

Asian Shorts: Contemporary Asian Short Stories

The four Asian short story writers in this discussion/travel course—Aravind Adiga, Ha Jin, Han Kang and Haruki Murakami—view their four cultures from different lenses. Adiga’s stories in *Between the Assassinations* portray class and caste in Kittur, India, while Ha Jin’s tales in *The Bridegroom* reveal bureaucracy and workplace in Muji City, China; both writers are social realists and satirists who write in English.

Kang and Murakami write in their native languages, Korean and Japanese, and we are reading translations of Kang’s *The Vegetarian* (which won the Booker Prize) and Murakami’s *Men without Women*. Both are psychological realists and use various techniques (dream, surrealism, magical realism, fantasy, symbolism) to explore the desires and prisons of their solitary characters.

Each week we will read and discuss extensively three to four stories. Participants should plan to read carefully the stories under discussion. They should purchase the books before the first class and may read ahead if they wish. However, most participants read and/or re-read the stories the week before they are discussed.

Textbooks are available as new and used paperbacks as well as on Kindle through <http://www.amazon.com> and elsewhere. In the past, students have found books much easier than Kindles to access for class discussion. A detailed syllabus as well as additional stories, poems, essays and discussion suggestions will be provided both in a Xeroxed package and emailed to students as a Word document file.

1. Aravind Adiga, *Between the Assassinations*, Free Press, 2008, paperback, \$6.52.
2. Ha Jin, *The Bridegroom*, Pantheon Books paperback, 2001, \$12.95 new.
3. Han Kang, *The Vegetarian*, Hogarth paperback, 2016, \$8.92 new.
4. Haruki Murakami, *Men Without Women*, Vintage paperback, 2017, \$9.37, new.

Date	Tentative Assignments
Sept 27	Introduction. No assignment, no need to read ahead, but bring the four books to the introductory session.
Oct 4	Reading Assignment: Aravind Adiga , <i>Between the Assassinations</i> , 3-141.
October 11	Reading Assignment: Aravind Adiga , <i>Between the Assassinations</i> , 143-336.
October 18	Reading Assignment: Ha Jin , <i>The Bridegroom</i> , 3-115.

October 25	Reading Assignment: Ha Jin , <i>The Bridegroom</i> , 116-235.
November 1	Reading Assignment: Han Kang , <i>The Vegetarian</i> , 9-204.
November 8	Reading Assignment: Haruki Murakami , <i>Men without Women</i> , 3-113.
November 15	Reading Assignment: Haruki Murakami , <i>Men without Women</i> , 114-212.

Leader: Lois Marie Harrod, poet and writer, teaches creative writing at The College of New Jersey and literature at the Evergreen Forum. She has written sixteen collections of poetry; to read online poems and stories, see www.loismarieharrod.org.

Wednesdays: 1:45 to 3:45 p.m., 8 weeks: September 27 through November 15.

Location: Presbyterian Church of Lawrenceville