Class Description

This discussion-based iteration of Cultural Foundations III focuses on a phenomenon essential to modern and contemporary arts: border crossing. In addition to considering the cross-cultural relationships that shape the arts in Italy and elsewhere, we will set out to examine and break boundaries between writers and readers, between authors and translators, between artistic genres, between creation and adaptation, between realism and abstraction, and between between artists and critics, among other typically rigid distinctions.

Rather than follow a neat chronology of transgression taking us from the 19th century to today, our investigations will take us back and forth in time; our guides will be the theories, critiques, and arts of a few scholars, critics, and artists who, like us, not only seek to subvert categories and expectations but also view such subversions as fundamental to cultural production.

Instructor Details
Name: Suzanne Maria Menghraj
NYUGlobalHome Email Address: smm274@nyu.edu
Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 12:00 pm – 12:30 pm + 4:30 pm – 5:30 pm; please use this link to make office hours appointments
Villa Ulivi Office Location: Faculty Office 1
Villa Ulivi Phone Number:+39 055 5007 300

Desired Outcomes
On completion of this course, students should:
- Have improved their ability to both creatively and critically respond to modern and contemporary works of literary, visual, and/or performative arts;
- Have productively applied reading, viewing, and other critical theories to modern and contemporary literary, visual, and/or performative arts;
- Have improved their ability to recognize affinities between artistic genres;
● Have improved their ability to privilege the development and pursuit of searching questions over the expression of hasty judgments and arguments;
● Have widened their sense of what it means to read, view, and interpret modern and contemporary arts; and
● Have demonstrated the ability to direct their own education.

Assessment Components

- Participation and Informal Work (e.g., response posts): 20%
- Discussion Group Work: 5%
- Midterm Project 1 (1,000 – 1,500 words): 10%
- Midterm Project 2 (1,000 – 1,500 words): 10%
- Final Group Presentation: 10%
- Final Project: 10%
- Final Project Analysis (2,000 – 2,500 words): 20%
- Final Exam: 15%
- Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component results in failure of the class.

Assessment Expectations

- **Grade A:** A-range work demonstrates a clear understanding of the assignment at hand and inventively sets out to explore an ongoing question, problem, tension, complication, mystery, or other intellectual challenge evident in the art(s) on which you focus. The work—whether written or visual—describes/narrates and places in context nuances of concrete subject matter with close, strategic attention to detail. Writing for the course shows a shift in thinking or perspective—evidence, in other words, that you are thinking or otherwise thoughtfully reflecting. Where the use of secondary sources is required, writing carefully introduces texts, and contextualizes, interprets (when necessary), and responds to their quoted and paraphrased excerpts. In this way, they regard reading as another kind of experience and demonstrate an understanding that texts need not serve merely as support for or as a foil to your ideas. The texts instead provide occasions for you to comment on, expand, and/or qualify another writer’s ideas and in doing so, further your own. A-range writing is written for a global audience—that is, an audience that is not familiar with the materials we’ve discussed. They make challenging, inventive connections between subjects. With regard to participation, students who earn a grade in the A-range are actively engaged in class discussions and volunteer to speak or read more than once during every session. With regard to discussion and presentation groups, A-range work shows planning, precision, curiosity, and creativity. Students who earn a final grade in the A-range attend office hours more than twice over the course of the semester.

- **Grade B:** While B-range work shows a basic understanding of the assignment and/or materials at hand and is motivated by a question, problem, tension, complication, mystery, or other ongoing intellectual challenge, their inquiries tend to be unclear or confused. They may occasionally focus on specific works and the interpretive challenge(s) those works present, but
show a tendency toward sweeping analyses and baseless theorizing, generalizing, or opining. They might not be written for global or wide audiences. B-range writing shows moments of eloquence, but might also be clouded by unnecessary verbiage or be repetitive in their ideation. Where required, they demonstrate some effort to responsibly and thoughtfully engage secondary sources but might poorly, awkwardly, or perfunctorily incorporate them. B-range writing might not show much development in thinking—that is, a change in the writer’s perspective on the question(s) at hand—over the course of the work. With regard to participation, students who earn a grade in the B-range are engaged in class discussions and volunteer to speak or read at least once per class session. With regard to discussion and presentation groups, B-range work shows evidence of self-generated interest in the materials at hand, but might be lacking with regard to planning, precision, and creative approaches. Students who earn a final grade in the B-range attend office hours at least twice over the course of the semester.

- **Grade C:** C-range work shows an incomplete understanding of the assignment and/or materials at hand. The question, problem, tension, complication, mystery, or other ongoing intellectual challenge the work seeks to explore is unclear or poorly presented. C-range essays generalize or opine—and without reference to specific subject matter. Sometimes a strident certainty rather than genuine inquiry appears to motivate such essays. Where engagement with other writers’ ideas is required, C-range essays work perfunctorily with texts or write for an audience already familiar with the texts that are engaged. They show little evidence of your having been intellectually challenged by the subject matter you’ve chosen to write about or discuss and have often hardly been revised. With regard to participation, students who earn a grade in the C-range are engaged in class discussions and volunteer to speak or read only once or so per week. With regard to discussion and presentation groups, C-range work shows little evidence of self-generated interest in the materials at hand, and is clearly lacking with regard to planning, precision, and creative approaches. In general, students who earn a final grade in the C-range have attended office hours no more than once over the course of the semester.

- **Grade D:** The student’s work shows little understanding of the assignment and/or materials at hand. Written work is deficient in one of more of the follow areas: clarity, organization, creativity, or content. With regard to participation, students who earn a grade in the D-range hardly if ever engage in class discussion or volunteer to speak or read during class. With regard to discussion and presentation groups, D-range work shows no evidence of planning, precision, creativity, or deep familiarity with the materials at hand. In general, students who earn a final grade in the D-range have not attended office hours.

- **Grade F:** The student’s work does not demonstrate understanding of assignments and/or materials at hand. Written and group work is either not submitted/participated in or is clearly lacking in clarity, organization, creativity, or content. The student appears unprepared or fully unengaged in class and has not frequented the office hours.
Grading Guidelines

A = 94-100
A minus = 90-93
B plus = 87-89
B = 84-86
B minus = 80-83
C plus = 77-79
C = 74-76
C minus = 70-73
D plus = 67-69
D = 65-66
F = below 65

Grading Policy
Please refer to Assessment Expectations and the policy on late submission of work

Academic Accommodations
Academic accommodations are available for students with documented disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at 212-998-4980 or see the Moses Center for further information.

Students with disabilities who believe that they may need accommodations in a class are encouraged to contact the Moses Center for Students with Disabilities at (212) 998-4980 as soon as possible to better ensure that such accommodations are implemented in a timely fashion. For more information, see Study Away and Disability.

Attendance Policy
Study abroad at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalized with a two
percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.

For courses that meet once a week, one unexcused absence will be penalized by a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade. For courses that meet two or more times a week, the same penalty will apply to the number of class times over a single week.

**Excused Absences**
In case of absence, regardless of the reason, the student is responsible for completing missed assignments, getting notes and making up missed work in a timely manner based upon a schedule that is mutually agreed upon between the faculty member and the student. The only excused absences are those approved by the Office of Academic Support; they are as follows:

**Absence Due to Illness**
- If you are sick, please see a doctor. Contact the Office of Student Life for assistance.
- For absences that last for two or more consecutive days, a doctor’s certificate, “certificato medico” is required. The doctor will indicate in writing the number of days of bed rest required. Please note these certificates can only be obtained on the day you see the doctor and cannot be written for you afterwards.
- Absences can ONLY be excused if they are reported WITHIN 48 HRS of your return to class via the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- OAS will not accept a student email or telephone call regarding an absence due to illness
- OAS will only notify faculty of absences REPORTED on the ABSENCE FORM
- The Office of Student Life, when assisting you in cases of severe or extended illness, will coordinate with the Office of Academic Support to properly record your absences

**Due to Religious Observance**
- Students observing a religious holiday during regularly scheduled class time are entitled to miss class without any penalty to their grade. This is for the holiday only and does not include the days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday
- Information regarding absences due to religious observance must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.

**Due to a class conflict with a program sponsored lecture, event, or activity**
- All students are entitled to miss one class period without any penalty to their grade in order to attend a lecture, event or activity that is sponsored by La Pietra Dialogues, Acton Miscellany or the Graduate Lecture series.
- Information regarding absences due to a class conflict must be provided at least SEVEN DAYS PRIOR to the date(s) in question using the online NYU Florence Absence Form
- Please note that no excused absences for reasons other than illness can be applied retroactively.
Students with questions or needing clarification about this policy are instructed to contact a member of the Office of Academic Support located in Villa Ulivi or to email florence.academicsupport@nyu.edu

Late Submission of Work
- All course work must be submitted on time, in class on the date specified on the syllabus.
- To request an extension on a deadline for an assignment, students must speak to the professor one week prior to the due date
- To receive an incomplete for a course at the end of the semester, two weeks before final exams, both the student and the faculty member must meet with the Assistant Director of Academic Affairs to review the request and if granted, they must both sign an Incomplete Contract detailing the terms for completing missing coursework.

Plagiarism Policy
PLAGIARISM WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN ANY FORM:
The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.

In the event of suspected or confirmed cases of plagiarism, the faculty member will consult first with the Assistant Director for Academic Affairs as definitions and procedures vary from school to school.

Writing Center
The Writing Center, located in Villa Ulivi, offers you feedback on any type of writing, at any stage in planning or drafting; very rough drafts are welcome. Sign up for a consultation at the Writing Center’s website and submit your working draft or ideas at least six hours in advance to NYU Florence Writing Center. You can drop in for a consultation M-Th, but remember that appointments are given priority. Please also note that the Writing Center does not correct or “fix” your writing but prompts you to think and work. The aim is to create stronger writers in the long term, not necessarily perfect papers in the short term.

Required Text(s)
Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida
Umberto Eco, Six Walks in the Fictional Woods
Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend
Pap Khouma, I Was an Elephant Salesman
Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist
Copies of each textbook are available for consultation and short term loans in the Villa Ulivi Library. Extra copies of some textbooks are also available for semester long loans. More information on Books and Course Materials. Please see the course schedule to find out by what date you’ll need to have read specific books. Short essays and stories will be posted to our NYU Classes site (see the Response Posts page).

Internet Research Guidelines
The careful use of internet resources is encouraged and a list of recommended websites will be given. Failure to cite internet and other non-traditional media sources in your written work constitutes plagiarism.

Additional Required Equipment
N/A

Class Assignments and Topics

Part I: Reading as Imaginative Practice

Session 1 – Monday, September 3
Introduction

Session 2 – Wednesday, September 5
Response 1.1 due


Session 3 – Monday, September 10
Response 1.2 due/Discussion Group 1

Umberto Eco, *Six Walks in the Fictional Woods*, Chapters 2 – 6 (pages 27-142)

Session 4 – Wednesday, September 12
Practicum 1: Response 1.3 due

Pap Khouma, *I Was an Elephant Salesman: Adventures Between Dakar, Paris, and Milan*

September 13, 2018 [Required]: Atavistic Fear of the Other: Between Reality and Propaganda – Pap Khouma, Pape Diaw, Jocopo Stormi

[6:00 pm at Cinema Alfieri—RSVP required; keep an eye on your email or refer to the Villa La Pietra events page for further information]
Session 5 – Monday, September 17
Response 1.4 due

Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (pages 19-85); Jorge Borges, “Pierre Menard, Author of the Quixote”; Alexandra Schwartz, “The Unmasking of Elena Ferrante”

Session 6 – Wednesday, September 19
Practicum 2: Response 1.5 due

Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (pages 87-186)

Session 7 – Monday, September 24
Response 1.6 due/Discussion Group 2

Elena Ferrante, My Brilliant Friend (pages 187-331)

Session 8 – Wednesday, September 26
Response 1.7 due/Discussion Group 3

Susan Bassnett, excerpts from Reflections on Translation and Italo Calvino, “The Last Channel” (“L’ultimo canale”)

Part II: Critics as Artists

Session 9 – Monday, October 1
Response 2.1 due

Susan Sontag, “Against Interpretation”; Michelangelo Antonioni, L’avventura (view); and Geoffrey Nowell-Smith, “Shape Around a Black Point”

Session 10 – Wednesday, October 3
Criticism as Art: Response 2.2 due/Discussion Group 4

Oscar Wilde, The Critic as Artist

Session 11 – Monday, October 8
Practicum 3: Response 2.3 due/Midterm Project 1 due

Michelangelo Antonioni, L’eclisse (view) and Tisa Bryant, excerpt from Unexplained Presence

Session 12 – Wednesday, October 10
Tentative Date for Marina Abramovic exhibition visit (Palazzo Strozzi)

Reading: Excerpts from David Salle, How to See: Looking, Talking, and Thinking about Art

Session 13 – Monday, October 15
Response 2.4 and 2.5 due/Discussion Group 5
John Cage, 4'33“ and Scott Carrier, The Neighborhood

Session 14 – Wednesday, October 17
Response 2.6 due

Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida

Visit the Museo Nazionale Alinari della Fotografia (on your own or with a friend) between October 17 and October 21

Session 15 – Monday, October 22
Practicum 4: Response 2.7 due

Roland Barthes, Camera Lucida (continued)

Session 16 – Wednesday, October 24
Response 2.8 due/Discussion Group 6


Session 17 – Monday, November 5*
Our November 16 trip to the Fondazione Prada in Milan replaces this class session.

Session 18 – Wednesday, November 7
Midterm Project 2 Due/Final Project Discussion

Part III: Final Project: Group Crossings

Session 19 – Monday, November 12
Response 3.1 due

Session 20 – Wednesday, November 14
Final Project Group Meetings/Response 3.2 due

Friday, November 16: Site Visit [Required] Fondazione Prada [Milan]*
[Specific Time and Meeting Place TBA]

Session 21 – Monday, November 19
Group Presentation 1

Readings and Viewings TBA

Session 22 – Wednesday, November 21
Group Presentation 2

Readings and Viewings TBA
Session 23 – Monday, November 26
  Group Presentation 3
  Readings and Viewings TBA

Session 24 – Wednesday, November 28
  Group Presentation 4
  Readings and Viewings TBA

Session 25 – Monday, December 3
  Group Presentation 5
  Readings and Viewings TBA

Session 26 – Wednesday, December 5
  Review

Final Exam: Week of December 10: Specific Date, Place, and Time TBA

Classroom Etiquette
  ● Eating is not permitted in the classrooms. Bottled water is permitted.
  ● Cell phones should be turned off during class time.
  ● The use of personal laptops and other electronic handheld devices are prohibited in the classroom unless otherwise specified by the professor.
  ● We recycle! So keep it green! Please dispose of trash in the clearly marked recycle bins located throughout the on campus buildings

Required Co-curricular Activities
  Thursday, September 13: Pap Khouma, Pape Diaw, and Jocopo Stormi (for more information, see Villa La Pietra events listings; please note that RSVP is required)
  Wednesday, October 10: Marina Abramovic, The Cleaner (exhibit viewing at Palazzo Strozzi)
  Between Wednesday, October 17 and Sunday, October 21: Visit Museo Nazionale Alinari della Fotografia (Piazza Santa Maria Novella 14a)
  Friday, November 16 (Time and Meeting Place TBA): Fondazione Prada (Milan)
**Suggested Co-curricular Activities**
Museo Novecento (Florence museum dedicated to 20th century art), Piazza Santa Maria Novella 10

Other suggested optional co-curricular activities will be announced in class and/or via email by the professor throughout the semester.

**Your Instructor**
Suzanne Maria Menghraj (BA Cornell University, MFA Columbia University) joined New York University’s faculty in 2007. This is her fourth non-consecutive year at NYU Florence. She teaches courses in writing and arts criticism, and has recently served Liberal Studies as chair of the Global Liberal Studies Critical Creative Production concentration; co-chair of the Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Working Group; and faculty-co-chair of the Steering Committee.

Suzanne is a former contributing writer for *Guernica*. Recent work has appeared in *Punctuate, Writing on the Edge*, and *Flyway: Journal of Writing and Environment*. Her essay “Usciolu” was listed among notable works in *Best American Essays 2015* and was awarded a *Flyway* prize for nonfiction. Prior to joining NYU’s faculty, she taught at Columbia University and served as director of Columbia’s Writing Center and assistant director of its Undergraduate Writing Program. Earlier in her career, she worked in the consulting division of the Vera Institute of Justice. She has since collaborated with several justice institutions, as well as such arts organizations as the Center for Urban Pedagogy, the Bronx Museum of the Arts, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art.