

# Global Contemporary Literature

CLT 595

Professor Jessica Pressman

Spring 2019

## COURSE DESCRIPTION

Twenty-first century literature explores and explains our contemporary global, networked world through formal experimentations on the page and screen. Such literature approaches “the global” through a perspective informed by digital technologies, specifically the concept and infrastructure of networks. Rather than a reading list organized around author nationality, this course considers texts that express, display, and critique global capitalism, the World Wide Web, terrorism, and more. Keywords include global networks, translation and born-translated, world literature, borders and exile, crisis and terrorism, new media and upgrade culture.

## Learning Outcomes

In this class, you will

- acquire an understanding of how central concepts of twenty-first century global culture are addressed in, by, and through contemporary literature
- consider the feedback loop between digital technologies and literature
- gain familiarity with a variety of writers working different genres from different identity and national perspectives
- hone your skills as a critical thinker, listener, and writer by focusing on the development of a thesis statement and the ability to prove it through textual explication

## Administrative Information

Email: <a href="mailto:jpressman@sdsu.edu">jpressman@sdsu.edu</a> *Do not expect a response within 24 hours	Course Website: <a href="http://spring2019-clt595.jessicapressman.com">spring2019-clt595.jessicapressman.com</a>
Office: AL 261 Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday, 11-12 or by appointment	Course Meeting: Tuesday, Thursday 12:30-1:45 Room: Life Sciences North 111
English Subject Librarian: Markel Tumlin	<a href="mailto:mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu">mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu</a>

## ASSIGNMENTS

Participation and Presentation 25%

Weekly Blog Posts 25%

Short Thesis & Close Reading Assignment 15%

Final Essay 35%

### Participation 25%

This is *your* class, and your active participation is vital to its success.

- You must attend *all* class meetings in order to receive full credit for participation.
- You must also engage—*talk* and listen—in class. Come to class prepared to discuss the text in depth; this means having read the *entire* text *before* class. I expect you to speak and listen.
- **Your participation grade includes engaging in dialogue in class.** This means speaking and listening actively, attentively, and respectfully. (If you have fear of speaking in public, this seminar is a good place to learn to address that fear. Please come see me early in the term to discuss strategies for dealing with this fear).
- **Your participation grade includes an in-person meeting with the professor.**
- **You will give a 5-minute presentation on one of the texts.** This presentation should serve to start the class's conversation for the day. You will point us to a question from the day's reading and to the specific passage in the text that sparked that inquiry for you. You will get the discussion rolling. You should be able to direct the class to a passage for close reading and/or a series of questions for discussion.

### Weekly Blog Posts (25%)

You will write (**500 words**) **blog responses to the reading and each provide a comment on a peer's blog each week**, before the next week's class meeting. The goal of the blog posts is to extend the conversation and coverage of the course by allowing you to 1) express, share, and comment upon interests, questions, and concerns related to the readings and also to 2) enable the professor to address and incorporate these topics in that week's meeting. It is also a place to draft ideas and text for use in your essays.

--Blog posts are due *on Monday at 6pm* weekly; **late posts will not receive credit.**

-You will be given an *overall* grade for blog posts, based on completion and content, not a grade for each post. Rubric for grading is available on our website and below.

Your Blog Grade is based on 2-parts: 1) a completion grade, and 2) a content grade.

The completion component of the blog	The content component of the blog grade
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<b>grade</b> requires you to have the following number of posts:	is based on the following grading rubric
A= 11-13 posts B= 8-10 posts C= 6-7 posts D= 4-5 posts F= 3 or less <hr/>	A= Post contains a focused thesis or question and close reading of a passage, B= Post contains a close reading of content but no focused question or thesis C= Post contains no analysis of text (no close reading), just summary and undirected ideas D=Post contains little substantive thinking as content <hr/>

### **Short Thesis & Close Reading Assignment (15%)**

This short (3-4 page) assignment is intended to provide *a benchmark* for your writing (and grade), a place to test your thesis and explication skills before the final essay. You will revise one of your blog posts or write new content that demonstrates your ability to

**1) develop a thesis about a text**

**2) use a single passage from the text to support your argument through careful textual explication/analysis/close reading of that passage**

*\*\*Late essays are docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late*

### **Final Essay (35%)**

In this **6-8 page analytical essay**, you will build upon your thesis and explication skills to explore a topic and text that most interested you during the semester.

-Your essay must include **a thesis** that guides the analysis and **textual explication** (close reading) to support it. (We will discuss and practice these analytical skills throughout the semester; informative guides to thesis writing and explication are also available on our website).

-You must *meet with the professor* to discuss your plans for the final essay

*\*\*Late essays are docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late*

### **Extra Credit (Total of 1%)**

There are multiple ways to earn extra credit in this class, all of which will be listed on our website.

### **REQUIRED READING (all texts are available in the SDSU Bookstore)**

William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology*

J.R. Carpenter, *The Gathering Cloud*

Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar, Vol. 1, One Rainy Day in May*

Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words* (translated from the Italian by Ann Goldstein)

Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*  
Wang Ping, *Ten Thousand Waves: Poems*

## **READING SCHEDULE**

### **Week 0: Introduction to the class**

January 24: introduction

### **Week 1: Books and Networks**

January 29: excerpt from Patrick Jagoda, *Network Aesthetics* (2016) [PDF]

January 31: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part I, pps. 1-53)

### **Week 2: Crisis, Climate, and Connections**

February 5: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part I, pps. 53- 109)

February 7: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part II, pps. 109-259)

### **Week 3: Social Media and Global Selves**

February 12: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part III, pps. 260-355)

February 14: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part IV, pps. 356-403)

### **Week 4: Labor and Loss**

February 19: Wang Ping, *Ten Thousand Waves: Poems*

especially “A Hakka Man Farms Rare Earth in South China,” “Dust Angels,”  
“Bargain”

February 21: Wang Ping, *Ten Thousand Waves: Poems*

especially “The Price of a Finger,” “This is Not Violence,” “This is How You  
Cross the Line,” “Ten Thousand Waves”

### **Week 5: Digital Capitalism & Global Networks**

February 26: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

February 28: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

### **Week 6: Space: Geographic and Typographic**

March 5: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

March 7: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

*Thesis Workshop*

### **Week 7: Games and Fiction**

March 12: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

**\*March 13: MZD talk\* 2pm in DH Center**

March 14: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

### **Week 8: Scale**

March 19: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

March 21: Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar*

### **Week 9: Networks**

March 26: Guest speaker: Professor David Ciccoricco (Univ. of Otago, New Zealand)

-David Ciccoricco, “Networks” (forthcoming article for *Cambridge Companion to Technology*) [PDF]

March 28: excerpt from Nicole Starosielski, *The Undersea Network* (2015) [PDF]

**-Midterm Essay Due: Thursday 5/28 at midnight, posted to the blog**

**--Spring Break--**

### **Week 10: Archives and Obsolescence**

April 9: Special Collections visit

April 11: Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries, selections, including “Samsung Means to Come” (yhchang.com)

### **Week 11: Translation, Code, & The Language of Others**

April 16: Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words* (pps. xiii-102)

April 18: Jhumpa Lahiri, *In Other Words* (pps. -103-231)

-excerpt from Rebecca Walkowitz, *Born Translated: The Contemporary Novel in an Age of World Literature* (2015)

### **Week 12: Borders, Exile, and Refuges**

April 23: William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology* (pps. 1-65)

April 25: William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology* (pps. 65-104)

### **Week 13: The Cloud**

April 30: J.R. Carpenter, *The Gathering Cloud* (pps. 13-63)

May 2: J.R. Carpenter, *The Gathering Cloud* (pps. 65-104, and web-companion)

### **Week 14: Drones, Surveillance, and Conclusions**

May 7: James Bridal, “Drone Shadows” series (2012-13)

-Trevor Paglen “Drone art” series (2010) and interview with Trevor Paglen (2013)

May 9: Concluding Conversation

**-- Final Essay Due, Wednesday 5/15 at midnight—posted to the blog**

## **OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

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**NOTE:** This syllabus is subject to change.

**SDSU as “safe space”**

The CSU has affirmed its commitment to ‘protecting access, affordability, intellectual freedom, inclusivity, and diversity for all students . . . including supporting DACA students.’ Discrimination, harassment, or retaliation against students, faculty, and staff on the basis of race, religion, gender, sexuality, disability, nationality, immigration status and other categories of identity is prohibited. If you have concerns about your status at the university, please visit <http://studentaffairs.sdsu.edu/EOP/> for information or contact the Dean of Students or the Assistant Dean for Student Affairs in your College.”

**ACADEMIC HONESTY**

I take teaching seriously, and I expect you to take seriously your work as a student. That means that academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Academic dishonest includes, but is not limited to: (a) using assignments that you wrote for another class, (b) representing work done by someone else as your own (i.e., plagiarism), and (c) copying someone else’s work on an assignment, basic cheating. Plagiarism and Cheating of any kind will result at least in an "F" for that assignment (and may, depending on the severity of the case, lead to an "F" for the entire course) and may be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities for further action. If you have questions at all, you should consult me immediately.

**DISABILITY STATEMENT**

If you are a student with a disability and believe you will need accommodations for this class, it is your responsibility to contact Student Disability Services at [\(619\) 594-6473](tel:6195946473). To avoid any delay in the receipt of your accommodations, you should contact Student Disability Services as soon as possible. Please note that accommodations are not retroactive, and that accommodations based upon disability cannot be provided until you have presented your instructor with an accommodation letter from Student Disability Services. Your cooperation is appreciated.