

Fall 2008  
English 388; King 339  
Tu Th 9:35-10:50

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Office hours: TuTh 11:00-1:00 & by appt

### **Selected Writers: Salman Rushdie**

This course will focus on the fictional and non-fictional *oeuvre* of one of the most prominent anglophone writers of our time—Salman Rushdie. Class discussions will seek to contextualize, and be contextualized by the following: (1) the history, politics and cultures of South Asia, which are the primary thematic interests of his work, distilled through his perspective as a diasporic writer located in Britain and, more recently, in the U.S. To this end, our reading will incorporate essays/chapters written by Rushdie and others that constitute a crucial component of this context; (2) theoretical/cultural concepts deriving from postcolonial studies—like hybridity, mongrelization, migration, cosmopolitanism, national allegory—with which Rushdie’s work is associated or seen as exemplifying in particularly accurate and cogent ways. The course will be reading- and writing-intensive and require significant student engagement.

**Texts** (available at Oberlin Bookstore):

#### Required

*Midnight’s Children*  
*Shame*  
*The Satanic Verses*  
*The Moor’s Last Sigh*  
*Shalimar the Clown*  
*The Enchantress of Florence*

#### Recommended

*Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*  
*Step Across This Line: Collected Nonfiction 1992-2002*

I have put the selections assigned from the recommended texts by Rushdie and other readings on ERES. Copies of the novels and the material on ERES have also been put on reserve.

### **Course Schedule**

#### **Week 1 (September 2, 4)**

Tues: Introduction: (1) to the course: requirements, including attendance policies, writing assignments, your responsibilities for class discussion; (2) to Rushdie.

Recommended Reading: Anuradha Dingwaney, “Salman Rushdie” in *An Illustrated History of Indian Literature in English* (on ERES)

Th: “The Location of Brazil” and “Outside the Whale” (*Imaginary Homelands*: 87-101; 118-125) and “Influence,” and “‘Damme this is an Oriental Scene for you!’” (*Step Across This Line* [SATL]: 62-69; 145-158)

#### **Week 2 (September 9, 11)**

Tues: Parekh, “Jawaharlal Nehru and the Crisis of Modernisation” in *Crisis and Change in Contemporary India*; Khilnani, selections from *The Idea of India* (ERES)

Th: “Imaginary Homelands” and “Riddle of Midnight” (*Imaginary Homelands*: 9-21; 26-33), and “Gandhi Now” (SATL: 165-170)

**Week 3 and 4 (September 16, 18, 23)**

*Midnight’s Children*

Thursday September 25 no class; substitute class: lecture on Pakistan by Professor Michael Fisher (day and time to be determined)

**Paper One (short 5-7 pages) due on Thursday September 25 by noon in Rice 128**

**Week 5 (September 30, October 2)**

*Shame*

**Week 6 and 7 (October 7, 14, 16)**

Tues: “Notes on Writing and the Nation,” “India’s Fiftieth Anniversary” and “*The Baburnama*” (all in SATL: 58-61; 159-164; 173-179)

Th: Yom Kippur—no class

Tues and Th: *The Moor’s Last Sigh*

**Paper 2 (short 5-7 pages) due Friday October 17 by noon in Rice 128**

**Fall Break: October 18-26**

**Week 8 and 9 (October 28, 30 and November 4, 6)**

Tues: “The New Empire Within Britain,” “In God We Trust,” “In Good Faith,” “Is Nothing Sacred?” (all in *Imaginary Homelands*: 129-138; 373 ff.)

Th, Tues, Th: *The Satanic Verses*

**Week 10 and 11 (November 11, 13, 18)**

*Shalimar the Clown*

Recommended Reading: “Kashmir” (SATL: 274-276)

**Proposal for research paper due Thursday November 20 in Rice 128 by noon; no class**

**November 24, 25: Individual conferences to discuss proposal**

## **Thanksgiving Break: November 27-30**

### **Week 12 and 13 (December 2, 4, 9)**

*The Enchantress of Florence*

Thursday December 11: Wrap up; course evaluations.

### **Research paper (12-15 pages) due Monday December 15 by noon in Rice 128**

## **Evaluation Requirements, Assignments & Criteria**

1. Attendance, Informed Class Participation & Citizenship: A significant proportion of the final grade (**15 %**) is dependent on attendance, informed participation, and citizenship. Students are required to attend all class meetings and to be punctual. Two absences over the course of the term will put a student's grade and course credit in jeopardy. Three class sessions of tardiness will count as one absence. It is impossible to make up or reproduce a missed class meeting in which discussion is foregrounded; in addition, your absence impoverishes the discussion. In case of illness, or some other serious emergency, please provide documentation and send me an e-mail. A dynamic class environment requires that each student **READ THOROUGHLY** and **IN ADVANCE OF CLASS**, ask questions about any issue that is unclear (inevitably, someone else in the course is confused about the same issue), and be prepared to take intellectual risks in the classroom. This is a discussion-centered course and thus requires a high level of individual and collective engagement.
2. Written Assignments: Over the course of the semester, you will write:
  - (a) two critical papers—**both due before the break (on September 25 and October 17)**; each will count for **15%** of your grade; paper one should analyze the material we will have read up to September 25 and paper two should address material we will discuss after September 25 up to October 17; each paper should contextualize and frame its analysis via the theoretical/critical concepts we will discuss as well as the essays/chapters assigned. (**30%** for both papers)
  - (b) one short response paper (2-3 pages) that counts for **10%** of your grade and which addresses what you brought to the discussion you will help facilitate.
  - (c) Proposal (2-3 pages)—**due on November 20**—for the final research paper in which you will outline what you intend to write about, as well as how, and why it's important to write about the topic you choose. This proposal must also include a bibliography of texts you intend to consult for your research paper. This will count for **10%** of your grade

- (d) Research paper (12-15 pages)—**due on December 15**—in which you will examine one or more novels by Rushdie, incorporating both primary (critical/theoretical concepts and scholarship) and secondary (scholarship on the novel(s)) material through which you will frame your analysis. **(35%)**

All papers should be driven by a clearly articulated thesis, fruitfully arrived at in most cases by posing a significant question or set of interrelated questions. This thesis should be supported with well-developed analysis of appropriate passages, recapitulation of themes and/or formal properties of the text under consideration.

Papers must be submitted on time on the dates they are due; while I am willing to give short extensions, you must provide persuasive reasons for asking for such extensions and must ask for it prior to, not on, the date the paper is due. You will be penalized a grade per day (e.g., lowered from B to B-) for unexcused late submissions.

### **Academic Integrity:**

Do not cheat or plagiarize. All assignments are to be individually completed unless otherwise noted. All references to material produced by others, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, must be attributed with page numbers in written work. The Honor Code requires that:

At the end of each academic exercise students shall write in full and sign the Honor Pledge: "I affirm that I have adhered to the Honor Code in this assignment." If a student does not follow the appropriate procedure, faculty members have the option of withholding the grade until the student writes the Honor Pledge correctly, although they may not penalize students for an oversight.