

## SYLLABUS

### San José State University Department of English and Comparative Literature ENGL 40, Contemporary World Fiction, Spring 2013

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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 8:00-8:30 and 4:30-5:30
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tuesdays and Thursdays: 1:30-2:45
<b>Classroom:</b>	BBC 123
<b>Class Web Page:</b>	<a href="http://www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40">www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40</a>
<b>GE Category:</b>	Area C2

#### Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Copies of the course materials such as the syllabus, major assignment handouts, and so on, may be found on the class web page at [www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40). The same information is available on the course Canvas page ([sjsu.instructure.com](http://sjsu.instructure.com)), which you will need to access in order to submit your essays online. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through MySJSU for any messages that may be sent pertaining to this class.

#### Course Description

This semester, all our novels are winners of the Booker Prize, one of the most prestigious of all literary awards. Now the Man-Booker Prize, it has been given annually since 1968 to the best novel written in English by a citizen of a country formerly part of the old British Empire, including the UK, Ireland, and the British Commonwealth. We will be reading seven novels that won the Booker prize, from 1983 to 2010. Two of those novelists are from England (one of whom was born in Japan), two are from India, one is from Canada, one is a South African who also won the Nobel Prize for literature and then moved to Australia, and one was born in Australia, grew up mostly in Mexico, has lived in various parts of the globe, and now makes his home in Ireland. Their novels are as diverse as their biographies, but have one thing in common – they are all superb fiction on a global scale. Engl 40 satisfies Area C2 of the General Education Requirements.

#### GE Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. recognize and discuss how significant works of fiction illuminate enduring human concerns, in class and small group discussions, in online exchanges, in both essays, and on the final exam.
2. respond to significant works by writing both research-based critical analyses (in the second essay) and personal responses (in typed online discussions groups).
3. write clearly and effectively, in both essays. Writing shall be assessed for correctness, clarity, and conciseness.

### **Course Content Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. learn to value individual experiences and perspectives, develop skills to work together in a cooperative manner as they are grappling with sophisticated works of fiction, and come to appreciate differing viewpoints and ways of knowing – through class and online discussions, and in their own analysis and appreciation of the texts.
2. encounter some of the best literature of contemporary English-speaking cultures outside the U.S., both as individual works of art by idiosyncratic writers and as expressions, however indirect, of the societies from which they come – a balance that will be needed in writing essays for the class.
3. understand the literary texts, be able to address them logically and with insight, create and support arguments in their writing about the texts. Students will apply their comprehension and thinking skills in working with research materials to help them reach a level of understanding that leads to clarity, conciseness and coherence in writing.

### **English Major Student Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will demonstrate the ability to:

1. read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, in all aspects of coursework but, in particular, in frequent and detailed quizzes, as well as in essays;
2. show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to European literature from ancient Greece to medieval Italy, and to demonstrate that familiarity in class discussions, essays, and examinations;
3. write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and the nature of the subject, as demonstrated in two essays and the final examination;
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively, as demonstrated particularly in the second essay;
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, in both class discussions and written assignments.

### **Required Texts/Readings**

JM Coetzee, *The Life and Times of Michael K*(1983). Penguin. ISBN 0140074481.  
 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*(1989). Vintage International. ISBN 0679731725.  
 Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*(1997). Random House. ISBN 0812979656.  
 Yann Martel, *The Life of Pi*(2002). Mariner. ISBN 0156027321.  
 DBC Pierre, *Vernon God Little*(2003) Mariner. ISBN 0156029987.  
 Aravind Adiga, *The White Tiger*(2008). Free Press. ISBN 1416562605.  
 Howard Jacobson, *The Finkler Question*(2010). Bloomsbury USA. ISBN 1608196119.

## Library Liaison

Toby Matoush, toby.matoush@sjsu.edu, 808-2096

## Classroom Protocol

**Preparation and Participation:** Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small-group or full-class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion.

**Quizzes:** In order to ensure that you get credit for the hard work you do in reading and reflecting on the works assigned for this course, there will be frequent quizzes (on average, one every two or three class meetings). I think of quizzes as one of the best ways for you to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain (at least for a day or so). The quizzes will cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily accessible to you in plot summaries, outlines, or synopses, but only through personally experiencing the text for yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of poor results on these quizzes should indicate to you that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to understand and appreciate the texts.

**Written Work:** There will be two essays, both about 1500 words and counting 25% of the final mark each, and a final examination counting 25%. There will also be frequent quizzes, which will help determine the remaining 25%, along with participation in class discussions, the timely completion of readings and written work, an oral presentation to the class, and a few online chat sessions and other activities. The first essay will be due in two or three stages; the second essay will require research beyond the class texts themselves. Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final mark, 100-97 will be an A+, 96-94 an A, 93-90 an A-, 89-87 a B+, 86-84 a B, 83-80 a B-, 79-77 a C+, 76-74 a C, 73-70 a C-, and so on.

**Submission of written work:** The two essays must be double-spaced, without a cover page but otherwise following MLA guidelines, in Word (.doc or .docx) or Rich Text (.rtf) format, and submitted online only on Canvas by the beginning of class on the days they are due. Late work will only be accepted by prior arrangement. Please do not email or leave at my office any work for this class. Corrected papers will be returned online in your Canvas account in pdf format. Please keep a copy of all work submitted on disk, and retain all graded work returned until the end of the semester; English majors should save the graded copies of their essays in all department classes, since these will be required for the portfolio in their senior seminar. Students should anticipate a significant delay in the return of late work. Please note that many people find it harder to proofread work on a computer screen than in printed form and, if that is true in your case, you may want to print out your final draft and make corrections to that, before submitting the finished file online. Finally, remember that I will also be keeping a copy of your marked work during the semester so that, when you submit your second essay, I will begin by reviewing the technical mistakes you made in the first one, and looking to see if you have made any progress in those areas on the second. You, too, should take the time to review those errors, and improve your writing.

**Written Responses and Online Chats:** Several times a semester, students will be asked to write short responses to assigned readings not yet discussed in class. Such responses may take the form of a

paragraph or an online written chat with a small group of other students. Class meetings may even be suspended in order to allow time for more complicated chats. Such activities will be announced, in class and online, at least one class session in advance.

**Classroom conduct:** Please do not read non-course related materials during class, and refrain from conversations or inappropriate comments while the instructor or classmates are speaking. Turn off cell phones, music players, and other likely distractions while in class. Computers and other electronic devices may be used only for note-taking and other course-related activities; otherwise they must be turned off. Since images on a screen, whether moving or still, are particularly visible and distracting to those around you, please do not access them during class and be sure your screen saver is off. Permission of the instructor (and, possibly, other students) is needed to make sound or video recordings during class.

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

1. Class participation, presentation, quizzes, and timely completion of work: 25%
2. First essay (1500 words total, in two parts): 25%
3. Second essay (1500 words): 25%
4. Final exam: 25%

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment:

The **"A"** essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The **"B"** essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the **"A"** essay. The chief difference is that the **"B"** essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The **"C"** essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the **"B"** essay.

The **"D"** essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The **"F"** essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall

replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students' GPA.

## **University Policies and Statements**

### **SJSU Policies and Procedures for Spring 2013**

Links to many policies and procedures governing this semester can be found at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/policies.html>. A few others can be found below.

#### **Academy Integrity**

Your commitment as a student to learning is evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University. The University's Academic Integrity policy, located at <http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/S07-2.htm>, requires you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The Student Conduct and Ethical Development website is available at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studentconduct/>.

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person's ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include your assignment or any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU's Academic Policy S07-2 requires approval of instructors.

The University's policies on Academic Integrity, as well as Student Conduct and Ethical Development, are also outlined in the online catalog at <http://info.sjsu.edu/static/catalog/integrity.html>.

#### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please discuss this with your instructor as soon as possible. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability. The DRC's web site is [www.drc.sjsu.edu](http://www.drc.sjsu.edu).

#### **Adding and Dropping Classes**

The last day to drop a class without a W grade is Monday, February 4. The last day for adding classes without a late fee, for registering late, or for requesting grade options is Monday, February 11. Information regarding the university policy on late drops can be found on the Academic Advising website at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/policies/latedrops/>.

#### **Estimation of Per-Unit Student Workload**

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of forty-five hours over the length of the course (normally 3 hours per unit per week with 1 of the hours used for lecture) for instruction or preparation/studying or course related activities including but not limited to internships, labs, clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

## Student Resources

### SJSU Writing Center



The SJSU Writing Center is located in Clark Hall, Suite 126. All Writing Specialists have gone through a rigorous hiring process, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. In addition to one-on-one tutoring services, the Writing Center also offers workshops every semester on a variety of writing topics. To make an appointment or to refer to the numerous online resources offered through the Writing Center, visit the Writing

Center website: <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter>.

For additional resources and updated information, follow the Writing Center on Twitter and become a fan of the SJSU Writing Center on Facebook.

### Peer Connections

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) and the Peer Mentor Program have merged to become Peer Connections. Peer Connections is the new campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring. Our staff is here to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Students are encouraged to take advantage of our services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals. In addition to offering small group, individual, and drop-in tutoring for a number of undergraduate courses, consultation with mentors is available on a drop-in or by appointment basis. Workshops are offered on a wide variety of topics including preparing for the WST, improving your learning and memory, alleviating procrastination, surviving your first semester at SJSU, and other related topics. We are located in SSC 600 (10th Street Garage), at the first floor entrance of Clark Hall, and in the Living Learning Center (LLC) in Campus Village Housing Building B. See the [Peer Connections website](http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu) for more information (peerconnections.sjsu.edu) and be sure to come see us!

### Student Technology Resources

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1st floor of Clark Hall and on the 2nd floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library.

A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

### Engl 40: Contemporary World Fiction, Spring 2013, Course Schedule

This schedule is subject to change. Any changes will be announced in class at least one week in advance. If you miss class, please check for changes to the schedule on the class web page at [www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40](http://www.sjsu.edu/people/d.mesher/courses/engl40).

January	24	Thursday	Introduction
	29	Tuesday	Life and Times, pages 3-60
	31	Thursday	Life and Times, pages 61-126
February	5	Tuesday	Life and Times, pages 127-184
	7	Thursday	Remains of the Day, pages 3-44
	11	Tuesday	Remains of the Day, pages 47-126
	14	Thursday	Remains of the Day, pages 129-201
	18	Tuesday	Remains of the Day, pages 205-245
	20	Thursday	God of Small Things, pages 3-62
	25	Tuesday	God of Small Things, pages 62-117
	27	Thursday	God of Small Things, pages 118-183
March	5	Tuesday	God of Small Things, pages 184-251
	7	Thursday	God of Small Things, pages 252-321
	12	Tuesday	Life of Pi, pages vii - 80
	14	Thursday	Life of Pi, pages 80-161
	19	Tuesday	Life of Pi, pages 161-240
	21	Thursday	Life of Pi, pages 240-319
	25-29	Spring Break	
April	2	Tuesday	Vernon God Little, pages 3-77
	4	Thursday	Vernon God Little, pages 78-154
	9	Tuesday	Vernon God Little, pages 155-214
	11	Thursday	Vernon God Little, pages 215-277
	16	Tuesday	White Tiger, pages 1-78
	18	Thursday	White Tiger, pages 79-145
	23	Tuesday	White Tiger, pages 147-203
	25	Thursday	White Tiger, pages 203-276
	30	Tuesday	Finkler Question, pages 3-68
May	2	Thursday	Finkler Question, pages 69-133
	7	Tuesday	Finkler Question, pages 137-208
	9	Thursday	Finkler Question, pages 209-307
	15	Wednesday	Final Exam, 12:15 - 2:30

The first essay for the class (covering *The Life and Times of Michael K* and *The Remains of the Day*) will be due in two parts, on February 21st and March 21st. The second essay (covering *The God of Small Things*, *The Life of Pi*, and *Vernon God Little*) will be due on April 18th. You will have an opportunity to write on *The White Tiger* and *The Finkler Question* on the final exam.