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ENG 2850-001: "Postcolonial Literatures in English" "Revoicing the Story"

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English 2850-001: "Postcolonial Literatures in English"
"Revoicing the Story"
Spring 2015
Class Meeting: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 10:00-10:50 a.m.

Dr. Dagni Bredesen

Office Hours in Coleman Hall 3556: Mon 11a.m. to 12 noon and Fri 9 a.m.- 10a.m. or by appointment
Faculty Development Office: Booth Library Basement room 1116
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"Caliban"
Franz Marc, 1914

Course Description: In this course, we will look at two sets of texts: one set by the colonizer (now firmly established within the canon of "English Literature"), the other a set of answers to those texts, a revising or 'revoicing' of them from a perspective suppressed in them. This answering is what constitutes the postcolonial, a telling of the story from the voices that form the silent bedrock of the colonial texts. So, for example, the voice of Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* is articulated in more than an animalistic howl in Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea* and the story she tells is different. Pitting these texts against each other, we get a holistic sense of the colonial experience—the conflict and the complicity, the violence and the exchanges it involves—and it is this particular conjunction that we will come to understand as the postcolonial.

Required Texts include:

Introduction: *The Tempest*

Unit One: Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* / J.M.Coetzee's *Foe*

Unit Two: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*/ Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Unit Three: Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*/ Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*
and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus*

Post-colonial Key Concepts by Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin

As well as other critical and background readings that will be presented in class or assigned as E-texts available through the library

Course Objectives: Those of you committed to your intellectual growth will have the opportunity to increase your competency in reading complex literature
develop a stronger sense of literary, historical, and cultural contexts pertaining to this course
increase your competency in thinking, writing, and speaking--both critically and creatively--
about the texts we read
and, increase your ability to work independently and collaboratively

Course Assignments: To achieve the objectives described above students will need to keep up with the reading schedule and actively participate in the class discussion. The following assignments will foster the active engagement necessary to make this a productive and exciting learning experience.

I. Papers:

Three “close-reading” essays length: 1 page single-spaced (1st C/NC, 2nd @ 75, 3rd @ 100 points each for a total of = 175 points)

One longer (6-8 pages double-spaced) research-based “argument” essay based on a topic you develop from your reading over this semester (150 points). This paper will be preceded by a TED-Talk type presentation (more info to follow) that will include handout with an illustration, an abstract of the paper, and a working bibliography of at least six sources from a variety of reputable sources (75 points).

II. Examinations: Midterm (100 points) and Final (200 points):

These exams will consist of identifications, concept definitions and longer passage explication.

III. Discussion Partnerships and General Participation:

Discussion leading with a partner of a primary text with handout (100 points).

Thoughtful engagement with the materials we read, which will manifest in relevant questions and comments along with efforts to respond to classmates, as well as to the instructor or texts (100 points).

In-class writing and possible quizzes (50 points).

Please note that this class is DISCUSSION-DRIVEN. This means that there is an expectation that each student will be fully prepared for each meeting having read and thought about the text(s) assigned for the day and able to initiate or contribute to discussion with relevant and meaningful questions or comments that indicate a serious effort to grapple with the readings and the questions that frame this course.

Course Policies:

EMAIL COMMUNICATION: When you email me, please include the course number 2850 and your last name in the subject line along with the reason you are contacting me. For example, a subject line might look like **2850 Montez Question about First Paper.**

CLASS ATTENDANCE: punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. You are presumed to be professionals-in-training and thus responsible for attending class regularly and participating in discussion. In order to deal with unforeseen emergencies, you are allowed to miss up to the equivalent of one week of class without documented excuse (that means three class periods). Any additional absences will, however, be penalized at a rate of one letter grade per two class meetings; any student who is absent for more than the equivalent of three weeks or 20% of the course will earn a grade of F for the course.

ASSIGNMENTS will need to be completed by class time on the date that will appear on the syllabus. The book(s) assigned for that day should be brought to class. Unannounced quizzes on assigned material may be given at any time. There will be no opportunity to make up missed quizzes or in-class writing assignments,

which will form part of your participation grade. Students are responsible for material covered in class and announcements or assignments made in class as well as for assignments on the syllabus. Therefore, I strongly encourage you to develop a buddy-system, several “study-buddies,” on whom you may rely to get information, handouts etc., should you have to miss a class.

Mid-term and Final EXAMS should be written on test booklets, available at the Union Book Store. Please write tests in ink and on the appropriate booklets. Announced tests and exams must be taken at the scheduled time. Except in cases of DOCUMENTED emergency or official university absence arranged ahead of time, there will be no opportunity to make up mid-term or final exams.

ALL PAPERS AND OTHER WRITTEN WORK must be handed in on the date due. Work turned in late without clearance will be penalized, usually at the rate of 5 points per day (not per class meeting) of lateness. Additionally, late submission may delay the grading and return of the paper, perhaps until semester's end. BE SURE TO KEEP A COPY OF EVERY PAPER YOU HAND IN. In the case of a missing paper, the student is responsible for supplying a copy.

DOCUMENTATION: Use the MLA system to cite all primary and secondary sources used in preparation of your papers. Also, be sure to introduce sources in your text. Each student should have access to the latest edition of *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, and to a handbook of usage and mechanics.

RESPONSIBLE USE OF ELECTRONIC MEDIA: Please keep in mind that electronic media materials must be documented as conscientiously and accurately as any other material. Be aware also that it is necessary to ascertain the authority, reliability, accuracy of all materials and that it may be particularly difficult to do so in the case of electronic media. Be sure to evaluate and clearly identify any source of information, analysis, or opinion; process material from electronic sources as critically and creatively as you do print sources. Check with the Writing Center for up-to-date documentation conventions. **DOWNLOADING IS NOT RESEARCH.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must be prepared independently; all sources and background material (print, electronic, or other) must be digested and acknowledged. Make sure you understand the meaning of plagiarism and the policy of the English Department:

*Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism--"the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language)--has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of the grade of **F** for the writing in which plagiarism occurs and a grade of **F** for the course, as well as to report the incident to the university's Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.*

STUDENTS WITH DOCUMENTED DISABILITIES: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodation, please note that arrangements must be made through the Office of Student Disability Services; you should, therefore, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible and notify your instructor(s).



Course Schedule:

Please note this schedule is provisional and subject to *change*. Also, students should read assigned text(s) prior to the class in which the text(s) will be discussed. Always bring *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*.

Week One (January 12-16)

Introduction to Class
 Discuss *Tempest* Act I
 Finish reading Shakespeare's *The Tempest*

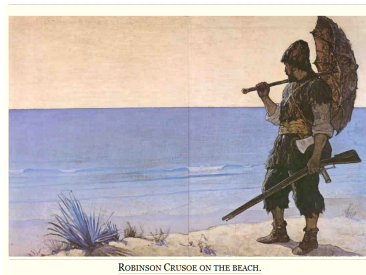
Post-colonial Studies Key Concepts: Allegory, Colonies/Colonialism, Postcolonial
 Miscegenation, Contrapuntal Reading, Binarism, Cannibal, Exploration and Travel

Get started reading *Robinson Crusoe*

Week Two (January 19-23)

M (1/19) **Martin Luther King Jr.'s Birthday / No Class**

W & F Discuss first half of *Robinson Crusoe*.



ROBINSON CRUSOE ON THE BEACH.

Week Three (January 26-30)

Single-page paper on *The Tempest* / Due: Monday, January 30th

This week: Finish reading *Robinson Crusoe*

Bring *Foe* to class on Monday

Week Four: (February 2-6)

Writing Workshop
 Conclusion of *Robinson Crusoe*
 Introduction to J.M. Coetzee and *Foe*
Key Concepts- Agency, Apartheid, Ambivalence
 This week: Read *Foe* Part I, II, and III
Friday, February 6th: EIUnity conference

Week Five: (February 9-13)

First Paper Due/ Conferences with Professor Bredesen

Continue Discussion of *Foe* /Discuss Part IV

Introduction to Charlotte Bronte and *Jane Eyre*

Note: February 13th—Lincoln's Birthday—No Class.

Week Six: (February 16-20)

Jane Eyre: This week chapter 1-19

Key Concepts: Empire, Centre/margin (periphery), Eurocentrism, Exotic/exoticism, Orientalism, Other Imperialism,

Introduction of Discussion Partnerships and Sign up -- Brainstorm Mid-term Study Sheet

Crusoe/Foe paper revision due: February 20th.

****Recommended Viewing: "Dear White People" 7pm-9pm Buzzard Auditorium.**



Week Seven: (February 23-27)

Jane Eyre: This week's reading chapters 20-35

Wednesday: DP 1: 24-27

Midterm Study Sheet distributed

Week Eight: (March 2-6)

Jane Eyre: This week's reading chapters 36-38

And Intro to *Wide Sargasso Sea* for Wednesday read Part One

Key Concepts: Creole, Creolization, Contact Zone, Colonial Desire, Dislocation, Double colonization, Ethnography, Ethnopsychiatry/psychology

Friday: March 6th -- Mid-Term

Week Nine: (March 9-13)

Wide Sargasso Sea: This week Parts Two and Three

Wednesday: DP 2: Part Two

Introduction to *Jane Eyre/Wide Sargasso Sea* Paper

****Recommended Viewing "Pride"**

March 11th, Doudna Lecture Hall 5-7pm

SPRING BREAK: March 16-20th /
PLEASE READ *Heart of Darkness*

Week Ten: (March 23-27) Conferences with Instructor

Heart of Darkness Part I and II

Key Concepts: Cartography, Native, Savage/Civilized, Subject/Subjectivity, 'Going Native'

Wednesday: JE & WSS Paper Due

Friday: DP 3 *HoD* Part II

Intro to final Research paper and presentations

Week Eleven: (March 30-April 3)

Heart of Darkness Part III

Wednesday DP 4: Chinua Achebe's Response to *Heart of Darkness*

Intro to *Things Fall Apart* read chapters 1-3

Week Twelve: (April 6-10)

Things Fall Apart Part One

Key Concepts: Place

Wednesday: DP 5: *Things Fall Apart* Part One, chapters 4-13.

Friday: Final Paper Proposal Due with Working Bibliography

Week Thirteen: (April 13-17)

Monday: DP 6: *Things Fall Apart*, Part TWO

Key Concepts: Missions and colonialism,

Friday: Introduction Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Week Fourteen: 7 minute Final Project Presentations 4 presentations each class day

Continue working on final paper, prepare presentations and read Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Week Fifteen:

Monday: Last set of presentations and discussion of *Purple Hibiscus*

Wednesday DP 7: *Purple Hibiscus*

Key Concepts: Religion and the post-colonial, feminism and post-colonialism, palimpsest

Final Exam: Tuesday May 5th, 10:15 a.m-12.15 p.m.

