

Asian North American Literature and the Remains of War  
English 9177A  
Fall 2019

Instructor : Dr. Thy Phu

Course Location: UC 4415

Tuesdays 3:30-6:30

Office hours: Thursdays, 1:30-2:20 in UC 4432 please email to confirm an appointment

Course Description

Though Canada and the U.S. are often celebrated in immigration as havens for those seeking safety from war, a diasporic framework complicates this narrative of benevolence. This course examines the emergence of Asian diasporic literature in Canada and the U.S., paying particular attention to the cultural work that they do in forming community and protesting injustice. In our close study of select novels, we will consider the significance of their formal experimentation, examine their engagement with the themes of race, gender, and sexuality, and situate them within their social and historical contexts, focusing in on how they respond to the violence of wars, from WWII to the Cold War and their aftermaths.

Novels

Mohsen Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist*

Maxine Hong Kingston, *The Woman Warrior: Memoirs of a Girlhood among Ghosts*

Nora Okja Keller, *Comfort Woman*

Joy Kogawa, *Obasan*; John Okada, *No-No Boy*

Madeleine Thien, *Do Not Say We Have Nothing*

Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*

Ocean Vuong, *On Earth We Are Briefly Gorgeous*

We will also view two documentary films in class: *The Apology* and *First Person Plural*.

Objectives:

By the end of the course, successful students will be able to:

- ¥ Grasp the importance of key concepts in the field of Asian North American literary cultural studies;
- ¥ Understand the practical application of these concepts for literary interpretation;
- ¥ Situate literary texts within historical contexts;
- ¥ Analyze the cultural politics of literary

Methods of Evaluation

Attendance and participation (ongoing includes mandatory meeting with the professor on your final essay proposal)	15%
Weekly critical reflection	20% (ongoing)
Presentation	20% (various)
Essay proposal	5% (Oct. 22)
Essay draft	5% (Dec. 2)
Peer editing workshop	5% (Dec. 3)
Final essay	30% (Dec. 13)

This course provides an open space for the critical and civil exchange of ideas. Some readings and other content in this course will include topics that some students may find difficult and/or traumatizing. The instructor will aim to forewarn students about potentially disturbing content. All students are asked to help to create an atmosphere of mutual respect and sensitivity.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at

		Robert G. Lee, "The Cold War Origins of the Model Minority Myth," in <i>Orientalisms: Asian Americans in Popular Culture</i> .
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Week 5

Oct. 8

Monique Truong, *The Book of Salt*

Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile"

Anita Mannur, "Culinary Nostalgia: Authenticity, Nationalism, and Nostalgia," *ELUS* 32.4 (2007)

Week 11	Nov. 26	Mohsin Hamid, <i>The Reluctant Fundamentalist</i>  Aimee Bahng, "On Speculation: Fiction, Finance, and Futurity."  Arif Dirlik, "Colonialism, Globalization and Culture: Reflections on September 11," <i>Amerasia</i> 28.1 (2001): 80-92.
Week 12	Dec. 3	Drafts due Dec. 2  Bring a hard copy to class for the mandatory editing workshop Dec. 3  Final essay due Dec 3.

ideas, and to grapple with the critical questions raised by the text.

You are NOT expected to submit a critical reflection on Week 1. You are also NOT expected to prepare a critical reflection on the films we will view. Finally, you are NOT required to submit a response on the week that you present.

No late responses will be accepted (if you anticipate an absence, you may submit your responses early). Please note that, although you are expected to assign critical essays in preparation for classes, you are not required to write responses to these articles.

**Presentations.** Presentations should be 20 minutes long. Your presentation should set up a critical problem and provide an engaging interpretation of the assigned text or prompt that works towards an overarching thesis or argument. However, you are not expected to read a formal paper but are instead encouraged to prepare detailed notes and present in an engaging, conversational manner. You should prepare a one-page handout with your main points to assist class members in following your talk. Please submit your notes to the professor at the end of your presentation.

At the end of your presentation, your peers will offer brief feedback and suggestions on the presentation, based on organization, clarity, and quality of analysis.

#### Final Essay

Writing is a multi-step process that involves pre-writing, drafting, revising, and editing. Writing well means that you do not skip steps, by waiting until the night before a deadline to prepare

receive feedback while our ideas are developing. On December 13th your class will be devoted to peer editing. Attendance and participation are mandatory

¥) Final essay: Due before midnight on December 13th

## Policies

### Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed classes, participation component and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at [http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/accommodation\\_medical.pdf](http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf)

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC)

[http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic\\_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf](http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf)

### Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

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### Plagiarism

Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

### Plagiarism Checking

All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Graduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

### Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the UO <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western: [https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental\\_wellbeing/](https://www.uwo.ca/health/mental_wellbeing/) for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.

### Student Accessibility Services

Western is committed to achieving barrier-free accessibility for all its members, including graduate students. As part of this commitment, Western provides a variety of services devoted to promoting, advocating, and accommodating persons with disabilities in their respective graduate program.

Graduate students with disabilities (for example, chronic illnesses, mental health conditions,