

ENGL 40914/AFST 40718
Introduction to Postcolonial Literature and Literary Theory

Spring 2018- MW 2:00-3:15

113 DeBartolo

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Office: 217 Brownson Hall
Office hours: MW 10:30-12:00 and by appointment

Course Overview

As our communities become increasingly ethnically, racially, and linguistically diverse, and as critical literacy becomes more integrally tied to meaningful and humane participation in the global family, it is essential that English integrates theories of race, culture, and imperialism into its understandings of literature, literacy, and cultural production. What does it mean to read from a Eurocentric perspective, both in terms of our selections of texts and our interpretations of texts? How do traditional readings of the word and the world reinforce racial and cultural hierarchies? Which authors and thinkers best help us to theorize the role of culture in the reproduction of structural, racial and gender inequality? And how do these novelists, playwrights, poets, activists, and cultural theorists help us to better reimagine a more equitable and humanizing pedagogy of reading, writing, and multimodal production in the 21st Century? This class is intended to serve as a general introduction to postcolonial literature and theory. Toward that end, we will be reading a number of the most influential theorists of Postcolonialism as well as some of the novels that have been of particular importance to debates and discussions in the field. This course begins with the premise that a study of postcolonial theories and a growing body of literature from subaltern perspectives can help the discipline of English to diversify its canon and add a robust theory of race, culture, imperialism, and intersectionality to its intellectual discourse.

With this in mind, the goals of this course are:

- To explore the anti-colonial tradition that is a precursor to and a companion of the postcolonial theoretical movement
- To understand the roots of postcolonial theory and its development across global contexts, with a focus on South Asian, sub-Saharan African, Latin American/Caribbean, and U.S. Postcolonialism
- To read critically postcolonial literatures and media texts from Africa, Asia, South America, the Caribbean, and the United States
- To draw on postcolonial theory to read the traditional British and American literary canons
- To develop the ability to employ Postcolonialism as a toolkit to read and critique any cultural text.

In addition, at the end of this course you will be better able to:

- Examine and critique the arguments of key theorists and scholars in group presentations that you will make to your classmates
- Actively listen to classmates as a thoughtful participant in Socratic and small group discussions

- Present your work confidently to your peers
- Lead an interactive classroom discussion of your research
- Identify weaknesses in your own academic writing
- Revise and resubmit written work after initial feedback

Course Policies

Late Policy

Any assignment not submitted by the date and time indicated in the schedule will be considered late and marked down by one half-letter (5%) for each day it is late, including weekends. I will not accept assignments that are more than a week late, and I will consider requests for extensions only if there is a serious reason for the request supported by a signed medical, legal, or other authoritative document. Assignments must be printed out and are considered due at the beginning of class on the date assigned.

Attendance

Attendance and participation are important parts of learning in this class. In order to ensure that you have the best possible learning experience in this class you are allowed a maximum of THREE (3) UNEXCUSED ABSENCES. With a 4th unexcused absence, your final grade will drop 5% and a notification of excessive absence will be sent to you and your Dean. For each unexcused absence beyond the 4th your final grade will drop 10%. Only absences permitted by University policy and verified as per section 3.1 (pages 4-5) of the [Undergraduate Academic Code](#) will be excused.

Students with Disabilities

Any student who has a documented disability and is registered with Disability Services should speak with the professor as soon as possible regarding accommodations. Students who are not registered should contact the Office of Disability Services - <http://disabilityservices.nd.edu/>

Honor Code

Notre Dame students are expected to abide by Academic Code of Honor Pledge. "As a member of the Notre Dame community, I will not participate in or tolerate academic dishonesty."

Course Texts

- Ania Loomba. *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (3rd Ed) (e-book, paper)
- Edward Said. *Orientalism* (e-book, paper)
- Homi Bhabha. *The Location of Culture* (e-book, paper)
- Salman Rushdie. *Midnight's Children* (e-book, paper)
- Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart* (e-book, paper)
- Gabriel Garcia Marquez. *Hundred Years of Solitude* (e-book, paper)
- Jamaica Kincaid. *Annie John* (e-book, paper)
- Toni Morrison. *Beloved* (e-book, paper)
- Gloria Anzaldua. *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (paper)

Course Readings and Assignments

1/17 Introduction

- 1/22 Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Introduction, Chapter 1
- 1/24 Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Chapter 2
- 1/29 Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Chapter 3 & Conclusion
- 1/31 Orientalism, Chapter 1
- 2/5 Orientalism, Chapter 2
Anchored Discussion
- 2/7 Orientalism, Chapter 3
- 2/12 Location of Culture, Introduction & Chapter 1
- 2/14 Location of Culture, Chapters 3,4, & 7
Anchored Discussion
- 2/19 Location of Culture, Chapters 9, 11, & 12
Short Essay #1 Due
- 2/21 Things Fall Apart, Part One
- 2/26 Things Fall Apart, Parts Two and Three
Anchored Discussion
- 2/28 100 Years of Solitude
- 3/5 100 Years of Solitude
Anchored Discussion
- 3/7 100 Years of Solitude
- 3/12 Spring Break (No Class)
- 3/14 Spring Break (No Class)
- 3/19 Midnight's Children, Book One
- 3/21 Midnight's Children, Book Two
Anchored Discussion
- 3/26 Midnight's Children, Book Three
Short Essay #2 Due
- 4/2 Easter Monday (No Class)
- 4/4 Annie John, through Columbus in Chains

Deadline for email/meeting about Final Paper Topic

- 4/9 Annie John, through A Walk to the Jetty
Anchored Discussion
- 4/11 Beloved, Chapter I
Proposals for Final Papers
- 4/16 Beloved, Chapter II
Anchored Discussion
- 4/18 Beloved, Chapter III
- 4/23 Borderlands, through How to Tame a Wild Tongue
Drafts of Final Papers Due
- 5/2 Borderlands, Poems, I, II, and III
- 5/7 Final Papers are due during the Final Exam period (4:15-6:15pm)**

Course Activities and Assignments

Class Attendance, Class Readings and Class Discussion:

Meaningful class discussion is a crucial part of the learning experience for students and instructors. Because we expect everyone to complete the class readings and come prepared for discussion, we will not have reading responses. This will give more time for individual writing projects. As such, preparing for class discussions will rely on students and instructors thinking deeply about assigned readings—developing defensible interpretations, negotiating meanings, and drawing connections to other works, concepts, or phenomena. (15% or 150 points)

Anchoring a Discussion:

During several of the class sessions, I will ask a small group to anchor a discussion of the day's readings. What this means is that the group in charge will come with a set of activities and questions to get the class involved in the reading for the session. Activities and discussions should last 20-30 minutes. (10% or 100 points)

Short Essays:

You will write two short essays of no more than 5 pages each. One essay will ask you to use authors and ideas from the course to analyze a text from the traditional British or American canon and the second essay will ask you to draw upon the course readings to analyze contemporary cultural artifacts of your own choosing. You are not required to but you may submit a draft or a fragment of your papers up to 2 weeks prior to the due date and I will return your draft within a week. (20% each or 200 points, 400 points total)

Final Paper:

You will write a final paper (12-15 pages) in which you address a topic of your choice. You should plan to send an email or meet with me to discuss your topic by March 26th. The formal proposal and research plan is due by April 11th. Paper drafts (at least 2/3 of your final paper) should be submitted by April 23rd and your final papers are due on May 7th during your final exam period. (35% or 350 points)

Grading 1000 points

970- A+

930- A

900- A-

870- B+

830- B

800- B-

770- C+

730- C

700- C-

600- D