

HON 363-01: The Castaway Narrative as World Literature

Mon. & Wed., 2:30-3:45

DeMille, Room 146

Instructor: Michael Wood (mwood@chapman.edu)

Office: DeMille, Rm. # 114

Office Hours: MW, 9:00-10:00, or by appointment

Course Catalogue Description: The stories of drift and maritime disaster that emerge alongside the development of trans-oceanic travel are fascinating accounts of survival, as well as textual traces of an encounter between worlds. It is possible to read these narratives as not simply the result of particular national literary and cultural histories, but more importantly, as a trans-cultural literary form that emerges roughly simultaneously at various points around the world. As such, these stories of survival at sea tend to be fascinating ideological texts in which notions of self and other are re-imagined in light of new global and colonial worldviews that come to be shared, contested, and otherwise propagated. Reading a select number of castaway narratives from world literature, we will begin to unravel the complex interplay between concrete world historical conditions on the one hand, and more abstract categories of language, geography, ethnography, race, gender, and national identity. (7AI, 7SI, 7GC)

Honors Program Learning Outcomes: Upon completing a course in the University Honors Program students will have:

- a. Obtained a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- b. Sharpened their ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
- c. Understood how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
- d. Developed effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

Required Texts:

- 1) Defoe, Daniel, *The Life and Adventures of Robinson Crusoe* (You can purchase the Penguin Classics Edition in paperback)
- 2) Coetzee, J.M., *Foe* (Penguin paperback or other inexpensive copy is fine)
- 3) Chase, Owen, *Narrative of the Most Extraordinary and Distressing Shipwreck of the Whaleship Essex* (Lyons Press, 1999)
- 4) Ibusue, Masuji, *Castaways: Two Short Novels* (Kodansha, 1987) (I will provide PDF of relevant material if this text is not readily available.)
- 5) Walcott, Derek, *Omeros* (FS&G, reprint, 1992); OR Eggers, Dave *Zeitoun* (Vintage, 2009)

All other written and visual materials will be provided by the instructor through Blackboard or in class.

Expectations of Students: This course is designed as a small, discussion intensive seminar meeting twice a week. It is expected that students attend the course on a regular basis and participate in discussions. Discussion and debate is encouraged in class, however it is important that we all remain respectful to our fellow classmates as well as the materials and methodologies we encounter in our shared exploration. To this end, it is also expected that students do all the readings on time and keep up with writing assignments. The writing assignments are either short responses to texts and problems addressed in class (with prompts included in the syllabus), or they are assignments working towards the completion of a final paper at the end of the semester. The final paper is expected to be approximately 15-20 pages, double-spaced and should engage a castaway narrative (either fictional or historical) of the student's choosing that was not the focus of the class, or a detailed exploration of an issue or theme related to castaways and/or narrative of drift/survival at sea.

Grades: Grades will be calculated at the end of the semester based on the relative weight of the following assignments.

Participation and Attendance	25%
Reading/Viewing Responses (lowest grade thrown out)	4 x 5%
Preliminary research work for final paper due 9/30	5%
Thesis and Abstract for final paper due 10/21	5%
Rough draft of final paper due 11/9	5%
Presentation	15%
Final Paper	25%

8/28 Introduction

What is a castaway? What is castaway literature? Who cares?
Read *Robinson Crusoe*

8/30 Defoe and European Imagination of the New World
Continue reading *Crusoe*

9/4 Labor Day

Finish reading *Robinson Crusoe*
e-mail the instructor a one-page, single-spaced **response (#1)** to *Robinson Crusoe*
Address the following questions in your response: What is the appeal of the text to a 21st c. reading audience? What do you think Defoe changed from Selkirk's experience?

9/6 Discuss *Robinson Crusoe*
Begin reading *Foe*

9/11 Historical and cultural forms of the castaway
What castaway accounts are you familiar with already?

9/13 View *Swiss Family Robinson* (1960, Anniken, dir.)
Read *Foe*

9/18 View *Swiss Family Robinson*

Finish *Foe*
E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#2)** to *Foe* and *Swiss Family Robinson* to instructor.
How do these Robinsonades engage and differ from Defoe's work?

9/20 Discuss *Foe*, *Swiss Family Robinson*, and other Robinsonades
Why is the Robinsonade such an enduring literary tradition across time and national literary traditions? Does the general narrative appeal to readers across time and space because it taps into some universal human experience or conversely, is there something else at work here?
Read *The Tempest*

9/25 View *The Tempest*
E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#3)** to *The Tempest*

*9/27 Discuss *Tempest* narratives

Oceanic travel, Colonialism, and the emergence of non-European narratives

Begin reading Ibuse Masuji, *Castaways*

Find a castaway narrative or theme you would like to write about for your final paper. Find primary text(s) and at least five secondary academic sources that might be an important reference for you. **Submit to instructor by e-mail.**

10/2 The emergence of early-modern Japanese castaway narratives:

The cases of Daikokuya Kodayu and Tsudayu
Continue reading *Castaways*

10/4 Reading lost texts: Historiography and national memory

Finish reading *Castaways*

E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#4)** to *Castaways*. How do the Japanese texts seem to differ from Defoe and other Western castaway narratives? What do they share?

10/9 View *Oroshiya koku suimutan* (Satô, dir., 1992)

Look at Manjiro and Hikoza narratives online. **Link**

10/11 View *Oroshiya koku suimutan*

E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#5)** to materials online and film. Focus on how these texts frame notions of self and other.

10/16 Discuss Daikokuya Kodayu and other Japanese castaways

Begin reading *Whaleship Essex*.

*10/18 Whaling and conquest of the Pacific

Continue reading *Whaleship Essex*

Write thesis and one page abstract for your final paper.

10/23 View *Moby Dick* (Huston, dir. 1956)

Finish reading *Whaleship Essex*

10/25 View *Moby Dick*

E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#6)** to Chase and *Moby Dick*. How can we discuss fact and fiction in the case of this historical maritime accident? In general, how do ostensibly fictional castaway narratives relate to historical fact? Conversely, how do ostensibly factual castaway narratives relate to fictional myths and fantasy?

10/30 The castaway narrative and WWII.

11/1 *Hell in the Pacific* (Boorman, dir., 1968)

*11/6 Postmodern, SciFi, and reality TV castaways

Submit first draft of your final paper to instructor.

11/8 View *Cast Away* (Zemeckis, dir. 2000)

11/13 View *Cast Away*

E-mail one-page, single-spaced **response (#7)** to *Cast Away*. How is this castaway narrative similar and dissimilar from texts we have discussed this term? How are castaway narratives different today with GPS and other satellite technology?

11/15 Discuss films

Read Derek Walcott, *Omeros* or Dave Eggers, *Zeitoun*

11/20 Thanksgiving Break

11/22 Thanksgiving Break

11/27 Discuss *Omeros* and *Zeitoun*

11/29 Discuss Final Papers

12/4 Presentations

12/6 Presentations

12/17 **Submit Final Draft of Paper**