

POL 493S: EXPERIENCES OF CONFLICT

Session: Winter 2016

Lectures: Thursday 12-2, SK 222

Instructor: Professor Nancy Bertoldi

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Office Hours: Friday 1-2:30 (appointments recommended)

DESCRIPTION OF THE COURSE

The course reviews selected novels that deal with personal and collective experiences of conflict. It focuses on representations of how conflict is experienced. It gives students a practical understanding of the human dimension of selected major conflicts and explores possibilities for personal and social resistance to injustice and violence. Special attention is paid to questions of identity formation and moral choice in contexts of war and nationalism.

READINGS

The following books will be used in the course:

1. Chimamanda Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*, (Vintage Canada, 2007).
2. Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*, (Penguin, 2006)
3. Karen Connelly, *The Lizard Cage*, (Random House Canada, 2005).
4. Steven Galloway, *The Cellist of Sarajevo*, (Knopf Canada, 2008).
5. Khushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan*, (Grove Press, 1961) or (Penguin, 2007).

The books are available for short-term loan at Robarts Library. They are also available for purchase at the University of Toronto Bookstore, located at 214 College Street.

FORMAT AND REQUIREMENTS

The course will meet for two hours of seminar discussion per week. Performance in the course will be evaluated on the basis of the following components:

Reflection paper	5%
Book review	30%
Class presentation	20%
Term test	25%
Seminar participation	20%

The reflection paper (5% of the final grade) will involve the preparation of a brief analysis of a selected passage in Steven Galloway's *The Cellist of Sarajevo* that engages with course themes from week 2. Maximum length: 300 words.

The book review (30% of the final grade) will involve the preparation of an analytical paper on an assigned novel that engages with course themes from assigned weeks. Length: 2000 words.

The class presentation (20% of the final grade) will involve a class presentation on the novel students have written their book review on, followed by a question and answer period and an opportunity to lead class discussion. Students will be expected to meet with the instructor in office hours the week before their presentation is scheduled to finalize their presentation plans and have them approved. As part of their presentation, students will also be expected to distribute a handout to the class that covers the central themes of their presentation and indicates key questions for discussion. Length: 500 words.

The term test (25% of the final grade) will be closed-book and will take place during class time on week 12 in a room to be announced. Questions on the test will ask students to discuss novels they have not written a book review on.

Seminar participation (20% of the final grade) will be graded on the basis of regular attendance and informed participation in class discussions. Student should be aware that missed weeks do make a significant difference to the final participation mark.

Please include word counts on all written assignments.

IMPORTANT DATES

January 21	Assignment of books
January 24	Last day to add course
January 28	Galloway reflections due
February 4	Singh book reviews due
February 11	Singh presentations
February 25	Connelly book reviews due
March 3	Connelly presentations
March 13	Last day to drop course without academic penalty
March 10	Adichie book reviews due
March 17	Adichie presentations
March 24	Boyden book reviews due
March 31	Boyden presentations
April 7	Term test
April 8	Last day to request late withdrawal at college registrar
April 29	Last day to file a petition regarding term work

COURSE RULES AND POLICIES

Extensions and make-ups: No extensions or make-ups will be granted on written assignments, presentations and tests, unless students have strong acceptable reasons that are documented, e.g. illness supported by an official U of T medical certificate. Appropriate documentation must be submitted within one week of missed term work. Assignments or tests from other courses scheduled for the same day or work commitments do not constitute acceptable reasons, so plan in advance accordingly.

Late penalties: Written assignments are to be handed in *at the beginning of class* on the date that they are due. Late assignments will be penalized. There is no allowance for computer problems, printer problems, late buses, late trains, and so on. The late submission penalty is 2% per each late day, *weekends included*. The cut-off time for the determination of the number of late days is 5 pm. Please

note the following exception: To be fair to students who submit their assignments on time, **assignments received after class begins on the date they are due will be considered 1 day late.**

Submission of late assignments: Late written assignments must be submitted to the reception of the Political Science Department on the 3rd floor of Sidney Smith Hall. All late work must be date-stamped by departmental staff at the time of submission and must clearly note the course code and name of the instructor. Make sure to submit your work during business hours (9 am to 5 pm) or no one will be there to receive it. Assignments submitted by fax or email will not be accepted, unless prior arrangements have been made with the instructor.

Plagiarism: All sources used in written assignments must be properly cited. Failure to acknowledge sources constitutes plagiarism—a serious academic offense. For more information, students can review “How Not to Plagiarize” and other advice on sources at www.writing.utoronto.ca/advice/using-sources.

Turnitin: Normally, students will be required to submit their course essays to Turnitin.com for a review of textual similarity and detection of possible plagiarism. In doing so, students will allow their essays to be included as source documents in the Turnitin.com reference database, where they will be used solely for the purpose of detecting plagiarism. The terms that apply to the University's use of the Turnitin.com service are described on the Turnitin.com web site.

Double-sided printing: To help conserve paper, please print all written assignments double-sided if you can. You can learn how at: printdoublesided.sa.utoronto.ca.

Blackboard and email: Blackboard will be used to manage the course. Students are expected to check their U of T emails and the course blackboard page regularly for posted course materials and announcements.

RESOURCES

Writing skills: Students can visit www.writing.utoronto.ca for advice on all aspects of academic writing. Students can also make use of the college writing centres for individualized consultations on their written assignments. Interested students should book their appointments with the writing centres early, as they fill up fast. Information about college writing centres is available at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-centres/arts-and-science>. Students can also take advantage of the Library's free “Writing Plus” academic skills workshop series, described at <http://www.writing.utoronto.ca/writing-plus>. International students can find information about the English Language Learning program (ELL), which includes practice opportunities for improving oral communication and reading skills, at <http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/current/advising/ell>. For more information, please contact the ELL Coordinator at leora.freedman@utoronto.ca.

Accessibility services: Students with special needs are strongly encouraged to register with accessibility services to arrange necessary accommodations for fair access to their courses.

SEMINAR SCHEDULE

There is no class on February 18 (reading week).

Reminder: All written assignments must be handed in at the beginning of class on their due date and must include word counts.

January 14	Week 1	Distribution of Syllabus
January 21	Week 2	Obedience and Resistance (Assignment of books)
January 28	Week 3	Novel: Galloway (Galloway reflections due)
February 4	Week 4	Secession (Singh book reviews due)
February 11	Week 5	Novel: Singh (Singh presentations)
February 25	Week 6	Human Rights (Connelly book reviews due)
March 3	Week 7	Novel: Connelly (Connelly presentations)
March 10	Week 8	Civil Wars (Adichie book reviews due)
March 17	Week 9	Novel: Adichie (Adichie presentations)
March 24	Week 10	Reconciliation (Boyden book reviews due)
March 31	Week 11	Novel: Boyden (Boyden presentations)
April 7	Week 12	Term test (Room TBA)

READING ASSIGNMENTS

Week 1: Distribution of Syllabus

- No reading assignment.

Week 2: Obedience and Resistance

- François Rochat and Andre Modiglianni, "[The Ordinary Quality of Resistance: From Milgram's Laboratory to the Village of Le Chambon](#)," *Journal of Social Issues*, 51/3 (1995), pp. 195-210.
- Michael Ignatieff, "The Narcissism of Minor Difference" in Michael Ignatieff, *The Warrior's Honor*, (Viking, 1998), pp. 34-71.

Week 3: Novel: Galloway

- Steven Galloway, [The Cellist of Sarajevo](#), (Knopf Canada, 2008).

Week 4: Secession

- Daniel Philpott, "In Defense of Self-Determination," *Ethics*, 105 2 (Jan 1995), pp. 352-385.
- Allen Buchanan, "Democracy and Secession" in Margaret Moore (ed.), [National Self-Determination and Secession](#), (Oxford University Press, 1998).
- Atul Kohli, "[Can Democracies Accommodate Ethnic Nationalism? Rise and Decline of Self-Determination Movements in India](#)," *The Journal of Asian Studies*, 56/2 (1997), pp. 325-344.

Week 5: Novel: Singh

- Khushwant Singh, [Train to Pakistan](#), (Grove Press, 1961) or (Penguin, 2007).

Week 6: Human Rights

- Charles Beitz, [The Idea of Human Rights](#), (Oxford University Press, 2009), ch. 7.
- Joseph Carens, *The Ethics of Immigration*, (Oxford University Press, 2013), ch. 10.

Week 7: Novel: Connelly

- Karen Connelly, [*The Lizard Cage*](#), (Random House Canada, 2005).

Week 8: Civil War

- Donald Horowitz, “Group Comparison and the Sources of Conflict” in Donald Horowitz, *Ethnic Groups in Conflict*, (University of California Press, 1985), ch. 4. Available online at: <http://books.google.com/books?id=Q82saX1HVQYC> (pp. 141-184).
- E. Wayne Nafziger, “[The Political Economy of Disintegration in Nigeria](#),” *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 11/4 (1973), pp. 505-536.

Week 9: Novel: Adichie

- Chimamanda Adichie, [*Half of a Yellow Sun*](#), (Vintage Canada, 2007).

Week 10: Reconciliation

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, *Honoring the Truth, Reconciling for the Future*, (May 2015), pp. 1-25.
- Thomas King, *The Inconvenient Indian: A Curious Account of Native People in North America*, (Doubleday Canada, 2012), ch. 8.

Week 11: Novel: Boyden

- Joseph Boyden, *Three Day Road*, (Penguin, 2006).

Week 12: Term Test

READING AND DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What effect does the context of conflict have on the identities of the main characters?
2. How does the context of conflict affect everyday life?
3. How do the main characters cope with the impact of conflict in their lives?
4. What important choices does each main character make in the course of the novel?
5. In what ways do the points of view and perspectives of different characters shape their representations and understandings of what is going on around them?
6. How do the main characters view each other? How do they regard each other's choices, attitudes, identities and actions?
7. Do the characters normalize conflict and become desensitized to it?
8. Which character were you most sympathetic to and why?
9. Which character did you most identify with and why? In which ways was this character able to connect you with the conflict?
10. Which character(s) most repulsed you and why? Was this repulsion mitigated by the circumstances in which the character(s) found themselves, or not?
11. Is it necessary to include elite characters (e.g. military, political or religious leaders) to effectively explore the causes and impact of a conflict, or not? Does the inclusion of elite points of view improve or detract from the depiction of the conflict in the novel?
12. How does fear shape the actions of the main characters? What are the implications of this for who the characters become?
13. Do contexts of conflict necessarily involve compromising one's integrity, identity, and values? Which character best enables you to grapple with such difficult compromises?
14. Can characters who compromise their identities and values redeem themselves? How?
15. Does the novel place blame with some actors versus others? If so, how are these actors portrayed? Does this portrayal help or hinder the overall presentation of the conflict?
16. Must representations of conflict depict both (or all) sides to a conflict sympathetically or symmetrically? How does the novel approach this problem?
17. What was the most important moment in the novel for you and why?
18. How does the physical setting of the novel affect the story and the characters, if at all?
19. What are the most important signs and symbols of social and political turmoil portrayed by the novel? By contrast, what would the signs and symbols of peace be in a similar setting?
20. What are the most important moments of protest and resistance in the novel? Do you find them persuasive?
21. How would you survive under similar conditions of conflict? What would be your greatest challenges and how would you cope with them? Would you be able to "do the right thing"? Who would you become?