School of Theology and Ministry
Seattle University

STMM 593-02
Literature from Around the World
Hunthausen 110
Wednesday: 5:45 - 8:35 p.m.

Michael Kinnamon
HUNT 222
Office hours: By appointment
206-296-2534
Kinnamon@seattleu.edu

Purpose

Behind this course are four major assumptions: 1) that Christians, confessing God to be active in the world and the Creator of all cultures, should be concerned with the way people live–the problems they face, the convictions they hold–around the world; 2) that Christian faith and ministry are generally strengthened and enriched when our inevitably-contextualized worldviews are brought into dialogue with alternative ways of experiencing reality; 3) that our ministries, given the era in which we live, must take account of religious and cultural pluralism and global interconnectedness; and 4) that the reading of serious literature (always a worthy endeavor) can be an exceptionally fruitful and appropriate means of imagining genuine "otherness," including the otherness of foreign cultures and non-Christian religions.

With these assumptions in mind, the central purpose of the course becomes clear: to expand our spiritual and intellectual horizons by studying novels, short stories, and poems written by outstanding modern (for the most part, contemporary) authors from the Middle East, Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean. We will examine these works in order to understand both what they say (i.e., their perspectives on reality) and how they say it (i.e., their use of character, plot, language, and other elements of literary form). As a result of the course, students should be more familiar with a wide variety of cultures and have greater appreciation for literature and its importance for the church and its ministry.

Required Texts

Uzodinma Iweala, Beasts of No Nation

Denys Johnson-Davies, ed., The Anchor Book of Modern Arabic Fiction (ABMAF)

Amit Majmudar, Partitions

Tayeb Salih, Season of Migration to the North

Barbara Solomon, ed., Other Voices, Other Vistas (OVOV)

"Literature from Around the World" course pack (CP)

Schedule

January 9	**Introduction to the Course** **Literature Across Cultures / Literature of the Caribbean** J. Lahiri, "Interpreter of Maladies" (CP) C. Ngozi Adichie, "The Thing Around Your Neck" (CP) O. Senor, "Mad Fish" (CP) E. Danticat, "Children of the Sea" (CP)
January 16	**Literature of Sub-Saharan Africa** U. Iweala, Beasts of No Nation
January 23	**Literature of Sub-Saharan Africa** C. Achebe, "Girls at War" (CP) N. Gordimer, "Africa Emergent" (OVOV) Ngugi wa Thiong'o "A Meeting in the Dark" (OVOV) Charles Mungoshi "Who Will Stop the Dark" (OVOV) C. Ngozi Adichie, "Half of a Yellow Sun" (CP)
January 30	**Literature of North Africa** T. Salih, Season of Migration to the North
February 6	**Arabic Literature of the Middle East** T. Hussein, from A Man of Letters (ABMAF) N. Mahfouz, "The Conjurer Made Off with the Dish" and from Palace Walk (ABMAF) M. Khudayir, "Clocks Like Horses" (ABMAF) A. Mamdouh, "Presence of the Absent Man" (ABMAF) A. Salam al-Ujaili, "The Dream" (ABMAF)
February 13	**Literature of Israel and Palestine** S.Y. Agnon, "Hill of Sand" (CP) A. Oz, "Nomad and Viper" (CP) S. Hareven, "Twilight" (CP) J.I. Jabra, from In Search of Walid Masoud (ABMAF) E. Habiby, "At Last the Almond Blossomed" (ABMAF)
February 20	**Literature of South Asia** A. Majmudar, Partitions
February 27	**Literature of India** R. Tagore, "The Cabaliwallah" (accessible online) R.K. Narayan, "A Horse and Two Goats" (OVOV) K. Singh, "The Wog" (OVOV)

L. Antarjanam, “Revenge Herself” (CP)
A. Roy, “Abhilash Talkies” (from The God of Small Things) (CP)

March 6 **Literature of China and Vietnam**
Lu Hsun, “The True Story of Ah Q” (accessible online)
Chen Rong, “Regarding the Problem of Newborn Piglets in Winter” (OVOV)
Mo Yan, “Love Story” (CP)
Gao Xing Jian, “Buying a Fishing Rod for My Grandfather” (CP)
Bao Ninh, “The Jungle of Screaming Souls” (from The Sorrow of War) (CP)

March 13 **Literature of Japan**
Y. Kawabata, “The Moon on the Water” (OVOV)
M. Ibuse, from Black Rain (CP)
Y. Mishima, “The Priest and His Love” (CP)
S. Endo, “Unzen” (CP)

Requirements

Students who are taking this course for credit are expected:

1. To read carefully all of the assigned works and to participate fully and regularly in class discussions. Because the course will depend heavily on classroom discussion, missing even a single class period will impoverish the learning experience for everyone. Missing two classes will lower your grade significantly.

15% of final grade

2. To introduce class discussion of one novel or set of short stories. Fulfillment of this assignment will involve research on the author(s) and her or his culture, as well as identification of key questions for class discussion. You may choose to provide others in the class with handouts that enhance our understanding and help frame our discussion. This requirement is, in effect, an opportunity to understand an author and/or culture in greater depth.

20% of final grade

3. To take (and pass!) two take-home examinations, the first dealing with literature from the first half of the course and the second dealing with literature from the second half of the course. I realize that it is rare to have an exam at STM, but in this case the exam format seems appropriate since it will allow you to focus on careful reading of the numerous texts rather than add the research that would come with a paper. Generally speaking, the exams will ask you to compare and contrast readings we have been discussing together. I want to be sure that you are reading with discernment and are able to recognize common themes or

patterns in the readings. The questions will be given to you on February 6 and either March 6 or March 13.

20% / 20% of final grade

4. To write a brief (5-6 page) paper on which you reflect on the significance of literary fiction for ministry, including specific ways in which you can envision using literary materials in your own ministry. The papers, which I hope you will discuss with me in advance of submission, will be submitted to me, and briefly shared in class, on March 6.

25% of final grade

The policies of Seattle University, including the policy regarding academic honesty, obviously apply to this course. Please consult the Seattle University Handbook for details.