

## Rushdie to address freshmen

On Wednesday, Sept. 20, author Salman Rushdie will be giving a talk entitled "Step Across this Line." Rushdie's book, *Shalimar the Clown*, a finalist for the Whitbread Book Awards, was the Class of 2010 summer reading selection. Rushdie is this year's William Starr Freshman Course Lecturer.

*Shalimar the Clown* is a story of conflict between two Indian Kashmiri villages, one of which is Hindu and the other Muslim. According to *Publisher's Weekly*, the novel is a "parable about the willing and unwilling subversion of multiculturalism," and Rushdie described the novel as "everyone's story slipping into everyone else's story."

Rushdie was born in Bombay in 1947, and was educated at King's College, at Cambridge University. He won the attention of literary critics after his second book, *Midnight's Children*, was met with wide acclaim in 1981. Since then, he has written many popular novels and short stories, as well as a children's book, a travel narrative, and a book of essays, among other projects.

He is perhaps most well-known, however, as a result of the controversy surrounding his novel, *The Satanic Verses* (1988). In 1989, Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini, then-leader of Iran, declared the novel blasphemous against Islam and declared a fatwa against Rushdie, calling for his execution. The author was forced to live in hiding for some years, while riots, protests and firebombing of bookstores ensued in the U.S., England, Pakistan and India. As of this past February, an Iranian news source reported that the fatwa could not and would not be removed, and that a \$2.8 million bounty on Rushdie's life remains.

Now, Rushdie is an Honorary Professor of Humanities at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. *Step Across this Line* is also the title of his recent book of collected non-fiction articles from 1992-2002.

—Acacia O'Connor, Senior Editor

