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ENG 2850-001: Postcolonial Literatures in English

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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 @ 50 points, 2nd @ 75, 3rd @100
points each for a total of 225 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
presentation 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. Historical Briefs, 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 Whitlow 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 two 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 six classes (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 which 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.

PRESENTATION OF PAPERS: Papers must be "typed" or computer-generated (double-spaced) on heavy or medium-weight white 8.5 x 11” paper. Computer print-outs must be "letter quality," 12-point size, clear, and dark--no pale or illegible print will be accepted. Use 1” margins.

Each paper should have a separate title sheet which includes the title of the paper, course title, instructor's name, student's name, and submission date. The title sheet should also include your thesis statement and the key sentences for each paragraph (I’ll explain later). Repeat the title at the top of the first page of text. Papers must be stapled or clipped, and pages and paragraphs numbered.

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
M (1/9)
Introduction to Class
Discuss Tempest Act I

HMWK: Finish reading Shakespeare's The Tempest
Read Post-colonial Key Concepts: Colonies/Colonialism Postcolonial Miscegenation Contrapuntal Reading

Bring Robinson Crusoe to class

W (1/11) Discuss: The Tempest Intro to Robinson Crusoe’s “Strange Surprising Adventure”

HMWK: Get started reading Robinson Crusoe (up to and including 112 by Wednesday, January 18th)

Week Two:
M (1/16) Martin Luther King Jr.’s Birthday / No Class

W (1/18) Discuss first half of Robinson Crusoe.

HMWK: Robinson Crusoe read up to p170 by Monday, January 23rd

Week Three:
M (1/23) Discussion Partnership on Robinson Crusoe pp112-170
First “Close Reading” paper Assignment / Due: Monday, January 30th

HMWK: Finish reading Robinson Crusoe

W (1/25) Robinson Crusoe
HMWK: First Paper
Bring Foe to class
Week Four:  M (1/30): First Paper Due  
Writing Workshop  
Conclusion of Robinson Crusoe  
Introduction to J.M. Coetzee and Foe  
HMWK: Read Foe Part I  

W (2/01): Discussion Partnership Foe Part I  
Paper Two Close Reading paper Assignment  
HMWK: Foe Part II and III  

Week Five:  M (2/06): Foe Part II  
HMWK: Finish reading Foe and bring Jane Eyre to class  

W (2/08): Foe Part III  
Introduction to Charlotte Bronte and Jane Eyre  
HMWK: Jane Eyre, chapters 1-10  
Paper Two on Foe Due Monday February 13th  

Week Six:  M (2/13) Paper Two Due: Writing Workshop  
Jane Eyre first ten chapters  
HMWK: Jane Eyre, chapters 11-15  

W (2/15): Discussion Partnership Jane Eyre chapters 11-15  
Jane Eyre assigned chapters  
HMWK: Jane Eyre, chapters 16-27  

Week Seven:  
M (2/20): Jane Eyre assigned chapters  
HMWK: Jane Eyre 28-34  

W (2/22): Discussion Partnership Jane Eyre chapters 28-34  
HMWK: Finish Reading Jane Eyre 35-38  
Bring Wide Sargasso Sea to class  

Week Eight:  
M(2/27) Wrap-up Jane Eyre  
Intro to Wide Sargasso Sea  
HMWK: Read Wide Sargasso Sea Part One  

W (2/29): Discuss WSS  
HMWK: Wide Sargasso Sea Part Two and Ending  
Midterm Prep
Week Nine:
M (03/05): Discussion Partnership *Wide Sargasso Sea* Part Two
   HMWK: Prepare for Midterm
   Bring Exam Notebook to class

W (03/07): MIDTERM EXAM (1 Hour)

SPRING BREAK: March 12-16th / PLEASE READ *Heart of Darkness*

Week Ten:
M (3/19): Paper Three Due
   HMWK: re-read *Heart of Darkness*, Part I

W (3/21): *Heart of Darkness* Part I
   HMWK: re-read *Heart of Darkness* Part II

Week Eleven:
M (3/26): Discussion Partnership *Heart of Darkness* Part II
   HMWK: re-read *Heart of Darkness* Part III
   Bring *Things Fall Apart* to class

W (3/28): Wrap-up discussion of *Heart of Darkness*
   Introduce Chinua Achebe and *Things Fall Apart*
   HMWK: read introductory essays by Gikandi and Ohadike and chapters 1-3

Week Twelve: Conferences with Dr. Bredesen
M (4/02): *Things Fall Apart* essays and 1-3
   HMWK: *Things Fall Apart* Part One, chapters 4-13.

W (4/04): Final Paper Prospectus Due with Working Bibliography
   HMWK: *Things Fall Apart* Parts Two and Three

Week Thirteen

W (4/11): Presentations Begin
   HMWK: work on final paper, prepare presentations and read Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Week Fourteen
M (4/16): Presentations

W (4/18): Presentations
   HMWK: work on final paper, prepare presentations and read Adichie *Purple Hibiscus*

Week Fifteen
M (4/23): *Purple Hibiscus*

W (4/25): *Purple Hibiscus*