# General Education and I-Series Course Submission and Review

## CMLT270 Global Literature and Social Change

### General Information

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<th>Title</th>
<th>Global Literature and Social Change</th>
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<tr>
<td>Course Number</td>
<td>CMLT270</td>
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<tr>
<td>College</td>
<td>ARHU – Arts and Humanities</td>
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<tr>
<td>Department</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>Submitted By</td>
<td>Thomas Colborn Moser Jr</td>
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### CORE Information

- CORE Fundamental Studies: No
- CORE Distributive/Advanced Studies: (HL) – Literature
- CORE Diversity: Yes

### General Education Information

- Fundamental Studies: None
- Distributive Studies: Humanities
- Diversity: Understanding Plural Societies
General Questions

Please give a brief description of the course:

This course is intended as an opportunity to study and discuss several works of literature, film, and other media in a global context. To do so, we will use a variety of approaches to work toward in-depth cultural and textual analysis. The course will emphasize contemporary works, and will also consider how texts use a variety of tactics for understanding, making visible, and at times influencing social change, including political, socioeconomic, technoscientific, and artistic shifts. Students will consider how these texts relate to nation, history, gender roles, race and ethnicity, the role of the author in society, various artistic genres, and relevant literary and cultural traditions. Students will also be expected to demonstrate and improve academic skills such as discussing literature, giving oral presentations, closely analyzing texts, and writing about literature. Students will read extensively, participate in class discussion, complete a significant writing project, research, take a final essay exam, and complete a range of other assignments, including presentations, group assignments, homework, and quizzes. Students are expected to grapple with interesting and challenging questions and debates.

Please list any pre- or co-requisites for this course:

None

If there are pre- or co-requisites, please justify them with respect to their appropriateness for a General Education course:

N/A

Please list any restrictions (e.g. majors only) placed on this course:

None

What is the approximate course size (students/academic year)?

245

Please describe how student learning will be assessed (i.e. exams, homework, papers, group projects, etc.):

Grading: The final grade will be calculated as follows: 20% Paper 1 30% Paper 2 20% Final Exam 10% Class Participation 20% Quizzes, Group Projects, Presentations, and Other Assignments

Comments on the course that you feel may be useful for the review process. Also, if this is an existing course that you are planning on making changes to via VPAC (i.e. changing the title), please list those proposed changes here:

This is a long-standing and popular course. It is being submitted without any substantial changes.

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes are phrased as "At the completion of this course, students will be able
to...". Answers are expected to demonstrate how the course will (1) give students the ability to meet the learning objective and (2) determine that students were successful in meeting the learning objective.

Learning outcomes in this color are REQUIRED

<table>
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<th>Humanities</th>
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<td>Courses in the humanities disciplines study history and the genres of human creativity, and they include courses in the practice of architecture and the visual, literary and performing and creative arts. Under &quot;Humanities,&quot; students will find courses in cultures and literatures in any language, creative writing, art, architecture, art history, classics, history, linguistics, philosophy, and the performing arts (dance, music, theatre) and their histories.</td>
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Must address at least 4 of the following Learning Outcomes

At the completion of this course, students will be able to...

...demonstrate familiarity and facility with fundamental terminology and concepts in a specific topical area in the humanities.

Each text of the course is discussed, examined, and critiqued in terms of its specific historical, cultural, and literary context as well as in relation to a global context. Since one of the goals of the course is to provide students with an understanding of how literary texts use a variety of tactics to understand, make visible, and, at times, influence social change (understood as political, socioeconomic, technoscientific, and artistic shifts), the course will focus on close readings of the texts in relation to and in conversation with broader concerns regarding national identity, history, gender roles, race and ethnicity. Students are encouraged to think about the guiding theme of the course and challenge assumptions about what constitutes social change through in-class writing assignments on topics like: “Make up some terms to describe social change that refer to specific changes WITHOUT suggesting or implying progress or decline. In other words, think of words that can describe particular kinds of social change that don’t suggest one is a higher stage of development than the other. Define and explain your terms using examples from one or two texts from this class. Examples that others have used include centralization/decentralization, homogenization/differentiation, but you can feel free to choose more creative or less technical-sounding terms.” Through a range of assignments, students will demonstrate and be evaluated on their ability to recognize and analyze the relationship between aesthetics and politics.

...demonstrate understanding of the methods used by scholars in a specific field in the humanities.

This is a course that focuses on representations in literature and film and the effects of these representations in various societies. Understanding and analyzing representation in literary texts is perhaps the most fundamental exercise in a literature course. Students generally think of a literary text or a film as a transparent transcription of what they call "reality," a way of knowing that is immediately apparent from reading the surface of the text. Teaching students how to decode a text, how to read the representational signs is a central concern of this course. For this reason, students learn how to conduct close readings of the texts responsibly by taking into account the specifically literary and formal aspects of a text, as well as its cultural, historical, and aesthetic context. These skills are modeled for the students in lectures and reinforced in class discussion that requires students to draw from the texts as the basis for their comments. Students are assessed on their understanding as demonstrated in papers and the final exam essay.
...demonstrate critical thinking in the evaluation of sources and arguments in scholarly works, or in the evaluation of approaches and techniques in the visual, literary, or performing arts.

...describe how language use is related to ways of thinking, cultural heritage, and cultural values.

In Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature, Ngugi wa Thiong’o argued for the significance of language as a vehicle of culture and the importance of engaging critically with the legacy of colonial languages in postcolonial societies. In a class on global literature, it would be impossible to engage with issues of gender, race, nation, and class without taking into account issues related to translation, language choice, and multilingualism. Students will be assessed on their understanding of these issues in discussion, in their papers and in exams.

...conduct research on a topic in the humanities using a variety of sources and technologies.

CMLT 270 students are required to conduct and present original research using a variety of sources and technologies, as demonstrated by the following assignment: “The study of global literature spans across countless writers, art forms, regions, languages, characters, and themes. But in reality, a person can only know so much about global literature. This assignment asks you to think about the ways that global literature affects contemporary U.S. society. What factors influence which works of global literature you, as someone in the Maryland area, are most likely to read, discuss, or hear about OUTSIDE OF THE CLASSROOM? What trends do you notice in the U.S. reception and consumption of global literature? Your assignment is to get into a group of 2 or 3 and research this question. Only research literature that is not from the United States or Canada for this assignment (even though, as part of the world, these literatures are obviously part of “global literature”). You will then: 1) Submit your findings to the course Global Literature Wiki (about 2 paragraphs per person). AND, 2) be prepared to summarize your most interesting discoveries for the class. You might consider the following questions: –How do you research which works have had the greatest effect on contemporary U.S. society? Do you look at which books are best–sellers? At which win awards? At which are read by book clubs? At which influence U.S. writers? At which book get reviewed in U.S. publications? What else? –Which nations or languages are most likely to find a U.S. audience and/or become part of larger conversations in the U.S.? Why? –Which genres are most likely to find a U.S. audience and/or become part of larger conversations in the U.S.? Why? –What kinds of themes or characters are most likely to find a U.S. audience and/or become part of larger conversations in the U.S.? Why? Does it relate to the nation or region of origin? –How do gender, class, or another category of your choice affect these issues? –How do economic and marketing factors affect how and why certain books find U.S. audiences?”

...demonstrate the ability to formulate a thesis related to a specific topic in the humanities and to support the thesis with evidence and argumentation.

...demonstrate understanding of the creative process and techniques used by practitioners in a specific field of the visual, literary, or performing arts.

Understanding Plural Societies

Life in a globally competitive society of the twenty-first century requires an ability to comprehend both theoretical and practical dimensions of human difference. From that perspective, Understanding Plural Societies is the centerpiece of the University’s Diversity requirement. Courses in this category speak to both the foundations—cultural, material, psychological, historical, social, and biological—of human difference and the operation or function of plural societies.

Must address at least 4 of the following Learning Outcomes
At the completion of this course, students will be able to...

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<th>...demonstrate understanding of the basis of human diversity: biological, cultural, historical, social, economic, or ideological.</th>
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<td>...demonstrate understanding of fundamental concepts and methods that produce knowledge about plural societies.</td>
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<tr>
<td>...explicate the processes that create or fail to create just, productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies.</td>
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CMLT 270 provides students with an understanding of how literary texts use a variety of tactics to understand, make visible, and, at times, influence social change. The core of the course is the exploration of social inequality and how culture has addressed these inequalities. Through their assignments, students are encouraged to think about what constitutes social change, how it signifies differently in different periods and areas of the world, and what role the imagination plays in the creation or failure of productive, egalitarian, and collaborative societies.

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<th>...analyze forms and traditions of thought or expression in relation to cultural, historical, political, and social contexts, as, for example, dance, foodways, literature, music, and philosophical and religious traditions.</th>
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CMLT 270 provides students with an understanding of how literary texts use a variety of tactics to understand, make visible, and, at times, influence social change. Analysis of these political, socioeconomic, technoscientific, and artistic shifts is organized around understanding each text as embedded in its historical period and in relation to other visual and cultural texts in a global framework. The syllabus in this course includes novels, poetry, memoir, graphic novels, film, video, and theory.

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<th>...articulate how particular policies create or inhibit the formation and functioning of plural societies.</th>
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The writers, filmmakers, playwrights, and critics studied in this course foreground the various ways meaningful social change can be created or inhibited. Students are encouraged to think in a synthetic way about their position as critics, the artists’ position relative to society, and the role that the arts and humanities play in the formation of plural societies. The following assignment indicates one of the ways students demonstrate their understanding of this complex of issues. “This homework assignment is worth one quiz grade. The assignment is based on the “Politics of Listening” notes in Course Documents. It asks you to come up with ideas for how to improve meaningful listening, and to think about how learning about one’s self and listening to others might go hand in hand. It also asks you to think about the challenges in listening in conversations that you feel are difficult but important to have. Specifically, in this assignment, you are asked to think about how one’s “location” as a reader affects how and when one listens to others. How does a reader’s experiences shape the reading and interpretive process? How does the reader’s “location” (culture, language, nation, background, assumptions, etc.) shape responses to a text? You might think about what readers “bring” to a text, particularly for texts we read for class that you feel you really had to “negotiate with” – one that you struggled with, not in terms of understanding its literal meaning, but in terms of having to work to see the author’s purpose. What assumptions did the text challenge? How did your location as a reader affect your reading? The assignment consists of the following: 1. Interview a classmate about their location as a reader. You will be given all of class to do this. Think of five or more questions ahead of time – what about this person’s background, assumptions, beliefs, or experiences shapes how they read texts in this class or other texts from around the world? Try to come up with questions that will help the other person talk about their experiences of reading and what broader cultural or other influences shape their location as a reader. 2. Write up a homework assignment that includes: - A list of the questions you asked and the person you interviewed. - A 2–3 paragraph summary of what you found out in the
interviews about how one's location affects how one encounters or experiences various texts. Reflect both on what you
learned about the other person through listening to their perspective and on what you learned about your own location as a
reader. -Come up with some terms, metaphors, or visual representations to better describe one of the following: (a) Specific
difficulties in listening that are often overlooked -- you might consider, for example, why authors such as Deavere Smith and
Gordimer portray listening as a politically or socially fraught act; or (b) how a reader's location affects the interpretation of
literature. Briefly explain why your metaphor or visual model sheds light on or emphasizes important aspects of listening or
reading.

...use a comparative, intersectional, or relational framework to examine the experiences, cultures, or histories of
two or more social groups or constituencies within a single society or across societies, and within a single
historical timeframe or across historical time.

The texts in this class are drawn from the United States, the Caribbean, Latin America, Europe, Africa, Asia, and Southeast
Asia. The texts themselves stage multicultural, multilingual, and transnational encounters that demand comparative and
intersectional frameworks for analysis. Course readings and discussions are arranged to highlight the ways two or more
groups can be "in conversation" with others within texts or across geographical and temporal boundaries. Students take on
these issues in assigned paper topics that ask them to compare writers from different groups on topics like ideas of freedom,
displacement and migration, conceptions of time and progress.

...use information technologies to access research and communicate effectively about plural societies.

CMLT 270 makes use of information technologies, including library databases, websites, youtube and a course Wiki to allow
students to communicate their research findings.

Course Syllabus

View the course syllabus here.

Note: Your browser may download the syllabus, in which case you will have to open it in a separate program, i.e. Adobe Acrobat of Micro$oft Word, in order to view it.

Another Note: Some people are uploading Word .docx files (newer Word format). If your computer doesn't have a fairly recent version of Word installed (2007 or later), your computer won't know what to do with a .docx file and may try to open it as a "zip" file. You will have to either upgrade your version of Word, or install Micro$oft's Compatibility Pack to allow earlier versions of Word to open the file.

Review and Sign-Off : Completed!