

Course Goals: What Will You Learn?

1. You'll examine writers of **fiction** and **autobiography** (ca. 1950 – 2000) who tell stories about **victims of injustice** in multicultural societies. They will expose you to individual and collective injustice due to racism, genocide, ethnicity, gender, religious intolerance, and immigration in societies such as Cuba, Guatemala, Eastern Europe, Israel-Palestine, Somalia, Afghanistan, India, and the U.S.
2. You'll link these intensely personal voices to the ideas of political philosophers, literary critics, and historians who theorize about how to achieve justice. You'll learn arguments about: the history and nature of **human rights**; reasons for **redistributing** wealth and power; the need to convert the **disrespect** that is often shown oppressed individuals and groups into **recognition** of their worth; why victims of injustice should have **moral standing** across national borders; and how race, class, gender and sexuality can produce **hybrid forms** of injustice.
3. You'll develop critical abilities to see how fiction and autobiography overlap. Using both literary and social criteria, you'll learn to evaluate the truth value and moral standing of a victim's sense of injustice. You'll see how crucial literature can be to understanding **multiculturalism**, **human rights**, and the nature of **personhood**. You'll also appreciate how conflicting **ideologies** contribute to injustice (liberalism, democracy, feminism, communitarianism, ethnic or racial theories, Zionism, Islam).

Course Requirements

1. Class attendance & participation: you are expected to attend our 2 classes each week (= 29 class meetings) and to be prepared to discuss the readings assigned for that day. You should set aside 6-7 hours per week for reading these assignments (= about 150 pages) [15%]
2. Class format will combine various types of discussion & presentation (general discussion, case study discussions, role-playing, etc.)
3. Written assignments: 2 short papers (5 pp. each) [30%]; midterm exam [20%]; and longer paper (12 pp.) [35%]. Note Policy on Written Assignments.

Required Readings [available at the University Bookstore]

Ali, Ayaan Hirsi. *Infidel*. New York: Free Press. 2007.
Appelfeld, Aharon. *Tzili: Story of A Life*. Trans. D. Belu. New York: Grove. 1996 [o.p. 1982]
Barnet, Miguel/Esteban Montejo. *Biography of a Runaway Slave*. Trans. W. Nick Hill.
Willimantic: Curbstone P. 1994 [o.p. 1966].
Barghouti, Mourid. *I Saw Ramallah*. Trans. A. Soueif. New York: Random. 2000.

Divakaruni, Chitra Banerjee. *Arranged Marriage*. New York: Random. 1995.
 Khadra, Yasmina. *The Swallows of Kabul*. Trans. J. Cullen. New York: Random. 2004.
 _____. *The Attack*. Trans. J. Cullen. New York: Random. 2006.
 Levi, Primo. *Survival in Auschwitz [If This is a Man]*. Trans. S. Woolf. New York: Touchstone. 1996 [o.p. 1958]
 Menchú, Rigoberta (E. Burgos-Debray, ed.). *I, Rigoberta Menchú: An Indian Woman in Guatemala*. Trans. A. Wright. London: Verso. 1984.
 Sembene, Ousmane. *Black Docker*. Trans. R. Schwartz. London: Heinemann 1987 [o.p. 1956]
 [Available in photocopy through Custom Publishing]
 Wright, Richard. *Native Son*. New York: Harper and Row. 1966 [o.p. 1940]

*Other required readings will take the form of selections from works on theories of justice or literary and cultural background on the readings. These will be available electronically through Ares Reserve or on our course's Blackboard site (see below).

Study and Research Aids: To help with assigned readings, “focus questions” will be provided for certain texts. These highlight the key information and developments you should look for and key concepts you should recognize. You’ll find these on Blackboard.

Policy on written assignments: Assignments are due at the times and days indicated in the syllabus. **Late assignments will not be accepted** unless approved for reasons of illness or personal/family emergency. There will be no exceptions. NB. Electronic submissions are NOT accepted—hard copy only.

Policy on academic integrity: We will adhere rigorously to the university's policies on academic integrity as described in *SCampus*. Violations, during exams or through plagiarism in written work, will be reported to the Office for Student Conduct.

Policy on Grade of “Incomplete”: A grade of IN can only be assigned if you do not complete work after the end of the 12th week because of illness or personal emergency. Prof. Farenga must, however, approve assignment of this grade. The missed work must be completed within one academic year.

Statement on Students with Disabilities: Any student requesting accommodations based on a disability is required to register with Disability Services and Programs (DSP, STU 301; x00776) each semester. A letter of verification for approved accommodations can be obtained from DSP. Please have the letter delivered to Prof. Farenga ASAP.

Instructor: Vincent Farenga, Assoc. Prof., Classics & Comparative Lit, THH 256-R, x00106, farenga@usc.edu.
 Office hours for Fall: TBA in THH 256-R.

Short Version of Course Syllabus

Week 1 Discussion of injustice in the media. What is a “sense of injustice”? How do articles and videos tell a story? How is the alleged victim of injustice represented?

Readings: Selected newspaper articles and videos
 Shklar 1990, “Introduction,” *Frames of Injustice* 1-14

- Week 2** Latin American “testimonial novel” as a narrative of injustice: the story of Esteban Montejo
- Readings:** Barnet/ Montejo *Biography of a Runaway Slave*;
R. González-Echevarría 1985, “*Biografía de un cimarrón* and the Novel of the Cuban Revolution,” in *Voice of the Masters* 110-23 (Ares Reserve).
- Week 3** Rigoberta Menchú’s story of Guatemalan Indian life. What are human rights? How are they criteria for justice?
- Readings:** Menchú/Burgos-Debray, *I, Rigoberta Menchú*;
L. Hunt 2007, “Introduction,” in *Inventing Human Rights: A History* 15-34 (Ares Reserve).
- Week 4** How does Menchú’s story of genocide evoke powerful emotions through the reader’s empathy in scenes of degradation, fear, brutality, torture?
- How did the classic European novel contribute to a sense of universal human rights?
- How fictive (novelistic) should a testimonial novel be?
- Readings:** Menchú/Burgos-Debray;
L. Hunt, “Torrents of Emotion” in *Inventing Human Rights* 35-69 (on Blackboard)
D. Stoll 1999, “The Construction of *I, Rigoberta Menchú*,” in *Rigoberta Menchú and the Story of All Poor Guatemalans* 177-2000 (Ares Reserve).
- Week 5** What kind of narratives can best represent the injustice of the Holocaust? Genocide and injustice outside the concentration camps.
- How was Zionism a response to European injustice toward the Jews?
- Readings:** Appelfeld, *Tzili: the Story of a Life*
T. Herzl, “The Jewish State,” in *The Zionist Idea* 201-26 (Ares Reserve)
.J. Rose, “The Nazi Holocaust Proved the Urgency for a Jewish State” in *The Myths of Zionism*, 135-53 (Ares Reserve).
- Week 6** Genocide and injustice inside the concentration camps
- Historically, how did western Europeans understand the Palestine & Palestinians? What role did Zionism play in this?
- Reading:** Primo Levi, *Survival in Auschwitz (If This is a Man)*
E. Said 1979a, “The Question of Palestine,” in *The Question of Palestine*, 3-37 and 46-55 (Ares Reserve)

Week 7 What does it mean for Palestinians to have no place as a homeland? What might it mean for a poet, Mourid Barghouti, to return “there”?

What does it mean to have a Palestinian identity today?

Readings: Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah*.
Said 1979b. “Zionism from the Standpoint of Its Victims,” in *The Question of Palestine* 56-82 (on Blackboard);
Yasmina Khadra, *The Attack*.

Week 8 Ayaan Hirsi Ali’s story: Somalian clans and the values of traditional and fundamentalist Islam. Self-liberation and emigration to the West.

Should the norms of justice be limited by national or cultural boundaries?

Readings: Ayaan Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*
O. O’Neill 2000a, “Identities, Boundaries and States” and “Distant Strangers, Moral Standing and Porous Boundaries,” in *Bounds of Justice* (Ares Reserve)

Week 9 Hirsi Ali’s new identity in Holland; birth of a social critic & activist. Are her public criticisms of Islam in the Dutch media justified? Does feminist critique have an international moral standing?

Are there limits to a just demand for individual freedom? A conservative perspective on women in Islam.

Reading: Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*
H. Jawad 1998, “The Legal Status of Women in Islam,” in *The Rights of Women in Islam*, 1-15 (Ares Reserve).

Week 9 The Taliban revolution, human rights, and the status of women. How do disrespect and lack of recognition cause injustice? What are hybrid forms of injustice?

Readings: Yasmina Khadra, *The Swallows of Kabul* ;
Fraser and Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition?*
C. Taylor, “The Politics of Recognition” (Blackboard)

Week 10 How does witnessing injustice lead individuals to transform themselves? Why is the victim who sacrifices her/himself a savior for others?

Reading: Yasmina Khadra, *Swallows of Kabul*.

- Week 11** How can emigration & cultural displacement bring injustice into an individual's private life? How do family relationships create scenarios of injustice across cultural boundaries?
- Reading:** Divakaruni, *Arranged Marriage* ("The Bats" 1-16; "Clothes" 17-33; "Silver Pavilions" 35-56; "The Maid Servant's Story" 109-168; "The Disappearance" 169-81 and "The Doors" 183-202)
- Weeks 12-13** The marginalization and social invisibility of African Americans as misrecognition. How can a black American discover a more authentic sense of self?
- Disrespect and betrayal as personal experiences of injustice; the 3 spheres of recognition
- Reading:** Wright, *Native Son*
- Week 14** Immigration, racism, and the authority of the African subject: who has the right to tell the story of slavery and injustice to Africans?
- Reading:** Sembene, *Black Docker*
- Week 15** The literary principles of justice: summary of course themes and principles