

**DIASPORA, EXILE, AND DISPLACEMENT:
Literary and Theoretical Perspectives
Graduate Seminar
Columbia University
Professor Anna Fishzon**

Full Course Description

Violent upheavals of the twentieth century – imperialism, the two world wars, struggles for national independence, decolonization, and the Cold War -- have made exile and dislocation the great preoccupations of literary works, autobiography, and theoretical writings. Globalization, driven by unprecedented trade and new technologies of communication, information, and travel, has accelerated the movement of people, commodities, ideas, and cultures across the world. Diaspora is thus treated here not as a singular but rather historically varied and heterogeneous phenomenon. The transnational mobility of people may be the result of forced or voluntary migration, self-exile or expulsion. Refugees, people *in transit*, are the product of war, ideological heterodoxy and persecution, ethnic conflict, and natural calamity.

Under the broad rubrics of ‘diaspora’, ‘exile’ and ‘displacement’ we will move through the course thematically, taking a cross-cultural and cross-temporal approach and covering the following topics: nostalgia and homelessness, the ideologies of ‘home’ and nation, immigrant and diasporic cultures, experiences and memory of war, genocide, the politics of multiculturalism, the predicament of minorities, the exilic perspective, the redefinition of cosmopolitanism, identity questions (belonging, ‘national origins’, assimilation, acculturation), issues relating to race (racism), sexuality and gender, as well as borders, ‘mixing’, and language.

Novels, essays, poems, and films produced in various geographic and historical contexts have engaged creatively with the phenomenological and material aspects of migration, dislocation, and privation. Psychoanalysis has focused on loss, mourning, anxiety, and shame – repetitions as well as impossibilities of return. Postcolonial theory and cultural studies have had a particular interest in conceptualizing the ‘new’ phenomena of borders and borderlands, hybridity, language (for example, global English), translation, double consciousness, history and its lack; and all of the above-mentioned theories, narratives, and imaginings have addressed the affective dimensions of migration and diaspora -- homesickness, memory, longing, and melancholy.

Diaspora and immigration are multidisciplinary fields. In addition to fictional accounts, we will draw on writings in anthropology, psychoanalysis, poststructuralist theory, history, literary studies, and cultural studies. Theorists to be studied will include: Sigmund Freud, Edward Said, Svetlana Boym, Homi Bhabha, Stuart Hall, Rey Chow, Theodore Adorno, Jacques Derrida, and Jacques Lacan. We will watch films and read novels, memoirs, poems, and other literary by writers such as: Joseph Brodsky, Milan

Kundera, Gary Shteyngart, Anya Ulinich, Anzia Yezierska, and Vladimir Nabokov, Salman Rushdie, Frantz Fanon, V.S. Naipaul, and Gloria Anzaldua.

Assigned Books

Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory* (1951)
Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984)
Gohar Homayounpour, *Doing Psychoanalysis in Tehran* (MIT Press, 2012)
Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (1951)
David Bezmozgis, *The Free World: A Novel* (2011)
V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (1967)
Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (1925)
Anya Ulinich, *Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel: A Graphic Novel* (2014)
Gary Shteyngart, *Little Failure: A Memoir* (2014)
Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1998)

All other readings will be posted on Courseworks or available through the Columbia library system online (listed as "CLIO e-book"). Some films will be made available on reserve and you can find many of them on YouTube.

Course Requirements

1. 1-2 pp. written response to one or more of the readings assigned for each class to be circulated by students on Courseworks by **10pm** on the preceding day. Please post the response on the Courseworks discussion board.
2. 1-2 pp. abstract for final paper due April 1 in class.
3. 15-20 pp. paper due May 2 by 5pm.
4. ATTENDANCE IS MANDATORY.

SCHEDULE OF CLASSES

WEEK 1: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL INTRODUCTION

- * Nico Israel, *Outlandish: Writing Between Exile and Diaspora* (Stanford UP, 2000), *Introduction*, 1-22.
- * Jana Evans Braziel & Anita Mannur, eds., "Nation, Migration, Globalization: Points of Contention in Diaspora Studies," in *Theorizing Diaspora: A Reader* (Blackwell, 2003, 1-22.
- * Kobena Mercer, ed., *Exiles, Diasporas and Strangers* (MIT Press, 2008), *Introduction*, 6-27
- * Salman Akhtar, *Immigration and Identity: Turmoil, Treatment, and Transformation* (Jason Aronson, Inc., 1999), 3-39
- * Sara Ahmed, "Home and Away. Narratives of Migration and Estrangement," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 2 (3) 1999: 329-47

- * Andre Aciman, “In a Double Exile” in *False Papers: Essays on Exiles and Memory* (Picador, 2001)
- * Sholem Aleichem, “On Account of a Hat”

WEEK 2: NOSTALGIA, HOMESICKNESS, and MELANCHOLY: Affective Dimensions of Migration and Diaspora

- * Freud, “Mourning and Melancholia” (1917)
- * Svetlana Boym, *The Future of Nostalgia* (Basic Books, 2002), 1-55
- * Amitava Kumar, *Bombay-London-New York* (Routledge, 2002), “Paper” and “Going Back”
- * Bharati Mukherjee, “Nostalgia”
- * Salman Rushdie, *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991* (Granta, 1992), “Introduction” and “Imaginary Homelands,” 1-21.
- * Joseph Brodsky, “On the Condition We Call Exile” and “In a Room and a Half”
- * Andre Aciman “Shadow Cities” in *False Papers: Essays on Exiles and Memory* (Picador, 2001)
- * Film: *Window to Paris* (Yuri Mamin, 1993)

WEEK 3: OLD/NEW HOMELANDS: Displacement and Legacies of Colonialism

- * Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), *Introduction*, Chapters 5 and 6
- * Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (1963), “Colonial War and Mental Disorders”
- * Edward Said, “Reflections on Exile”
- * Edward Said, “Intellectual Exile” in *Representations of the Intellectual* (1994)
- * Edward Said, “Movements and Migrations” in *Culture and Imperialism* (1993)
- * Chinua Achebe, *Home and Exile* (OUP, 2000)
- * Film: *Exils* (Tony Gatlif, 2004)

WEEK 4: EXILE AND AUTOBIOGRAPHY

- * Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (1951), *Dedication*, and #1-13 (pp. 15-34)
- * Vladimir Nabokov, *Speak, Memory* (1951), *first half*

WEEK 5: DISSENT, POLITICAL EXILE, AND THE DIASPORIC INTELLECTUAL

- * Milan Kundera, *The Unbearable Lightness of Being* (1984)
- * Gohar Homayounpour, *Doing Psychoanalysis in Tehran* (MIT Press, 2012)
- * Rey Chow, *Writing Diaspora: Tactics of Intervention in Contemporary Cultural Studies* (Indiana UP, 1993), 73-98
- * Abdul R. JanMohamed, “Worldliness-Without-World, Homelessness-Without-Home: Toward a Definition of the Specular Border Intellectual” in Michael Sprinkler, ed., *Edward Said: A Critical Reader* (Blackwell, 1992), 96-120

WEEK 6: WWII AND THE HOLOCAUST; SECOND GENERATION MEMORY

- * Sigmund Freud, *Moses and Monotheism* (1939)
- * Edward Said, *Freud and the Non-European*
- * Theodor Adorno, *Minima Moralia* (1951), *selections*
- * Anna Freud, "Monthly Report 3: April, 1941," in *The Writings of Anna Freud* Vol. 3 (New York, 1973), 24-41
- * John Welshman, "Evacuation and Social Policy During the Second World War: Myth and Reality," *Twentieth-Century British History* 9, 1 (1998), 28-53
- * D.W. Winnicott, "Children in the War", "The Deprived Mother", "The Evacuated Child", "The Return of the Evacuated Child" in D.W. Winnicott, *Deprivation and Delinquency* (London, 1984), 25-48
- * Marianne Hirsch and Leo Spitzer, "We Would Not Have Come Without You: Generations of Nostalgia" *American Imago* 59, 3 (2002): 253-76
- * David Grossman, "Momik" (1986)

WEEK 7: LIMINALITY AND HOMELESSNESS: THE REFUGEE

- * David Bezmozgis, *The Free World: A Novel* (2011)
- * V. S. Naipaul, *The Mimic Men* (1967)
- * Jacqueline Bhabha, "Embodied Rights: Gender Persecution, State Sovereignty, and Refugees," *Public Culture* 9, 1996: 3-32
- * Agnès Callemard, "Refugee Women: A Gendered and Political Analysis of the Refugee Experience" in A. Ager, ed., *Refugees: Perspectives on the Experience of Forced Migration* (Pinter, 1999) 194-214
- * Philomena Essed, Georg Frerks and Joke Schrijvers, eds., "Introduction: Refugees, Agency and Social Transformation" in *Refugees and the Transformation of Societies: Agency, Policies, Ethics and Politics*, Vol. 13 *Forced Migration* (Berghahn Books 2004), 1-16
- * Film: *The House in Jerusalem* (Amos Gitai, 1998)

WEEK 8: IMMIGRATION, LANGUAGE, AND IDENTITY: Assimilation and Acculturation

- * Anzia Yezierska, *Bread Givers* (1925)
- * Anya Ulinich, *Lena Finkle's Magic Barrel: A Graphic Novel* (2014)
- * Jacques Derrida, *Monolingualism of the Other; Or, the Prosthesis of Origin*, trans., Patrick Mensah (Stanford UP, 1999)
- * Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," ed. Jonathan Rutherford, *Identity: Community, Culture, Difference* (Lawrence and Wishart, 1993)
- * Smadar Lavie and Ted Swedenburg eds., *Displacement, Diaspora and Geographies of Identity* (Duke UP, 1996), *selections*
- * Lisa Lowe, *Immigrant Acts: On Asian American Cultural Politics* (Duke UP, 1996), *parts*

SPRING BREAK

WEEK 9: IMMIGRATION II: Memory, Mourning, and Shame

- * Gary Shteyngart, *Little Failure: A Memoir* (2014)
- * Alexander Etkind, *Warped Mourning: Stories of the Undead in the Land of the Unburied* (Stanford UP, 2013), *Introduction*
- * Joan Copjec, "The Object-Gaze: Shame, Hejab, Cinema" *Filozofski vestnik*, 27/2 (2006): 11-29
- * Jacques Lacan, *Anxiety: The Seminar of Jacques Lacan* (Polity, 2014), *parts*
- * Nabokov, *Speak, Memory*, *second half*

WEEK 10: SEXUALITY, GENDER, AND TRANSNATIONAL FEMINISM

- * Avtar Brah, "Diaspora, Border and Transnational Identities" and "Re-Framing Europe Gendered Racisms, Ethnicities and Nationalisms in Contemporary Western Europe" in *Cartographies of Diaspora: Contesting Identities* (Routledge, 1996), 152-210
- * Anne-Emmanuelle Berger, "The Newly Veiled Woman: Irigaray, Specularity, and the Islamic Veil" *Diacritics* 28:1 (1998): 93-119
- * Chandra Talpade Mohanty, "Genealogies of Community, Home, and Nation" in *Feminism Without Borders. Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity* (Duke UP, 2003), 124-137
- * Tina Campt and Deborah Thomas (2008) "Gendering Diaspora: Transnational Feminism, Diaspora and its Hegemonies," *Feminist Review* 90 (2008): 1-8
- * Edwidge Danticat, *Breath, Eyes, Memory* (1998)

WEEK 11: RACE AND DIASPORIC VISIBILITY

- * Carole Boyce Davies, *Black Women, Writing, and Identity: Migrations of the Subject* (Routledge, 1994), 1-37
- * Tina Campt, "Family Matters: Sight, Sense, Touch" from *Image Matters: Archive, Photography, and the African Diaspora in Europe* (Duke UP, 2012), 21-34.
- * Michelle Wright, "Introduction: Being and Becoming Black in the West," in *Becoming Black: Creating Identity in the African Diaspora* (Duke UP, 2004), 1-26
- * Fatima El-Tayeb, "Introduction: Theorizing Urban Minority Communities in Postnational Europe" and "Dimensions of Diaspora. Women of Color Feminism, Black Europe, and Queer Memory Discourses," in *European Others: Queering Ethnicity in Postnational Europe* (University of Minnesota Press, 2011), xi-xlvi; 43-80
- * Paul Gilroy, "The Black Atlantic as a Counterculture of Modernity" in Jana Evans Braziel and Anita Mannur, eds., *Theorizing Diaspora. A Reader* (Blackwell, 2003), 49-80
- * Jin Haritaworn, "Colorful Bodies in the Multikulti Metropolis: Vitality, Victimology

and Transgressive Citizenship in Berlin,” in Trysta Cotten, *Transgender Migrations. The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition* (Routledge, 2012), 11-31

* Film: *Hate* (Matthew Kassovitz, 1996)

WEEK 12: QUEERING DIASPORA

- * Gayatri Gopinath, *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures* (Duke UP, 2005), *Introduction*, 1-28
- * Joseph Massad, “Re-Orienting Desire: The Gay International and the Arab World,” *Public Culture* 14/2 (Spring 2002): 361-85
- * Jasbir K. Puar, “Transnational Sexualities: South Asian (Trans)nation(alism)s and Queer Diasporas” in David Eng and Alice Hom, eds., *Q & A: Queer in Asian America* (Temple UP, 1998), 405-24
- * Jasbir K. Puar, “Rethinking Homonationalism,” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 45 (2013), 336–39
- * Adi Kuntsman, “Double Homecoming: Sexuality, Ethnicity, and Place in Immigration Stories of Russian Lesbians in Israel,” *Women’s Studies International Forum* 26/4 (2003): 299-311
- * Nael Bhanji, “TRANS/SCRIPTIIONS: Homing Desires, (Trans)sexual Citizenship and Racialized Bodies,” in Trystan Cotten, ed., *Transgender Migrations. The Bodies, Borders, and Politics of Transition* (Routledge, 2012), 157-75
- * Film: *My Beautiful Launderette* (Stephen Frears, 1985)

WEEK 13: COSMOPOLITANISM

- * Pheng Cheah and Bruce Robbins, eds., *Cosmopolitics: Thinking and Feeling Beyond the Nation* (University of Minnesota Press, 1998), *Introduction*, 1-39
- * Bruce Robbins, *Feeling Global: Internationalism in Distress* (NYU Press, 1999), 11-38
- * Edward Said, *The World, the Text, and the Critic* (Harvard UP, 1983), 31-53
- * Rebecca Walkowitz, *Cosmopolitan Style: Modernism Beyond the Nation* (Columbia UP, 2012), 1-32
- * Timothy Brennan, *At Home in the World: Cosmopolitanism Now* (Harvard UP, 1997), 12-27
- * Kwame Anthony Appiah, *Cosmopolitanism: Ethics in a World of Strangers* (W. W. Norton & Company, 2006), *Introduction* and 1-12

WEEK 14: BORDERS AND BORDERLANDS; HYBRIDITY, LANGUAGE, TRANSLATION

- * Jacques Derrida, *Of Hospitality* (2000)
- * Anzaldúa, Gloria. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (Aunt Lute Books, 1987), *selections*
- * Homi Bhabha, *Location of Culture* (Routledge, 1994), *selections*
- * Film: *Lone Star* (John Sayles, 1996)