

English 564.04: Special Topics in Major Authors “Salman Rushdie”

MW 11:30-1:18, Denney Hall 253
Fall Quarter 2006

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Course Description

This section of “Major Authors” will introduce students to Salman Rushdie, one of the most celebrated writers in the English language in the past twenty-five years. Rushdie’s novels and essays have been widely recognized as putting postcolonial literature on the map of Western literary studies. Besides appreciating Rushdie’s dazzling magical realism and his foregrounding of cultural hybridity, we will study the larger social impact of his politically-engaged career from Bombay to London to New York. Our study of four important novels and several essays will lead us through the tumultuous aftermath of decolonization in India, the disjointed experience of immigrants and exiles in the postcolonial diaspora, representations of Islam and the turmoil around the Iranian *fatwa* against Rushdie, rising South Asian communalism in the 1990s, and the turmoil of war and terrorism in the 21st century. Rushdie’s work shows us how literature is entwined with its historical contexts: how writers can shed a powerful light on the great themes of our times, pushing beyond the boundaries of history even as they are shaped by it.

Required Texts (available at SBX, 1806 N High St)

Four novels by Salman Rushdie:

Haroun and the Sea of Stories
Midnight’s Children
The Moor’s Last Sigh
The Satanic Verses

Course packet (CP) from Zip publishing (available at SBX)

Course Web Page(s) and Email:

Log on at www.carmen.osu.edu for

- Interactive Syllabus
- Dropbox for turning in papers
- Discussion threads for journal entries

Go to my personal webpage: <http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/jani4/> for

- links to the broader literary and political context of class material
- links to world and alternative media

Note: Messages requiring a response from me should be sent to jani.4@osu.edu. Please keep the discussion on Carmen focused on themes and questions of general interest to the class.

Course Requirements

Class Participation	20%
Carmen (10 entries)	10%

Response Papers (4, 1-2 pp)	40%
Final Paper (8-10 pages)	30%

Grading

- **Class Participation:** Engaged, active participation in the class will be crucial to your grade. This includes, but is not limited to: arriving to class on time, bringing in the texts we're reading that day, being alert during lecture and discussion, raising questions and comments in the discussion period. Multiple absences, as described below, can detract from your participation grade.
- **Carmen:** To receive the full 10% of the grade, you must post at least 10, paragraph-length entries to the discussion threads on Carmen by the end of the term. These may be anything from general observations on the reading to close readings of passages to comments about issues raised in the class but not discussed fully. You may either initiate a new thread or respond to others' comments. Balancing original comments and responses, of course, will help develop online interaction.
- **Responses:** Given the heavy reading load in the class, I'm only assigning 4 short papers for the class (outside of the final paper). A response paper is due with every novel that we read; you may turn it in at any time while we are reading the novel but **response papers submitted after the completion of the novel will not be accepted.** The topic for the paper is open; if you need suggestions, consult your lecture notes and the study questions that I post on Carmen. Response papers do not need to make an argument and can be used to explore ideas. I expect them, however, to be focused meditations, with some textual support, on either a passage, a set of themes or ideas, a literary device, or narrative method.
- **Final Paper:** The specific assignment will be posted on Carmen at the start of the term. The paper will be an in-depth study of one or more of Rushdie's novels that develops an interpretation of the work based on critical, historical, and/or theoretical texts. You are encouraged to meet with me to discuss the final paper, which is different from all the other writing assignments in the course, and to submit a proposal outlining your ideas and overall direction.

Course Policies

- 1) **Absences:** More than 2 absences from class will harm your participation grade, with a loss of 1/3 of a grade for each day lost. Emergencies should be reported to me as soon as possible, and may require documentation from the University.
- 2) **Plagiarism:** Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct. **There will be no exceptions to this rule. If you are stressed out and don't know how to write the paper, communicate with me before deciding to plagiarize, not after.**
- 3) **Help with Disabilities:** Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should meet with me, as early in the quarter as possible, to discuss your specific needs. Early communication will allow me to adjust the course according to your needs in terms of access to technology, course material, and office hours. If it makes sense, we can coordinate a plan with the Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, which offers services for students with documented disabilities. To contact the ODS, call 292-3307.
- 4) **Use of Technology:** I expect that your papers be in typed in 12-point font and double-spaced as a Microsoft Word document, and that you submit them to me via the Carmen dropbox. I also expect that you can be reached by email for announcements that I may need to make in between class sessions. While I will make every effort to make the technology accessible, **it is your responsibility to get papers to me on time in the proper format.** This includes, but is not limited to, planning ahead so that you can account for technological problems that may occur in saving your document, transferring it to Carmen, etc. The logic behind my requirements is this: 12-point font and double spacing makes the document most legible for grading and reading, Microsoft Word—available to you at all campus computers—is the easiest format for uploading and downloading, and posting papers electronically on Carmen allow

me to give you comments that are typed, legible, and much more thorough than if you were printing them out and handing them in.

- 5) The Jani Guarantee: On my part, I will do my best to return papers to you within a week after they are turned in, and never more than 10 days after the due date. I will type comments to your papers so that you don't have to read my terrible handwriting, and can actually use the comments to study and improve for the next time. I will also be regularly available, during office hours but also on email, to discuss papers or class ideas and issues.

COURSE OUTLINE (check Carmen for updates)

Introduction

W 9.20 The World of Rushdie: Decolonization and the Postcolonial Intellectual

WEEKS 1-3 MIDNIGHT'S CHILDREN

M 9.25 Nations and Perforated Sheets

Reading: Benedict Anderson, from *Imagined Communities* (CP), or
<http://www.nationalismproject.org/what/anderson.htm>

W 9.27 Methwold and Colonial Hangovers

*Reading: Rushdie, "'Commonwealth Literature' Does Not Exist" (CP)

M 10.2 The Saleem-Shiva Opposition

*Reading: Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form" (CP)

W 10.4 Pakistan and Muslim Identity

M 10.9 Student Research: Find a relevant article or book on *Midnight's Children* from the MLA Database.

W 10.11 Of Sperectomies, Magicians, and Hummingbirds

*Reading: John J. Su, "Epic of Failure: Disappointment as Utopian Fantasy in *Midnight's Children*" (CP)

F 10.13 **Last day to turn in Response #1, in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

WEEKS 4-6 THE SATANIC VERSES

Online Reading Companion: Paul Brians, "Notes on Salman Rushdie: *The Satanic Verses* (1988)" at
http://www.wsu.edu/~brians/anglophone/satanic_verses/

M 10.16 Decentering the West, Decentering Tradition

W 10.18 Celebrating Mongrelization

M 10.23 Khomeini, Thatcher, Reagan

W 10.25 The Sacred and the Profane

M 10.30 Student Research: Find a relevant article or book on *The Satanic Verses* from the MLA Database.

W 11.1 The Fatwa

Reading: Feroza Jussawalla, "Rushdie's *Dastan-e-Dilruba: The Satanic Verses* as Rushdie's Love-Letter to Islam" (CP)

F 11.3 **Last day to turn in Response #2, in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

Week 7: Rushdie and Islam: 9/11 and after

M 11.6 Reading: As'ad AbuKhalil, "Islamophobia" (CP)

Student Research: Representations of Islam after 9/11

W 11.8 Reading: Rushdie, "Gods and Monsters" and other essays (CP)

WEEKS 8-9 THE MOOR'S LAST SIGH

- M 11.13 Tracing Genealogies
W 11.15 Representations of Bombay
M 11.20 Student Research: Find a relevant article or book on *The Moor's Last Sigh* from the MLA Database.
W 11.22 Alternatives to Secularism/Fundamentalism
Reading: Dohra Ahmad, "‘This Fundo Stuff is Really Something New’: Fundamentalism and Hybridity in *The Moor's Last Sigh*" (CP)
F 11.4 **Last day to turn in Response #3, in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

WEEK 10 Haroun and the Search for Truth

- M 11.27 Stories and Truth
W 11.29 Is *Haroun* a Postmodernist Text?
F 12.1 **Last day to turn in Response #4, in Carmen dropbox by 5pm**

Tuesday 12.5: Final Paper Due (8-10 pages), in Carmen dropbox by 5 pm