Course Information

Course description: In this research seminar, we will interrogate the concept of returning home – to places known briefly or well, deeply familiar or completely imagined. Through writing and class discussion, we will consider the relationship between identity and place, and the tensions between collective versus individual ideas of the self. The ways in which contemporary critics, philosophers, filmmakers, and novelists treat the theme of "coming home" across boundaries of time and space and the role this notion plays in the construction of contemporary ethnic, racial, and national identities will serve as the impetus for frequent exploratory writing, weekly blog posts, two formal essays, and a final research paper.

Course objectives: During the course, students will ideally: improve critical reading and thinking skills; create individual writing goals to be met during the semester; increase writing fluency through regular practice; sharpen research techniques and knowledge of NYU’s bibliographic resources; refine editing skills through peer workshops; deepen knowledge of course content and related topics.

Required Texts: All texts are available at Bluestockings Books, 172 Allen Street (one block south of the F train’s 2nd avenue stop). If you have difficulty obtaining them for any reason, please let me know. (Early in the semester, a representative from Bluestockings will bring the course books to our class; if you choose to do so, you may buy the books at that time).


Additionally, you will be asked to watch one film, “Hiding and Seeking,” by our class session on Thursday, October 10. The film will be on reserve at the Avery Fisher Center, on the second floor of Bobst Library. Please plan accordingly.

Office hours/Conferences: I encourage you to meet with me outside of class to talk about any of the reading or writing assignments. My office hours are Thursdays 3:30-4:30, and my office is #417, 1 Washington Place. If you cannot meet during this time, please let me know and I will do my best to accommodate your schedule.

Course Requirements:

Attendance and participation (10%): Your participation is integral to the success of the class and will therefore be part of your grade. This includes keeping up with assignments and contributing to discussions and other class activities such as in-class writing and peer group workshops.

Regular attendance is expected, and excessive absence (more than 2 classes) or chronic lateness will adversely affect your grade. If you need to be absent, please be sure to email me so that you can find out about any missed assignments.
Reading assignments: Reading assignments will consist of the texts listed above as well as additional handouts, articles, etc. as listed on the syllabus.

Writing assignments (90%): You will be asked to do the following written work:

In-class writing: We will often spend time writing together in class. These informal assignments will serve as a basis for class discussion and offer opportunities for thinking and writing practice. You may be asked to share what you have written with the class or in small groups, and I will let you know in advance if this is going to be the case.

Course blog: You will be asked to post to a blog created for our course almost every week, and to read and respond to your classmates’ posts. I will provide a suggested prompt for each blog assignment, but the topics will generally be open. Your post should be completed by the Thursday of each week as indicated on the syllabus. I will provide a handout that describes the blog requirements in more detail.

Drafts and Formal Papers: We will write three finished papers, including two short essays of 3-5 pages each, and a final research paper of 8-10 pages. I will provide suggestions for paper topics, but I encourage you to choose your own. The papers will be written in a series of stages, from in-class writings through drafts we will workshop together. In addition, you may choose to revise your short essays within one week from the date on which the papers are returned. If you wish to revise, you must meet with me first to discuss your essay. For each of the papers, I will provide a handout with details about topics and requirements, and we will spend time reviewing these in class.

Grading: Grades for the course will break down as follows:

Attendance and participation (including reading, discussion, and participation in workshops): 10%

Writing assignments: (90%):
- Successful and timely completion of drafts, sketches, annotated bibliography, and peer responses: 10%
- Blog assignments: 10%
- Essay 1: 20%
- Essay 2: 20%
- Essay 3 (research paper): 30%

Academic ingegirty: As a Gallatin student you belong to an interdisciplinary community of artists and scholars who value honest and open intellectual inquiry. This relationship depends on mutual respect, responsibility, and integrity. Failure to uphold these values will be subject to severe sanction, which may include dismissal from the University. Examples of behaviors that compromise the academic integrity of the Gallatin School include plagiarism, illicit collaboration, doubling or recycling coursework, and cheating. Please consult the Gallatin Bulletin or Gallatin website http://gallatin.nyu.edu/academics/policies/integrity.html
Research Seminar: Coming Home: Identity and Place
Jennifer Lemberg
The Gallatin School, NYU
Classroom: 432, 1 Wash. Pl.
Office: 417, 1 Wash. Pl.
email: jl258@nyu.edu

Syllabus

Week 1
Tue 9/3 First day of class - introductions and course requirements

Thur 9/5 Rosh Hashanah – class cancelled

I. Mapping Home: Our Selves, Our Places

Week 2
Blog assignment: post your completed poem and respond to at least one other poem. Feel free to include photos or links. Have fun!

Tue 9/10 Composing “Where I’m From” poems
Bluestockings Bookstore brings our texts to class to purchase (optional).

Thur 9/12 Paul Gruchow, “Home is a Place in Time;” Kathleen Dean Moore, excerpts from The Pine Island Paradox
Assignment for essay #1 distributed

Week 3
Blog assignment: responses to theoretical readings on home and place

Tue 9/17 Yi-Fu Tuan, “Visibility: the Creation of Place;” Mindy Fullilove, “The Butterfly in Beijing”

Thur 9/19 Teju Cole, Open City, Part I, Chapters 1 – 6 (to page 85)

Week 4
Blog assignment: responses to Open City

Tue 9/24 Open City, Part I, Chapters 7 – 11 (86 – 146)
Please come to class prepared to share a bit about your topic for essay #1.

Thur 9/26 Open City, Part 2 (pp 149 – end)

Week 5
Blog assignment: responses to essays by Mendelsohn and Hoffman

Tue 10/1 Draft of essay #1 due – workshop in class. See assignment sheet for details.
II. Coming “Home” to Where You’ve Never Been

Thur 10/3 Daniel Mendelsohn, “What Happened to Uncle Schmiel?” and Eva Hoffman, excerpt from *After Such Knowledge*

**Week 6**

Blog assignment: responses to Foer and “Hiding and Seeking”

Tue 10/8 Jonathan Safran Foer, “The Very Rigid Search”

Thur 10/10 Watch “Hiding and Seeking,” on reserve at Bobst Library, for today.

*Optional deadline for Essay #1* (for those who want to turn it in before Fall break)

*Guidelines for Essay #2 distributed today.*

**Week 7**

Blog assignment: responses to Gruber and Kugelmass

Tue 10/15 – Fall Break – classes cancelled


*Essay #1 due.* Along with the final version, please hand in your draft with my comments.

**Week 8**

Blog assignment: responses to LaCapra

Tue 10/22 Dominick LaCapra, “Trauma, Absence, Loss”

Th 10/24 *Draft of essay #2 due* – workshop in class. See assignment sheet for details.

III. Objects in Place

**Week 9**

Week 9 blog assignment: responses to Fine-Dare and other assigned readings

Tue 10/29 Kathleen Fine-Dare, excerpt from *Grave Injustice*; additional reading TBA


*Guidelines for Essay #3 distributed today: we discuss research paper topics. Come prepared to share your (as yet possibly unformed) ideas*
Week 10
Week 10 blog assignment: responses to Erdrich

Tue 11/5 The Painted Drum, Part II, “North of Hoopdance”: pp 95 – 186
Essay #2 due. Along with the final version, please hand in your draft with my comments.

Th 11/7 Paper sketch for Essay #3 due for in-class workshop

Week 11
Blog assignment: comments on the conclusion of The Painted Drum


Th 11/14 Library visit. Meet in room 619, on the 6th floor of Bobst Library, for research instruction

Week 12
Final blog assignment: how is your research going? Share successes and struggles.

Tue 11/19 Annotated bibliography for Essay #3 due for in-class workshop. Please make sure to email me a copy of your bibliography as well.

Th 11/21 Class cancelled – continue work on research paper

Week 13
Tue 11/26 Assignment TBD – reading and/or work on research papers

Th 11/28 – Thanksgiving recess

Week 14

Tue 12/3 Draft of Essay #3 due for exchange with group members. Please see assignment sheet for details. Groups will meet to discuss progress, questions, etc.

Th 12/5 Continue work on research papers

Week 15

Tue 12/10 Responses to Essay #3 due. We meet in groups to discuss.

Th 12/12 – last day of class – wrap-up

Final version of Essay #3 due no later than Monday, December 16 at 11am