

**Engl 243, 2008**

**Contemporary Fiction**

*School of English, Film, Theatre and Media Studies*

***Class Hours***

**Lectures: Mon, Wed, Thurs 1310 -1400, Cotton LT 122**

**Student Consultation Time:** Students may make an appointment with any of the lecturers to discuss any aspect of the course at any mutually convenient time.

***Staff***

**Convenor:** Charles Ferrall VZ 904 Ext. 6804; e-mail: Charles.Ferrall@vuw.ac.nz

**Lecturers:** Anna Jackson; VZ 918 Ext. 6840; Anna.Jackson@vuw.ac.nz

Siv Jansson; VZ 913 Ext. 6849; Siv.Jansson@vuw.ac.nz

Mark Williams; Mark.Williams@vuw.ac.nz

All information about the course will be posted on the English Department noticeboards, Floor 3, Hugh Mackenzie foyer. Don't hesitate to get in touch with Charles Ferrall at any time if you have queries or problems relating to the course.

***Course Aims***

This course will familiarise students with some of the most critically acclaimed novels in English published within the last ten years. Issues that will be examined include the marketing, critical reception and evaluation of these novels; their narrative strategies in a post-modern media-saturated cultural context; and the ways in which their authors work with the intersecting ideas of nation, history and cultural identity.

***Set Texts***

Murray Bail, *Eucalyptus* (Text Publishing); Jonathan Franzen, *The Corrections* (Picador); Suzanne Dunn, *The Queen of Subtleties* (Harper Collins); Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake* (Harper Collins); Zadie Smith, *On Beauty* (Hamilton); John Banville, *The Sea* (no recommended edition); Alan Hollinghurst, *The Line of Beauty* (Picador); Kinan Desai, *The Inheritance of Loss* (Penguin).

***Assessment***

There will be two essays set during the course worth 25% each and a final 3-hour examination worth 50%. Students will be expected to write exam questions on at least four of the writers on

whom they have **not** written in-term essays. The exam is closed-book.

### ***Essays***

It is important that your essays are considered, well-planned pieces of writing, and not drafts. You are assessed on your ability to control material, handle ideas, write concisely and directly, and relate your critical views to specific textual locations. Essays should be approximately 1500 words.

Essay topics will be available by the second week of term. Written work must be handed in by the due date to the English Programme Office, VZ 8<sup>th</sup> floor. Late work submitted without an extension will be penalised by a lowering of the grade (e.g. A to A-, C+ to C) and will not receive any written comments. Extensions will be granted for students with medical certificates or other valid reasons (to be decided by the convenor).

The first essay is due on **April 10** and the second on **May 19**

### ***Mandatory Requirements***

The minimum course requirements that must be satisfied are submission of both essays, sitting the final examination and attendance at 70% or more of the lectures and tutorials.

### ***Workload***

You should expect to spend, on **average**, about 15 hours per week on work for this course (**apart** from time in class). **Please note that this is a rough guideline only.** Some students might have to put in more time, others less. The time commitment will be greatest in the weeks immediately prior to essay submission dates.

### ***Return of Written Work***

Work that has been handed in on time will normally be marked within two weeks. Marked work can be collected from English department administration until the end of examination marking.

### ***Attendance***

Attendance at 70% or more of the lectures and tutorials is mandatory.

### ***Academic Integrity and Plagiarism***

Academic integrity is about honesty - put simply it means no cheating. All members of the University community are responsible for upholding academic integrity, which means staff and students are expected to behave honestly, fairly and with respect for others at all times.

Plagiarism is a form of cheating which undermines academic integrity. Plagiarism is prohibited at Victoria.

The University defines plagiarism as follows:

Plagiarism is presenting someone else's work as if it were your own, whether you mean to or not.

'Someone else's work' means anything that is not your own idea, even if it is presented in your own style. It includes material from books, journals or any other printed source, the work of other students or staff, information from the Internet, software programmes and other electronic material, designs and ideas. It also includes the organization or structuring of any such material.

Plagiarism is not worth the risk.

Any enrolled student found guilty of plagiarism will be subject to disciplinary procedures under the Statute on Student Conduct ([www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/policy/studentconduct)) and may be penalized severely. Consequences of being found guilty of plagiarism can include:

- an oral or written warning
- suspension from class or university
- cancellation of your mark for an assessment or a fail grade for the course.

Find out more about plagiarism and how to avoid it, on the University's website at: [www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html](http://www.vuw.ac.nz/home/studying/plagiarism.html).

### ***Students with Disabilities***

The contact for students with disabilities enrolled in English courses is the English Department administrator, ext. 6800.

### ***Statute on Conduct***

If you have any problems with your course (such as too much work compared with other similar courses, poor teaching quality, unfair assessment, or poor feedback on assignments), you should talk to the tutor or lecturer concerned or, if you are not satisfied with the result of that meeting, see the Departmental Chairperson or the Associate Dean (Students) for your faculty. The University has a well-developed, independent procedure for dealing with academic grievances and complaints of this nature. These procedures are set out in Part 5 of the Personal Courses of Study Statute in the Calendar.

More generally, the University is also concerned to ensure that members of the University community are able to work, learn, study and participate in the academic and social aspects of the University's life in an environment of safety and respect. To this end, it has put in place a comprehensive Statute on Conduct. This Statute is printed in the Calendar and contains information about what conduct is prohibited and what steps can be taken if there is a complaint. Persons with a complaint or grievance may seek assistance or support from another member of the University community such as the Adviser on Grievance Resolution, Departmental Chairpersons, Counselling staff or Sexual Harassment Contact Support persons. They may also resolve disputes by making use of any of the other informal or formal procedures outlined in the Statute on Conduct.

*Timetable*

|         |        |                                  |                 |
|---------|--------|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Week 1  | Feb 25 | Introduction                     | CF              |
|         | Feb 27 | Franzen                          | AJ              |
|         | Feb 28 | Franzen                          | AJ              |
| Week 2  | Mar 3  | Franzen                          | AJ              |
|         | Mar 5  | Franzen                          | AJ              |
|         | Mar 6  | Bail                             | AJ              |
| Week 3  | Mar 10 | Bail                             | AJ              |
|         | Mar 12 | Bail                             | AJ              |
|         | Mar 13 | Bail                             | AJ              |
| Week 4  | Mar 17 | Desai                            | CF              |
|         | Mar 19 | Desai                            | CF              |
|         | Mar 20 | Desai                            | CF              |
| Week 5  | Mar 24 | HOLIDAY!                         | CF              |
|         | Mar 26 | Desai                            | CF              |
|         | Mar 27 | Lahiri                           | CF              |
| Week 6  | Mar 31 | Lahiri                           | AJ              |
|         | Apr 2  | Lahiri                           | AJ              |
|         | Apr 3  | Dunn                             | AJ /SJ          |
| Week 7  | Apr 7  | Dunn                             | AJ/SJ           |
|         | Apr 9  | Dunn                             | AJ/SJ           |
|         | Apr 10 | <b>Essay due, no lecture</b>     |                 |
|         |        | <b>MID-TRIMESTER<br/>BREAK</b>   |                 |
|         |        |                                  |                 |
| Week 8  | Apr 28 | Lecture on reviewing             | To be announced |
|         | Apr 30 | Hollinghurst                     | CF              |
|         | May 1  | Hollinghurst                     | CF              |
| Week 9  | May 5  | Hollinghurst                     | CF              |
|         | May 7  | Hollinghurst                     | CF              |
|         | May 8  | Banville                         | CF              |
| Week 10 | May 12 | Banville                         | CF              |
|         | May 14 | Banville                         | CF              |
|         | May 15 | Banville                         | CF              |
| Week 11 | May 19 | Smith<br><b>Second essay due</b> | CF              |
|         | May 21 | Smith                            | CF              |
|         | May 22 | Smith                            | CF              |
| Week 12 | May 26 | Smith                            | CF              |
|         | May 28 | Exam Revision                    | CF/AJ           |
|         | May 29 | No lecture                       |                 |

