

**Carleton University  
Winter 2016  
Department of English**

**ENGL 4976A: Issues in Postcolonial Literature**  
*Prerequisite: fourth-year standing or permission of the dept*

**Tuesday 6:05 pm – 8:55 pm**  
**Location: PA 111 (Please confirm on Carleton Central)**

**Instructor: Dr. Pius Adesanmi**  
**Email: [piusadesanmi@gmail.ca](mailto:piusadesanmi@gmail.ca)**  
**Office: 1916 DT**  
**Office Phone: ext 1175**  
**Office Hours: Tuesday 10 am-12 pm (or by appointment)**

*\*Provisional Syllabus- subject to change*

## **Overview**

Welcome! This course is a detailed introduction to major issues in postcolonial literature and theory. Using a combination of theoretical essays and fiction, we shall explore some of the key themes and issues that have been covered by postcolonial discourse since its inception as a disciplinary field in the 1980s: empire and resistance, diaspora and transnationalism, feminism and gender.

## **Expectations and Course Goals**

This course has the following objectives: (1) to introduce the student to different literary genres and discourses from the postcolonial world, (2) to read both male and female writers in order to understand more clearly the impact of colonialism, race, dislocation, ethnicity and gender on postcolonial peoples, (3) to see how postcolonial literatures enable readers to reframe postcolonial cultures within the context of world cultures. Students will be further expected to develop competence in (5) comparative literary analysis, (6) cultural analysis (7) and writing.

## **Course Requirements and Procedures**

Requirement: read and reflect on each text well ahead of the date we begin to analyze it in class.

Attendance: as this course strongly requires students' active participation, regular attendance is imperative. The course shall be delivered in such a way that your continuous involvement shall be

necessary at every stage. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Reasonable circumstances sometimes force people to be late. By all means do come to class if you're late and be sure to explain things to me after class. Absence will be excused only for certifiable medical reasons and religious observances. **One percentage point** will be subtracted for every unexcused absence.

Conduct: we will strive to create a convivial class atmosphere in which you will be at ease to express your opinions and participate fully in the learning process. Any disruptive conduct will, however, not be tolerated. You are required to avoid habitual lateness, reading newspapers during class, working hurriedly on an assignment due for submission in your next class, sleeping during class, leaving the classroom before the end of the class period, chatting with others on issues not related to the ongoing class discussion, or any other behaviour that interferes with the learning process and distracts everybody else.

Assignments: it is required that students do all assigned tests and examinations according to the instructor's specifications. Except in cases where necessary permission is granted or a student is able to present evidence of illness or any form of incapacitation, any student who fails to submit assignments on schedule will lose a determined percentage of his/her final grade point.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Late Submission Policy: **One percentage point will be deducted for every day that an assignment is late.**

Academic integrity: academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University Policies. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Access statement: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible.

Students requiring academic accommodation on the basis of a religious observance should make a formal, written request to the instructor for an alternate date and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students or instructors who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Registration policy: during the drop/add period at the beginning of the semester, the Department of English encourages students to visit this and other courses in order to make informed judgments about which courses to take. After the last day for course changes, however, only students registered in the course may remain; no student may late-add (or restore a dropped registration) after the deadlines without petitioning the, instructor, the Department of English, and the Registrar's office.

Communication: we shall use several lines of communication to ensure a vibrant rapport throughout the course. They include: (1) email to the instructor – **please allow a window of 24 to 48 hours for me to reply**. Students are welcome to send me emails regarding any issue they like to discuss about the course; (2) students can see me at my office or give me a phone call during office hours, or leave a message on my answering machine.

### **Examination and Assignments**

\*All quizzes and the final exam are take-home

1<sup>st</sup> Essay Quiz: 20 points (grammar and syntax @5 points; ideas & presentation @ 15 points)

2<sup>nd</sup> Essay Quiz: 20 points (grammar and syntax @5 points; ideas & presentation @ 15 points)

Final exam: 60 points (grammar and syntax @ 10 points; ideas & presentation @ 50 points)

**\*All assignments – including the final exam – are take-home research essays.**

\* This course places a lot of emphasis on good writing and independent critical reasoning. Your tests and essay questions will be structured in a way that encourages sustained critical reasoning. Consequently, elements such as grammar, level of language, presentation/quality of ideas will form a key part of the grading process. In other words, this is a writing attentive course. Please bear in mind the English Department's definition of writing attentive:

- Students will write at least one examination.
- Students will write a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they are expected to do the following:
  - i. develop an argumentative thesis across an essay
  - ii. develop complex ideas using correct and effective expression according to academic English practice
  - iii. use and cite evidence from primary texts appropriately
  - iv. develop literary skills through close critical analysis of texts from a variety of genres
  - iv. develop fluency in genre-specific literary terms of analysis

- Students will be introduced to issues in secondary research (such as critical evaluation of and citation of secondary materials)
- A portion of class time will be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills.

### Grade Distribution

A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	0-49

### Required Texts

**(Our designated book store is Octopus Books 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1, 613-233-2589. Ask for ENGL 4976)**

Jhumpa Lahiri, *The Namesake*

Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God*

Chika Unigwe, *On Black Sisters Street*

\*Supplementary readings (essays, urls, etc) will be posted on CULEARN/ARES as necessary).

### Course Outline

Jan	12	Empire and Resistance Readings: Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa" Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Europhonism, Universities and the Magic Fountain" Lord Macauley, "Minute on Indian Education"
	19	Chinua Achebe, <i>Arrow of God</i>
	26	<i>Arrow of God</i> (1 <sup>st</sup> Essay Quiz question)

Feb	2	Diaspora and Transnationalism
		Readings:
		Salman Rushdie – Imaginary Homelands
		Olu Oguibe – The Uncertainty of Geographies
	9	Jhumpa Lahiri <i>The Namesake</i> (Submission of 1 <sup>st</sup> Essay Quiz Question)
	23	<i>The Namesake</i>
Mar	1	<i>The Namesake</i> (2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay Quiz Question)
	8	Feminism and Gender
	15	Chika Unigwe, <i>On Black Sisters Street</i> (Submission of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Essay Quiz Question)
	22	<i>On Black Sisters Street</i>
	29	<i>On Black Sisters Street</i>
Apr	5	Revision

## **Reading Schedule\***

**January 11**

### **Introduction:**

What is Literary Theory? Moving from image to text to understand the possibilities of narrative.

**January 18**

### **Formalism ++ Interpretive Analysis Assignment due**

“Tradition and the Individual Talent” T.S. Eliot; “The Heresy of the Paraphrase” Cleanth Brooks

**January 25**

### **Historicisms (Old & New)**

“The Structure of Historical Narrative” Hayden White; “What is an Author?” Michel Foucault

**February 1**

### **Linguistics/Structuralism**

“Course in General Linguistics” Ferdinand de Saussure;  
<http://www.buzzfeed.com/chrisr414d8a71a/post-structuralism-explained-with-hipster-beards-xwfz#.cioaJR46>

**February 8**

### **Poststructuralism/Deconstruction**

“Death of the Author” Roland Barthes; “What is Postmodernism?” Jean Francois Lyotard; “Las Meniñas” Michel Foucault

<b>February 15</b>	<b>Reading Week – no class</b>
<b>February 22</b>	<b>Materialism/Marxism</b>  From “Wage Labor and Capital”, Karl Marx; from “Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses” Louis Althusser, “Hegemony” Raymond Williams
<b>February 29</b>	<b>Psychoanalysis</b>  “The Unconscious” Sigmund Freud; “Beyond the Pleasure Principle” Sigmund Freud; “The Mirror Stage” Jacques Lacan
<b>March 7</b>	<b>Feminisms/Gender</b>  “Performative Acts and Gender Constitution” Judith Butler; “Negotiating Postmodernism and Feminism” Linda Hutcheon; “Introduction to Female Masculinity” Judith Halberstam
<b>March 14</b>	<b>Queer Theory **Thesis/Annotated Bib due</b>  “Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence” Adrienne Rich; “The History of Sexuality” (Chpt 1) Michel Foucault
<b>March 21</b>	<b>Postcolonialism/Critical Race Theory</b>  “Situating Colonialism and Postcolonial Studies” Anita Loomba; “The Signifying Monkey” Henry Louis Gates; “The Language of African Literature” Ngugi wa Thiong’o; “Signs Taken for Wonders” Homi K. Bhabha
<b>March 28</b>	<b>Cultural Theory</b>  “The Function of Subculture” Dick Hebdige; “The Practice of Everyday Life” Michel de Certeau
<b>April 4</b>	<b>Wrap up ** Research paper due prior to class</b>

\* Readings will be available in the course pack from Haven Books.

**NB:** Schedule or readings may be subject to change. **All assignments must be submitted electronically in .doc or .docx format on cuLearn.**