Description:

This class is designed as a close reading of four contemporary novels that cover the geographic areas of the U.S., Europe, and Asia or Latin America. It intends to explore the overlapping of global economy and culture in our time, at once finding the threads that interweave our humanity and observing the fissures that divide it. By critically engaging the texts in our reading and writing, we hope to imagine a better and more equitable global order for all.

Required Texts:

Franzen, Johnathan  
Kureishi, Hanif  
Smith, Zadie  
Yu, Hua  
Freedom  
The Buddha of Suburbia  
White Teeth  
Brothers

Policy Statement:

Papers:

Two 5pp critical essays are due on February 3rd and March 10th respectively. You are not required to consult outside scholarship for the assignment: Any external sources used in your paper would be welcome but should be properly acknowledged in the body of the essay and the works cited section at the paper's end. A critical essay is one that interprets a literary work with a particular argument. You want to focus on one aspect of the novel and generate an interpretive thesis of your own. Make sure to use textual evidence while arguing your case. Your grade will depend upon the quality of your ideas, organization, and prose style.

Your paper must be typed and double-spaced with sufficient margins. You are responsible for retaining a photocopy of the paper you submit. You must turn in your essay (as a hard copy) by the beginning of the class hour (No electronic submission accepted). All late papers will receive an "F" except in cases of serious medical incapacity.

I will offer specific instructions and potential paper topics in class, and I encourage you to stop by during my office hrs and share with me your ideas on the essay prior to its due date.

Semester Grades: The scaled numerical sum of all essays, exams and quizzes will determine your final grade. I reserve the right, though, to take into account absenteeism. 2 critical essays (1st, 10%; 2nd, 20%), a mid-term (20%) and a final (25%). Indefinite
number of in-class quizzes; No make-up quizzes for any absentees except for serious illness (25%).

95-100=A+; 85-95=A; 75-84=B; 68-74=C; 60-67=D; below 60=F

Plagiarism (i.e. the misrepresentation of another person's ideas or words as your own): automatic flunk.

Exams: A Mid-term (2-3) and a final examination (3-14). No advanced or make-up exams except for unexpected and serious medical incapacity.

Academic Courtesy: I have several requests pertaining to this category. Students who feel unable to honor these should enroll in some other courses.

I reserve the right to adjust the syllabus when necessary.

Syllabus

T 1-4  Introduction
R 1-6   The Buddha of Suburbia (1-61)
T 1-11  The Buddha of Suburbia (62-121)
R 1-13  The Buddha of Suburbia (125-204)
T 1-18  The Buddha of Suburbia (205-284)
R 1-20  Brothers (3-210)
T 1-25  Brothers (213-350)
R 1-27  Brothers (351-506)
T 2-1   Brothers (507-641)

R 2-3   Midterm Exam and 1st Paper Due

T 2-8   White Teeth (3-102)
R 2-10  White Teeth (104-217)
T 2-15  White Teeth (221-339)
R 2-17  White Teeth (343-448)
T 2-22  Freedom (1-117)
R 2-24  Freedom (118-231)
T 3-1   Freedom (232-344)
R 3-3   Freedom (345-442)
T 3-8   Freedom (443-562)

R 3-10  Term Review and 2nd Paper Due

M 3-14  FINAL EXAM: 13:00 in regular classroom