>

Tues., June 29: continue discussion of *Things*

Read: "Realism, Criticism, and the Disguises of Both: A Reading of Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* with an Evaluation of the Criticism Relating to It," Ato Quayson \*

(JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/3819871>)

Wed., June 30: complete discussion of *Things*

Read: "Chinua Achebe, The African Writers Series and the Establishment of African Literature," James Currey\* (<http://afraf.oxfordjournals.org>)

Thurs., July 1: Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*—Please read all of the short stories; we will discuss in particular "Cell One," "The Thing Around Your Neck," and "The Headstrong Historian," and others as we have time.

Mon., July 5: **ESSAY # 1 DUE** in class, 3-5 pages

Finish reading *A House for Mr Biswas*; we will begin discussion of it today

Read: "V.S. Naipaul and the Political Correctness Debate," Graham Huggan \* (JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/25112146>)

Read: "Two Worlds," V. S. Naipaul, \* *PMLA*, Vol. 117, No. 3 (May, 2002), pp. 479-486 (JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/823146>)

Tues., July 6: continue *House*

Wed., July 7: Complete discussion of *House*

Read: Bissoondath, "Insecurity," and "Veins Visible" \*

Read: Persaud, "Canada Geese" \*

Thurs., July 8: Finish reading *One Hundred Years of Solitude*; we will begin discussion of it today

Read: "Fiction as History: The Bananeras and Gabriel Garcia Marquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*," Eduardo Posada-Carbo \* (JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/158531>)

Mon., July 12: **ESSAY # 2 DUE** in class, 3-5 pages

Continue *Solitude*

Read: "The Politics of the Possible," KumKum Sangari \* (JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1354154>)

Read: Diaz, "Drown," and "How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie" \*

Read: Danticat, "Nineteen Thirty-Seven," and "Seeing Things Simply" \*

Tues., July 13: Begin *Midnight's Children*

Wed., July 14: complete *Midnight*

"The Postcolonial Exotic," Graham Huggan \* (JSTOR: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/2935304>)

Thurs., July 15: Lahiri, *Unaccustomed Earth*

Final Paper due Mon., July 26 in my office: 5-10 pages