

Department of English and Comparative Literary Studies

EN265 The Global Novel

Assessed Essay Topics

Term One 2018/19

The following topics are suggestions. You may modify them, or devise one of your own questions, but should do so only in consultation with your seminar tutor.

While you may range as widely as you like in world fiction, not necessarily confining yourself to books studied on the module, you should make detailed reference to at least two of the set texts.* It is also acceptable to bring in a different form alongside the novel in the essay, but the particulars must be discussed with your tutor and justified. Material used in the essay must not be substantially repeated in the Term Two essay or examination (depending on which option you go with).

* Unless you decide to do question 11.

1. “Arising within a transcultural context, a local, or national literature must negotiate a double bind: the new influences that can help shape a people’s traditions also brings them the threat of the local culture’s absorption into a broader milieu.”
(David Damrosch, “Global Regionalism”). Does this statement ring true in your reading of global novels thus far?
2. Discuss how new technologies aggravate and create tensions between the local and global in at least two texts studied in Term One.
3. “Modernity is to be understood as governed always – that is to say, definitionally – by unevenness, the historically determinate ‘coexistence’, in any given place and time, ‘of realities from radically different moments of history – handicrafts alongside the great cartels, peasant fields with the Krupp factories or the Ford plant in the distance’ (1995: 307). The multiple modes in and through which this ‘coexistence’ manifests itself [...] are to be understood as being connected, as being governed by a socio-historical logic of combination, rather than as being contingent and asystematic” (WReC, *Combined and Uneven Development*). Discuss how capitalist modernity’s “logic of combination” manifests in at least two texts from Term One.
4. Write an essay on the significance of the figure of the worker OR migrant OR travelling character in at least two novels we have read.
5. In what ways do objects register the experience and process of globalisation (or, indeed, resistance to that process) in the novels we have covered in Term One?
6. “We were become a part of the great web of commercial reciprocities, and felt in our corner and extremity, every touch or stir that was made on any part of the texture. The consequence of this I have now to relate.” (Annals of the Parish, Chapter XLIX)

Make a reading of Global Novel texts using this statement as your platform. (You do not need to write on Galt's novel).

7. In what ways are social relations (e.g. friendships/romantic/familial/workplace, etc.) irrevocably “globalised” in the texts we have covered?
8. “For every genre comes a moment when its inner form can no longer represent the most significant aspects of contemporary reality” (Franco Moretti, “Graphs, Maps, Trees”). Discuss how the appearance of and incorporation into a wider world-system impacts the form, tone, and aesthetics of at least two novels from Term One.
9. Outline ways in which the “global” (or, if you like, “local”) element in novels is conveyed by their narrative (and/or any other formal) techniques.
10. In what ways can we read the novelisation of the global as registering the wide and long process of capitalist modernity?
11. Make a case for the inclusion of a novel you have read that is not on the syllabus. Your essay must refer to at least one set text by way of comparison and fit the rubric of Term One.
12. Write an essay on the importance of one of the following in Term One texts: natural resources; magic; infrastructure; religion; legend; calamity; transport; trade; urban and/or rural space; narrative and/or storytelling; the family.
13. Some critics argue that the globalisation of the novel is something distinct from the story of globalisation in the novel. Referring to at least two texts from Term One, write an essay on the terms of their situation as “global” novels in that first sense (i.e. with primary reference to features such as audience, circulation, media, marketing, reception, etc.)
14. In what ways do Global novels put pressure on the stability of place?
15. In what way is war (or armed conflict/militarization) a ‘global’ element in the novels we have read in Term One?