

Iranian Fiction

during the Pahlavi Era (1921–1978)

Fall 2013...CL 323 (34005), MEL 321 (42185), MES 342 (42365)

MWF 12–1 pm, Garrison 2.128

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Course Description. After a continuous history of a thousand years in which verse figured much more significantly than prose, Persian literature began turning attention to Iranian prose fiction in the early years of the 20th century. By mid-century, prose fiction became the leading form of Iranian literary expression and remains so in the second decade of the 21st century. This **survey course** traces that development and focusses on classics of Persian prose fiction during the Pahlavi Era from 1921 to the overthrow of the Pahlavi monarchy and establishment of the Islamic Republic in early 1979. The chief course business is a **close reading and discussion of classics of Persian fiction** in the contexts of, first, 20th-century Iranian society and culture and, second, the craft of fiction. The course uses works of Persian fiction as a window into Iranian culture to glean from them Iranian self-views about **modernization and Westernization, cultural and political nationalism, patriarchy and ruler-subject relations, religion, and women**. The course also seeks to reach appreciative conclusions as to the critical appeal of classic works of Persian fiction qua fiction. The course calendar cites the required course readings, i.e., **seven novels in paperback** and **ten+ short stories, a screenplay, and critical writing** that appear in the “Iranian Fiction Course Packet” on the course Blackboard, as well as online materials (e.g., at iranica.com, JStor, and Academia.edu/Michael Hillmann).

Course activities include open-book exercises, group exercises and discussions (break-out and whole class), oral reports, and the viewing of feature films based on course texts.

Course Grades are based on: class participation (10% of the course grade); eight two-page papers, each analyzing a specific, assigned work of fiction (4% of the course grade each), a book report on a study of Persian fiction chosen from a list in the course bibliography (10% of the course grade), and two review tests (25% of the course grade each). The grading scale is: A (93–100), A- (90–92), B+ (87–89), B (83–86), B- (80–82), C+ (77–79), C (73–76), C- (70–72), D+ (67–69), D (63–66), D- (60–62), and F (0–59). Students who miss a class in order to observe a religious holy day will have the opportunity to complete the missed work. Students with disabilities may request appropriate academic accommodations from the Division of Diversity and Community Engagement, Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone) or <http://www.utexas.edu/diversity/ddce/ssd>.

Note: Students with advanced Persian reading skills can participate in a parallel, one-credit PRS 130D course in which they read self-contained passages from Sadegh Hedayat’s *Buḡ-e Kur* in the original Persian as presented in the context of advanced Persian reading lessons.

Iranian Fiction Course Calendar and Assignments

- 1 W Aug 28**
 - Discussion of the course description, goals, activities, and calendar.
 - Discussion of the elements of fiction in the short story and the novel.
 - Exercise 1: Minute Paper.
 - Assignments: Read “The Fly” (1922) by Katherine Mansfield (1888–1923).
- 2 F Aug 30**
 - Exercise 2: Open-book questions about “The Fly” (1922).
 - Mansfield’s “The Fly.” Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read “By the Riverbank” and “Mâkhulâ” by Nimâ Yushij (1895–1960).
Prepare Writing Assignment #1.
- 3 W Sep 4**
 - Submit **Writing Assignment #1**.
 - Exercise 3: Open-book questions about “By the Riverbank” and “Mâkhulâ” by Nimâ Yushij.
 - Introduction to Modernism.
 - “By the Riverbank” and “Mâkhulâ.” Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read “The Seven ‘S’s” (2002) by Mohammad Bahârlu.
- 4 F Sep 6**
 - Exercise 4: Open-book questions about “The Seven ‘S’s” (2002) by Mohammad Bahârlu.
 - “The Seven ‘S’s” (2002) by Mohammad Bahârlu. Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read “Persian Is (as Sweet as) Sugar” (1921) by Mohammad Ali Jamalzadeh (1892–1996).
Read MCH’s “Language and Social Distinctions in Iran.”
- 5 M Sep 9**
 - Exercise 5: Open-book questions about “Persian Is (as Sweet as) Sugar” (1921).
 - “Persian Is (as Sweet as) Sugar.” Discussion
“Language and Social Distinctions in Iran.” Discussion.
 - Assignment: Jamalzadeh’s “Preface” to *Once upon a Time* (1922).
- 6 W Sep 11**
 - Jamalzadeh’s “Preface” to *Once upon a Time*. Discussion.
 - Exercise 6: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Read “Part 1,” *The Blind Owl* (1937, 1941) by Sadegh Hedayat (1903–1951).
Prepare Writing Assignment #2.
- 7 F Sep 13**
 - Submit **Writing Assignment #2**.
 - Exercise 7: Open-book questions about “Part One,” *The Blind Owl* (1937, 1941).
 - *The Blind Owl*: Part One 1.
 - Assignments: Reread “Part One,” *The Blind Owl* and the transition section to Part Two.
- 8 M Sep 16**
 - Exercise 8: Open-book questions about “Part One” and the transition section, *The Blind Owl*.
 - *The Blind Owl*: Part One and the transition section. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read “Part Two,” *The Blind Owl*.
- 9 W Sep 18**
 - Exercise 9: Open-book questions about “Part Two,” *The Blind Owl*.
 - “Part Two,” *The Blind Owl*. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Reread *The Blind Owl*, Part Two, and read the concluding section of *The Blind Owl*.
- 10 F Sep 20**
 - Submit **Writing Assignment #2**.
 - *The Blind Owl*: Part Two and the concluding section of *The Blind Owl*.
 - Exercise 10: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Reread *The Blind Owl*: Part Two and the concluding section.
Read MCH’s “*The Blind Owl* as a Modernist Fiction,” *The Love Song of M. Sadegh Hedayat* (2014).
- 11 M Sep 23**
 - *The Blind Owl* as Fiction and as a Glimpse into Iranian culture. Discussion.
 - Exercise 11: Minute Paper.
 - Assignments: Read “The Mobilization of Iran” (1946) by Jalâl Âl-e Ahmad (1923–1969).
Read Âl-e Ahmad’s “The China Flowerpot” (1946).

- 12 W Sep 25**
- Exercise 12: Open-book questions about Âl-e Ahmad's "The Mobilization of Iran" and "The China Flowerpot."
 - "The Mobilization of Iran" (1946). Discussion.
 - "The China Flowerpot" (1946). Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read Âl-e Ahmad's "Seh'târ" (1953?).
Read MCH's "Cultural Dilemmas of an Iranian Intellectual."
- 13 F Sep 27**
- Exercise 13: Open-book questions about Âl-e Ahmad's "Seh'târ."
 - Âl-e Ahmad's "Seh'târ" (1953?). Discussion.
 - "Cultural Dilemmas of an Iranian Intellectual." Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read "The Kerosene Man" (1945) by Sâdeq Chubak (1916–1988).
Read Chubak's "An Afternoon in Late Autumn" 1945).
- 14 M Sep 30**
- Exercise 14: Open-book questions about Chubak's "Kerosene Man" and "An Afternoon in Late Autumn."
 - Chubak's "The Kerosene Man" (1945). Discussion.
 - Chubak's "An Afternoon in Late Autumn" (1945). Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read "The Umbrella" (1959) by Gholâmhosayn Sâ'edi (1935–1985).
Read "Esmat's Journey" (1965) by Ebrâhim Golestân (b. 1922).
Prepare Writing Assignment #3.
- 15 W Oct 2**
- Submit **Writing Assignment #3**.
 - Exercise 15: Open-book questions about Sâ'edi's "The Umbrella" and Golestân's "Esmat's Journey."
 - Sâ'edi's "The Umbrella" (1959). Discussion.
 - Golestân's "Esmat's Journey" (1965). Discussion.
 - Assignments: Read "Twentieth-century Iranian History : A Chronology" at iranica.com.
- 16 W Oct 4**
- Twentieth-century Iranian History. Discussion.
 - Exercise 16: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Read an assigned essay on Iranian society, culture and politics from 1945 to 1977.
- 17 M Oct 7**
- Exercise 17: Open-book questions on the assigned essay on Iranian society, culture and politics.
 - Iranian society, culture and politics from 1945 to 1977. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read *Her Eyes* by Bozorg 'Alavi (1904–1996)
- 18 W Oct 9**
- Exercise 18: Open-book questions about *Her Eyes*.
 - 'Alavi's *Her Eyes*. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read "Rezâ Barâheni: A Case Study of Politics and the Writer in Iran, 1953–1977."
- 19 F Oct 11**
- Exercise 19: Open-book questions about "A Case Study of Politics and the Writer in Iran, 1953–1977."
 - "Rezâ Barâheni: A Case Study of Politics and the Writer in Iran, 1953–1977." Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read any still unread portions of longer assigned texts and reread shorter texts.
- 20 M Oct 14**
- Exercise 20: Group exercise review for Review Test #1.
 - Review for Review Test #1.
 - Assignment: Study for Review Test #1.
- 21 W Oct 16**
- **Review Test #1** (= Exercise 21)
 - Assignment: Prepare Writing Assignment #4.
- 22 F Oct 18**
- Submit **Writing Assignment #4**.
 - Exercise 22: Group Review of Review Test #1 questions.
 - Discussion of Review Test #1.
 - Assignment: Read Chubak's *Tangsir* (1963) 1.
- 23 M Oct 21**
- Exercise 23: Open-book questions about *Tangsir* 1.
 - Chubak's *Tangsir* (1963) 1.

- Assignment: Read Chubak's *Tangsir* (1963) 2.
- 24 W Oct 23**
- Exercise 24: Open-book questions about *Tangsir* 2.
 - Chubak's *Tangsir* (1963) 2. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Think about women in Persian fiction texts assigned and read in Sessions 1-25.
- 25 F Oct 25**
- Exercise 25: Open-book questions about women in Persian fiction, 1921–1969.
 - Women characters in Persian fiction, 1921–1969.
 - Assignments: Read *A Persian Requiem* 1 (1969) 1 by Simin Daneshvar (1921–2012).
Prepare Writing Assignment #5.
- 26 M Oct 28**
- Submit **Writing Assignment #5**.
 - Exercise 26: Open-book questions about *A Persian Requiem* 1.
 - Daneshvar's *A Persian Requiem* 1.
 - Assignments: Read Dāneshvar's *A Persian Requiem* 2.
- 27 W Oct 30**
- Daneshvar's *A Persian Requiem* 2.
 - Exercise 27: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Read *Sâ'edi's The Cow: A Screenplay* (1970).
- 28 F Nov 1**
- Exercise 28: Open-book questions about *The Cow: A Screenplay*.
 - *Sâ'edi's The Cow: A Screenplay* (1970).
 - The Movie *The Cow* 1.
 - Assignment: Reread *The Cow: A Screenplay*.
- 29 M Nov 4**
- Exercise 29: Open-book questions about *The Cow: A Screenplay*
 - The Movie *The Cow* 2.
 - Assignment: Read *Prince Ehtejâb* (1968/9) 1 by Hushang Golshiri (1938–2000).
- 30 W Nov 6**
- Exercise 30: Open-book questions about *Prince Ehtejâb* 1.
 - *Prince Ehtejâb* 1.
 - Assignment: Read *Prince Ehtejâb* 2.
- 31 F Nov 8**
- Exercise 31: Open-book questions about *Prince Ehtejâb* 2.
 - *Prince Ehtejâb* 2.
 - Assignment: Reread parts of *Prince Ehtejâb*.
Prepare Writing Assignment #7.
- 32 M Nov 11**
- Submit **Writing Assignment #7**.
 - The Movie *Prince Ehtejâb* 1. Discussion of differences between the novel and the film.
 - Exercise 32: Minute Paper.
 - Assignments: Reread parts of *Prince Ehtejâb*.
Watch the movie *Prince Ehtejâb*.
- 33 W Nov 13**
- Exercise 33: Open-book questions about the movie *Prince Ehtejâb*.
 - Differences between the novel and the movie *Prince Ehtejâb*. Discussion.
 - Assignment: Read *Winter Sleep* (1973) 1 by Goli Taraqqi (b. 1937).
- 34 F Nov 15**
- Exercise 34: Open-book questions about *Winter Sleep* 1.
 - *Winter Sleep* (1973) 1 by Goli Taraqqi (b. 1939).
 - Assignment: Read *Winter Sleep* 2.
Choose a book for your book report.
- 35 M Nov 18**
- Exercise 35: Open-book questions about *Winter Sleep* 2.
 - Discussion of book report subjects.

- *Winter Sleep 2*.
 - Assignment: Read *Women without Men* (1974-1990) 1 by Shahrnush Pârsipur (b. 1947).
- 36 W Nov 20**
- Pârsipur's *Women without Men* 1.
 - Exercise 36: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Read *Women without Men* 2.
Prepare Writing Assignment #8.
- 37 F Nov 22**
- Submit **Writing Assignment #8**.
 - *Women without Men* 2.
 - Exercise 37: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Reread "Check List of Elements of Fiction" vis-à-vis course texts.
- 38 M Nov 25**
- Exercise 38: Open-book questions about the "Check List of Elements of Fiction" vis-à-vis course texts.
 - "Check List of Elements of Fiction." Discussion.
 - Assignment: Review for Review Test #2.
- 39 W Nov 27**
- **Review Test #2** (= Exercise 39).
 - Assignments: Prepare book reports.
- 40 M Dec 2**
- **Submit book reports in hard copy and post pdf book reports online.**
 - Discussion of Review Test #2.
 - Exercise 40: Minute paper.
 - Assignment: Read classmates' book reports online.
- 41 W Dec 4**
- Discussion of book reports.
 - Exercise 41: Minute Paper.
 - Assignment: Read an assigned short history of Iran from 1977 to 2013.
- 42 F Dec 6**
- Exercise 42: Open-book questions about the assigned short history of Iran from 1977 to 2013.
 - Course conclusions.
 - Preview of post-Pahlavi Iranian fiction in Iran and abroad.

About the Instructor. A specialist in the Persian prose fiction of the Pahlavi Era (1921–1978), Michael Craig Hillmann has published a score of articles on Pahlavi-Era fiction, among them: "Âl-e Ahmad's Fictional Legacy," "*The Blind Owl* as a Modernist Fiction," "Hedâyat's *The Blind Owl*: An Autobiographical Nightmare," "Modern Persian Fiction: An Iranian Mirror and Conscience," "Revolution, Islam, and Modernist Persian Literature," and "The Modernist Trend in Persian Literature and Its Social Impact." Copies of those and other articles are available online at [Academia.edu/Michael Hillmann](http://Academia.edu/Michael_Hillmann). Hillmann has also edited these volumes on the subject: *The Blind Owl Forty Years After*, *Literature and Society in Iran*, *Major Voices in Contemporary Persian Literature*, *Persian Fiction Reader: Second Edition*, and *Sociology of the Iranian Writer*. Hillmann's monograph called *The Blind Owl The Love Song of M. Sadeh Hedayat* is forthcoming.