

"What is home? The place I was born? Where I grew up? Where my parents live? Where I live and work as an adult? Where I locate my community—my people? Who are 'my people'? Is home a geographical space, an historical space, an emotional, sensory space?" –Chandra Mohanty, "On Being South Asian in North America"

*"It is good to have an end to journey towards;
but it is the journey that matters, in the end."
–Ursula Le Guin, The Left Hand of Darkness*

English_OX 185: Critical Reading and Writing

LEAVING HOME

SPRING 2015

Monday/Wednesday/Friday, 10:45-11:50 am

Required Texts

Jon Krakauer, *Into the Wild*

Toni Morrison, *Beloved*

Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*

Julie Otsuka, *When the Emperor Was Divine*

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Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays,
1:30-3:30 pm, and other times by
appointment

Copies of these books are available at the bookstore. If you buy the texts elsewhere, be sure to purchase the same edition that we are using in class. **Always bring your book to class!**

Course Purpose

The purpose of English 185 is to develop and enhance the close reading, critical thinking, writing, research, and oral communication skills necessary for successful college-level (and beyond) work. To that end, you will be asked in this course not only to read a significant amount of literature but to ask questions of the works that help you gain a deeper understanding of the texts' meanings and to make thematic connections across diverse texts. You will reflect on those meanings and connections in class discussions, in lower-stakes writing assignments (e.g., in-class writing assignments, reading responses), and in more formal writing assignments (e.g., 4-5-page essays). Finally, you will pursue a research project of your own design that relates to the course theme and share your findings with the class in an oral presentation. By the end of the term, you will be well prepared for all of your coursework...and you may even walk away from this course with a newfound love of literature and writing!

Course Theme

Leaving one's home and culture for a fresh start in a new place can be a simultaneously exhilarating and painful process. In this course, we will explore the multiple ways in which authors have imagined such migrations (and even experienced those migrations firsthand). We will discuss the range of sentiments and emotional experiences that accompany these journeys, from loss, loneliness, fear, and shame to liberation,

awakening, and rejuvenation. And we will look at ideas that emerge across the texts—for example, the significance of “the quest”; the importance of family, friends, and strangers in our journeys; the multiple definitions of “home”; the impact of war on the human psyche; and much more. Reading and writing about a variety of works will lead us to consider both the joys and the anxieties that each of us has experienced upon leaving the places and the people we call “home.”

Student Learning Outcomes

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

1. Read a text closely and critically
2. Make thematic connections across diverse texts
3. Articulate and support an original argument within a logically structured essay
4. Demonstrate college-level mastery of grammar, punctuation, and style
5. Use library resources to identify appropriate sources for research
6. Incorporate research findings and proper citation of sources into an essay
7. Present research findings orally in a clear, organized, and engaging way
8. Understand writing as a process of drafting, receiving/giving feedback, and revising

Email

I am always happy to speak with you in person about your coursework but am also happy to field your questions over email. When emailing me (or any professor or staff member, for that matter), please keep the following guidelines in mind:

1. Use an appropriate subject line for your message.
2. *Always* start your message with an appropriate greeting, such as “Dear Professor McGehee” or “Dr. McGehee—” (as opposed to “Hey”).
3. Use a professional and respectful tone within your message.
4. Proofread your message before sending. (A good way to do that and to check tone is to read the message aloud before clicking Send.)

Oxford College Writing Center

You are **required** to take at least 2 of your 3 assigned essays to the Writing Center. You may do so at any stage in the writing process, but the Writing Center director and I strongly advise you not to wait until the day before the essay is due. You could go for help to get started, to organize and develop your ideas in a rough draft, or to learn to recognize and correct errors in grammar and punctuation in a revised draft.

Spring 2015 hours are Sunday-Thursday, 3-11 pm. The center is located on the second floor of the library. To make an appointment, visit:

<http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/centers-institutes-programs/writing-center/>

When you go to your appointment, make sure that, in addition to your draft, you have a copy of your assignment with you, as well as the book(s) you are using in that

assignment. **Ask the tutor for assistance on specific issues—s/he is not there (and is not allowed) to proofread your work but to guide you towards a clearer expression of your ideas.**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

Class participation	120 possible points
Quizzes	75 possible points*
Weekly reading responses (5)	50 possible points
Essays (2)	200 possible points
Research Presentation/Report	100 possible points**
Final Exam Essay	100 possible points
Total	645 possible points***

**Total depends on the number of quizzes given.*

***The point total is comprised of the following: a topic statement (10 points), annotated bibliography (15 points), summary of findings (50 points), and oral presentation with Prezi or Powerpoint (25 points).*

****The possible point total may change over the course of the semester due to schedule changes.*

GRADING

The grading system for this course relies on a point system, meaning that **you start with a 0 in this course**. The only way to go is up, in other words! Each component of the course is worth a certain number of points (see Course Requirements below). Your grade will be determined by dividing the number of points *you earned* by the total number of *possible* points (not including extra credit), which totals **645** for this semester. The grading scale is as follows: A 100-92; A- 91-90; B+ 89-88; B 87-82; B- 81-80; C+ 79-78; C 77-72; C- 71-70; D+ 69-68, D 67-60, F 59 and below.

DISCUSSIONS & ATTENDANCE

- **Class participation:** The success of this class depends on you (and a little bit on me). You are responsible both for attending each class session and for participating in the lively and informed discussions that will no doubt result from your having thoroughly and thoughtfully completed the assignments for each day.
 - If you tend to be a less vocal participant in classroom discussions, send your thoughts or questions to me via email, talk to me after class, etc.
 - Participation also involves “active” listening, including eye contact, nodding, smiling, raising eyebrows, and taking notes.
 - In general, if you are disruptive in class (talking while I am talking, sleeping, or engaging in any other form of distracting behavior), I will ask you to leave, and you will be marked absent for that day.
 - If you miss class, you are responsible for obtaining notes from a classmate.

- Please don't email me with the following question: "Did I miss anything important in class today?" My answer will always be "yes."
- **Absence/Tardy Policy:** You are allowed **3 absences without penalty**.
 - For each absence beyond 3, you will lose 1 point off your final grade average. For example, you have a 90 average at the end of term, but you were absent 5 times total. Because of the 2 excessive absences, you would lose 2 points on that average, leading to an 88 for the course.
 - That said, please talk to me in advance about **accommodations for religious holidays/observances**.
 - Be on time. If you come to class more than 10 minutes late, you will be counted as absent.
- **Technology:** **ALL CELL PHONES SHOULD BE TURNED OFF DURING CLASS!**
 - Texting during class automatically negates any participation points earned during class that day.
- **Grading:** At midterm and again at the end of the semester, you will receive a participation grade out of 60 points. The two grades combined will equal your class participation grade for the semester. **Possible points: 120 points**

QUIZZES

- I will give a **pop quiz at least once a week** based on the reading/viewing assignment for the day I choose to give the quiz. The quizzes will consist of 5 factual questions related to the reading or one open-ended question to which you will respond in a paragraph or two.
- There will be 12-15 quizzes throughout the semester. **Total possible points will depend on number of quizzes given, but each is worth 5 points.**

WEEKLY RESPONSES

- You will write **5 semi-formal reading responses** in this course.
- There are 7 opportunities to complete a response, but you need to submit only 5 responses. Therefore, you may skip 1 response, or if you complete all 6, I will simply drop the lowest response grade from your point total.
- The handout at the end of this syllabus (also on Blackboard) will give you a clearer sense of what I expect and will give you the response due dates.
- Each response is worth a maximum of 10 points. **Total possible points: 50 points maximum (5 responses x 10 points max each).**

ESSAYS

- You will write **two** short essays (approx. 4-5 pages, each) in this class.
- I will provide a detailed handout for each paper assignment about a week in advance of the due dates (see syllabus).
- You are **required to take at least 2 of your 3 essays to the Writing Center**. You should attach the Writing Center tutor's comment sheet to your final draft.
- **Late papers will not be accepted.**

- Papers should be double-spaced, with 1-inch margins, and typed in 12-point Times New Roman font. (No crazy fonts or margins—I know the tricks!)
- You should include your name, the course title, my name, and the date in the top left-hand corner of the first page of the essay. Also provide a title for the essay, centered on the first page.
- You will submit a rough draft for each essay, which will be read and critiqued by one of your peers in class on the due date.
- Each essay is worth a maximum of 100 points. **Total possible points: 200 points maximum.**

RESEARCH PROJECT

- During the second half of the course, you will research a topic of your choosing related to our course theme of Leaving Home. You may choose to examine a primary text (e.g., a novel, film, body of songs, etc.) or a more historical topic.
- Regardless of your chosen focus, your task will be to relate to the class in an 8-minute presentation how the work or topic relates to ideas and concepts that surfaced during the semester.
- You will also be asked to incorporate research from at least 3 secondary sources (e.g., articles, books, etc.) to help support your claims. We will meet as a class with a librarian to learn about using library resources, and you will also be required to make an individual appointment with a reference librarian.
- The project involves four components due at various points in the second half of the semester: a topic statement (10 points); an annotated bibliography (15 points); an oral presentation using Powerpoint or Prezi (25 points); and a summary of your research findings (50 points).

FINAL EXAM ESSAY

Your final exam essay, which will be completed out of class, will ask you to put the texts that we examined throughout the semester into conversation with one another. **Total possible points: 100 points.**

NOTE ON STUDENT WORK

Student work submitted as part of this course may be reviewed by Oxford College and Emory College faculty and staff for the purposes of improving instruction and enhancing Emory education.

EXTRA CREDIT

Throughout the semester, I will give you opportunities to raise your point total by attending and writing up a summary of outside events—such as lectures, films, performances, or exhibitions—that relate to the topics and themes of this course. If you have suggestions for such events, email your ideas to me, and I will post them to Blackboard. Most events will be worth **2 points**, and you may get up to **6 points max.**

HONOR CODE

<http://oxford.emory.edu/academics/student-services/student-honor-code/>

The Honor Code applies to all assignments, in and out of the classroom. **All work in this course must be entirely your own.** The bottom line: don't use someone else's ideas or words without proper citation. (This includes websites like Sparks Notes!) I am always happy to discuss with you when something needs to be acknowledged and properly cited, but it is up to you to see me before your written work is due to ask your questions about documenting sources.

OFFICE OF DISABILITY SERVICES (ODS):

<http://www.ods.emory.edu/students/index.html>

ODS will offer qualifying students academic accommodations such as alternative testing, notetaking, interpretation, etc. **Students must register and request those services.** To do so, contact the Office of Disability Services at Emory University or Oxford College.

COUNSELING AND CAREER SERVICES (CCS):

<http://oxford.emory.edu/counseling/>

CCS provides many services at no cost to help address students' personal and career development needs, including personal counseling, career counseling, and psychiatric services. To schedule an appointment, call 770.784.8394.

Tentative* Schedule of Reading and Assignments

[*This reading schedule is subject to change should we need more time on a text; I will not change due dates of assignments except when it might be helpful to you.]

INTO THE WILD: TALES OF ESCAPE and REBIRTH

W 1/14	Introductions/ Review of Syllabus and Requirements
F 1/16	Jon Krakauer, <i>Into The Wild</i> , chapters 1 through 5
M 1/19	No Class—Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day
W 1/21	<i>Into the Wild</i> , chapters 6-9
F 1/23	<i>Into the Wild</i> , chapters 10-12
M 1/26	<i>Into the Wild</i> , chapters 13-16
W 1/28	Finish <i>Into the Wild</i> , chapter 17-epilogue
F 1/30	No class meeting, but watch <i>Mad Men</i> (Season 1, episode 5, "5G," and episode 8, "The Hobo Code") before class (on Reserve in library or on Netflix streaming)
M 2/2	Discuss <i>Mad Men</i>
W 2/4	Essay #1 Rough Draft Due in class/ Peer review workshop
F 2/6	Individual Essay Conferences (times TBA)

Reading
Response 1 due
this week—see
handout

Reading
Response 2 due
this week

MOVING ON UP (NORTH): TALES OF MIGRATION & THE SEARCH FOR A BETTER LIFE

- M 2/9 **Final draft of essay #1 due in class and to Blackboard**
Lecture introducing new section (in class)
- W 2/11 Toni Morrison, *Beloved*, 3-59
- F 2/13 *Beloved*, 60-middle of 111
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- M 2/16 *Beloved*, 112-73
- W 2/18 *Beloved*, 174-224
Extra Credit: Southern Circuit film, 7:30pm, Williams
- F 2/20 No Class—Dr. McGehee at the Southern American Studies Association conference—Keep reading *Beloved*!
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- M 2/23 *Beloved*, 225-70
- W 2/25 Finish *Beloved*
- F 2/27 Watch *A Raisin in the Sun* (1961 film adaptation of Lorraine Hansberry's 1959 play) before coming to class
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- M 3/2 **Essay #2 Draft due in class/ Peer review**
- W 3/4 Individual Essay Conferences—no class meeting
- F 3/6 **Essay #2 Final Draft due in class and to Blackboard**
Introductory lecture to new section

Reading
Response 3 due
this week

Reading
Response 4 due
this week

M 3/9-F 3/13: SPRING BREAK

DEFENDING HOME: TALES OF WAR AND EXILE

- M 3/16 **Topic Statement due in class**
Library Information Session—meet in library (classroom TBA)
- W 3/18 Tim O'Brien, *The Things They Carried*, 1-36
Extra Credit: Southern Circuit film, 7:30pm, Williams
- F 3/20 *The Things They Carried*, 37-84
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- M 3/23 *The Things They Carried*, 85-128
- W 3/25 *The Things They Carried*, 129-79
- F 3/27 Finish *The Things They Carried*
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- M 3/30 Tim Hetherington and Sebastien Junger, dir., *Restrepo* (in class)
- W 4/1 Finish *Restrepo*
- F 4/3 Discuss film in class
Annotated Bibliography due by 5pm to Blackboard
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- M 4/6 Julie Otsuka, *When The Emperor Was Divine*, first chapter
- W 4/8 *Emperor*, next two chapters

Reading
Response 5 due
this week

Reading
Response 6 due
this week

F 4/10	Workshop with OCIT Staff on Effective Presentations
M 4/13	Finish <i>Emperor</i>
W 4/15	* <i>In lieu of class</i> : Attend the Southern Circuit film, <i>A Kind of Order</i> , 7:30 pm, Williams
F 4/17	Individual Research Conferences (no class meeting)
M 4/20	Research Presentations (4)
W 4/22	Research Presentations (4)
F 4/24	Research Summary Due in class Wrap Up

<p>Reading Response 7 due this week</p>

<p>Thursday, April 30 FINAL EXAM ESSAY due by NOON to my office and to Blackboard</p>

Guidelines to Reading Responses in English 185

Reading responses are due to Blackboard by class time on the dates listed below.

You will submit the responses through Blackboard:

- Type your response on Microsoft Word, check the Word Count, and save as a .doc or .docx file.
- Log into Blackboard at classes.emory.edu.
- Select our course, ENG_OX 185.
- Go to Assignments and click on the link to the Reading Response due that week.
- You will be prompted to attach your response.
- **Be sure to click Submit.**
- Check back within a week or so after posting to view your grade and to read my comments.

You will write a total of 5 responses throughout the semester. You have 7 opportunities to write reading responses, but **you may skip 2 responses during the semester without penalty**. The skipped response may appear as a 0 in the online gradebook, but rest assured that I will drop that 0 when calculating your final grade for the course. With each response you can earn a maximum of **10 points** towards your final grade for a total of 50 possible points.

Below, you will find the list of due dates for these responses.

- Students whose last names begin with A to L typically submit responses on Mondays, with the exception of Response 1.
- Students with last names M to Z typically submit responses on Wednesdays, with the exception of Responses 1 and 7.
- **If you prefer to switch due dates one week, you must let me know by Saturday, 10pm, of the week that it is due.**

You will not have a response due the same week that an essay is due!

Due Dates	<u>Last name A-L</u>	<u>Last name M-Z</u>
Response 1	*W 1/21	*F 1/23
Response 2	M 1/26	W 1/28
Response 3	M 2/16	W 2/18
Response 4	M 2/23	W 2/25
Response 5	M 3/23	W 3/25
Response 6	M 4/6	W 4/8
Response 7	M 4/13	*M 4/13

Objectives

The responses are meant to accomplish the following:

- 1) get you writing on a regular basis,* and
- 2) ensure that you are not only completing the readings assignments but thinking about them critically before coming to class.**

*Just like with exercise, it's important to write on a regular basis. If you don't, then your writing weakens. If you do, then you not only become a stronger writer, but writing becomes easier and

less daunting. Furthermore, the more writing assignments you have, the more chances you have to get an A!

****Because this is a discussion-heavy course, I want to make sure you are doing the reading in a way that will allow us to have lots to talk about when we meet each day. I also want to make sure that each of you is able to participate even if you are one of the less vocal members of the class.**

How do I get 10 out of 10 on each response?

To get 10 points, your response should:

- be at least 300 words in length. Suggestion: Type your response in Word; check the word count using "Word Count" under Tools; and then cut and paste into Blackboard.
- reflect upon the reading due in class the day your response is due. On the days that you have more than one essay or article to read, you may write about only one of the readings without penalty.
- have a main idea in your response and support that idea with analysis and textual evidence.
- contain minimal grammatical mistakes.
- be turned in on time. Late responses will not be accepted.

These responses should be very thoughtful and reflective. They should show that you understand the main points or premises of the reading. But they are also meant to provide you with a more relaxed space in which to play with your ideas and to make connections to your personal experiences. You can use humor and colloquial language, but your response should be intelligent and articulate...and of course, grammatically correct. **What you choose to write about is essentially up to you, but I have provided some prompts for you below. You can respond to one of these, or you can choose to write about a single idea, metaphor, phrase, or fact that piqued your intellectual curiosity.**

The response should relate in some way to the reading that is due in class the following day, not about something you just pulled out of the air.

Some prompts (but feel free to come up with your own!):

- The most interesting or powerful or surprising or [insert adjective] moment in the reading was: (include reasons)
- One moment [identify that moment] reminded me of something we read previously... (discuss the parallels you see)
- This reading troubled me because: (include reasons but avoid ranting)
- This reading raised a central question for me: (include the question and your thoughts about it)
- This reading brings to light the theme(s) of: (include theme(s) and a discussion of the ways in which the theme appears)
- This reading showcases the author's ability to: (identify author's strengths or weaknesses and discuss)