English Novel and the World  
ENGL 103 910  
Summer Session 1: May 22- June 28, 2017  
Schedule: Monday, Wednesday, Friday: 12-2.30 p.m.

Instructor: Najnin Islam  
Office Hours: TBA  
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Course Description:

What is the relationship between literature and the world? Do English novels represent competing views of the world we inhabit and what are the stakes of such worldviews? In this course we will explore these questions through a selection of works of fiction from Britain and its former colonial possessions worldwide. Moving away from the conventional understanding of the English novel as invested only in marriage plots and insular country houses, we will ask questions such as, what might one of the earliest examples of the novel form like Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko* tell us about Britain’s connection to the wider world and the human costs of imperial expansion? What might Jane Austen’s ostensibly domestic drama, *Mansfield Park* tell us about a world outside of polite British society, somewhere in the plantations of Antigua? As we read works by authors from Britain, South Asia and the Caribbean, we will pay attention to how they use the form of the novel to represent the world, not just as a tissue of global processes like capitalism, slavery and tourism but also as a site where marginalized people find voice and representation.  
Readings for this course may include, Aphra Behn’s *Oroonoko*, Jane Austen's *Mansfield Park*, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, V.S. Naipaul’s *A House for Mr. Biswas* and Amitav Ghosh’s *The Shadow Lines* as well as films such as Patricia Rozema’s 1999 adaptation of Austen's *Mansfield Park* and Richard Fung’s 1990 documentary, *My Mother’s Place*.

Required Texts:

Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)  
Jane Austen, *Mansfield Park* (1814)  
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899)  

All Secondary Materials will be made available on Canvas.

Course Assignments:  
Two short (3-5 pages) assignments and a final essay on a topic of your choice subject to approval.

Attendance Policy:
You are allowed one unexcused absence throughout the course. Exceptions will be handled on individual basis. Please let me know ahead of time if you are unable to attend class for any reason.

**Academic Integrity:**
If you are unsure what comprises academic integrity please see The University of Pennsylvania’s Code of academic Integrity at:
http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_codeofacademicintegrity.html and
http://www.upenn.edu/academicintegrity/ai_plagiarismwhatisit.html.
I am also happy to talk to you about this.

**Tentative Syllabus**

**Week 1: The New World and the Novel**


May 24: Discussion of *Oroonoko* by Aphra Behn.
Joana Lipking, “A New World of Slavery—An Introduction”

May 26: Discussion of the text continued.
Laura Brown, “The Romance of Empire: Oroonoko and the Trade in Slaves”

**Week 2: The Domestic and the Worldly**

May 29: Discussion of *Mansfield Park* by Jane Austen.

May 31: Discussion continued.

June 2: Wrap up discussion of the novel. We will also watch selections from Patricia Rozema’s film adaptation of *Mansfield Park*.

**Week 3: Empire and the Novel**

June 5: Discussion of *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad

June 7: Discussion continued.

June 9: Wrap up discussion of the novel.
Edward Said, “Two Visions in Heart of Darkness” in *Culture and Imperialism*.

**Week 4: Straddling between worlds**

June 12: Discussion of *A House for Mr. Biswas* by V.S. Naipaul.
June 14: Discussion continued.

June 16: We will watch Richard Fung’s **documentary film**, *My Mother’s Place* (1990)

**Week 5: At home in the world**

June 19: Discussion of *The Shadow Lines* by Amitav Ghosh.

June 21: Discussion continued.
   Shameem Black, “Cosmopolitanism at Home: Amitav Ghosh’s The Shadow Lines”

June 23: Wrap up discussion of the novel.
   Pheng Cheah, “Missed Encounters: Cosmopolitanism, World Literature and Postcoloniality”.

**Week 6: Wrapping up**

June 26: Discuss final essays-in-progress. Final clarifications/questions.

June 28: Final essays/projects due.