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Features

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Reflections: World literature in 1928

by [Sarah Ruden](#)

On the rise of the “multiculturalist” curriculum and the damage inflicted upon “every literary tradition.”

How all seventeen volumes of an early twentieth-century edition of the *Columbia University Course in Literature* came to Africa, eventually to appear in a Cape Town thrift shop, might be an interesting story in itself. But I have no room in my curiosity for that. I am too excitedly comparing the selections to the beginning university literature courses in my own life. I not only had my freshperson dose of Great Books at the University of Michigan, but I also taught this stuff at Harvard, at the University of Cape Town, and, most truculently, at the University of Kansas. There, one student reported in the first essay I assigned (“My Favorite Book”) that his favorite book was one on the Jayhawks, because he lived for Kansas basketball—had spent the rest of the day sobbing after one loss, and joined his twin brother in trashing their dorm room in rage after another. I have long been sunk in my own psychopathology, featuring among other ...

Sarah Ruden

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