

Literature and Justice

COLT 385, Class #22051, Fall 2007, Tues & Thurs, 12:30-1:50, WPH 103



Who holds the keys to justice in our world? Is it politicians and philosophers? Or writers and readers who construct stories of injustice? This course examines autobiography and fiction (1950-2007) about individual and collective experiences of injustice due to race, ethnicity, class, gender, religious intolerance, and immigration, in Cuba [Barnet, *Biography of a Runaway Slave*], France-Senegal [Sembene, *Black Docker*] Guatemala [Burgos-Debray, *I Rigoberta Menchu*] India [Divakaruni, *Arranged Marriage*; Lahiri, *Interpreter of Maladies*], Afghanistan [Khadra, *The Swallows of Kabul*], Eastern Europe [Appelfeld, *Tzili: Story of a Life*], Palestine [Barghouti, *I Saw Ramallah*], Somalia [Hirsi Ali, *Infidel*] and the U.S. [Ellison, *Invisible Man*].

We will link these intensely personal literary voices to analyses by political philosophers who theorize systematically about achieving justice in multicultural societies through **redistribution** of wealth, **recognition** of the worth of subaltern individuals and groups, rethinking **power and sovereignty**, or more **deconstructive** strategies. You will develop a critical ability to discuss the literary and social dimensions of **multiculturalism**, including issues like human rights, recognition, personhood, gender, the social contract, and contemporary ideologies like liberalism, communitarianism, deliberative democracy, and feminism.

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