Global Histories - Traversing Borders

This seminar will explore the way “the global” is conceptualized in an age with competing notions of the individual and the community. By considering race, class, gender, and politics, the readings will elucidate the many paths that thought, language, and identity take when traversing borders. Given these considerations, we will challenge the ways authors envision citizenship in a world where boundaries are both fixed and fluid.

Class Structure:

This is primarily a discussion course and so I will try and keep lectures to a minimum. Class interaction through reading and presentations will create the substance of the course.

Goals of Class Discussions:

Class is an important opportunity to discuss the week’s themes and readings. It is a chance for us to think critically and question some of our own assumptions. When possible will aim at a thoughtful and thought-provoking discussion. You should develop a sense of responsibility for class discussion, making sure it is robust, on-topic and well thought out. We will cover a lot of material each week and you should approach the readings with the goal of allowing certain sources to speak to you, challenge you, and inspire further reflection. Our discussions will be shaped, by questions and ideas you bring to class. While we will generally stick to the course outline, I may change readings or subject matter to better address your concerns or interests.

Readings:

Reading is the most important element of class. Careful reading will help you to study for exams, participate in class, and enhance your overall understanding of the subject matter. On average you will have 180 pages of reading per week, combining primary and secondary text. As the relaying of stories is an important part of religion, I have done my best to provide you with texts that tell a story.
When reading be strategic by identifying the themes and purpose of a given selection and discovering how authors achieve their goals. When you find something in the readings that seems vulnerable to criticism, try to formulate the criticism, but then try to imagine how the author might want to respond to your question or objection. This type of critical thinking will help you when formulating essays and research papers.

* - Please be aware that the reading for any given week may change, and I will inform you of these changes in advance.

**Class Requirements & Grading:**

**Participation 30%**: Participating is a crucial part of your grade. It includes actively and thoughtfully contributing to the conversation, as well as actively listening and respecting your classmates’ input. Articulating ideas through participation will help you to formulate ideas and reinforce reading material.

**Presentations & Class Led Discussion 10%**: Each student will present the readings for one week’s class. This will include a semiformal presentation of the material as well as spearheading and running class discussion.

**Midterm Paper 20% Due February 27**: A 9-12 page paper explaining and critiquing the Fukuyama-Huntington debate and assessing how Appiah’s book, *Cosmopolitanism*, acts as an deals with the relevant issues. **Late Papers**: Papers turned in after the deadline will lose 1/3 grade (A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.) for each 24-hour period late up until the end of the second day. Papers turned in any time after the end of the second day will lose 1 full letter grade (A to B; A- to B-, etc.)

**Final Paper Presentation 5% Due May 4**: Two weeks before your final papers are due there will be an informal presentation session for your paper ideas accompanied by a one-page paragraph of explanation and a short bibliography. The main objective is to help you frame your ideas in preparation for writing the paper.

**Final Paper 35% Due May 18**: A 15-20 page paper discussing one of the novels that we have read this semester and placing it in its relevant historical and political context. These paper should discuss a central theme of the chosen novel (gender, race, class, politics, etc.), how the author presents and discusses this theme, the author’s argument, and the accuracy with which he/she has presented historical and political events. **Late Papers**: Papers turned in after the deadline will lose 1/3 grade (A to A-; A- to B+; B+ to B, etc.) for each 24-hour period late up until the end of the second day. Papers turned in any time after the end of the second day will lose 1 full letter grade (A to B; A- to B-, etc.)
Explanation of Grading: All assignments will be given letter grades. The following, partially taken from the CSUS website (http://catalog.csus.edu/12-14/first%20100%20pages/academicpolicies.html), helps to define what each letter means:

A - *Excellent* achievement of the course objectives. In addition to being clearly and significantly above the requirements, work exhibited is of an independent, creative, and contributory nature.

B – *Very Good* achievement of the course objectives. The performance is clearly and significantly above the satisfactory fulfillment of course requirements.

C - *Satisfactory* achievement of the course objectives. A C shows evidence of effort, but only modest success in meeting the course expectations.

D - *Unsatisfactory* achievement of course objectives, yet achievement of a sufficient proportion of the objectives so that it is not necessary to repeat the course unless required to do so by the academic department. A D is minimally acceptable in the sense that it barely counts as a completion

F - *Unsatisfactory* achievement of course objectives to an extent that the student must repeat the course to receive credit.

Plus - Shows effort and achievement that goes somewhat beyond the standards expressed above for each letter category.

Minus - Shows effort and achievement that is somewhat below the standards expressed for each letter category.

Statement on Academic Integrity
Plagiarism and academic dishonesty constitute serious offenses that undermine your education and violate Sacramento State’s policy on academic integrity and may result in penalties ranging from a lowered grade to course failure. All work submitted in this class must be your own, and must be completed specifically for this class. You may not turn in work previously written for another class. Any use of another’s work without proper attribution constitutes plagiarism. Plagiarism ranges from copying someone else’s work word for word, to rewriting someone else’s work with only minor word changes (mosaic plagiarism), to summarizing work without acknowledging the source. For more information see the library’s page on plagiarism: (http://library.csus.edu/content2.asp?pageID=353)
**Expectations:**

**Attendance:** I will not be taking attendance, but excessive lateness and/or absence will negatively affect your performance on exams as well as the participation component of your grade.

**Preparation:** Being prepared means you have read and taken notes on all of the week’s required reading assignments, have arrived to class with all of the relevant texts, and have brought questions and ideas to class that are important to you, prepared to discuss a range of issues. On occasion I will give you a list of “terms to define/identify” before a week’s readings. You should come to class aware of these definitions, having used your class texts and outside materials if necessary.

**Laptops & Cell Phones:** Laptops and cell phones are not allowed during class. We should be listening and commenting, keeping a good focus on the direction of the conversation. As we all know, laptops and cell phones can be a serious means of distraction for you and those around you.

**Office Hours:** Outside of our weekly class sessions, I will be available to address any questions, concerns or suggestions you have by e-mail and during office hours (it is best to make an appointment). I will do my best to respond to your e-mails within 24 hours on weekdays. I will typically respond to weekend emails on Mondays. I encourage you to meet with me to discuss questions you might have about the course material or your broader interests.

**Accommodations for Recognized Disabilities:** I will make every effort to accommodate your needs as they apply to the above policies. Please come see me in the event that you will need special accommodation so that we can figure out an acceptable solution.

I’m looking forward to a rich and exciting semester.
Books:


Chinua Achebe was a Nigerian novelist, poet, professor, and critic. His first novel *Things Fall Apart* was considered his magnum opus, and is the most widely read book in modern African literature. Although a work of fiction, the story told in this book helps give insight into African religion and its eventual encounter with Christianity through colonial expansion.


Kwame Anthony Appiah was born in London, but moved as an infant to Ghana, where he grew up. His father, Joseph Emmanuel Appiah, a lawyer and politician, was also, at various times, a Member of Parliament, an Ambassador and a President of the Ghana Bar Association; his mother, the novelist and children’s writer, Peggy Appiah, whose family was English, was active in the social, philanthropic and cultural life of Kumasi. Their marriage, in 1953, was widely covered in the international press, because it was one of the first “inter-racial society weddings” in Britain. In January 2014 he took up an appointment as Professor of Philosophy and Law at New York University, where he teaches both in New York and in Abu Dhabi and at other NYU global centers. The book *Cosmopolitanism* is Appiah’s answer to the contemporary world and the ethics necessary for balancing the global and the particular.


Barbara Kingsolver was born in 1955, and grew up in rural Kentucky. At various times in her adult life she has lived in England, France, and the Canary Islands, and has worked in Europe, Africa, Asia, Mexico, and South America. In 2000 she received the National Humanities Medal for service through the arts. *The Poisonwood Bible* is a story told by the wife and four daughters of Nathan Price, a fierce, evangelical Baptist who takes his family and mission to the Belgian Congo in 1959. The novel was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize and the Orange Prize, and won the national book award of South Africa.

Toni Morrison is an American novelist, editor, and professor. She has authored numerous novels, winning the Pulitzer Prize and the American Book Award in 1988, the Nobel Prize in 1993, and the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. Through the love story of its two main characters, the novel *Tar Baby* addresses the diversity of the African American experience with race, gender, and class, moving from the Caribbean to Manhattan and the deep South.


Salman Rushdie is a British-Indian novelist best known for the novels *Midnight's Children* (1981) and *The Satanic Verses* (1988), for which he was accused of blasphemy against Islam. He attended King's College at the University of Cambridge, where he studied history. After graduating, he spent time working in television and a brief period as a copywriter for an advertising agency, before pursuing a career as a writer. Through its use of “magical realism” and its main character Saleem Sinai, *Midnight’s Children* presents India, Indian history, and Indian culture through the lens of partition, independence, and colonialism.


Cornel West is public intellectual and scholar of race, religion, and philosophy. He has taught at Princeton, Union Theological Seminary, Yale, Harvard and the University of Paris. He has written 19 books and edited 13 books. He is best known for his book *Race Matters* and *Democracy Matters*. His website bio says that he “has a passion to communicate to a vast variety of publics in order to keep alive the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr. – a legacy of telling the truth and bearing witness to love and justice.” *Prophecy Deliverance* presents the African American experience based largely on Cornel West’s own political and cultural perspectives. It challenges African Americans to consider the incorporation of Marxism into their theological perspectives, thereby adopting the mindset that it is class more so than race that renders one powerless in America.
Course Outline

January 26: The End of History or The Clash of Civilizations?

See Blackboard for:
Francis Fukuyama, “The End of History?” The National Interest, Summer 1989
Samuel Huntington, “The Clash of Civilizations,” Foreign Affairs, Summer 1993, pp. 22-49

February 2: Cosmopolitanism

Reading: Kwame Anthony Appiah: Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers

See Blackboard for:
Michel de Certeau, “Walking in the City” in The Practice of Everyday Life, pp. 91-110

February 9: Partition & the End of Colonialism

Reading: Midnight’s Children, Book One

See Blackboard for:
Excerpts from the writings of Ghandi, Nehru, & Jinnah
Salman Rushdie, Imaginary Homelands, pp. 9-21

February 16: Partition & the End of Colonialism (continued)

Reading: Midnights Children, Book Two

February 23: Partition & the End of Colonialism (continued)

Reading: Midnights Children, Book Three

See Blackboard for:
Interview with Edward Said in Imaginary Homelands, pp. 166-184

Midterm Paper Due Monday, February 27
March 2: Africa and Colonial/Missionary Encounters

See Blackboard for:
Ali Mazrui, *The African Condition: A Political Diagnosis*

March 9: Africa and Colonial/Missionary Encounters (continued)

Reading: *The Poisonwood Bible*, Part I

March 16: Africa and Colonial/Missionary Encounters (continued)

Reading: *The Poisonwood Bible*, Part II

Spring Break (No Class March 23)

March 30: Africa and Colonial/Missionary Encounters (continued)

Reading: *The Poisonwood Bible*, Part III

April 6: Africa and Colonial/Missionary Encounters (continued)

Reading: *Things Fall Apart*

April 13: Race: Seeing the Global through the Eyes of the Local

Reading: *Prophecy Deliverance*

April 20: Race: Seeing the Global through the Eyes of the Local (continued)

Reading: *Tar Baby*, Part I

April 27: Race: Seeing the Global through the Eyes of the Local (continued)

Reading: *Tar Baby*, Part II
May 4: Paper Presentations

May 11: Looking Back and Moving Forward

See Blackboard for:


In class film: Daughters of the Dust

Final Paper Due Monday, May 18