

**Carleton University- Department of English****ENGL 4975A: Issues in Postcolonial Theory****(Winter 2020- January- April)****Instructor:** Aliesha Hosein, PhD**Office Hours: 45 minutes before and after class****Meeting Time:** Mondays 5:35 pm – 8:25 p.m.**Meeting Place:** 308 Southam Hall

Prerequisite(s): fourth-year standing or permission of the department.

**Email:** [alieshahosein@cunet.carleton.ca](mailto:alieshahosein@cunet.carleton.ca)**Overview****Welcome!**

Postcolonial criticism has remade the world of late twentieth-century literature. With surgical precision postcolonial critics align a diverse array of texts along a single axis: the socio-political influence of imperialism. The world is not so simple.

This course presents an exciting opportunity to journey through postcolonial fiction and postcolonial literary theory. We will consider recurrent themes and issues such as identity, power, migration, race, gender, nation, and representation. We will also examine the specific social, cultural and historical contexts from which these literatures emerge. We will discuss authors from Asia, Africa, the Caribbean, and critical theory from around the world.

Students in this class will be introduced to the postcolonial turn in contemporary literary criticism through a selection of by-now canonically postcolonial novels and other literary genres. A study of postcolonial fiction, poetry, drama and autobiography in English. We will consider recurrent themes and issues such as identity, power, migration, race, gender, nation, and representation.

**Expectations and Course Goals**

For this course, we have some more specific learning outcomes. By the end of the semester, depending on your level of commitment to and engagement with the course, you should be able to: 1. Discuss some of the most significant literary texts and trends

within Anglophone literature by authors born and/or raised outside of the United States and Britain. 2. Develop more sophisticated strategies for interpreting and discussing literary texts. 3. Discuss the ways in which 2 literary texts historically promoted certain ideas of race and empire, and how these ideas influence attitudes toward other cultures. 4. Discuss the ways in which some literary texts challenge and rewrite Western histories, questioning Western notions of universality and objectivity. 5. Apply knowledge gained from the literary texts to other contemporary texts and cultural phenomena, particularly with respect to current models of multiculturalism and race relations. 6. Compose formal essays that demonstrate a high degree of logical structure and argumentation, fluent prose, and original insights. 7. Perform formal presentations that demonstrate a high degree of organization, teamwork, clarity, and original insights. 8. Utilize university resources (including the library, faculty, the writing center, and other students) in ways that promote knowledge

### **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. **70% of your evaluation will be done in class.** The course shall be delivered in such a way that your continuous involvement shall be necessary at every stage. Reasonable circumstances sometimes force people to be late. By all means do come to class if you are late and be sure to explain things to me after class. Absence will be excused only for certifiable medical reasons and religious observances.

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.

As for use of computers, laptops, I-phones, I-pads and other electronic gadgetry. You are all adults. An important part of being an adult is courtesy and respect for others. If you are using your computer for schoolwork - fine. But, if your other activities are distracting, annoying or disrespectful and violates another person's right to enjoy, be comfortable in, or feel secure in the classroom environment, then, we as a class may have to discuss this further.

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.

Academic integrity: The University Senate defines plagiarism as “*presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.*” This can include: 3

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts, or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in "substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occur."

Plagiarism is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course’s instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include a final grade of "F" for the course.

The policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

Access statement: You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

### **Pregnancy obligation**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/contact/form-pregnancy-accommodation/>

### **Religious obligation**

Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details, visit the Equity Services website:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/discrimination-harassment/religious-spiritual-observances/>

### **Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities**

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or [pmc@carleton.ca](mailto:pmc@carleton.ca) for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. For more details, visit the Paul Menton Centre Website:

[carleton.ca/pmc](http://carleton.ca/pmc)

### **Survivors of Sexual Violence**

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit:

<https://carleton.ca/equity/focus/sexual-violence-prevention-survivor-support/>

### **Diversity**

This class is built on the assumption that diverse perspectives are fundamental to learning. It is only when we are challenged by knowledge and viewpoints different from our own that we can learn and grow. We'll be dealing with topics that can sometimes look different depending on where you stand—topics that can become somewhat controversial as well. This is just the sort of situation where we benefit most from experience and perspectives different from our own. The course is structured to make the most of our differences by giving you many opportunities to interact with all of your classmates. But for this to work we must all be willing to listen to each other respectfully. A few basic guidelines can make a big difference here:

- Treat each other with respect.
- Question the quality of the argument, not personal beliefs.

- Speak from experience.
- Avoid generalizing about groups of people.
- Share air time.
- Listen respectfully to different perspectives.
- Don't blame or scapegoat.
- Focus on learning, not on winning arguments.

### **Policy on Children in Class:**

It is my belief that if we want women in academia, that we should also expect children to be present in some form. Currently, the university does not have a formal policy on children in the classroom. The policy described here is thus, a reflection of my own beliefs and commitments to student, staff and faculty parents.

1) All exclusively breastfeeding babies are welcome in class as often as is necessary to support the breastfeeding relationship. Because not all women can pump sufficient milk, and not all babies will take a bottle reliably, I never want students to feel like they have to choose between feeding their baby and continuing their education. You and your nursing baby are welcome in class anytime. 5

2) For older children and babies, I understand that minor illnesses and unforeseen disruptions in childcare often put parents in the position of having to choose between missing class to stay home with a child and leaving him or her with someone you or the child does not feel comfortable with. While this is not meant to be a long-term childcare solution, occasionally bringing a child to class in order to cover gaps in care is perfectly acceptable.

3) I ask that all students work with me to create a welcoming environment that is respectful of all forms of diversity, including diversity in parenting status.

4) In all cases where babies and children come to class, I ask that you sit close to the door so that if your little one needs special attention and is disrupting learning for other students, you may step outside until their need has been met. Non-parents in the class, please reserve seats near the door for your parenting classmates.

5) Finally, I understand that often the largest barrier to completing your coursework once you become a parent is the tiredness many parents feel in the evening once children have *finally* gone to sleep. The struggles of balancing school, childcare and often another job are exhausting! I hope that you will feel comfortable disclosing your student-parent status to me. This is the first step in my being able to accommodate any special needs that arise. While I maintain the same high expectations for all student in my classes regardless of parenting status, I am happy to problem solve with you in a

way that makes you feel supported as you strive for school-parenting balance. Thank you for the diversity you bring to our classroom! 6

### **Accommodation for Student Activities**

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist.

**<https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>**

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.

### **Evaluation/ Examination/ Assignments: (Tentative) may change**

#### **This class is a seminar class**

Seminar presentation -20marks

Five –in class tests - 50marks (5\*10)

Final research paper -30 marks

This course places a lot of emphasis on good writing and independent critical reasoning. Your tests and essay questions shall 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. Attendance is critical to your making a good grade in this course. I normally generate my test and exam questions from class discussions and debates. **I will not be posting my notes online. The onus is on you to come to class, participate and generate your own notes.**

**Please note that standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.**

\* 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 one graded mid-term exam, in which they are expected to do the following:

- develop an argumentative thesis across an essay
- develop complex ideas using correct and effective expression according to academic English practice
- use and cite evidence from primary texts appropriately
- develop literary skills through close critical analysis of texts from a variety of genres
- 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 may be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills.

### **Grade Distribution**

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

## Required Texts

- Chinua Achebe – *Things Fall Apart*
- Ousmane Sembene- *Xala*
- Samuel Selvon- *The Lonely Londoners*
- Bapsi Sidwaha- *Cracking India*
- Jean Kwok- *Girl in Translation*
- Kasten, L. & Sage, J. (Eds.) *Enslaved: True stories of modern day slavery.*
- V.S. Naipaul- *Finding the Centre*
- OPTIONAL: Kempadoo, Kamala, Jyoti Sanghera, and Bandana Pattanik, eds. *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights.* 2nd ed. Paradigm Publishers, 2011

## Course Outline: A very exciting schedule awaits:

### Monday 6<sup>th</sup> January 2020: **They came- Contact with Colonizers**

- Introduction to course syllabus, content, and format
- Chinua Achebe – *Things Fall Apart*
- Chinua Achebe, "The African Writer and the English Language"
- CHOOSING SEMINAR PRESENTERS

### Monday 13 January, 2020. **They came- Contact with Colonizers**

- **Chinua Achebe – *Things Fall Apart***
- Readings:
  - 1) Aimé Césaire, "From 'Discourse on Colonialism,'" pp. 172-180.



- 2) Emad Mirmotahari (2011) History as project and source in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*, *Postcolonial Studies*, 14:4, 373-385,
- 3) Bouda Etemad, *Possessing the World: "Introduction,"* pp. 1-7.

Seminar Presenters:

**Monday 20 January, 2020 and Monday 27<sup>th</sup> January, 2020- The Colonizers left ...or did they**

### TEST 1

- **Ousmane Sembene – *Xala*- Film and Novel**
  - Readings:
    - 1) Gugler, Josef. "Ousmane Sembene *Xala*: The Novel, the Film, and Their Audiences." *Research in African Literatures* 29 (Summer 1998): 147-158.
    - 2) Gabriel, Teshome H. "Towards a Critical Theory of Third World Films." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia, University Press, 1994. 340-358.
    - 3) Frantz Fanon, "The Negro and Language." In *Black Skin, White Masks* Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Press, 67. 17-40
    - 4) Frantz Fanon, "The Negro and Language," pp. 17-25, 30-33, 36-39. [bring to class]

Seminar Presenters:

**Monday 3<sup>rd</sup> February, 2020 and Monday 10<sup>th</sup> February, 2020- Some went to the metropole and became confused.**

### TEST 2

**Text: Samuel Selvon- *The Lonely Londoners***

Reading:

1. Birat, K. (2009) 'Hearing voices in George Lamming's *The Pleasures of Exile* and Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*', *Commonwealth*, vol. 32, no. 1, pp. 9–22.
2. Dyer, Rebecca. "Immigration, Postwar London, and the Politics of Everyday Life in Sam Selvon's Fiction." *Cultural Critique* 52.1 (2002): 108–144
3. Bentley, Nick. "Black London: The Politics of Representation in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*." *Wasafiri* 39 (2003): 41–45.

4. Kabesh, Lisa. "Mapping Freedom, or Its Limits: The Politics of Movement in Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners*." *Postcolonial Text* 6.3 (2011): 1–17.
5. Nasta, Susheila. "Introduction." *Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon*. Ed. Susheila Nasta. Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1988. 1–14.
6. Rohlehr, F. Gordon. "The Folk in Caribbean Literature." *Critical Perspectives on Sam Selvon*. Ed. Susheila Nasta. Washington, DC: Three Continents Press, 1988. 29–43

Seminar Presenters:

**Monday 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2020- No Class- Winter Break**

**Monday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 2019- They left it to the Women....Women as Nation**

**TEST 3**

**Text: Bapsi Sidhwa- Cracking India**

**Reading:**

1. Ritu Menon, "Reproducing the Legitimate Community," *Appropriating Gender* (ed.) Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu (1997): 15-32
2. Jill Didur, "Lifting the Veil? Reconsidering the Task of Literary Historiography" *Interventions*, Volume 3, Issue 3 November 2001, pp. 446 – 451

**Seminar Presenters:**

**Monday March 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 and Monday March 9<sup>th</sup>, 2020**

**TEST 4**

**Postcolonial, Diaspora and Labour- Immigration and Labour**

**Text: Girl in Translation by Jean Kwok**

1. Harrison, Jill L. & Sarah E. Lloyd (2012). Illegality at work: The new productive era of immigration enforcement. *Antipode* 44(2): 365–385.

2. Donato K.M. & Massey D.S. (2016). 'Twenty-First Century Globalization and Illegal Migration.' *The ANNALS of the American Academy of Political and Social Science*, vol. 666, n.1, pp. 7-26.
3. Cohen, R. (2006). 'The Proletariat at the Gates: Migrants and Non-Citizen Labour 1850-2000.' In Cohen, R., *Migration and Its Enemies: Global Capital Migrant Labour and the Nation-state*. Fernham, Surrey: Ashgate Publishing, pp. 39-62

### **Seminar Presenters:**

**Monday 16<sup>th</sup> March, 2020 and Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2020**

### **TEST 5**

### **Slavery in the Post-colonial**

**Text: Kasten, L. & Sage, J. (Eds.) *Enslaved: True stories of modern day slavery*.**

### **Readings:**

Selected Chapters From:

Kempadoo, Kamala, Jyoti Sanghera, and Bandana Pattanik, eds. *Trafficking and Prostitution Reconsidered: New Perspectives on Migration, Sex Work, and Human Rights*. 2nd ed. Paradigm Publishers, 2011.

### **Seminar Presenters:**

**Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March and Monday 6<sup>th</sup> April, 2020.**

### **The postcolonial Diaspora and Anxiety**

**Text: V.S. Naipaul *Finding the Centre***

### **Readings:**

1. Clifford, James. 'Diasporas.' *Cultural Anthropology* 9:3(1994): 302-338.
2. 'New Lamps for Old: Diasporas Vibrancy Border.' *Interrogating Post colonialism: Theory, Text and Context*. Ed. Harish Trivedi and Meenakshi Mukherjee. Shimla: Indian Institute of Advanced Study, 1996. 67-85.

3. Mishra, Vijay. '(B)ordering Naipaul: Indenture History and Diasporic Poetics.' *Diaspora* 5:2 (1996): 189-237.

**Seminar Presenters:**

**A Final Note**

Reading literature is interesting, fun, exciting. Reading the literature of Africa can open up realms of experience quite new for most of us. My hope is that you will leave this class having found a way to deepen and enrich your life experience. The work we do should help you toward that goal. If you are finding it overwhelming, please talk to me ASAP so I can help you manage it and find a way to make it work for you.