**Contemporary Global Literature**

626: Seminar in Comparative Literature

Professor Jessica Pressman

Spring 2022

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This class pursues an understanding of our globally networked world through the study of world literature. We read a wide variety of 21st- century literature that explores and explains global politics, pandemics, multinational capitalism, and digital culture. Our intellectual journey focuses on texts that express, display, and critique our contemporary world with a perspective informed by digital technologies, specifically the idea-concept-form of the network and the World Wide Web. We also read contemporary literary criticism that theorizes and challenges the concepts of world literature and traditional methods of comparative literature (e.g. definitions based on nation-state and/or language).

Keywords include: network theory, borders and exile, translation and born-translated, crisis and terrorism, new media and upgrade culture, ecocriticism and climate change, and networks. Readings (might) include Ruth Ozeki’s *A Tale for the Time Being*, William Archila’s *The Gravediggers Archaeology,* Rivers Solomon’s *The Deep*,Wang Ping’s *Ten Thousand Waves*: *Poems*, and digital literature by Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries as well as selections of relevant literary scholarship, cultural criticism, and media theory.

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 and criticism.
* Recognize the feedback loop between digital technologies, especially the World Wide Web (the Internet), and literature and literary criticism.
* Gain familiarity with a variety of writers working different genres from different identity and national perspectives.
* Gain familiarity with contemporary debates and discourse in the field of Comparative Literature.
* Develop awareness of how concepts and methods used to discuss “world literature” and “comparative literature” are in flux
* 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 and analysis

**Administrative Information**

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| Email: jpressman@sdsu.edu \**Do not* expect a response within 24 hours | Course Website:  https://jessicapressman.com/spring2022-eng626/ |
| Office: AL 261 Office hours: **Th 12-1:30 and additional hours by appointment,** both in person and on Zoom. For Zoom, sign up on Google doc (on our website on Admin/Info page).For additional times and date outside Th 12-1:30, email me.**Zoom meeting room: 943 624 7815** | Course Meeting: Tuesday, Thursday 2-3:15AL 107 |
| English Subject Librarian:Markel Tumlin | mtumlin@rohan.sdsu.edu |

***NOTE:******This syllabus is subject to change… and probably will change!***

**Our COVID situation:**

***Masks are required in the classroom at all times. NO exceptions.***

***\*\*Students who do not adhere to the*** [***Covid19 Student Policies***](http://csrr.sdsu.edu/) ***or the directives of their faculty will be directed to leave the classroom*** *and will be referred to the Center for Student Rights and Responsibilities\*\**

* Effective Fall 2021, students who register for face-to-face classes are expected to attend as indicated in the course schedule. Faculty teaching face-to-face courses will not be required to create a new, alternative on-line class as an accommodation for any student.
* Students with medical conditions that would present a COVID-related risk in a face-to-face instructional setting should contact the Student Ability Success Center (<https://sdsu.edu/sasc>) to begin the process of getting support.
* Do not come to campus if you do not feel well. Remain home and monitor your symptoms and seek medical attention as needed.

**Online learning:** The first two weeks of our classes will be held on Zoom at our scheduled class-time. Even though we will be meeting virtually, I expect you to *attend all class meetings via Zoom* ***AND*** *have your video on*. You can use a virtual background, but your presence and visibility are of utmost importance to developing a learning community. If you have concerns about virtual instruction, please reach out and do so early in the semester!

***COVID Caveat: I understand the pressures of sheltering-at-home and learning online. If something comes up and zooming in on a particular day proves an encumbrance, please email me. Please aim to attend all zoom sessions, but I certainly understand what we are all up against.***

**REQUIRED READING**

**\*all books available at SDSU bookstore unless otherwise noted\***

Literature

William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology*

Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being*

Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon*

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

Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries, (elit) “Nippon and “Samsung Means to Come”

Additional, but not required:

Mark Z. Danielewski, *The Familiar* (vol. I)

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

Literary Criticism (excerpts from)

American Comparative Literature Association “State of the Field” special issue (2014)

David Damrosch, *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (2020)

N. Katherine Hayles, *Unthought*: *The Power of the Cognitive Nonconscious* (2017)

Patrick Jagoda, *Network Aesthetics* (2016)

Steve Mentz, *The Ocean: Object Lessons* (2020)

Jessica Pressman, “Electronic Literature as Comparative Literature” (2014)

Christina Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (2016)

Rita Raley, “Machine Translation and Global English” (2003)

Roopika Risam, *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and*

*Pedagogy* (2019)

Nicole Starosielski*, The Undersea Network* (2015)

Erin Suzuki, *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures*

(2021)

Rebecca Walkowitz, *Born Translated*: The *Contemporary Novel in an Age of World*

*Literature* (2015)

**ASSIGNMENTS**

Participation 20%

Weekly Blog Posts 25%

Midterm Essay: Short Close Reading 20%

Proposal and Annotated Bibliography for Final Essay 5%

Final Essay Project 30%

**Participation 20%**

This is *your* class, and your participation is vital to its success. You must attend *all* class meetings in order to receive full credit for participation 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 a meeting with the professor**.

**Weekly Blog Posts (25%)**

You will write (500 words) blog responses to the reading (any text and any idea/section from that text) *and* each *provide a comment on a peer’s blog each week (due before the next week’s class meeting, so before Thursday*). 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.

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| --- | --- |
| **The completion component of the blog grade** requires you to have the following number of posts: | **The content component of the blog grade** 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 | 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 thesisC= Post contains no analysis of text (no close reading), just summary and undirected ideasD=Post contains little substantive thinking as content |

**Midterm Short Close Reading (20%)**
This short (3 page) essay 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 can revise one of your blog posts or write new content that demonstrates your ability to
1) develop a [thesis](https://jessicapressman.com/fall2021-eng604/?page_id=61), and
2) use a text to support, through textual [explication/analysis/close reading](https://jessicapressman.com/fall2021-eng604/?page_id=66), your argument.

The short essay is an exercise in diving into the formal operations of a text to see HOW it operates and develop an argument about WHY that matters. You will
1) select a single short text or passage of a text
2) pursue a focused argument about that passage: what you see in it and why that matters (WHAT, HOW, SO WHAT– from the [Thesis handout](https://jessicapressman.com/fall2021-eng604/?page_id=61))

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

**Final Essay Thesis & Annotated Bibliography (5%)**
In preparation for your final essay project, you will write a short abstract (100 words) that includes a thesis statement and an annotated bibliography of 8-10 centrally relevant sources for the essay.

-Information about the proposal and bibliography are available on our website.
 \*\*Late assignment are docked 1/3 of a grade for each day late

**Final Essay (30%)**
In this 15-20 page analytical essay, you will explore in-depth one research question raised by our course. You will propose your own essay topic and determine the best way to present, your argument and research. You will conduct and implement scholarly research, secondary sources (at least 3) in your essay.

-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).

**MFA students**: Instead of a 15-20 page analytical essay, you can choose to instead create a work of poetry or fiction inspired by or related to our reading/learning and then write a 10-page analytical explanation of your creative piece.
-The analytical essay must include **a thesis** that guides the analysis and **textual explication** (close reading) to support it and scholarly research, secondary sources (at least 3) in your essay. You also must submit the formal proposal and annotated bibliography for your project.

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

-You will briefly present your project during the final week of class.

\*\*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 but include the following:

\*\*To receive credit for any of these events, you must not only attend but also write a blog post that situates that event (the reading, the literature, the discussion) in the context of our class

**READING SCHEDULE:**

**Week 0: Introduction**

January 20: Introduction to the class and each other

**Week 1:** **A Contemporary Global Novel —*A Tale for the Time Being***

January 25: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part I, pps. 1-109)

January 27: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part II, pps. 109-259)

-David Damrosch*,* Introduction to *Comparing the Literatures: Literary Studies in a Global Age* (Princeton UP, 2020): pps. 1-11.

**Week 2: A Contemporary Global Novel——*A Tale for the Time Being***

February 1: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part III, pps. 260-355)

February 3: Ruth Ozeki, *A Tale for the Time Being* (Part IV, pps. 356-403)

—Erin Suzuki, Introduction to *Ocean Passages: Navigating Pacific Islander and Asian American Literatures* (Temple UP, 2021): pps. 1-21

**Week 3**: **Network Theory & Global Media Studies**

February 8: Patrick Jagoda, excerpt from introduction to *Network Aesthetics* (Chicago UP,

2016): pps. 1-16

February 10: Nicole Starosielski*,* Preface and Introductionto *The Undersea Network* (Duke UP,

2015): pps. 1-25

**Week 4: Global Capitalism, Labor and Loss**

February 15: Wang Ping, *Ten Thousand Waves*: *Poems* (2014)

February 17: Wang Ping, *Ten Thousand Waves*: *Poems* (2014)

**Week 5*:* Borders, Exile, and Refuges**

February 22: William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology* (2015)

February 24: William Archila, *The Gravediggers Archaeology* (2015)

**Week 6: Archives and Power**

March 1: Special Collections Visit with Anna Culbertson

March 3: Special Collections Visit with Anna Culbertson

--Roopika Risam, *New Digital Worlds: Postcolonial Digital Humanities in Theory, Praxis, and Pedagogy* (Northwestern UP, 2019), Chapter 3: “The Stakes”

**Week 7:** **Black Mermaids &** **The Ocean as Archive and Agent**

March 8: Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

March 10: Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

—Steve Mentz, excerpt from *The Ocean: Object Lessons* (Bloomsbury Press, 2020)

**Week 8: *The Deep***

March 15: Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

--Christina Sharpe, excerpt from *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Duke UP, 2016)

March 17: Rivers Solomon, *The Deep*

**Week 9: Surveying the Field & Thesis Workshop**

March 22: *Thesis Workshop*

March 24: Selections from American Comparative Literature Association “State of the Field” special issue (2014)

***\*\*Midterm Essay due, Sunday 3/27 at midnight, posted to the blog\*\****

—**SPRING BREAK—**

**Week 10: The Novel at Global, Planetary Scale**

April 5: Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* (2014)

April 7: Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* (2014)

**Week 11: World Literature and the Question of “Comparative”**

April 12: Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* (2014)

April 14: Nnedi Okorafor, *Lagoon* (2014)

*—*Rebecca Walkowitz, “Introduction” of *Born Translated*: The *Contemporary Novel in*

 *an Age of World Literature* (2015)

**Week 12: Digital Literature on the WWW**

April 19: Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries, selections, including “Nippon” and

 “Samsung Means to Come” ([yhchang.com](http://yhchang.com))

April 21: Jessica Pressman, “Electronic Literature as Comparative Literature”

Rita Raley, “Machine Translation and Global English” (2003)

Additional:

Jessica Pressman, “The Code Between the Words: The Role of Translation in Young-hae Chang Heavy Industries's *Nippon*” (2007)

***\*\*Final Project Thesis and Annotated Bibliography due— Sunday, 4/24 @ midnight, posted to blog\*\****

**Week 13: The Non-Human and Posthuman**

April 26: Trevor Paglen “Drone art” series (2010), interview (2013) & James Bridal, “Drone

Shadows” series (2012-13)

April 28: N. Katherine Hayles, excerpt from *Unthought*: *The Power of the Cognitive*

*Nonconscious* (University of Chicago, 2017)

**Week 14: Conclusions**

May 3: Final Essay Thesis Workshop

May 5: Concluding conversation

**—Extra Credit event: Friday, 10-12 DH Showcase in DH Center—**

***—Final Essay Due: Sunday, May 15 @ midnight, posted to the blog—***

*-Late work is docked 1/3 of grade for each day late.*

**OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION**

**Communication**

Students are provided with an SDSU Gmail account, and this [SDSU email address](https://gsuite.sdsu.edu/) will be used for all communications. University Senate policy notes that students are responsible for checking their official university email once per day during the academic term. For more information, please see [Student Official Email Address Use Policy here](https://senate.sdsu.edu/policy-file/policies/facilities#collapsed20e126_12).

**Medical-related absences**

University policy instructs students to contact their professor/instructor/coach in the event they need to miss class due to an illness, injury, or emergency. Please inform me as soon as apossible if you are missing class due to an illness or a Covid-related situation.

**Finding Help on Campus**

Need help finding an advisor, tutor, counselor, or require emergency economic assistance? The [**SDSU Student Success Help Desk**](https://studentsuccess.sdsu.edu/) is here for you. Student assistants are available via Zoom Monday through Friday, 9:00 AM to 4:30 PM to help you find the office or service that can best assist with your particular questions or concerns.

**Other important resources:**

* CAL Student Success Center: <https://cal.sdsu.edu/student-resources/student-success>
* College of Education Student Success Center: <https://education.sdsu.edu/oss>
* Center for Student Success in Engineering:  <https://csse.sdsu.edu/>
* CoS Student Success Center: <https://cossuccess.sdsu.edu/>
* FSB Student Success Center: <https://business.sdsu.edu/undergrad/advising>
* HHS Advisors:  <https://chhs.sdsu.edu/student-resources/advising/>
* IVC Student Success and Retention: <https://ivcampus.sdsu.edu/student_affairs/retention>
* PSFA Advisors: <https://psfa.sdsu.edu/resources/student_advisors>

**Accommodations**

SDSU via the [Student Ability Success Center](http://sasc.sdsu.edu/) (SASC) provides accommodations for students with documented disabilities or medical conditions covered under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA). In keeping with current public health guidance, I cannot provide arrangements to students without an ADA-qualified disability or medical condition.

If you are a student with a disability and are in need of accommodations for this class, please contact the Student Ability Success Center at sascinfo@sdsu.edu (or go to [sdsu.edu/sasc](http://sdsu.edu/sasc)) as soon as possible. Please know accommodations are not retroactive, and I cannot provide accommodations based upon disability until I have received an accommodation letter from the Student Ability Success Center. SASC registration and accommodation approvals may take up to 10-14 business days, so please plan accordingly.

**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.