

## 5U: The Institutions of World Literature

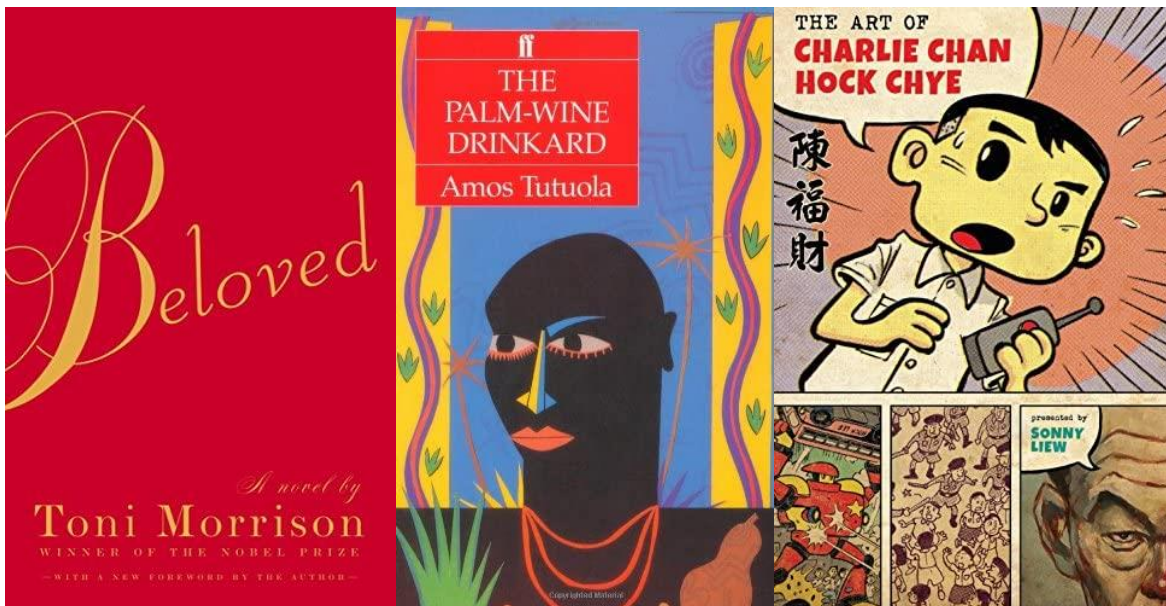
TuTh 4.30-6.20pm, Bldg 160-B37 (Wallenberg Hall)

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Office hours by appointment on [Calendly](#)

Pick a work of “World Literature” from your bookshelf. Now ask yourself—how did it come to be yours? Did a friend recommend it? A bookstore? A professor? Amazon? And how did you come to think of it as “World Literature”? Did publisher decisions on the book cover, blurb, or summary tell you that? Was it marketed as such on a class syllabus? Was it on the Booker Prize shortlist? This course asks questions about the production, dissemination, and consumption of World Literature through three primary texts: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (a syllabus classic), *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola (the first internationally recognized Nigerian novel in English), and *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* by Sonny Liew (a graphic novel criticized by the Singaporean government). Through the reading and contextual examination of each text, we will explore how these texts come to our attention in the first place, how we have been taught to aesthetically value them, and how we have come to classify them as “World Literature.” What identifying and gate-keeping mechanisms, what historical contingencies and systemic inequalities, comprise a work’s “worldliness”?

### PRIMARY TEXTS

- *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (until p. 100 ending with the lines “That’s pretty. Denver. Real pretty.”)
- *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* by Amos Tutuola
- *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* by Sonny Liew



## ASSIGNMENTS &amp; GRADING

Title	Format	Description	Grading
<b>Prepared response</b>	<i>Share for 3-5 minutes</i>	Choose one or a few books from your bookcase (or digital shelves) and tell the class the story of how you came to know about it, how you came to have it, how and when you read it, whether you disseminated it to others, who did you tell about it, how did you tell them about it, etc.	<b>10%</b>
<b>Short mid-term paper</b>	<i>3-4 pages, double spaced, 12pt</i>	Make a case for how one book is overrated, or how another book is underrated, or how an “undiscovered” book is undiscovered and why, or how one book was particularly advantaged or disadvantaged by its institutional context. Pick at least one peritext or epitext (blurb or book review, etc) to close read. You are encouraged to thoroughly develop only one supporting point for your main argument, given the limited wordcount.	<b>20%</b>
<b>Class presentation</b>	<i>About 10 minutes with slides</i>	Choose an institution and describe how it affects world literature (Simon & Schuster, Booker Prize, UNESCO, a national arts council, history of a class here at Stanford, etc). Focus on how it affects the production, dissemination and consumption of specific texts or a category of text.	<b>20%</b>
<b>Final paper</b>	<i>12-15 pages, double spaced, 12pt</i>	Make an intervention about a single text by exploring how it is a product of institutional contexts <b>OR</b> make an argument about a single institution using one text as an entry point. The previous assignments should be building towards your final paper—you can repeat the same thesis or topics but your writing should progress.	<b>30%</b>
<b>Attendance &amp; participation</b>	You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you need to miss a class, please provide advance notice via email. If you miss more than one class, you will have to do additional work for extra credit, or you will lose the points for each missed session. Extra credit work can be discussed on an individual basis.		<b>20%</b>

## LEARNING GOALS

- Understand the structures of production, dissemination and consumption of texts
- Able to make arguments about how these processes affect specific texts
- Be familiar with the range of definitions of world literature
- Make links between these institutional processes and colonial legacies (whether in agreement or disagreement)
- Open to using close reading, quantitative or sociological analysis to make an argument

**Week 1: Our Aesthetic Criteria**

- 10 Jan: Introduction & *[Prepared Response: Sub-assignment 1]*
- 12 Jan: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison (Read until p. 100 ending with the lines “That’s pretty. Denver. Real pretty.”); reading reviews (epitextual) and other paratextual material in class

**Week 2: Canon Wars**

- 17 Jan: Aubry, Timothy. “Why is *Beloved* So Universally Beloved?: Uncovering Our Hidden Aesthetic Criteria.” **[23 pages, on Canvas]**
- 19 Jan: Selections from Chapter 1 of *Cultural Capital: The Problem of Literary Canon Formation* by John Guillory **[26 pages, on Canvas]**
  - Social Identity (p. 3-14), Canon Revision or Research Program? (p. 15-19), Literary Language as Linguistic Capital (p. 63-71)

**Week 3: The University, and English as “Discipline”**

- 24 Jan: Visit to Stanford Archives; guest lecture on the history of the Stanford “Western Civilization” undergraduate requirement; Selections from Chapter 1 of *Cultural Capital* by John Guillory **[29 pages, on Canvas]**
  - The Pedagogic Imaginary (p. 28-38), Multicultural Interlude (p. 38-55), The School and the Reproduction of Social Relations (only p. 55-56, until the end of the para, “The instrumentality of the canon...”)
- 26 Jan: “Introduction”, *Masks of Conquest* by Gauri Vishnawathan **[23 pages, on Canvas]**; “On the Abolition of the English Department” by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o **[5 pages, on Canvas]**

**Week 4: Postcolonial Aesthetics**

- 31 Jan: Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (read first 1/3 of the book, up to THE “WRAITH-ISLAND” on p. 45 of ff 2014 edition) — read paratextual materials (reviews, etc) in class
- 2 Feb: *Postcolonial Exotic* by Graham Huggan, “Introduction” **[33 pages, on Canvas]**

**Week 5: Postcolonial Systems**

- 7 Feb: Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (Continue up to 2/3 of the book, “THE INVISIBLE-PAWN” on p. 86 of ff 2014 edition) — look through archival material in class
- 9 Feb: “Chapter 2” from *Remapping African Literature* by Olabode Ibrionke **[32 pages, on Canvas]**

*[Sub-assignment 2, due on Canvas]*

**Week 6: World-Systems**

- 14 Feb: Amos Tutuola's *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (Finish the book)
- 16 Feb: Extracts from “Chapter 3: World Literary Space” from *The World Republic of Letters* by Pascale Casanova (p. 82-103, 108-109) [**24 pages, on Canvas**] and “Chapter 1” of *World-Systems Analysis* by Immanuel Wallerstein [**22 pages, on Canvas**]

**Week 7: Governing Literature**

- 21 Feb: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* by Sonny Liew (until the end of Ch 4, p. 132)
- 23 Feb: “Introduction” to *Orhan Pamuk and the Good of World Literature* by Gloria Fisk [**31 pages, on Canvas**]

**Week 8: Prizes and Prestige**

- 28 Feb: *The Art of Charlie Chan Hock Chye* by Sonny Liew (finish)
- 2 Mar: “Introduction” and “Chapter 13” from James English’s *The Economy of Prestige* [**38 pages, on Canvas**]; “Who Cares About Literary Prizes?” [**article in Public Books, linked on Canvas**]

**Week 9: Publishing Today**

- 7 Mar: “Chapter 1” from Richard So’s *Redlining Culture* [**40 pages, on Canvas**]
- 9 Mar: “Chapters 4, 5 and 6” from Sarah Brouillette’s *Underdevelopment and African Literature* [**24 pages, on Canvas**]

**Week 10: Student Presentations*****CLASS POLICIES***

Attendance: You are expected to attend all class sessions. If you need to miss a class, please provide advance notice via email. If you miss more than one class, you will have to do additional work for extra credit, or you will lose the points for each missed session. Extra credit work can be discussed on an individual basis.

Late work: If you need an extension on the midterm or final papers, please reach out to me ahead of time. Expect to receive no more than 3 days extension, but if you get in touch with me ahead of time, I can work to accommodate you in a way that is fair and reasonable. Any work

that is late beyond a granted extension will be reduced one third-grade equivalent per day (e.g., an A- becomes a B+, then B+ becomes B, etc.).

Technology: We will not be having hybrid sessions. However, if you get in touch with me ahead of time, we can discuss whether Zooming in can be an option for you. In terms of screens in class, there are no technical restrictions—but I ask you to proactively create an environment where your classmates feel heard by you.

Plagiarism: Let's not. ([Plagiarism policies on Stanford's site](#))

Honor Code: Students are expected to act in accordance with the Stanford Honor code.

<https://communitystandards.stanford.edu/policies-guidance/honor-code>

OAE accommodations: Students who may need an academic accommodation based on the impact of a disability must initiate the request with the Office of Accessible Education (OAE), <https://oae.stanford.edu/>. Professional staff will evaluate the request with required documentation, recommend reasonable accommodations, and prepare an Accommodation Letter for faculty dated in the current quarter in which the request is being made. Students should contact the OAE as soon as possible since timely notice is needed to coordinate accommodations. Academic Accommodation Letters should be shared with me at the earliest possible opportunity so I may partner with you and OAE to identify any barriers to access and inclusion that might be encountered in your experience of this course and to anticipate needed adjustments.