

AP/EN 2240 6.0 Section A

Introduction to Postcolonial Literatures

Term: FALL/WINTER 2019/2020
Course director: Dani Spinosa dspinosa@yorku.ca
Office hours: TBA

Course description: This course provides a selective overview of twentieth-century and contemporary literature in English from the regions of Africa, the Caribbean, South Asia, and the South Pacific. The course introduces students to the major concepts, issues, contexts, events, and writers necessary for future study in the field, with primary focuses on diaspora, intersectionality of colonialism/race and gender/sexuality, and the relationship between literary form and colonial influence/resistance. Many various literary genres (including short and long fiction, creative non-fiction, poetry, and drama) will be considered.

Course Requirements

Close Reading Assignment (3-4 pages)	10%
Fall Term Essay (4-5 pages)	15%
Fall Term Test (In class)	15%
Annotated Bibliography	5%
Research essay (7-8 pages)	20%
Final exam (In exam period)	25%
Informed participation	10%

Essays should conform to proper MLA style, Eighth Edition.

ANY USE OF ANOTHER PERSON'S WORK, WHETHER IT IS IN PRINT OR ELECTRONIC FORM, WITHOUT PROPER CITATION CONSTITUTES PLAGIARISM AND WILL LEAD TO CHARGES OF A BREACH OF ACADEMIC HONESTY.

Please see the Senate Policy on Academic Honesty at:

<http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html>.

Important Information for Students

Grading: The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g., A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5, etc.). Assignments and tests will bear a percentage and a corresponding letter grade designation. (For a full description of York grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar - <http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/2012-2013/academic/grades/>)

Students may take a limited number of courses for degree credit on an ungraded (pass/fail) basis. For full information on this option see Alternative Grading Option in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies section of the Undergraduate Calendar.

Assignment Submission: Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received electronically by 11:59pm on the date it is due.

Lateness Penalty: Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized one-half letter grade if submitted within the following week electronically, with a hard copy to follow if requested. After that you must discuss submission with the instructor. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., may be entertained by the instructor and may require supporting documentation.

Missed Assignments: Students with a documented reason for missing a course assignment, such as illness, compassionate grounds, etc., which is confirmed by supporting documentation, may request accommodation from the instructor. Further extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty. Information on receiving an incomplete grade for the course, or other accommodations, can be obtained via discussion with the course instructor or meeting with the English Department Undergraduate Chair.

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following “Policies, Procedures and Regulations” at <http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/policies/index-policies.html>. Any element of this might be relevant but take particular note of “Academic Honesty and Student Appeals” and “Faculty, Staff, Students: Conduct and responsibilities.”

Note: The final date to drop the course without academic penalty is _____.

Text List

To Be Purchased:

- Canisia Lubrin, *Voodoo Hypothesis* (2017)
- Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958)
- J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (1980)
- Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1988)
- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)
- Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007)
- M. NourbeSe Phillip, *Zong!* (2008)
- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (1981)
- Thomas King, *Green Grass Running Water* (1993)
- Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman* (1975)
- Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (2000)

Hand-outs Circulated in Class

- The Letters of Christopher Columbus and Hernan Cortez
- *The Popul Vuh*
- *The Florentine Codex*
- Amiri Baraka, "AM/TRAK"
- Kamau Brathwaite, "Stone"

Films Screened in Class

- *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985)
- *Monsoon Wedding* (2001)

Required course texts have been ordered to the York University Keele Campus Bookstore. Unless otherwise indicated, any edition of the novels, plays, and collections of poetry is acceptable.

Reading Schedule

FALL TERM

- I. WEEK ONE:
 - a. Introduction to the course instructor, seminar, policies, &c.
- II. WEEK TWO:
 - a. “Introduction” (pp 1-13) and Chapter One “Cutting the ground: critical models of post-colonial literatures” (pp 14-36), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*
 - i. Available electronically through York Library e-resources [here](#) or by searching the e-resources.
 - b. Letters of Hernan Cortez and Christopher Columbus
 - c. Selections from the *Popol Vuh* and *The Florentine Codex*
- III. WEEK THREE:
 - a. Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
- IV. WEEK FOUR:
 - a. Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman*
- V. WEEK FIVE:
 - a. Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
 - b. Close Reading Assignment Due**
- VI. WEEK SIX:
 - a. Kamau Brathwaite, “Stone”
 - b. Amiri Baraka, “AM/TRAK”
 - c. from Chapter Five “Post-colonial literatures and postmodernism” (153-177), Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back*
- VII. WEEK SEVEN:
 - a. J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

VIII. WEEK EIGHT:

- a. J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

IX. WEEK NINE:

- a. Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*

X. WEEK TEN:

- a. Thomas King, *Green Grass, Running Water*

- b. Fall Term Essay Due**

XI. WEEK ELEVEN:

- a. Film Screening: *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985)

XII. WEEK TWELVE:

- a. Fall Term Test (In class, during seminar)**

WINTER TERM

I. WEEK ONE:

- a. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

II. WEEK TWO:

- a. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

III. WEEK THREE:

- a. Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*

IV. WEEK FOUR:

- a. Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

V. WEEK FIVE:

- a. Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

VI. WEEK SIX:

- a. Junot Diaz, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*

NO CLASS ____: Winter Term Reading Week

VII. WEEK SEVEN:

- a. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

VIII. WEEK EIGHT:

- a. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

IX. WEEK NINE:

- a. Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

X. WEEK TEN:

- a. Film screening: *Monsoon Wedding* (2001)

XI. WEEK ELEVEN:

- a. Canisia Lubrin, *Voodoo Hypothesis*

XII. WEEK TWELVE:

- a. Review and exam preparation

ASSIGNMENT GUIDELINES

Close Reading Assignment: The first major writing assignment of this course is a close reading essay due by _____. This is a short close reading assignment of 3-4 pages that does not require secondary sources and is worth 10% of the final grade. A document detailing the specifics of this assignment will be circulated. This paper must conform to MLA guidelines, including a Works Cited page.

Fall Term Essay: The second major writing assignment of this course is a comparative essay due by _____. This is a short essay of 4-5 pages that does not require secondary sources and is worth 15% of the final grade. A document detailing the specifics of this assignment will be circulated. This paper must conform to MLA guidelines, including a Works Cited page.

Fall Term Test: This is an in-class closed-book test that will be administered during seminar time on _____. The test will be made up of three sight passages (read: no essay question). A brief study aid will be circulated prior to this test.

Annotated Bibliography: This is a research-based assignment due on _____ and is worth 5% of your final grade. In this assignment, you will be graded on your ability to discern suitable academic sources for study. You will be required to select your text for your final research essay

prior to this annotated bibliography, and the sources you discuss in this annotated bibliography will be the sources you use for your final paper. There is no length requirement for this assignment, but a more detailed guide will be circulated later in the course.

Research Essay: The major research paper for this course is due by _____. This is a longer essay assignment of 7-8 pages that requires at least three secondary sources (including journal articles) and is worth 20% of the final grade. A document detailing the specifics of this assignment will be circulated, as well as detailed instructions for how to use York's library resources to perform research. This paper must conform to MLA guidelines, including a Works Cited page.

Final exam: The final exam for this course will be in the exam period. The exam will include definitions, sight passages, and an essay question and is worth 25% of the final grade. A document detailing the specifics of this assignment, as well as a group-sourced study guide, will be circulated prior to the end of term.

Informed participation: Seminar participation in this course is vital to your success. While the grade for participation is a relatively low 10%, this grade is dependent on not simply making a comment every once and a while. To receive participation marks, students should be **actively contributing informed discussion in the seminar on a more or less weekly basis.**