

# ENGL.3790.201: POSTCOLONIAL LITERATURE – COURSE SYLLABUS

Instructor: Professor S. J. Kim

Fall 2015

Days/Times: Mon/Wed 2-3:15pm

Classroom: O'Leary 485

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Tues 12-2pm or by appointment

"I think that if *all* English literatures could be studied together, a shape would emerge which would truly reflect the new shape of the language in the world, and we could see that English Literature has never been in better shape, because the world language now also possesses a world literature, which is proliferating in every conceivable direction."

- Salman Rushdie

**Course Description:** In this course, we will study literatures written in English from formerly colonized nations in their historical and cultural contexts. We will also examine central concepts, questions, and debates in postcolonial studies. Some questions we will consider include: What histories produce postcolonial literature as well as the field of postcolonial studies itself? What literary forms and languages do postcolonial writers use, and why? How do they negotiate between colonial and indigenous cultural traditions—and when, why, and how does that binary begin to break down? How are literary form and politics related to one another? What are some problems with the very term "postcolonial"?

## Diversity and Cultural Awareness (DCA) and Diverse Literary Traditions Requirements

This course meets the Essential Learning Outcome of *Diversity and Cultural Awareness* as defined under the Core Curriculum requirements. As such, the course will assist students in developing a set of cognitive, affective, and behavioral skills and characteristics that will help them to engage in effective and appropriate interactions involving diverse cultural and social groups in various contexts.

Additionally, this course meets the English Department's Diverse Literary Traditions Requirement. In keeping with UMass Lowell's mission "to enhance the intellectual, personal and cultural development of its students," literature concentrators must take at least one course that satisfies a requirement for "diverse literary traditions." These courses explore authors and texts through the historically under-represented perspectives of race, ethnicity, gender, disability, post-coloniality, and sexuality. Certain diversity courses may also significantly address non-western literary traditions. Courses satisfying this requirement take as their main focus literary traditions that respond to and represent voices outside the traditional canon, providing students with an opportunity to consider the complex power dynamics that influence literature and the academic field of literary study and to consider the way literary texts can engage and influence these same power dynamics.

NOTE: This is a 3 credit course, as defined by federal regulation. Each week, you should expect to complete 6 hours of work outside of class meetings; this schedule will continue for 15 weeks, for a total of 90 hours of outside-of-class work.

## Required Texts:

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*. Anchor/Doubleday, 1958. ISBN 385474547

Anand, Mulk Raj. *Untouchable*. Penguin, 1935. ISBN 140183957

Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Norton, 1966. ISBN 978-0393310481

Hodge, Merle. *Crick Crack Monkey*. Waveland, 1970. ISBN 978-1-4786-0659-8

Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children*. Random House, 1981. ISBN 978-0812976533

Dangarembga, Tsitsi. *Nervous Conditions*. Lynne Rienner, 1988. ISBN 0954702336

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Devil on the Cross*. Heinemann, 1980. ISBN 978-0435908447

\*\* Various electronic readings available on course Blackboard site – marked [ER] on syllabus

**Course Objectives:** Upon completion of this course, students should be able to:

- Identify and discuss key postcolonial authors and texts in their historical and cultural contexts
- Define and deploy central terms and concepts in postcolonial studies (e.g. nationalism, hybridity, discourse, etc.)
- Read, comprehend, and engage with postcolonial literary criticism
- Write literary analysis essays conforming to MLA formatting guidelines, which includes all of the following skills:
  - Explicate/close-read a text
  - produce clearly written and well-argued papers in academic prose
  - place course subject matter in broader literary or social contexts
  - evaluate research sources for authority, accuracy, and appropriateness
  - engage with relevant critical discourse
  - synthesize multiple sources in a research paper with correct and appropriate documentation of all sources

### Required Assignments:

**% of final grade:**

First Essay	15
Second Essay	20
Final Research Project	25
Paper Prospectus 1%	
In-Class Presentation 3%	
Final Essay 21%	
Final Exam	20
Sunday Night Discussion	
Board Posts (10 required)	10
Keywords Collaborative Project	5
Participation, In-class Writings, Quizzes, etc.	5

→ Specific grading criteria for each assignment will accompany the assignment.

**Final Grades** (*no* exceptions):

94-100=A: Superior work, *highest quality*  
90-93=A-: High Honors Quality  
87-89 = B+: High Quality  
83-86= B: Basic Honors Quality  
80-82=B-: Below Honors Quality  
77-79=C+: Above Satisfactory Quality  
73-76=C: Satisfactory  
70-72=C-: Below Satisfactory  
67-69=D+: Above Minimum Passing  
60-66=D: Minimum Passing  
below 60=F: Failed

**Prerequisites:** ENGL.1010 and ENGL.1020 (College Writing I and II) or equivalent required. I strongly recommend that you take *ENGL.2000: Critical Methods of Literary Inquiry* before or at least concurrently with this course.

## COURSE POLICIES:

**Classroom environment and preparedness:** Our class time will be divided between lectures and class discussions of the reading assignments. In order to have open class discussions, we must create a classroom environment that allows for the open exchange of ideas, opinions, and questions. In this class, and in *all* classes at the University of Massachusetts, Lowell, students are expected to exhibit professional and respectful behavior that is conducive to a mutually beneficial learning environment in the classroom. Examples of inappropriate behavior include: **text messaging**, listening to music, cell phone use (other than the campus alert system), **late arrivals**, **early departures**, **use of laptops for other than class**

**purposes**, disrespectful comments or behavior, intentional disruptions, failure to follow faculty directives. Students in violation of these standards may be asked to leave class and/or be referred to the Dean of Students for disciplinary action. Note: Standards of classroom conduct apply equally to *all online class forums*.

In order to have substantive discussions, it is essential that you come to class prepared, having read the day's assignment carefully and critically. If you find a particular text difficult and have a hard time forming an opinion or interpretation, at least be ready to ask questions about it.

→ **YOU MUST BRING TO CLASS THE READINGS ASSIGNED FOR THAT DAY** (i.e. listed on the course syllabus). You may bring hard or electronic versions of electronic readings.

**Attendance:** Attendance is required. You are allowed up to **FOUR (4)** absences with no penalty. Each additional absence will *lower your grade by 1/2 letter grade*. Save your absences for when you really need them, such as illness or other unavoidable conflicts. ***Absences will only be excused in the case of jury or military duty*** (documentation required). If you anticipate missing consecutive classes due to a serious illness or crisis, please let me know promptly via e-mail. Otherwise, I may assume you've simply dropped the course.

- **BE ON TIME** – Class begins at the time noted at the top of the syllabus. Arriving late to class constitutes a serious distraction, whether I am lecturing or whether we are involved in a class discussion. If you arrive after I have taken role, *you* are responsible for making sure I have noted your attendance (after class); otherwise you may be counted absent for the day. Unless you obtain permission from me *beforehand*, 2 late arrivals = 1 absence.
- If you miss class, ***YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR ANY MATERIAL MISSED***. Get class notes from classmates, and all handouts will be posted on Blackboard.

#### **Communication:**

- **Email:** I regularly use email to communicate with individual students and with the class. You are *required* to check your UML email account regularly to make sure you aren't missing any announcements or important information. If class is cancelled for any reason, I will contact you by email to let you know how to proceed. **The best way to contact me is via email ([sue\\_kim@uml.edu](mailto:sue_kim@uml.edu)).**
- **Blackboard:** I will post all course handouts, electronic readings, assignment directions, grading rubrics, and grades on our course Blackboard site. You have already been entered into the course, titled "**UML Postcolonial Literature – Sec 201 FA13 SKim**." To sign into Blackboard, see handout "Blackboard Access Information for Students."
- **UML MyAlert:** If you haven't already, it's a good idea to sign up for text and/or email messages from UML's alert system, which lets you know about urgent, timely notices such as weather delays or closures and health, environmental or criminal threats on campus. Visit [www.uml.edu/myAlert](http://www.uml.edu/myAlert) to verify existing contact information, manage your account and choose how you receive messages. Simply log on with your UMass Lowell email account and password. Alternately, you can use the University Cancellation Line: 978-934-2121.

**Instructional Resources and Disability Accommodations:** The Centers for Learning and Academic Support Services provide many resources, including tutoring in writing: <http://class.uml.edu/>. In accordance with University policy and the ADA, I will provide accommodation for students with documented disabilities. If you have a disability, please contact the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible. Their office is on North Campus, in Cumnock Hall C4, phone: 978-934-4574, e-mail: [Disability@uml.edu](mailto:Disability@uml.edu). Their website is: <http://www.uml.edu/student-services/Disability/default.aspx>. This documentation is confidential.

## **COURSEWORK:**

**Papers:** You will write **two shorter essays** (double-spaced; *minimum* 1200 words, or about 4 pages) and **one longer research essay** (double-spaced; *minimum* 1800 words, or about 6-7 pages). These assignments are designed to develop your ability to write about literature, with and without secondary sources, and to assess your understanding of course material. Each essay will require an arguable, focused **thesis**; **analysis** of **textual evidence**; and **organized, logical development**. Specific instructions will be distributed for each response essay.

- **Late papers:** Papers are due **at the start of class** on the assigned due date. Unless pre-approved by me, after the time they're due counts as "late." One letter grade will be dropped for each 24 hours your essay is late (i.e. if the paper is due at 2pm and you turn it in at 2:15pm, it will be lowered by one letter grade). I will occasionally grant extensions if you make arrangements with me *at least 48 hours* before the due date.
- **Formatting:** Papers should be **double-spaced**, **size 12 Times Roman** font, stapled, and titled, with **1-inch** margins and page numbers. They must follow **MLA style** and use gender-neutral language.
- **Style, Grammar, and Mechanics:** I expect you to know the basics of writing essays; so, for example, if your essay is rife with grammatical, typographical, and/or stylistic errors, ***you can expect no better than a C at the very most***. If you have concerns about your writing, please see me well before the due date of essays.
- **Essay Grades:** Grading rubrics for each response essay will be distributed with the assignment. For overall essay grading guidelines, see "Grading Scale for Essays" on Blackboard.

**Sunday Night Discussion Board Posts:** You will write brief (one paragraph or so) responses to the readings and **post them on** the appropriate **Blackboard Discussion Board** by **9pm each Sunday night**.

- ***You are required to do 10*** (1 point each).
- You can post more than once per week, but you can only get credit for ***one response per week***. (I.e. you may *not* do them all at the end of the semester.)
- If you post responses for more than 10 weeks, additional posts will be counted as ½ point extra credit.
- In order to receive credit, **all posts must point to specific places in the text** (quotes, page numbers, etc.) and be thoughtful and substantive (i.e. you can't just write "Wow I hate this book"). See guidelines below.
- Your post may be in response to other students' posts, my question(s), or a new thread (i.e. format is flexible; the emphasis is on quality of response).

Some Possible Options for Discussion Board Posts:

- DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:** Sometimes I will assign a specific question(s) to which everyone must respond. At other times, I will distribute general reading/discussion questions that you can use as jumping-off points for your response.
- A QUESTION:** Your question can be big/general or small/specific. An example of a big/general question: "What are the reasons Nwoye converts to Christianity?" An example of a small/specific question would be: "What does it mean that something inside Nwoye 'give[s] way' after Ikemefuna is killed (61-2)?" Questions should be questions of interpretation, not questions of fact that you can answer by looking up a word in a dictionary. When you raise a question(s), you also should hazard an answer, even if it's a guess, but the more genuine the question, the better. Be sure to include **page numbers** and/or quotes from relevant places in the text.
- AN OBSERVATION/INTERPRETATION:** If you identify a trend in the text or interpret a particular character, event, or scene a particular way, you can write about it and share it with your classmates. For instance, you might note the constant, intense attention to domestic spaces in *Nervous Conditions* and note a few key episodes having to do with this theme (include **page numbers** and/or quotes).

**A PASSAGE:** A particular passage that you want to discuss for any reason: you didn't fully understand it and want to talk about further; you think it sums up important thematic or formal aspects of the book; it just struck you and

you want to be sure we discuss it in class. Briefly cite the passage (you don't have to copy out the entire quote, particularly if it's long) and explain your choice (e.g. why you're point out this passage). Be sure to include **page numbers**.

**Keywords Collaborative Project:** We will be investigating some keywords, or key concepts, in postcolonial literary criticism, such as nationalism, neo-imperialism, magical realism, and historiographic metafiction. You will be paired with a partner and will be assigned a concept; then you will post a preliminary definition and discussion on Blackboard, which we will then discuss and edit as a class. The goal is (A) to develop your understanding of key concepts in postcolonial studies and (B) to produce a study guide for the final exam. Further instructions will be distributed.

**Participation:** The participation grade includes class discussions, group work, in-class writings, and reading quizzes (if necessary). Participation will be graded more on the *quality* – not necessarily the quantity – of your contributions. Participation also includes online assignments (not including the Keywords Collaborative Project).

**Final Exam:** The course final exam will be during the final exam period (Dec. 11-19, 2013), and it will be in essay format, closed-book, and cumulative for the entire semester. I will give you a comprehensive study guide for the exam.

**UML Academic Integrity Policy:** *All students are responsible for their own academic integrity.* Plagiarism, *whether intentional or not*, is an offense of the highest order and will not be tolerated. Please make sure you have read the academic policies of the University of Massachusetts Lowell. These are found at [http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic\\_dishonesty.htm](http://www.uml.edu/catalog/undergraduate/policies/academic_dishonesty.htm).

#### **TIPS ON READING LITERATURE, ESP NOVELS:**

While many of you may be old hats at reading and taking notes, it never hurts to review strategies. Listed below are some guides to help you read actively and take notes:

- Cornell College website on How to Read Closely: Making Sense Out of Novels (<http://www.cornellcollege.edu/academic-support-and-advising/study-tips/How%20to%20Read%20Closely%20Making%20Sense%20Out%20of%20Novels.shtml>)
- The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL) also has some good tips for taking notes while reading (<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/713/07/>; see also the link to “Writing About Fiction”)
- When taking notes on longer, more complex texts, it's often helpful to keep both 1) a running list of overall issues and/or questions *as well as* 2) specific passages with specific issues (examples from Joseph Heller's *Catch-22*):
  - 1) Issues can include short notes like, “How are we supposed to feel about Yossarian? Are we supposed to identify with him or condemn him? What is Heller's purpose in creating such an unorthodox protagonist?” or “Heller could have made the point that the army is problematic and inefficient in one sentence. Why does he drag it out into hundreds of pages? What particular examples does he use to show the military's inefficiency? Are these problems specific to the military, or does it have to do with other things?” or “The prose depicts women as sexual objects, but is that what we're really supposed to come away with? Does the text support this view or undermine it?”
  - 2) Specific passages might be listed in a manner as follows:
    - 77-8 char of Clevinger (academically smart & politically liberals but DUMB) –why?
    - 165-6 really weird description of women as purely sexual
    - 247-8 Milo is god of the universe?—ironic?

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## SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS

Readings should be completed by date listed.

### **Week 1      UNIT I: The Empire Writes Back**

W 9/4      Course Introduction: "What is Postcolonial Literature? What is Postcolonial Studies?"

In-Class: Writing Assessment

### **Week 2**

M 9/9      VIRTUAL CLASS (NO IN-CLASS MEETING) – directions will be distributed

*Things Fall Apart*, Part I

[ER] Gikandi, Simon. "African Literature and the Colonial Factor." *African Literature: An Anthology of Criticism and Theory*. Ed. Tejumola Olaniyan and Ato Quayson. Malden: Blackwell, 2007. 54-59.

W 9/11      finish *Things Fall Apart*

[ER] Jeyifo, Biodun. "Okonkwo and His Mother: *Things Fall Apart* and Issues of Gender in the Constitution of African Postcolonial Discourse." *Callaloo* 16.4 (Autumn 1993): 847-58.

### **Week 3**

M 9/16      Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable* (to p. 121, including E. M. Forster's Preface)

W 9/18      finish *Untouchable*

[ER] Excerpt from Mukherjee, Arun. "The Exclusions of Postcolonial Theory and Mulk Raj Anand's *Untouchable*: A Case Study." *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 22.3 (July 1991): 27-48.

### **Week 4**

M 9/23      Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, through about 2/3 of Part II (to p. 124)

W 9/25      finish Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

[ER] Parry, Benita. "Two Native Voices in *Wide Sargasso Sea*." 1987. *Wide Sargasso Sea: Norton Critical Edition*. Ed. Judith L. Raiskin. New York: Norton, 1999. 247-50.

### **Week 5**

M 9/30      *Crick Crack, Monkey*, through ch. 17 (to p. 91)

[ER] Booker, M. Keith and Dubravka Juraga. "Merle Hodge, *Crick Crack, Monkey* (Trinidad, 1970)." *The Caribbean Novel in English: An Introduction*. Portsmouth: Heinemann, 2001. 50-63.

### **W 10/2      ESSAY 1 DUE**

finish *Crick Crack, Monkey*

[ER] Gikandi, Simon. "Narration in the Post-Colonial Moment: Merle Hodge's *Crick Crack, Monkey*." Ed. Ian Adam and Helen Tiffin. *Past the Last Post: Theorizing Post-Colonialism and Post-Modernism*. Calgary: U of Calgary P, 1990. 13-22.

### **Week 6      UNIT II: Post-Colonial?: Arrested Decolonization and Late Capitalism**

M 10/7      Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Book I, through "Hit-the-Spittoon" (to p. 52)

[ER] Rushdie, Salman. "'Errata': Or Unreliable Narration in *Midnight's Children*." *Imaginary Homelands: Essays and Criticism 1981-1991*. New York: Penguin, 1991.

W 10/9 *Midnight's Children*, finish Book I (p. 53-133)

**Week 7**

M 10/14 NO CLASSES (UML CLOSED)

W 10/16 *Midnight's Children*, Book II, through "My Tenth Birthday" (p. 137-237)  
[ER] Hutcheon, Linda. "Historiographic Metafiction: The Pastime of Past Time." *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction*. New York: Routledge, 1988. 105-123.

**Week 8**

M 10/21 *Midnight's Children*, Book II, through "Movements Performed by Peppercorns" (p. 238-336)

W 10/23 *Midnight's Children*, finish Book II, through "How Saleem Achieved Purity" (p. 337-393)

**Week 9**

M 10/28 *Midnight's Children*, Book III, through "A Wedding" (p. 397-484)

W 10/30 finish *Midnight's Children* (p. 485-533)

**Week 10**

M 11/4 **ESSAY 2 DUE**  
Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*, ch. 1-3 (through p. 57)

W 11/6 *Nervous Conditions*, ch. 4-7 (p. 58- 121)  
[ER] Okonkwo, Christopher. "Space Matters: Form and Narrative in Tsitsi Dangaremba's *Nervous Conditions*." *Research in African Literatures* 34.2 (Summer 2003): 53-74.

**Week 11**

M 11/11 NO CLASS (UML CLOSED)

W 11/13 finish *Nervous Conditions* (p. 122-208)  
[ER] Fanon, Frantz. "The Negro and Psychopathology." *Literary Theory: An Anthology*. Ed. Julie Rivkin and Michael Ryan. Malden: Blackwell, 2010. 462-9. Excerpt from *Black Skin, White Masks*. Trans. Charles Lam Markmann. New York: Grove Weidenfeld, 1967.

→ W 11/13 – Last day for students to withdraw from courses with a grade of "W"

**Week 12**

M 11/18 **RESEARCH PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE**  
Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Devil on the Cross*, ch.1-ch. 4 (through p. 127)

W 11/20 *Devil on the Cross*, ch. 5 (p. 127-153)  
[ER] Fanon, Frantz. "On National Culture." *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman. New York: Columbia University Press, 1994. 36-52. Excerpt from *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York: Penguin, 1967.

**Week 13**

M 11/25 finish *Devil on the Cross* (p. 153-254)

W 11/27 NO CLASS

**Week 14**

M 12/2      Final Research Project Presentations

W 12/4      Final Research Project Presentations

**Week 15**

M 12/9      **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**

W 12/11    Final Exam Review

**→ FINAL EXAM during Finals Period (Dec. 13-19, 2013)**



**Keywords Collaborative Project**

**Objective:** To help you understand key terms and concepts in postcolonial studies. Many of

these terms are also common in literary and cultural studies in general, so this exercise will help you read and engage literary criticism.

**Directions:** Each of you will be assigned a keyword; two or more of you may be assigned the same term. You can divvy up the assignment any way you want; one person can work on the definitions and the other can find passages in the text, or you can collaborate on each section (each person finds a quote or two and you combine). But you must equally contribute.

Rather than thinking of a singular or fixed definition for each of these terms, think of these keywords as a pointing to a cluster of issues, questions, problems, and debates. We will seek a general baseline description of the term, but the goal here is for you to see how these clusters of issues permeate both the literature and the criticism. Also, there will almost always be sub-themes/-terms/-issues to discuss, so you can make note of these in your keyword sheet.

- I. Read related excerpts from Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* and/or other sources, which will be **posted on Blackboard**. See below for guidelines for other sources and suggestions.
- II. Put together a **keyword sheet** with **all** of the following:
  1. A brief **definition** of the term
  2. 2-3 **definitional quotes** from Loomba and/or other sources
  3. 3-4 relevant **passages** from the primary text that we're reading
    - these may demonstrate the definition and/or demonstrate how the concept/term is complicated in reality
- III. Post your **keyword sheet** on Blackboard:
  1. Go to our Blackboard site and click on "KEYWORDS Collaborative Project"
  2. click on your term and post your sheet on the appropriate **Wiki** (either as attachment or pasted in field)
- IV. Present in class for discussion on your assigned date. We'll discuss and revise as needed.
  1. In your discussion of the keywords, try to make links to other keywords and texts that we've discussed.
- V. These **keyword sheets** will serve as study guides for the Final Exam.

**KEYWORDS** (we may add more if we find other key terms that need further explanation):

ideology	gender
hegemony	nationalism
discourse (and discourse analysis)	race (constructions of racial difference)
historiographic metafiction	hybridity
magical realism	subjectivity
neo-imperialism	The Other
class (and capitalism)	

→ I will model the first three: ideology, hegemony, and discourse

**Sources:**

- Our primary source will be Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism* (Random House, 1997) – I will put electronic readings for each keyword on Blackboard.
- Some other good sources (but not all of them will have entries on your specific term):
  - The Imperial Archive: Key Concepts in Postcolonial Studies (Queen's University): <http://www.qub.ac.uk/imperial/key-concepts/key-concepts.htm>
  - Emory University's "Postcolonial Studies" website: <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/index.html>
  - University of Chicago's "Theories of Media" website: <http://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/navigation.htm>
  - UC Santa Barbara's "Voice of the Shuttle" page of links on postcolonial studies (hit-or-miss – some of the links may not work): <http://vos.ucsb.edu/browse.asp?id=2089>
- You may use other sources, but they should be *reliable, academic* sources. That means books must be peer-reviewed and by a reputable (preferably academic) publisher, and websites should end in ".edu" (university website) and have a clear author/source.

## Directions for Essays 1 & 2

- **Essay 1** due **Monday, Oct. 7**, by the beginning of class
  - **Preliminary thesis statement** due **Friday, Oct. 4**, by **midnight** on Blackboard (click on “**Essay 1 Thesis Statements**” Forum in **Discussion Board**)
- **Essay 2** due **Monday, November 4**, by the beginning of class
  - **Preliminary thesis statement** due **Saturday, Nov. 2**, by **midnight** on Blackboard (click on “**Essay 2 Thesis Statements**” forum in **Discussion Board**)

**Directions:** For essays 1 and 2, you will write short literary analysis essays on texts that we have read in class. Essays should be double-spaced & a *minimum of 1200 words*, or about four pages.

- Do *not* write on the same text twice.
- These assignments are designed to develop your ability to write about literature and to assess your understanding of course material. Each essay will require an arguable, focused **thesis**; analysis of **evidence**; and **organized, logical development**.
- One essay will count for 15% of your grade; the other will count for 20% of your grade. I will count whichever essay on which you do better as 25%. (Initially, 1<sup>st</sup> essay will count for 15 points, but I’ll revise after 2<sup>nd</sup> essay if necessary).

**You may choose any of the following for either essay** (the main point is to have a **thesis & focus**):

- 1) **Close Reading:** Choose a single passage (between a paragraph and a page at most) and explicate it in detail, relating it to some overall thematic, formal, theoretical, or political significance of the text. For a passage from a novel, close readings usually begin with an analysis of a particular passage to highlight how it is significant for the overall text.
  - *Limit the scope of your close reading.* If you have not had ENGL.2000: Critical Methods or have forgotten how to close read, make an appointment with me *immediately*. Do *not* just summarize or paraphrase the passage; instead, **make an argument** (with a thesis) about how the passage works and/or what is significant about this passage.
  - Remember, close readings usually *reveal something new or unexpected about a passage*, often complicating a reading of the overall text.
- 2) **Literary Analysis:** Choose a recurring **trope, motif**, or **formal trait** of a text and explore how it works in the text. Do *not* simply describe when and where this motif shows up; you must **make an argument** (with a thesis) about how this aspect of the text functions in it. For example, paper topics may include: Compare and contrast how Achebe uses two different Ibo sayings in *Things Fall Apart*; explore how Achebe uses the concept of maternity in *Things Fall Apart*, and how that relates to the actual women in the text; examine how and why *Nervous Conditions* alternates between the adult I-narrator and the child I-narrator. These topics are places to *start*; you must then formulate a **thesis** about why these are significant for the text.

- 3) **Critical Response:** You may choose to respond to one of the critical essays we have read alongside the texts. The bulk of your paper should still focus on the primary text, but you may decide to engage a particular argument in one of the secondary sources. Again, you *must* have a **thesis** supported by evidence from both the critical reading and the primary text.
- 4) **Keywords Exploration:** You can explore how one of the keywords from our collaborative project works in one of the novels. For instance, you may decide to explore how hegemony works in *Untouchable*, or how hybridity in gender roles is manifested in *Midnight's Children*. Because the keywords are so broad and abstract, you'll have to limit/focus your reading of the text thematically and/or formally; in other words, you can't write about *everything*. But you can use the essay to further explore the concept at work in a text (and often the literary texts complicate the "dictionary" definitions of theoretical concepts).
- You still have to have a *thesis*; i.e. you can't simply point out all the instances of hegemony in the text. Identifying where examples of ideology and hegemony at work in the text is a *starting point*. Your thesis must make some **argument** about the significance of these elements of the text.

#### Some General Guidelines:

- *Your topic should be something about which you have questions.* Reading with curiosity is the single best way to find good paper topics. As you read, make a habit of asking yourself questions like "Why does the author use this particular image/word here?" or "What does this passage/scene/chapter accomplish?" Write these questions in the margins as you read.
- Literary analyses (including close readings) examine the relationships between the **form** and **content** in a text (that's why we're *literary critics*, not historians or philosophers), exploring multiple or underlying meanings. Literary critical essays usually point out contradictions and/or debunk a generally held view of the text: close readings and other literary analyses should ILLUMINATE or SHOW SOMETHING NEW ABOUT THE TEXT AND/OR PASSAGE. (i.e. If no one would argue with you, or if you're pointing out something obvious about the text, you don't really have an argument.)
- Outside sources are not required for this paper, but if you choose to use them, make sure to cite them using correct MLA format.
- If you have questions or concerns about your writing ability—come see me immediately!! Don't wait until right before the essays are due. Also, I will meet with you to talk about essays until **24 hours** before the due dates.

#### Paper Format:

- double-spaced, size 12 Times Roman, stapled, and titled, with 1" margins and page numbers
- a title that gives some sense of your topic
- cite all sources in **MLA format** (parenthetical in-text citations & Works Cited page)
- gender neutral language

*Nota Bene:* I expect you to know the basics of writing essays; so, for example, if your essay is rife with grammatical, typographical, and/or stylistic errors, you can expect no better than a C *at the very most*. If you have concerns about your writing, please see me well before the due date of essays.

## Research Paper Directions

(25 points, 25% of final grade)

→ **1-paragraph Prospectus** due **Monday, Nov. 25**, at *beginning of class* (1 point)

- Prospectus should include the proposed essay topic, primary text(s), 2-3 possible secondary sources, and preliminary thesis.

→ **In-Class Presentation** on **Wednesday, Dec. 4** (3 points)

- 5-minute overview of your project topic, primary texts, and possible secondary sources.

→ **Research Essay** due **Wednesday, Dec. 11**, by **9pm** via **Blackboard** (21 points)

- Length: **minimum 2000 words**, which is ~6.5 pages (no max but don't go crazy)

### Research Project Options:

- 1) Choose a **theme**, **motif**, or **keyword concept** that we've come across this semester that interests you and explore how this theme, motif, or keyword concept works in **two texts** that we've read this semester.
  - You may include a text that you used in Essays 1 or 2, but you must *significantly* expand/complicate your initial arguments.
  - If you wish, *one* of your main texts may be one that we didn't read for class, but (a) it must be a postcolonial text; and (b) you must *get approval from me beforehand* (should be in your prospectus).
  - Similarly, contact me if want to write about an American text that deals with either British colonialism *or* American neo-imperialism; e.g., James Welch's novel *Fools Crow* or C. Richard King's critical anthology, *Postcolonial America*.
  - One of your texts may be a film, television series, art exhibit, or other non-literary medium.
- 2) Draw on **historical, social, or cultural context(s)** to deepen your interpretation of a text (or texts). *Do not* simply provide background information on a text; you *must* discuss how the literature is in conversation with this context, and how the contextual material enriches and/or complicates our understanding of the primary text.
  - For instance, you might explore the significance of Shiva, Parvati, and Padma in Hinduism and use this material to enrich/complicate our reading of *Midnight's Children*. (Actually, you can research pretty much anything in *Midnight's Children* and discover like 50 possible deeper meanings...)
  - You might research a particular historical event or cultural context and consider how a novel or novels treat it.
    - For instance, Gauri Viswanathan's essay, "The Beginnings of English Literary Study in British India" (*The Post-colonial Studies Reader*, Ed. Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 2006), outlines the history of the education in English *literature* in colonial India. How does this history compare/contrast with, for instance, the

histories of British literary education in Trinidad (as depicted in *Crick Crack, Monkey*) and in Kenya (as depicted in *Devil on the Cross*)?

- ➔ **Tip:** Rather than simply trying to prove a point or defend a thesis, it might be equally or more interesting to **explore** a specific problem, question, or well-defined issue. That is, don't get hung up on trying to "prove" something as wholly true or false; rather, the purpose of this research project is to deepen our knowledge and understanding of postcolonial texts, contexts, and central issues. Your final essay should have a thesis, but it may be something more open-ended and/or speculative.

#### **REQUIREMENTS FOR ALL ESSAYS:**

- A) **You must use at least THREE reliable sources.** Some good online databases for literary criticism are the MLA International Bibliography, Contemporary Authors, Contemporary Literary Criticism, Academic Search Premier, and Ethnic News Watch. You may also use *reliable, reputable* popular (i.e. not peer-reviewed) sources, such as biographies, substantive book reviews, publications in reputable periodicals (e.g. *The Atlantic*, *New York Times Review of Books*), and scholarly websites (for instance, *Postcolonial Studies @ Emory*). If you are not certain if a source is reliable, ask me.
- Some of the ways you might incorporate secondary material:
- Use the critical concepts and/or ideas that a critic puts forth, expanding his/her ideas and/or applying it to a different text.
    - For instance, we only discussed Linda Hutcheon's concept of historiographic metafiction in relation to *Midnight's Children*; does it relate to any of the other texts that we've read (or any texts from outside the class)?
  - Identify an argument/claim/reading by critics with which you disagree or want to complicate, or identify a lacuna (missing part) in the criticism that you want to address.
    - For example, discussions of gender in *Things Fall Apart* vary widely; some read the text as critiquing the patriarchal Igbo culture, while some argue that the text participates in and perpetuates the suppression of women. You could find one essay that critiques *Things Fall Apart* and one that defends the novel, and then try to situate yourself in that debate, based on your interpretation of parts of the novel.
  - Incorporate historical and/or cultural context provided by a source into your essay.
- You may also use any of the essays on we read for class (by Jeyifo, Okonkwo, etc.), including Ania Loomba's *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*.
- B) You *must* include **literary analyses of the primary text(s)**. That is, you *must* discuss style and form in some way, not just content, *even if* you are focusing on, say, historical context.

- Be sure to cite specific parts of the *literary* text – quotes or summary or paraphrase – and *discuss/analyze* whatever passages you cite.
- C) You *must* use proper **MLA format** for incorporating quotes into your own writing, in-text citations, and the Works Cited. If you need help, see the Purdue OWL website (I’ve put a link on Blackboard) or *come see me*.

**Papers should be:**

- **FOCUSED** – 6-7 pages is relatively short when dealing with criticism, so your paper should be fairly narrowly focused (not TOO narrow, though).
- **CONCISE** – your goal in critical writing should be **complexity of thought** and **clarity & economy of language**
- Double-spaced, size 12 Times Roman, and titled, with 1-inch margins and page numbers
- in **MLA FORMAT** for in-text citations and Works Cited

**Reminders for all essays:**

- Introductory paragraphs should include your overall thesis or project focus, primary texts and authors, and a clear indication of what kinds of things your essay will be discussing (a “roadmap” for the essay).
- Use gender neutral language
- Essays will be ***one grade lower for each day late*** (unless approved by me; after I collect them counts as “late”)
- Introduce critics by their full name (first & last) the first time you mention them (not full info or title, just full name), and then subsequently use their last names only.
- Remember, quotes CANNOT stand alone as sentences! You *must* have attributive tags (So-and-so writes, or so-and-so says).
- 1<sup>st</sup> person is okay, but don’t hedge (as in, “in my humble opinion...” or “I think that...”) – just make your argument and back it up!
- Save the **style** editing for the very end, but be sure to check for: complete & correct sentences; focused & coherent paragraph; and clear, logical transitions and overall organization

→ **The last day I will meet with you to go over thesis statements/outlines/drafts is Tuesday, Dec. 10.** If you want to discuss your essay, you should *make an appointment to meet with me* in person.

- **NOTE:** I expect you to know the basics of writing essays; so, for example, if your essay is rife with grammatical, typographical, and/or stylistic errors, you can expect no better than a *C at the very most*. If you have concerns about your writing, please see me well before the due date of essays.

ENGL.3790.201: Postcolonial Literature  
Research Essay Grading Rubric (25 points; 25% of final grade)

<b>Component:</b>	
<b>Prospectus</b> (1 points): A prospectus was submitted on time	
<b>In-Class Presentation</b> (3 points): A brief in-class presentation on project topic, approach, and primary texts was presented on the assigned date.	
<b>Thesis and development of ideas</b> (7 points): The essay has a clear thesis/focus. The essay clearly and specifically follows the guidelines of the assignment. The paper's ideas are clear, well thought-out, imaginative, and fully developed. TIP: <i>Strive for insight into your subject.</i> Try to show something new or insightful about the text.	
<b>Use of Evidence</b> (7 points): The essay's arguments and observations are backed up by evidence from the text. The examples, evidence, arguments, or details supporting these ideas are carefully selected, organized, and directly related to the main point or thesis of the paper. Secondary sources are clearly and correctly incorporated into the essay. TIP: When you include a quote, be sure explain what it means, illustrating how the quote is relevant to your point.	
<b>Style &amp; Mechanics</b> (7 points): The word choices, sentence structures, and paragraph patterns are appropriately related to the subject and intent of the paper. The paper has a clear structure, and the various stages in the development of the essay are organized in coherent, internally developed paragraphs that are related to each other by appropriate logical or associative transitions. The grammar, spelling, and punctuation are flawless and demonstrate a good understanding of how the English language works. TIP: In general, use a comfortable, natural voice, but avoid slang or colloquial expressions and an overly casual tone.	
Total (out of 25):	

General Grading Criteria:

An **A** paper will be excellent in each area.

A **B** paper must demonstrate strength in each area.

A **C** paper will be competent in all three areas, or strong in two areas and weak in one area.

A **D** paper must demonstrate at least the bare essentials in each area.

An **F** paper demonstrates incompetence in most of the areas.