

English 350-01: Postcolonial Literature

Session: Fall 2013
TT 11:00 am-12:15 pm
Room: SI 208
Instructor: Dr. Rahman

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Office: Simpkins 224
Office hours: TT 9-10 am, M 3-5 pm, and by appt.

Course Objectives

This course will provide you with an overview of the emergence of postcolonialism as a discipline within literary studies which studies literature that addresses the experiences of Empire or are produced by writers from countries with a history of colonialism or writers who have migrated from formerly colonized countries. We will closely examine the major areas of concern in this body of literature from a number of different perspectives including the perspective of the colonizer, the colonized, and the formerly colonized. We will also grapple with issues of nationalism, feminism and migration.

Global Issues

This is a 300-level course in the English major that is designated as “Global Issues.” As a result, it will meet the “Global Issues” goals in these ways:

1. Postcolonial literature will help students understand that the world is a system of interconnected countries and cultures because students will study how a history of colonialism leads to this system. For instance, two countries are sometimes interconnected because of their history. The U.K. and India are interconnected because of two hundred years of British colonialism in India.
2. Students will understand that our actions impact other regions of the world by studying works by writers who have migrated from formerly colonized countries. For instance, writers from formerly colonized countries often write about ways in which U.S. foreign policy affects their countries.
3. Reading works by writers from other countries will give students a critically informed perspective of their points of view and help them develop an appreciation of global diversity. A course in postcolonial literature will inevitably study the literature of more than one country and this will give students a sense of the diversity of the world.

Texts

Beginning Postcolonialism by John McLeod
A Grain of Wheat Ngugi Wa Thiongo
Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte
Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys
My Place by Sally Morgan

Methods of Teaching and Learning

Our class will function primarily on the basis of discussion rather than lectures. While I may at times lecture, this is not a lecture class. This means that it will be very important for you to come to class prepared by having read the material carefully. The success and quality of this course is in your hands. I will expect you to raise questions, make comments, agree and disagree with each other in a respectful manner. Our discussions will help you think more deeply about the texts and eventually write better papers.

- Take readings notes, marking areas to help you understand and engage the material.
- Consider not only the texts but also the larger issues they raise.
- Interrogate the concepts and assumptions made by the reading.
- Connect relevant experiences, especially if they provide practical articulation of theories from our texts.
- **Bring 2-3 critical comments/ discussion questions to class every class meeting.** *(Though I will not regularly collect these, I will spot check depending on class discussion.)
- Good discussion questions should be open-ended, have multiple answers, and provoke discussion that helps us understand not only the work in question but also how the work shapes our understanding of the topic at hand. Avoid questions that can be answered with yes, no, or some other simple sentence.

Required Work

This course will require regular attendance and active engagement with the issues under discussion and writing. The major writing requirement of this course will be 3 formal essays of varying lengths. The rough drafts of Essays 1, 2 and 3 will each be peer reviewed **in class**. I also expect you to hand in your rough draft and your peer's comments along with your final draft so that I can track your improvement as well as grade your peer's review. **I will not accept the three formal essays without a rough draft and comments. As a result, you must attend all peer review classes.** Your final copy of each of the three formal papers should be examples of good writing.

Your class participation grade will comprise not only in-class discussion but also the quality of your comments about your peer's paper. The final exam will cover all the material discussed in class since the beginning of the semester. It will consist of three sections. The essay section will be worth the bulk of the points. The other smaller sections will contain identification and short answer questions. I do not provide study guides but I will explain whatever you don't understand in class. Note-taking in class and reading notes outside of class are both your responsibility.

Breakdown of grades:	Essay #1	3 pages or 750 words	10%
	Essay #2	4 pages or 1000 words	20%
	Essay #3	5 pages or 1250 words	30%
	Final Exam	covering 15 weeks	20%
	Class Participation	Peer Review	10%
		Discussion; presentations	10%

Grading Scale

- A = 93-100%

- A- = 90-92%
- B+ = 87-89%
- B = 83-86%
- B- = 80-82%
- C+ = 77-79%
- C = 73-76%
- C- = 70-72%
- D+ = 67-69%
- D = 63-66%
- D- = 60-62%
- F = 59% and below

Course Policies

- Please contact me about accommodations for special learning needs.
- Attendance and active participation are required. If you do not read the assigned pages before class, or if you are absent more than twice, or if you do not take part in class discussion, your class participation grade will suffer.
- You are allowed two excused absences but under-prepared students may be asked to leave class and will be marked absent. Reading carefully and bringing course texts is part of preparation.
- Ethical and professional conduct is required. I expect academic honesty and collegiality in class.
- Feedback from you regarding the course is welcome at any time. Contact me, put a note in my mailbox, or speak to Prof. Mark Mossmann, chair of English and Journalism.
- Keep all graded assignments. Keep track of grades.
- Late work is not accepted unless you have prior permission from me.
- A U grade means that you have earned less than a C on your work. If you earn a U grade, you must meet with me to discuss how to improve and resubmit your work for re-grading within one week. If you do not do so, your original F or D grade will stand.

WIU Policies

- **ADA:** In accordance with University policy and the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), academic accommodations may be made for any student who notifies the instructor of the need for an accommodation. For the instructor to provide the proper accommodation(s) you must obtain documentation of the need for an accommodation through Disability Support Services and provide it to the instructor. It is imperative that you take the initiative to bring such needs to the instructor's attention, as he/she is not legally permitted to inquire about such particular needs of students. Students who may require special assistance in emergency evacuations (i.e. fire, tornado, etc.) should contact the instructor as to the most appropriate procedures to follow in such an emergency. Contact Disability Support Services at 309-298-2512 for additional services.
- **Student Rights and Responsibilities:** <http://www.wiu.edu/provost/students.php>
- **Academic Integrity Policy:** Scholastic dishonesty of any kind will result in an F in the

course and will be reported to CAGAS. It is your responsibility to understand what constitutes scholastic dishonesty. I will also be happy to answer any questions you may have. You should also consult the University policy at <http://www.wiu.edu/policies/acintegrity.php>.

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Grading Criteria for Formal Papers

The final copy of your formal papers should be well structured around a thesis, provide textual evidence for the argument and be written in standard English relatively free of mechanical errors.

An **A** paper is a tightly structured, well-written, nuanced argument which provides plenty of textual evidence to back up its claims. The first paragraph contains a clearly-articulated thesis with a roadmap briefly stating the points which will be elaborated later.

A **B** paper might provide a thesis in the first paragraph but the paper itself may not be as well-organized around that thesis. For instance, sometimes these papers do not clarify how each paragraph relates to the thesis. As a result, these papers may contain material that seems irrelevant. B papers are thus not as convincing as A papers.

A **C** paper might provide an argument that only reveals itself at the end of the paper. This kind of paper usually lacks a thesis in the first paragraph because the writer has not rewritten the introductory paragraph to match the final version of the paper.

A **U** paper is unacceptable. One reason for this might be that there is no thesis let alone an argument. Random thoughts are not a paper. Another reason might be that the thesis is completely negated by the paper itself. Or, sometimes too many mechanical errors will make it impossible for the paper to argue a thesis because the reader can't follow the writer's thoughts.

The U paper and the University Writing Center

The University Writing Center is available to assist you with general and specific questions on writing assigned in any discipline and at any academic level. The one-on-one assistance available at the Writing Center is valuable for generating ideas, talking about global-level issues such as organization, and even working through grammatical problems. The University Writing Center is located in Simpkins Hall 341. Call for an appointment (298-2815) and be sure to bring a copy of your assignment.

If you earn a U on either the first or second formal paper, **you must** meet with me to discuss how to improve and **go to the writing center for help in rewriting the paper** which will be due in a week. This will help you bring your grade up to a C. If you do not do so, you will receive the original F for that paper. Remember that you must prove that you went to the writing center by handing in their form with the paper.

Tentative Schedule

Week 1: From “Commonwealth” to “Postcolonial”

20 August 2013: Introduction

22 August 2013: McLeod pages 1-43

Week 2: Combating Colonial Discourses

27 August 2013: Rudyard Kipling, “The Overland Mail” McLeod pages 44-69, 315-316, 69-79

29 August 2013: McLeod pages 80-111

Week 3: Nationalism

3 September 2013: **no class**

5 September 2013: Ngugi pages 1-56

Week 4: Kenya

10 September 2013: Ngugi pages 57-121

12 September 2013: Ngugi pages 122-177

Week 5: Independence

17 September 2013: Ngugi pages 178-247

19 September 2013: McLeod pages 111-142

Week 6: Re-reading and re-writing English Literature

24 September 2013: McLeod pages 162-172, Bronte pages 9-110

26 September 2013: **Peer Review Essay #1 Rough Draft Due**

Week 7: A literary “classic”

1 October 2013: Bronte pages 111-210 **Essay #1 Due**

3 October 2013: Bronte pages 211-316

Week 8: Colonial contexts

8 October 2013: Bronte pages 317-421

10 October 2013: Bronte pages 422-521

Week 9: Colonial or Postcolonial?

15 October 2013: McLeod pages 173-185, Rhys pages 9-64

17 October 2013: Rhys pages 64-112

Week 10: Double colonization

22 October 2013: McLeod pages 185-228

24 October 2013: Morgan pages 7-92

Week 11: Postcolonialism and Feminism

29 October 2013: Morgan pages 93-182

31 October 2013: **Peer Review Rough Draft Essay #2 Due**

Week 12: Australia

5 November 2013: **No class**

7 November 2013: Morgan pages 183-268 **Essay #2 Due**

Week 13: Representing Women

12 November 2013: Morgan pages 269-350

14 November 2013: Morgan pages 350-440, McLeod pages 228-233

Week 14: The Limits of Postcolonialism?

19 November 2013: McLeod pages 276-299

21 November 2013: **Peer Review Essay #3 Rough Draft Due**

Thanksgiving Break

Week 15: Wrap-Up and concluding discussion

3 December 2013: McLeod pages 299-314 **Essay #3 Due**

5 December 2013: Review class

12 December 2013: Final Exam on Thursday at 10 am