

## SEMESTER AT SEA COURSE SYLLABUS

### Colorado State University, Academic Partner

<b>Voyage:</b>	Spring 2023
<b>Discipline:</b>	English
<b>Course Number and Title:</b>	E 465 Topics in Literature and Language (Focus: Global Stories of Freedom and Confinement)
<b>Division:</b>	Upper
<b>Faculty Name:</b>	Dr. Tobi Jacobi
<b>Semester Credit Hours:</b>	3

**Prerequisites:** One upper-division literary criticism and theory course or permission of the instructor

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

*What are the relationships between writing and freedom? What does it mean to write from confined spaces like prison, jail, or other institutions that limit movement and choice? Is such writing spectacle, artistic expression, therapy, or rehabilitation? How might gender, racial, and cultural identity influence how such writing travels and gets published?* These are some of the questions that drive and define the scope of this special topics course on literature and language with a focus on stories of freedom and confinement. We will make, interrogate, and disrupt connections between texts written in and about freedom/ confinement and the material world as we read within historical and sociocultural contexts of our shared journey. We will stretch our thinking about how a global set of confined writers approach and use writing as creative expression, literary journalism, and human connection. In this way, our primary goal is to consider the role of language in constructing identities within discourse communities beyond the academy and conventional literary canon. Our exploration will include memoir, images, essays, poetry, film, and critical writing as well as texts drawn from regional writing projects sponsored by organizations in some of our port cities. Course assignments will include short response papers, written exams, a field class project, and a justice journal.

### LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This advanced English course emphasizes synthesis, disciplinary and interdisciplinary analysis, collaboration, critical thinking, and connections to larger social and intellectual endeavors through the following goals:

- to understand debates surrounding the nature of writing as well as the role of writing/language as cultural and social capital for writers working around the globe.

- to consider the relationship between writing and the human experience as by examining the will to compose by writers committed to pursuing and circulating stories of freedom, particularly those who do so from small and/or highly structured spaces.
- to consider the issues of race, gender, social class, sexual identity, representation, and ethics that influence the composing processes of the 21<sup>st</sup> century global writer through the examination of contemporary stories of freedom and confinement.
- to apply course content and debate to our collective experiences in the many cities and countries we visit during our voyage.

In considering how a diverse set of people approach writing as a meaning making process, in reading texts across gender, ethnicity, race, and time, and in tracing the circulation of those writings across global spaces, we will complicate and extend what counts as disciplinary knowledge as well as the ways we make connections between literature and the material world. In this way, our primary goal is to consider the role of language in constructing identities within discourse communities beyond the academy.

## REQUIRED TEXTBOOKS

AUTHOR: Siobhan Dowd, ed

TITLE: *This Prison Where I Live: The PEN Anthology of Imprisoned Writers*

PUBLISHER: Cassell

ISBN: 978-0304333066

DATE/EDITION: 1996 (paperback only)

AUTHOR: Rani Dhavan Shankardass

TITLE: *Of Women Inside: Prison Voices from India*

PUBLISHER: Routledge India

ISBN: 978-0415535076

DATE/EDITION: 2012

AUTHOR: Tomas Cuevas

TITLE: *Prison of Women: Testimonies of War and Resistance in Spain, 1939-1975*

PUBLISHER: SUNY Press

ISBN: 978-0-7914-3858-9

DATE/EDITION: 1998

AUTHOR: Calais Writers

TITLE: *Voices from the Jungle*

PUBLISHER: Pluto Press

ISBN: 0745399681

DATE/EDITION: 2017

## TOPICAL OUTLINE OF COURSE

### Embarkation Day – January 5

1: Introduction to the study of prison writing; course syllabus, expectations and assignments. In-class writing on SpeakOut! project and discussion of journal distribution.

2: Discussions of genre ranges in freedom/prison storytelling; introduction to CEP Justice Journal project and SpeakOut! journals.

Reading due: “A Wide and Worlded Vision of Prison Writing” by Kelly in Kelly and Westall; and selections from *Of Women Inside* by Shankardass.

3: Discussion of first justice journal observations. Discussion of public stories of freedom and imprisonment and prison writing as testimony.

Reading due: Selections from Shankardass.

4: Reflections, gender, and family in prison/freedom storytelling; introduction of first critical response paper. Read and discuss selections from Shankardass and *This Prison Where I Live* by Dowd.

5: Discussion of justice journal observations. Extend discussion of reading and writing freedom in India to African contexts. Reading due: “The Credibility of Elves?: Narrative Exclusion and Prison Writing” by Colvin in Kelly and Westall and selections from Shankardass.

6: Extend discussion of reading and writing freedom in India to African contexts. Reading due: Selections from *This Prison Where I Live* by Dowd.

7: Reflections and connections to prison/freedom writing. Discussions of prison writing as a genre.

Reading due: “Against Prison Writing” by Rodriguez and selections from Dowd.

8: Discussion of justice journal observations. Discussion of freedom and migration experiences.

Read due: tba (graphic comic on migration stories)

9: Politics of writing migration stories.

Reading due: Calais Writers, *Voices from the Jungle* (first half) and “PEN and the Prison Writer” by Westall in Kelly and Westall.

10: Stories of migration and freedom.

Reading due: Calais Writers, *Voices from the Jungle* (second half).

11: Draft of first critical response paper due for in-class review.

12: Film screening: Calais. Due: First critical response paper.

- 13: Read and discuss selections from *This Prison Where I Live* by Dowd
- 14: Preparation for mid-term exam: Bring justice journals to class.
- 15: Midterm Exam: Connections between reading and justice journal observations.  
Discussion of Greek prison islands: Makronisos and Yaros.
- 16: Justice Journal debrief. Reflection and freedom stories.  
Reading due: tba from Dowd.
- 17: Prepare for our field class. Discussion of Croatian “Alcatraz”: Goli Otok.
- 18: Field class debrief discussion and writing session (depending upon field class assigned).
- 19: Reading due: Discussion oral testimonies as method, gender, and political prisoners.  
Read due: first chapters of Cuevas, *Prison of Women*.
- 20: Discussion of role of images and historical context in 20<sup>th</sup> C Spanish testimonies.  
Reading and work due: middle chapters of Cuevas, *Prison of Women* and field class reflection paper.
- 21: Discussion of justice journal observations. Discussion of refugee narratives as prison writing and writing workshops.  
Read due: Final chapters of Cuevas, *Prison of Women*.
- 22: Reflections on prison writing and circulation and connections to regional issues and migration. In-class workshop of second critical response paper.  
Due: draft of critical response paper.
- 23: Discussion of justice journal observations.  
Reading Due: “Hunger Strike” and “Dream of a Wake” by Abdellatif Laabi (Manpanje book).  
Essay about Laabi: <https://www.theparisreview.org/blog/2015/10/30/great-waves-of-vigilance/> and second critical response paper.
- 24: Discussion of final justice journal work. Discussion of freedom from prisons and abolition writing. Discussion of freedom from prisons and abolition writing.  
Reading due: Excerpt from *Are Prisons Obsolete?* by Angela K. Davis.
- 25—FINAL CLASS: Final exam due. Final discussion and reflection activity drawn from Justice Journal project.

Disembarkation Day – April 20

## FIELD WORK

Semester at Sea® field experiences allow for an unparalleled opportunity to compare, contrast, and synthesize the different cultures and countries encountered over the course of the voyage. In addition to the one field class, students will complete a Comparative Experiential Project that span multiple countries.

### Field Class & Assignment

**STUDENTS: Field Class proposals listed below are not finalized.** Confirmed ports, dates, and times will be posted to the [Spring 23 Courses and Field Class page](#) when available.

**Field Class attendance is mandatory for all students enrolled in this course. Do not book individual travel plans or a Semester at Sea sponsored trip on the day of your field class.**

Field Classes constitute 20% of the contact hours for each course.

### Confinement, Justice and the Narratives of Port Country

We'll divide our time between exploring key cultural and historical sites in the city, talking with people formerly held as prisoners, and discussing the relationship between our shared texts and one place rich with difficult histories. We'll pursue four aims during our field class:

- 1) to understand the material conditions of writing from confined spaces like prison and struggles for freedom;
- 2) to contextualize the social, political, and physical contexts that shape the writing we are studying together;
- 3) to bring shared texts and historical moments to life and invite individual texts and stories into a wider field (e.g. moving course writing into a much deeper field of stories shared by former prisoners); and
- 4) to enable a link between historical record/writing and contemporary practice as we learn from current advocates for freedom, equity, and justice.

As we pursue these goals, we will visit both spaces of confinement and memorial sites. The port country offers a rich and complex historical backdrop for continuing our conversations about freedoms and confinements, and we'll have the opportunity to visit several sites with interesting historical collections. We will aim to connect our historical and contemporary thinking through dialogue with representatives from a local non-profit or community group committed to pursuing issues of justice, equity, and freedom.

The field assessment for this class session will be twofold: an object analysis and a reflective paper. Given the outcomes outlined above, there will be much social/political/ethical content to consider, so the academic outcomes for the day will culminate in a short analysis of one object that students select as important to their evolving thinking about global prison writing (2-3 pages) and a reflective essay that draws together at least two of the themes raised in class in relation to our day in the field (2 pages).

## **Comparative Experiential Project**

The CEP is the required comparative assignment that span multiple countries. The Comparative Experiential Project constitutes at least 5% of the grade for each course.

Justice Journal: A global observation notebook

The CEP for our course focuses on a justice journal that you will use to record observations across our varied port cities and experiences. Your journal will serve as a repository for your field observations, critical note-taking, found objects, and captured moments. The material for these entries will be drawn from at least eight of the thirteen ports we visit. Each stop offers a fresh opportunity for observing the social, cultural, and political structures of a specific point on the globe. You might observe interactions between law enforcement and citizens or see notices or events sponsored by local non-profit (or for profit) organizations. You might visit historical or contemporary sites that celebrate freedoms or their absence. Public art and/or memorials might demonstrate past or current approaches to or perspectives on freedom and justice. We will determine a guiding prompt and question together in advance of each port. A complementary component of our CEP will be our collective distribution of a copy of the *SpeakOut! Journal*, a biannual collection of writing composed by writers in confinement in Northern Colorado as part of a community writing project. I will provide one copy for each of you to distribute in a port/place of your choice. One entry in your justice journal will record your choice and rationale.

To earn full credit for your justice journal, you will need to complete the eight entries and participate in a final reflective activity toward the end of our voyage. If possible, we will invite our ship peers to join in a collaborative SpeakOut! dialogue and celebration of global stories of freedom and confinement as the culminating portion of our CEP.

## **METHODS OF EVALUATION**

15%	Justice Journal: A global observation notebook (CEP)
20%	Critical Reading Response Paper #1
10%	Midterm Exam
25%	Field Class: Dubrovnik Experience & Reflection Project
20%	Critical Reading Response Paper #2
10%	Final Exam

## **GRADING SCALE**

The following Grading Scale is utilized for student evaluation. Pass/Fail is not an option for Semester at Sea® coursework. Note that C-, D+ and D- grades are also not assigned on Semester at Sea® in accordance with the grading system at Colorado State University (the academic partner institution).

Pluses and minuses are awarded as follows on a 100% scale:

<u>Excellent</u>	<u>Good</u>	<u>Satisfactory/Poor</u>	<u>Failing</u>
97-100%: A+	87-89%: B+	77-79%: C+	Less than 60%: F
93-96%: A	83-86%: B	70-76%: C	
90-92%: A-	80-82%: B-	60-69%: D	

## ATTENDANCE/ENGAGEMENT IN THE ACADEMIC PROGRAM

Attendance in all Semester at Sea® classes, including the Field Class, is mandatory. There are no unexcused absences. Students must inform their instructors prior to any unanticipated absence and take the initiative to make up missed work in a timely fashion. Instructors must make reasonable efforts to enable students to make up work which must be accomplished under the instructor's supervision (e.g., examinations, laboratories). In the event of a conflict in regard to this policy, individuals may appeal using established CSU procedures.

## CLASSROOM CLIMATE

Semester at Sea® is committed to the Voyage Community Values. Consequently, the classroom environment is founded on mutual respect, community, and an aim toward equity. The Voyage Community Values support the creation of a collaborative and vibrant community. Our community is the foundation of our learning, critical inquiry, and discovery. Each member of this course has a responsibility to uphold these values when engaging with one another.

With that, please review the following Voyage Community Values:

- **Well-Being:** We commit to the health, safety and well-being of ourselves, all members of our voyage community, *and* members of the communities we will visit.
- **Interconnectedness:** We understand our actions and attitudes have an impact locally and globally. We always seek to positively affect the planet and the people around us near and far.
- **Respect:** We honor the inherent dignity of *all people* with an abiding commitment to freedom of expression, scholarly discourse and the advancement of knowledge. We have the right to be treated, and the responsibility to treat others, with fairness and equity.
- **Inclusion:** We ensure inclusive environments that welcome, value, affirm and embrace *all people* within the shipboard community and in each country we visit.
- **Integrity:** We are honest and ethical in all of our interactions, including our academic work. We hold ourselves accountable for our actions.
- **Excellence:** We model the highest academic standards of preparation, inquiry and knowledge and consistently seek to understand complex issues and express informed opinions with courage and conviction.

## LEARNING ACCOMMODATIONS

Semester at Sea® provides academic accommodations for students with diagnosed learning disabilities, in accordance with ADA guidelines. Students who will need accommodations in a class, should contact ISE to discuss their individual needs. Any accommodation must be discussed in a timely manner prior to implementation.

A letter from students' home institutions verifying the accommodations received on their home campuses (dated within the last three years) is required before any accommodation is provided on the ship. Students must submit verification of accommodations to their Student Services advisor as soon as possible, but no later than two months prior to the voyage. More details can be found within the **Course Registration Packet**, as posted to the [Courses and Field Classes page](#) no later than one month prior to registration.

## STUDENT CONDUCT CODE

The foundation of a university is truth and knowledge, each of which relies in a fundamental manner upon academic integrity and is diminished significantly by academic misconduct. Academic integrity is conceptualized as doing and taking credit for one's own work. A pervasive attitude promoting academic integrity enhances the sense of community and adds value to the educational process. All within the University are affected by the cooperative commitment to academic integrity. All Semester at Sea® courses adhere to this Academic Integrity Policy and Student Conduct Code.

Depending on the nature of the assignment or exam, the faculty member may require a written declaration of the following honor pledge: "I have not given, received, or used any unauthorized assistance on this exam/assignment."

## RESERVE BOOKS FOR THE LIBRARY

Judith Scheffler, Ed

*Wall Tappings: An International Anthology of Women's Prison Writings 200 AD – Present*

The Feminist Press at CUNY

978-1558612730

2002 (print only)

Jack Mapanje, Ed

*Gathering Seaweed: African Prison Writing*

Heinemann

978-0435912116

2002

Andrea Pitzer  
*One Long Night: A Global History of Concentration Camps*  
Little, Brown and Company  
978-0316303590  
2017

Michelle Kelly and Claire Westall, Eds  
*Prison Writing and the Literary World: Imprisonment, Institutionalality and Questions of Literary Practice*  
978-0367616236  
Routledge  
2020

Trisha Leimer et al, Eds  
*Let me tell you my story: Refugee Stories of Hope, Courage, and Humanity*  
Familius  
9781641700498  
2018

Angela Davis  
*Are Prisons Obsolete?*  
Seven Stories Press  
978-1583225813  
2003

## FILMS

Films featuring the Calais refugee camp in France.

- “Human Flow” by Ai Weiwei  
Amazon Studios
- “Beauty of a Stateless Mind”  
<https://www.theatlantic.com/video/index/602869/calais-jungle/>
- “In Another Life” Jason Wingard, 2017

One film featuring Nelson Mandela

## ELECTRONIC COURSE MATERIALS

Angela Davis  
*Are Prisons Obsolete?*  
ISBN 1583225811  
Seven Stories Press  
2003  
Chapters 1 (9-21) and 6 (105-115)

Claire Westall

“A Wide and Worlded Vision of Prison Writing”

*Prison Writing and the Literary World: Imprisonment, Institutionalality and Questions of Literary Practice*, Michelle Kelly and Claire Westall, Eds

ISBN 978-0367616236

Routledge

2020

1-18

Sarah Colvin

“The Credibility of Elves?: Narrative Exclusion and Prison Writing”

*Prison Writing and the Literary World: Imprisonment, Institutionalality and Questions of Literary Practice*, Michelle Kelly and Claire Westall, Eds

ISBN 978-0367616236

Routledge

2020

21-38

Michelle Kelly

“PEN and the Writer as Prisoner”

*Prison Writing and the Literary World: Imprisonment, Institutionalality and Questions of Literary Practice*, Michelle Kelly and Claire Westall, Eds

ISBN 978-0367616236

Routledge

2020

139-155

Rodriquez, Dylan

“Against the Discipline of Prison Writing: Toward a Theoretical Conception of Contemporary Radical Prison Praxis”

Genre

Vol. XXXV

Fall/Winter 2002

407-428