

**Tel Aviv University**  
**Faculty of Humanities**  
**Department of English and American Studies**  
***Migrant Writers in Contemporary America***  
Dr. Sonia Weiner

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Office: Web 503

Office Hours: By Appointment

Class hours: Monday: 14:15-15:45; Web 103

### Course Description

This course will explore the experience of late twentieth and early twenty first century narratives of migration to America, focusing on the varying ways in which the rupture of migration functions as a site of literary creativity. The course will consider not only experiences of transition, but also the transition of experience itself into new modalities, or what can be termed as a migratory aesthetics. We will explore how issues seminal to the migrant become tools for creating this new aesthetics: memory and loss, difference and similarity, proximity and distance, the various acts of translations and trans-creations, and the ever elusive question of what constitutes home, geographically, culturally, linguistically.

### Course Requirements

In accordance with departmental policy, class attendance is compulsory.

Come prepared = READ

In-Class Midterm (50%): 19/5/17; Moed B: 9/6/17

Take Home Final (50%) :

### Syllabus

#### **March 13 – Between Home and the In-Between: Dealing in Broken Mirrors**

Rushdie, Salman. "Imaginary Homelands." *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. London: Vintage Books, 2010. 9-21.

Aciman, Andre. "Shadow Cities." *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss*. Ed. Andre Aciman. New York: New Press, 1999. 15-34.

#### **March 20 Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)**

##### **Who more sci-fi than us?**

Introductory Chapter & Chapters 1-2

**March 27, Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*  
Lost & Magical Books**  
Chapters ; 3-5

**April 3 – Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*  
The Beauty! The Beauty!**  
Chapters 6-8

Critical Reading:

Durrant, Sam, and Catherine M. Lord. "Introduction." *Essays in Migratory Aesthetics: Cultural Practices Between Migration and Art Making*. Thamyris: Intersecting Place, Sex and Race 17. Ed. Sam Durrant and Catherine M. Lord. Amsterdam-New York: Rodopi, 2007. 11–20.

Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Identity and Diaspora." *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*. Ed. Jonathan Rutherford. London: Lawrence & Wishart, 1990.

Doris Sommer, "Introduction" *Bilingual Games: Some Literary Investigations*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003.

Hanna, Monica. "'Reassembling the Fragments': Battling Historiographies, Caribbean Discourse, and Nerd Genres in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *Callaloo* 33.2 (2010): 498-520.

Saldívar, Jose David. "Conjectures on 'Americanness' and Junot Díaz's 'Fukú Americanus' in *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *The Global South* 5:1 (2011): 120-136.

Kunsa, Ashley. "History, Hair, and Reimagining Racial Categories in Junot Díaz's *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*." *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 54:2 (2013): 211-224.

**April 24 - Aleksandar Hemon, *The Lazarus Project* (2008)  
See Double, Feel Double, Are Double**  
Chapters 1-6

**May 1 - Aleksandar Hemon, *The Lazarus Project*  
Past Exposures in the Present**  
Chapters 7-12

**May 8 – Aleksandar Hemon, *The Lazarus Project*  
Nowhere is the World**  
Chapters 13-22

Critical Reading:

Hoffman, Eva. "The New Nomads." *Letters of Transit: Reflections on Exile, Identity, Language, and Loss*. Ed. Andre Aciman. New York: New Press, 1999. 35-63.

Fishkin, Shelley Fisher. "Crossroads of Cultures: The Transnational Turn in American Studies – Presidential Address to the American Studies Association, November 12, 2004." *American Quarterly* 57:1 (2005): 17-57.

Fluck, Winfried. "A New Beginning? Transnationalisms." *New Literary History* 42:3 (2011): 365-384.

**May 15 - Jamaica Kincaid, "Biography of a Dress"  
Clothing and the (un)Making of the Self**

Critical Reading:

Rejouis, Rose-Myriam. "Caribbean Writers & Language: The Autobiographical Poetics of Jamaica Kincaid and Patrick Chamoiseau." *The Massachusetts Review* 44.1/2 (2003): 213-232.

**May 22 – The Short Story Cycle  
Edwidge Danticat, "Krik? Krak!"  
Critical Reading: TBA**

**May 29 – Viet Thanh Nguyen, *The Refugees* (2017)**

Critical Reading:

Ibarrola-Armendariz, Aitor. "Nightmares from My Parents: Return as Recovery in Doan Hoang's *Oh, Saigon*." In *Identity, Diaspora and Return*. NY: Routledge, 2014.

**June 5 – Boris Fishman, *Replacement Life* (2014)  
"Weathering the Divide Between Here and There"**

**June 12 – Boris Fishman, *Replacement Life*  
Testimony, Truthfulness and Storytelling**

Critical Reading:

Wanner, Adrian. "Introduction" & "The Rise of the 'Russian Debutantes'." *Out of Russia: Fictions of a New Translingual Diaspora*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2011.

Hirsch, Marianne. "The Generation of Postmemory." *Poetics Today* 29:1 (2008): 103-128.

Ribiero, António Sousa. "Memory, Identity, and Representation: The Limits of Theory and the Construction of Testimony," *Revista Critica de Ciências Sociais* 88 (2010): 9-21.

**June 19 – Rabih Alameddine, *The Hakawati* (2008)  
Retelling Tales from Here and There**

**June 26 – Rabih Alameddine, *The Hakawati*  
War and Love**

Critical Reading:

Cutter, Martha. "Introduction," *Lost and Found in Translation: Contemporary Ethnic and American Writing and the Politics of Language Diversity*. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2005.

Benjamin, Walter. "The Storyteller." *Illuminations*. Edited and with an Introduction by Hannah Arendt. Trans. Harry Zorn. London: Pimlico, 1999, 83-107.

Bakhtin, Mikhail, *Problems of Dostoyevsky's Poetics*. Edited and Trans. by Caryl Emerson; Introduction by Wayne C. Booth. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984.