

Carleton University
Winter 2019

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Department of English

ENGL 3965A: *Introduction to Postcolonial Theory*
Prerequisites: third-year standing or permission of the department.
Preclusions: None

Fridays / 11:35 a.m. – 2:35 p.m.
Location: *Southam Hall 409*

Instructor: John Coleman
Email: john.coleman3@carleton.ca

Office: DT 1801
Office Hours: Fridays, 10:00 – 11:00 a.m., or by appointment

I. Course description:

This class will introduce students to postcolonial literary theory and critical race studies. Students will become familiar with these approaches and will practice and develop academic communication and research skills. Core topics will include: foundational concepts in postcolonial theory; how literary and cultural texts manifest, perpetuate, and subvert the racial dynamics of the creative industries; and how texts by minoritized and disprivileged artists are shaped – often constrained – by industry practices.

II. Preclusions: None

III. Learning Outcomes:

The purpose of this class is for students to:

- 1) Be introduced to a variety of approaches in postcolonial theory and critical race studies
- 2) Gain familiarity with and explore core tenets of individual theoretical approaches
- 3) Compare, contrast, and appraise different theoretical approaches, emphasizing affinities and contradictions between them
- 4) Learn to produce critically engaged, theoretically guided interpretations of literary and cultural texts
- 5) Practice and develop academic research, writing and communication skills

These learning outcomes are aligned with the following assignments:

Formative Assessment:

Critical Response (2, 5)
Annotated Bibliography (2-5)
Essay Writing Workshop (4, 5)

Summative Assessment:

Pop Assignments (2)

Formative and Summative Assessment:

Reading Responses (1, 2, 5)
Research Essay (2-5)
Participation and attendance (1-5)

IV. Texts:

Required texts to purchase (available at the Carleton Bookstore):

Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How To Give Birth*, ISBN: 978-1905233298

NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names*, ISBN: 978-0-316-23084-1

Other readings:

The additional readings listed below will be made available online through ARES, or on reserve in the library.

V. Course calendar:

Class 1 (January 11)

Introduction to postcolonial theory, critical race studies, and the main themes in the course

Class 2 (January 18)

Robert Dale Parker, "Postcolonial and race studies." *How to Interpret Literature: Critical Theory for Literary and Cultural Studies*, Oxford University Press, 2015, 3rd ed., pp. 285-329.

Edward Said, Introduction. *Orientalism*, Vintage Books, 1979, pp. 1-28.

Class 3 (January 25)

Homi K. Bhabha, Introduction (excerpt). *The Location of Culture*, Routledge, 2008, pp. 1-12.

Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"

Critical Response Due

Class 4 (February 1)

James Procter, "Dwelling Places." *Dwelling Places: Postwar black British writing*, Manchester University Press, 2003, pp 21-68.

George Lamming, "The Emigrants." *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998*, edited by James Procter, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 36-39.

Samuel Selvon, "Finding Piccadilly Circus." *Foreday morning: selected prose 1946-1986*, edited by Kenneth Ramchand and Susheila Nasta, Longman, 1989, pp. 123-126.

Class 5 (February 8)

Beryl Gilroy, "Black Teacher." *Writing Black Britain 1948-1998*, edited by James Procter, Manchester University Press, 2000, pp. 132-139.

Ashley Dawson, "Linton Kwesi Johnson's Dub Poetry and the Political Aesthetics of Carnival in Britain." *Small Axe*, vol. 10, no. 3, 2006, pp. 54-69.

Linton Kwesi Johnson, selected tracks from the album *Forces of Victory*,
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=d0adV2inTVg&start_radio=1&list=RDd0adV2inTVg&t=48

Class 6 (February 15)

Neil Lazarus, "Introduction: The political unconscious of postcolonial studies." *The Postcolonial Unconscious*, Cambridge University Press, 2011, pp. 1-21.

Graham Huggan, Introduction. *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins*, Routledge, 2001, pp. 1-33.

Class 7 (March 1)

Menaka Raman, "Immigrant." *From There To Here: Sixteen True Tales of Immigration to Britain: The Second decibel Penguin Prize Anthology*, Penguin Books, 2007, pp. 1-8.

Michelle Pauli, "Decibel award shortlist announced." *The Guardian*, 23 February 2006,
<https://www.theguardian.com/books/2006/feb/23/news.awardsandprizes>.

Nick Tanner, "Literary prize bows to pressure over racial discrimination." *The Guardian*, 18 January 2007, <https://www.theguardian.com/books/2007/jan/18/news.awardsandprizes>.

Claire Squires, "Publishing Contexts and Market Conditions." *Marketing Literature: The Making of Contemporary Writing in Britain*, Palgrave Macmillan, pp. 19-39.

Class 8 (March 8)

NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (first half)

Dobrota Pucherová, "'A Continent Learns to Tell its Story at Last': Notes on the Caine Prize." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, vol. 48, no. 1, 2012, pp. 13-25.

Annotated Bibliography Due

Class 9 (March 15)

Silvia Federici, "Women, Globalization, and the International Women's Movement." *Revolution at Point Zero: Housework, Reproduction, and Feminist Struggle*, PM Press, 2012, pp. 85-90.

NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (second half)

Class 10 (March 22)

Essay Writing Workshop

Class 11 (March 29)

Anamik Saha, "Locating MIA: 'Race', commodification and the politics of production." *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, vol. 15, no. 6, 2012, pp. 736-752.

MIA, "Jimmy," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HBECisSkAu4>

MIA, "Borders," <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r-Nw7HbaeWY>

Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How To Give Birth* (first half)

Final essay due

Class 12 (April 5)

Warsan Shire, *Teaching My Mother How To Give Birth* (second half)

Sandeep Parmar, "Not a British Subject: Race and Poetry in the UK." *Los Angeles Review of Books*, 6 December 2015, lareviewofbooks.org/article/not-a-british-subject-race-and-poetry-in-the-uk/#!.

Conclusion – Connections between the main themes of the course

VI. Evaluation:

General criteria that influence grading:

All work completed for this course will receive a numerical grade that corresponds to the guidelines set out by the Faculty of Arts:

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

All term work completed for this course will be subject to the following general evaluation criteria:

Each student is encouraged to engage with course material by clearly and effectively expressing nuanced ideas about the details of assigned readings, lecture material, and class discussions. Students are expected to attempt to communicate their ideas through critically informed statements, and to support these statements with concrete textual evidence. Broadly articulated, generalized, or obvious claims will not be interpreted as reflecting a genuine attempt at critical engagement.

Furthermore, it is paramount for students to display a genuine attempt at:

- (a) developing critical reading, writing, and communication skills
- (b) formulating nuanced arguments based on critical engagement with course material

All written assignments designated under “Term Work” will be subject to the following evaluative criteria in addition to any particular criteria stated in each assignment outline:

- 1) Written term work must be guided by a clear argumentative focus, articulated in a thesis statement. A thesis statement is expected to convey a nuanced argumentative position about the texts being analyzed in the assignment. Each thesis’ scope must also reflect an accurate reading of the assignment question and be appropriate for the length of the assignment.

- 2) Written term work is to be presented in MLA citation style and format. This means that all references to texts must be cited parenthetically in your prose, and that your documents are to be formatted following MLA style (double-spaced, 12 point Times New Roman Font, numbered pages, identification info at top left-hand corner of page one).

Students are encouraged to consult the Eighth Edition of the *MLA Handbook*, which is on reserve in the library.

- 3) Significant consideration will be paid to:
 - (a) accuracy in identifying texts, authors, and historical context
 - (b) effective expression and communication of ideas through proper grammar, spelling, punctuation, and sentence and paragraph structure

"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."

Term work:

Critical Response, due in Class 3, 2-3 double-spaced pages, 10% of final grade:

This assignment will provide students with early feedback on how their writing meets the standards of evaluation for this course, and how they will be able to address areas for improvement in future assignments. This is a formal writing assignment, expected to be guided by a thesis statement, and to be academic in tone. Further explanation will be provided in the assignment outline in the second class.

Pop Assignments, written in three unspecified classes, 5% each for a total of 15% of final grade:

In three previously unspecified classes, students will be given either a quiz or a brief assignment based on the assigned readings for that day. Students will be expected to display accurate and extensive knowledge of, and genuine engagement with, details in the readings.

Reading Responses, 1-2 double-spaced pages each, 5% each for a total of 20% of final grade:

On four previously unspecified occasions, students will be asked to come to class with a written response to ideas raised in assigned readings. These responses will function as a space where students can explore their thoughts and work out concepts in relation to course material. Reading responses will be used as the basis for activities during class time, and will be collected for marking.

Annotated Bibliography, due in Class 8, 10% of final grade:

The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to undertake comprehensive research in anticipation of drafting and revising their research essay. Students will be asked to find, cite, and synthesize several academic sources which they plan on including in their essay. Considerable attention will be paid to how well each student formats their annotated bibliography in MLA style. More explanation will be given in the assignment outline well in advance of the due date.

Essay Writing Workshop, conducted in Class 10, 10% of final grade:

Students will be asked to come to class with a detailed outline or draft version of their research essays. The purpose of this workshop is for students to gain constructive feedback from the instructor and their peers. The class will be devoted to carrying out a few activities which will help students strengthen their research essays as they proceed through drafting and revising.

Research Essay, due in Class 11, 5-6 double-spaced pages, 25% of final grade:

Students will write a formal academic essay in response to one of a few writing prompts which the instructor will provide. A given prompt will require each student to choose one of the following general approaches:

- apply theory in the analysis of a literary or cultural text; in other words, use theory as a lens through which to arrive at a critical understanding of the text
- use a reading of a literary or cultural text to better understand theory
- reflect on the limits of a particular theoretical approach; in other words, make an argument for how a theoretical approach needs expanding, or how it has problematic underlying political, ethical or cultural assumptions

Further explanation will be provided in the assignment outline well in advance of the due date.

Other forms of evaluation:

Participation and attendance, 10% of final grade:

Students are expected to come to class with all readings completed, and to reflect thorough knowledge and engagement with readings by being attentive and by participating in class discussions and activities. Students are also encouraged to contribute to this component of their final grade by raising questions or continuing discussions about course material on CULearn.

Policy on handing in assignments: All term work is due in hard copy at the beginning of the class on the date which it is due. No other form of submission, electronic or otherwise, will be accepted unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor, and aside from submissions which conform to the policies on later papers and extensions outlined below.

Late Paper Policy: Term work submitted after the date which it is due must be submitted to the English Department Essay Dropbox (18th floor Dunton Tower), and will be docked 2% per day up until one week after the due date, after which it will receive a grade of zero.

Policy on Extensions and Absences: Extensions for term work will be considered on a case by case basis.

If a student is aware in advance that an extension will be needed, they must provide the instructor with a valid reason at least one week before the due date, and a new due date may be negotiated.

In emergency circumstances within one week of the due date, the instructor must be made aware of the situation and valid reasons necessitating an extension immediately, and a new due date may be negotiated.

For late assignments to be accepted without being docked late marks, official documentation noting the student's inability to attend class and/or complete school work, such as a doctor's note or documentation of a personal emergency, must be provided.

Policy on lost assignments: If a student claims to have handed in an assignment in class or to the English Department Essay Dropbox, and the instructor has not received the assignment, the student must email the instructor an electronic version of the assignment within two hours of email request by the instructor.

Policy on Attendance: Students are expected to attend each class, and to come prepared by having read all assigned material and being ready to discuss it.

Policy on handing back assignments: The instructor will strive to hand back all graded assignments within two weeks of them being submitted. Graded assignments will always be handed back in class, unless other pickup arrangements are made.

VII. Statement on Plagiarism

PLAGIARISM

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:

- 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 occurs."

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.

More information on the university's Academic Integrity Policy can be found here:
<https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

VII. Requests for Academic Accommodation

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

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 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.
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 is 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: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

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>