Engl 463: Postcolonial Literatures

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Office Hours: W 11:30-12:30 or by appointment
Class Meetings: W 1:00-3:50, HH 150

Course Description:
Postcolonial literature and criticism emerges out of a need to understand, so as to critique, the ramifications of colonialism in its various, most often culturally devastating, forms. As such, postcolonial literature and criticism becomes an expression of resistance, a “writing back” to the Empire which seeks the acknowledgement of wrongs committed. The texts chosen for this course attest to the desire to understand and, thereby, to recover from colonial interference and its traumatic results. Studying African, Australian, New Zealand, and British-Indian literature, this course will deal with such issues and topics as: cultural trauma, the ‘post’ in postcolonialism, subjectivity (racial, cultural, gendered, etc.), cultural hybridity, migration (displacement, in-between-ness), nationalism/community, and writing as resistance. To further our understanding of this body of literature, critical articles will also be discussed each week. Therefore, expect this course to have a somewhat demanding, but exciting, reading-load.

Our course will combine lectures and seminar-style learning, with every student required to actively participate in class discussions and to serve once as a co-facilitator for our discussion of a critical article.

Course Objectives:
• develop one’s knowledge of contemporary postcolonial literature and criticism, focussing particularly on African, Australian, New Zealand, and British-Indian/Pakistani literature and discussions surrounding these literatures
• develop the skills of close critical reading
• enable students to communicate their interpretations effectively both orally and in writing
• develop leadership skills by requiring students to facilitate discussions of course material
• build research skills and the application of research methodologies, including developing the skills of proper MLA documentation
• offer the opportunity for students to build their essay writing skills, including effective argumentation, structure, and grammar
• allow students to experience, and hopefully enjoy, interesting and challenging literary texts
Required Texts:
The following texts are available at the UW Bookstore.


Course Reader: Engl 463 Readings

Assignment Schedule:
Seminar Facilitation (including outline and 2 electronic handouts) – Various Due Dates – 25%
Proposal – Due: June 16 – 5%
Annotated Bibliography – Due: June 16 – 10%
Final Essay – 10-12 pages – Due: July 28 – 30%
Take-Home Exam – Due: August 6 – 20%
Participation/Professionalism – 10%

Assignment Descriptions:
Seminar Facilitation (25%) – Various Due Dates

20% Facilitation
5% Required Paperwork (3 items)

Facilitation:
In groups of three or four, you will be responsible for facilitating the discussion of one critical article. You are responsible for facilitating a 50 minute discussion (approximately; 45-65 minutes will be considered acceptable). The week that you facilitate, you and your partners should be the resident experts on the article, meaning that you should do some background research and should study the article closely. However, you are not to offer a formal presentation (apart from perhaps a 5 minute introduction), but instead are required to lead the class in their learning about the assigned article. In other words, your aim should be to develop strategies or activities that will encourage each student to participate actively. Remember it is your job to ensure that everyone gets a chance to contribute.

The discussion, however, should proceed in a logical and well-organized manner, meaning that you should designate particular topics for discussion. You likely will not be able to cover all of the salient points of an article in a 50 minute seminar, but you should choose effective topics of discussion that will allow you to represent the article’s most important features.

The following will be considered when evaluating the quality of your seminar:
• Demonstrated knowledge of and ability to handle the rhetorical situation (know your audience, purpose, and how to convey your ethos)
• Accurate understanding and demonstrated command of the article and any relevant supplementary information
• Logical and effective organization
• Demonstrated leadership qualities (confidence, clarity, rapport with classmates)
• Ability to engage classmates and motivate their participation
• Demonstrated ability to work as a cohesive group
• Creativity of seminar design
• Use of any supplementary teaching strategies (multi-media, blackboard); (note: using multi-media, etc. is not required, but could add to your seminars; remember though, if not used well, it could also detract from your seminar)

Required Paperwork (3 items):
1. Outline:
   By the Friday BEFORE you facilitate, you must submit an outline of your plans to me by email. This outline must indicate the following: the particular topics of discussion; your goals for the class (what do you intend the class to accomplish/learn? – e.g. We will discuss item a, item b, and item c, hoping to show x, y, z . . .); and the strategies you intend to use to accomplish these goals (e.g. We will ask the following question prompts: . . .; or, we will ask the class to perform the following activities: . . .).

2. Handout 1
   By the Friday BEFORE you facilitate, you must provide me with an electronic handout (.doc or .pdf would be best) that will be posted on UW-ACE. This handout should help direct your classmates’ reading so that they’re prepared to participate actively during your seminar. Tell them briefly what they need to do to be prepared for your seminar, giving them a sense of your plans.

3. Handout 2
   By the class one week AFTER you facilitate, you must provide me with another electronic handout (same formats as above) that:
   • offers a brief, point-form summary of the most important features of the article;
   • explains any historical or theoretical context for the discussion;
   • guides your classmates towards any future reading they may want to conduct.
     • In your section regarding future reading, you need to offer 5 sources that you think are good resources for your classmates regarding any of the key issues represented in your article. You will offer your classmates the necessary bibliographic info so that they can find the source if they want. You will also offer a very brief (maximum 3 sentences) description of the source that explains its importance/relevance.

This handout should be something that helps your classmates in their understanding of the article and will prove a vital resource both in their studying for the take home exam and in their possible future use of the article.

Note about grading of seminars:
Except in extreme cases, all group members will receive the same mark for their seminar facilitation and required paperwork.

Being absent on the day of your group’s seminar is unacceptable except in very extreme and documentable situations. Your group would be responsible for proceeding without you. If you are faced with an extreme situation and can provide documentation, you will be responsible for meeting with me as soon as possible to determine the course of action, potentially including such results as receiving a different grade than your group and/or the completion of alternate work. Consultation with all affected group members may be required before a course of action is confirmed.
Proposal (5%) and Annotated Bibliography (10%) – Due: June 16th
More detailed guidelines will be provided on UW-ACE, but this two-part assignment will require that you construct an effective proposal and annotated bibliography that announces your intentions for your final essay. The purpose of these assignments is to ensure that you’re conducting effective research and setting yourself up with an argument that will result in an effective final essay.

The proposal will require that you indicate your proposed thesis and explain the main ideas that will structure your paper’s argument.

The annotated bibliography is designed to give you practice in conducting effective research and also requires that you develop your knowledge of the MLA style of documentation. All errors in bibliographic citations will be penalized, so be sure to pay close attention to accuracy. For this assignment, you must locate five secondary sources (all must be outside of course texts) and write brief descriptions of each (3-4 sentences for each entry). These annotations will indicate the key argument of the source and how you could use the argument in your final essay. The purpose of this assignment is to help in your research for the final essay by giving you an opportunity to evaluate your sources and decide which ones are most valuable to your work. Only sources located through the Library Databases, the Library Catalogue, or RACER are acceptable.

Final Essay (30%) – 10-12 pages – Due: July 28
This essay will require that you discuss one or two texts from the course critically. Using scholarly articles to inform your essay, you will develop a critically engaged argument that assesses the significance of your two texts and/or the significance of their relationship to one another. For this assignment, you must use at least two sources from outside of course readings and at least three critical sources total. More detailed guidelines, complete with a list of suggested topics will be provided by May 19th.

Take Home Exam (20%) – Due: August 6
This take home exam will require that you discuss course themes and discuss texts that you did not choose to write on in earlier assignments. Be prepared to have your knowledge of the full course tested. In preparing this assignment, you may not consult your classmates in any way. Also, because this is an examination, no extensions will be granted nor will late exams be accepted. The exam will be available of UW-ACE as of July 21st.

Participation/Professionalism – (10%)?
This grade represents your in-class (seminar and lecture) performance. It requires that you attend all class meetings (see policy on unexcused absences), contribute to any in-class group work, and participate actively in class discussions. I have included professionalism as part of this grade to ensure that you also earn credit for respecting both your teacher and your fellow classmates. That means attendance is vital; treating others with respect is necessary (no cell phone interruptions, text messaging, non-course related computer use will be acceptable); participating in, without dominating, discussions is to be valued; and most importantly, paying attention while others speak is expected.

You will be assigned a mark out of ten for each week of the course and then this mark will be averaged to determine your final mark. Since successful seminar facilitation depends on active participation and the respect of your fellow classmates is paramount, failure to attend results in a 0 for the week (unless, of course, your absence has been excused in which case you can make-up your participation marks).
Consequently, as you may imagine, any unexcused absence affects your mark drastically. As well, if you attend class, but don’t actively contribute to lecture or the seminar, then you can expect approximately 5/10 for the week.

**Policy for Making-up Participation Marks in the Event of an Excused Absence**

Since participation marks rest quite heavily on your attendance (see syllabus for grading policies), it’s in your best interest to seek an excused absence. To receive an excused absence, you must tell me of your absence beforehand or in the case of a last-minute, unavoidable absence, you must let me know as soon as reasonably possible (waiting until the next class meeting is not acceptable). For any excused absence, be prepared to provide documentation.

In the event that you have received an excused absence for a whole class meeting or a part of a class meeting, you will be responsible for submitting a response to whatever reading material you have missed discussing in class. So, if you’ve been excused from a whole class, prepare a response to both the critical article and the primary text; if you’ve just missed discussing the critical text, prepare a response to just that critical article, or if you’ve missed discussing the literary text, prepare a response just addressing it.

Your response can be 1-2 pages (preferably double-spaced).

You have until the next class meeting after your excused absence to submit this response. No late responses will be accepted.

Remember the opportunity to submit a response to make-up for participation grades is only available to those whose absences have been excused.

**Course Schedule:**

We will follow this schedule as closely as possible, but occasionally one week’s topic may carry over into the next week. Please have all the reading for the week done by the beginning of the week so that you will be able to participate fully in class discussions.

Readings marked with a (CR) are part of the Course Reader.

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<td>Orientation</td>
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<td>Introduction: Post-colonialism</td>
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<td>May 12</td>
<td>Achebe, <em>Things Fall Apart</em></td>
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<td>Preparing Effective Seminars</td>
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<td>May 19</td>
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<td>as of May 19: Essay Guidelines available on UW-ACE</td>
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<td>Seminar 1: Appiah, “African Identities” (CR)</td>
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<td>May 26</td>
<td><em>Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman</em> (CR)</td>
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<td>Jun 2</td>
<td><em>Soyinka, Death and the King's Horseman</em> (CR)</td>
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<td>Continuing Development of Research Methodologies</td>
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<td>Jun 16</td>
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<td>Jun 16: Proposal and Annotated Bibliography Due</td>
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<td>and Screening of parts of the film</td>
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<td>Jun 23</td>
<td><em>Duff, Once Were Warriors</em></td>
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<td>Seminar 5: Glissant, “The Quarrel with History” (CR)</td>
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<td>Jun 30</td>
<td><em>Duff, Once Were Warriors</em></td>
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<td>Emecheta, <em>Second-Class Citizen</em></td>
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<td>Seminar 6: Marangoly George, “Prologue: All Fiction is Homesickness” (CR)</td>
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<td>Jul 7</td>
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<td>Seminar 7: Boyce Davies, “From ‘Post-coloniality’ to Uprising Textualities: Black Women Writing and the Critique of Empire” (CR)</td>
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<td>Seminar 8: Thiong’O “The Language of African Literature” (CR)</td>
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<td>Jul 14</td>
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<td>Kureishi, <em>The Buddha of Suburbia</em></td>
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<td>Seminar 9: Wah, “Half-Bred Poetics” (CR)</td>
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<td>Jul 21</td>
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Assignment Format:
All assignments must follow MLA format as described in The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers (6th or 7th ed.). Some details regarding MLA formatting will be discussed in class, but you should as well consult the MLA Handbook yourself.

Special Needs:
Students with documented or suspected disabilities (i.e., physical, learning, or sensory disabilities or chronic medical conditions) are encouraged to contact the Office for Persons with Disabilities (OPD) to determine eligibility for their services. OPD is located in Needles Hall 1132, 519-888-4567 ext. 35082.

Academic Offences:
Plagiarism and cheating are serious academic offences that carry grave consequences.

Plagiarism in part can involve appropriating the work of another and claiming it as one’s own. Common incidences of plagiarism include, but are not restricted to, copying or downloading published essays, or parts of published essays; copying or downloading essays, or parts of essays, by other students; and purchasing essays on-line. Plagiarism, too, can result from a misuse of sources: for example, a failure to indicate material from other sources by using quotation marks; a failure to offer proper in-text documentation of sources (author and page references); and a failure to provide a works cited page. Please be sure to review your papers carefully to ensure that you have used your texts fairly and documented them appropriately. Don’t let carelessness lead you to a serious academic offence.

Avoiding Academic Offences:
All students registered in courses at the University of Waterloo are expected to know what constitutes academic integrity, to avoid committing academic offenses, and to take responsibility for their actions. Students who are unsure whether an action constitutes an offense, or who need help in learning how to avoid offenses (e.g., plagiarism, cheating), or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course professor or other individuals like the Department Chair.

Review as well the following (as appears on all Faculty of Arts syllabi):

Academic Integrity: In order to maintain a culture of academic integrity, members of the University of Waterloo community are expected to promote honesty, trust, fairness, respect and responsibility. [Check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/ for more information.]

Discipline: A student is expected to know what constitutes academic integrity [check www.uwaterloo.ca/academicintegrity/] to avoid committing an academic offence, and to take responsibility for his/her actions. A student who is unsure whether an action constitutes an offence, or who needs help in learning how to avoid offences (e.g., plagiarism, cheating) or about “rules” for group work/collaboration should seek guidance from the course instructor, academic advisor, or the undergraduate Associate Dean. For information on categories of offences and types of penalties, students should refer to Policy 71, Student Discipline, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy71.htm. For typical penalties check Guidelines for the Assessment of Penalties, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/guidelines/penaltyguidelines.htm.
**Appeals:** A decision made or penalty imposed under Policy 70 (Student Petitions and Grievances) (other than a petition) or Policy 71 (Student Discipline) may be appealed if there is a ground. A student who believes he/she has a ground for an appeal should refer to Policy 72 (Student Appeals) www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy72.htm.

**Grievance:** A student who believes that a decision affecting some aspect of his/her university life has been unfair or unreasonable may have grounds for initiating a grievance. Read Policy 70, Student Petitions and Grievances, Section 4, www.adm.uwaterloo.ca/infosec/Policies/policy70.htm. When in doubt please be certain to contact the department’s administrative assistant who will provide further assistance.