

Spring 1-15-2003

ENG 2850-001: Post-Colonial Literature

Zahlan

Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2003



Part of the [English Language and Literature Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Zahlan, "ENG 2850-001: Post-Colonial Literature" (2003). *Spring 2003*. 83.
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_spring2003/83

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2003 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Spring 2003 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.

ENGLISH 2850: POST-COLONIAL LITERATURE

Spring 2003
W 1800-2030; CH 3150

Dr. Zahlan
3556 CH; tel: 581-6977
email: cfarz@eiu.edu

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Although European empires no longer exist officially, political, economic, linguistic, and cultural legacies remain. Imperialism and its aftermath have inspired an impressive array of literature--from naive tales of adventure to ironic fables of disillusionment. In this course, after a preliminary look at a Rudyard Kipling narrative of European colonial experience, we will read texts by important authors from the Indian Subcontinent, the Arab World, the Caribbean, and Africa--most of whose techniques and themes have been influenced by the encounters of the imperial era.

The course is intended to help students begin to establish familiarity with diverse literatures of the world--to move beyond the Western canon to read, understand, and enjoy poetry, prose, and drama produced in and reflective of diverse cultures. It is intended also to prepare those who plan to be teachers to develop multicultural curricula and to deal more confidently with students of non-European background.

To varying degrees, the works we will read have been influenced by interactions between European culture and indigenous traditions of Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean; some have been translated but many were written originally in English. In learning to appreciate "non-Western" literature, we will also enrich our understanding of the "Western" tradition. We will strive to learn about a number of important authors from Asia, Africa, and the Caribbean, to develop an understanding of cultures other than our own, and to enhance our appreciation of language and literature.

English 2850 is a writing-intensive course, intended to enable motivated students improve their written expression, as well as reading comprehension, critical thinking, and oral expression.

TEXTS

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Clerk and Siegel, eds., *Modern Literatures of the Non-Western World* (C&S);
Kipling, *Two Tales*; Naipaul, *A Bend in the River*

Suggested: *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*, 5th ed.

(Each student should also have a handbook of usage and a collegiate desk dictionary.)

Dr. Z's Office Hours: Mondays 1330-1430, 1630-1730; Thursdays 1400-1600

ASSIGNMENT SCHEDULE**WEEK I--INTRODUCTIONS/INDIA**

Wednesday, 15 January: Introductions: Class, Course, Assignments

Kipling, "The Man Who Would Be King," *Two Tales*

Introduction to "South Asia," C&S 195-200

WEEK II--INDIAN SUBCONTINENT

Wednesday, 22 January: Introduction to "South Asia" continued; Kipling continued

Tagore, "Where the Mind Is Without Fear," C&S 216

Narayan, "Trail of the Green Blazer," C&S 219ff.

Rao, "Companions" C&S 224ff.;

*Faiz, "Ghazal," C&S 231-32;

*Joshi, "The Universal Man," C&S 233-34;

*Ezekiel, "Night of the Scorpion," C&S 277-78

- WEEK III--INDIAN SUBCONTINENT
- Wednesday, 29 January: Hussein, "The Tale of the Old Fisherman," C&S 323ff.
Manto, "The Dog of Titwal," C&S 253ff.
*Mahapatra, "30th January 1982: A Story," C&S 320-321
*Nuhman, "Murder," C&S 390
Assignment of Paper I due 5 March
- WEEK IV---INDIAN SUBCONTINENT
- Wednesday, 5 February: Pritam, "The Weed," C&S 258ff.
Obeyesekere, "Despair," C&S 337ff.
Devi, "Dhowli," C&S 290ff.
Deshpande, "My Beloved Charioteer," C&S 371ff.
*Das, "An Introduction," C&S 345-347
- WEEK V--INDIA AND PAKISTAN; THE ARAB WORLD
- Wednesday, 12 February: Desai, "A Devoted Son," C&S 348ff.
Rushdie, "An Iff and a Butt," C&S 391ff.
Ashghar, "The Wagon," C&S 361ff.
Introduction to "The Middle East," C&S 417ff.
*Gibran, "On Children," 422-23
*Baraduni, "Answers to One Question," C&S 458-59
- WEEK VI--THE ARAB WORLD
- Wednesday, 19 February: Haqqi, "The Tavern Keeper," C&S 531-533
Mahfouz, "Half a Day," C&S 536-539
Khudayyir, "Clocks Like Horses," C&S 466ff.
Idris, "The Chair Carrier," C&S 608-612
Kanafani, "The Slave Fort," C&S 479-482
Abd al-Wali, "Abu Rubbiya," 492-96
- WEEK VII--ARAB WORLD; MID-TERM
- Wednesday, 26 February: Kanafani and Abd al-Wali continued--reread the stories.
*Al-Maqalih, "Sana Is Hungry," C&S 490
*Darwish, "Guests on the Sea," C&S 503-505
*Tuqan, "Song of Becoming," C&S 435-36
Adnan, "In the Heart of Another Country," C&S 450ff.
*Abu Khalid, "A Pearl," C&S 508
MID-TERM EXAM: 7:30-8:30 (Bring Exam Booklets to class.)
- WEEK VIII---ARAB WORLD; AFRICA
- Wednesday, 5 March: Paper I due in class on this date--be prepared to share your paper with the class. Peer Evaluations
El Saadawi, "She Has No Place in Paradise," C&S 637ff.
Introduction to "Africa," C&S 521-525
*Senghor, "Prayer to Masks," C&S 534-536
*Rabearivelo, "Flute Players," C&S 529-30
Tutuola, "The Gentleman of Complete Parts," C&S 545
- WEEK IX--SPRING BREAK

WEEK X--AFRICA

Wednesday, 19 March: Ogot, "The Rains Came," C&S 628ff.; Easmon, "Bindeh's Gift," 620ff.
Nwapa, "The Chief's Daughter," C&S 643 ff.
Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Read Part One for this class.
Paper I Revisions due in class for students who participated in Peer Evaluation Workshop. Review Paper II assignment.

WEEK XI--AFRICA

Wednesday, 26 March: Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Complete the novel for this class.)
*Okara, "You Laughed and Laughed and Laughed" C&S 553-54
*p'Bitek, "Song of Lawino," C&S 679ff
Schedule Paper-II topic-selection conferences for Week XII.

WEEK XII--AFRICA

Wednesday, 2 April: Soyinka, "The Strong Breed," C&S 699-ff.
Dramatic Presentations

* _____ *

* _____ *

* _____

WEEK XIII--AFRICA

Wednesday, 9 April: Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona, "The Island," C&S 653ff.
Dramatic Presentation & Reports

* _____ *

* _____ *

Head, "The Collector of Treasures," C&S 740ff.
Paper II topics due on file cards on this date.

WEEK XIV--AFRICA/THE CARIBBEAN

Wednesday, April 16: Thiong'o "Wedding at the Cross," C&S 758ff.
Armah, "Halfway to Nirvana"
Naipaul, *A Bend in the River*; read and prepare Part One for this class.
Paper II Prospectus (one fully-developed "typed" paragraph) due in class.

WEEK XV--THE CARIBBEAN

Wednesday, April 23: Naipaul, *A Bend in the River*; have the novel read for this class.
Introduction to "The Caribbean," C&S 812-15

WEEK XVI--THE CARIBBEAN

Wednesday, April 30: Review introduction to "The Caribbean," C&S 812-15
Lovelace, "The Fire Eater's Journey," C&S 1067ff.
Clarke, "Leaving this Island Place," C&S 1060ff.
Walcott, "I Once Gave My Daughters. . .," and "The Season of Phantasmal Peace," C&S 1009-1011
Book Annotations (one-paragraph each work) due in class on this date.
PAPER II DUE IN CLASS; Exam Review; Farewells

ENGLISH 2850 GRADE CALCULATION

Paper I--15%; Mid-Term Exam--10%; Oral Report--5%;
Paper II (including Prospectus)--25%; Annotations of Outside Reading--5%;
Final Exam--20%; Class Preparation and Participation (including quizzes)--20%

WRITTEN AND ORAL ASSIGNMENTS

I. ORAL REPORT: During the semester, each student will prepare and participate in one formal presentation. Students may take part in a carefully rehearsed dramatic reading of either Soyinka's *The Strong Breed* or "The Island" by Fugard, Kani, and Ntshona; or, read interpretatively and comment upon a poem* (poems are marked with asterisks) on the syllabus.

Dramatic presentations should include an introduction and/or commentary and should last for 45 minutes; be sure to time the reading very carefully! Poetry reports should last 10 to 15 minutes and should include a carefully rehearsed reading of the text and a report that includes background material, poetic analysis, and/or critical commentary. Reports must be presented on the assigned date--no "make-ups."

II. JOURNAL: Each student in the class should keep a separate notebook or journal in which you write both initial and considered responses to reading assignments and class discussion. From time to time, you will be asked to write written responses in class, and you should insert them into your journal when they are returned. Additionally, you should keep a list of terms and other words you wish to add to your vocabulary. I will not collect or grade your journal--it is a tool for you to use in mastering the work of the course. You will find the journal useful in preparing for tests and exams and in preparing oral reports and formal papers.

III. PAPER I (1000-1500 words/ 4 to 6 typed double-spaced pages) is due on Wednesday, 5 March. See assignment details below.

IV. PAPER II, due Wednesday, 30 April, is a comparative critical analysis (2200--2800 words/8 to 11 typed double-spaced pages) analysing some specific aspect of theme or narrative technique or connections between theme and narrative technique in in two novels, one of which must be and both of which may be published in or since 1965 and written by an author born and/or resident in India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, Sri Lanka, an Arab country, a nation of sub-Saharan Africa, or an island-nation of the Caribbean. Paper topics must be approved by me--please come and consult about what you might wish to write about; topics must be submitted for approval by 9 April. A prospectus (one to two paragraphs, typed and double-spaced) is due on 16 April The prospectus should indicate the primary works to be discussed, and specify the approach and critical method. The most important secondary sources to be used should also be named.

ALL PAPERS must be computer-printed or typed (double-spaced); print must be dark and letter-quality (no pale dot matrix) and pages must be separated and stapled. See course policy statement for details on presentation of papers and on academic honesty.

BOOK ANNOTATIONS: Each student will prepare and submit on or before 30 April a one-paragraph description-evaluation of a book read for and discussed in papers for the course. Give full bibliographical entry and then your description; annotations must be well-written and typed out; "sign" each annotation with your name. (The entries will be compiled as an annotated bibliography and copies made for all class members.)

English 2850: Paper I Assignment

PAPER I (1000-1500 words/ 4 to 6 typed double-spaced pages) is due on Wednesday, 5 March.

TOPIC: Paper I is an essay analyzing a specifically focused topic, theme, or technique in a novel, book of poems, full-length play or two shorter plays, or group of at least three short stories. The work(s) you write about must be written by an author born and/or resident in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, Sri Lanka, an Arab country of the Middle East or North Africa, a country in sub-Saharan Africa, or an island nation of the Caribbean. The work(s) should have been originally published since 1945.

“Post-colonial theory,” according to the editors of *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader* (1995), “involves discussion about experience of various kinds: migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being” (2). This reader (as do several others like it) offers a collection of excerpts from post-colonial writers and critics that may help you discover an appropriate focus for your paper.

PURPOSE: Introduce a work or works of post-colonial literature that you find interesting and challenging and analyze its reflection of, response to, or presentation of a particular place or idea or issue so as to enlighten and provoke reaction from an audience of sophisticated readers.

AUDIENCE: Address your essay to experienced readers of literary texts with some knowledge of and interest in post-colonial literature who may not have read the work(s) about which you are writing (your teacher and fellow students in English 2850, for example).

APPROACH: It is essential that you formulate and develop a clear argumentative thesis and that you support your critical observations with specific references to and quotations from the text(s) you are discussing. As appropriate, you may use other works by the author(s) you are discussing, historical background works, or works of literary theory or criticism. Be sure to quote accurately, indicate all quotes and paraphrases, and document accurately just as you would for a "research paper" (use the current MLA system).

ORGANIZATION: 1. The introductory paragraph(s) should identify and characterize the work(s) discussed and attract the interest of your reader: include title, author, date, country of origin, setting in place and time, political or social background, and a brief indication of theme for each work.

Some pre-writing questions to consider: is the text tragic or comic, political or apolitical, based on oral narrative, set in the past, nostalgic, ironic, angry? In the case of drama or narrative, is the plot structured as a life story, a journey or quest, a response to a question or a desire, a victory or defeat, a separation of the individual from the community or a reconciliation of the individual and the community? Does a main character "come of age" or discover or assert identity? You can come up with others.

2. Once you have given your reader an idea of the works you have chosen, focus in on your specific analytical thesis. You should be able to condense the argumentative point of the paper into one sentence. Your thesis is an argumentative assertion that can be supported by evidence from the text of the novel you are discussing.

3. Once you have built up to the thesis and stated it clearly, you are ready to develop the support of your argument. Try to divide the support into two, three, or four (no more) groupings, each of which can be supported in a paragraph. (Outline.)

4. The closing paragraph should state your conclusion, restate your thesis in a more complex form and it should leave readers with a sense of completion. Do not repeat the arguments! Do, however, remind your readers of the main points--perhaps in a dependent clause preceding the independent clause that states the concluding main point.

English 2850 Paper I (continued):

Remind your readers of your thesis and that you have "proved" your point with specific references to and quotations from the texts discussed. Pick up some motif, quotation, idea from the opening and bring your essay to an aesthetically satisfying full circle. Read the entire essay aloud to yourself (and others) and try to "hear" the conclusion. Reading aloud will also reveal unnecessary repetitions, awkward sentences, or confusing or dull diction.

EDITING/FORMAT: Please follow the Guidelines for Presentation of Papers in the Course Policies included with your syllabus. Please go over your paper as many times as it takes to eliminate unnecessary repetition, inaccurate word choice, errors in usage, spelling, and mechanics! Submit a paper that you can be proud of, that represents your best work.

FOR HELP: Please go by the Writing Center to consult with the graduate student tutors as you plan, draft, and edit your paper. Please also feel free to come to my office to discuss the topic and the paper. And don't forget to make use of your handbook.

English 2850: A FEW BOOKS TO LOOK AT

- Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths, and Helen Tiffin. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. London & New York: Routledge, 1989.
- _____, eds. *The Post-Colonial Studies Reader*. London: Routledge, 1995.
- Bhabha, Homi K. *The Location of Culture*. London: Routledge, 1994.
- Brennan, Timothy. *Salman Rushdie and the Third World: Myths of the Nation*. New York: St. Martin, 1989.
- Childs, Peter, and R.J. Patrick Williams. *An Introduction to Post-Colonial Theory*. London: Prentice-Hall, 1997.
- Davis, Lance E., and Robert A. Huttenback. *Mammon and the Pursuit of Empire: The Political Economy of British Imperialism, 1860-1912*. Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1986.
- Gorra, Michael. *After Empire: Scott, Rushdie, Naipaul*. Chicago: U Chicago P, 1997.
- Said, Edward. *Orientalism*. New York: Pantheon, 1978.
- _____. *Culture and Imperialism*. New York: Vintage, 1993.
- Walder, Dennis. *Post-Colonial Literatures in English*. Oxford: Blackwell, 1998.

PRELIMINARY LIST OF NOVELS

Evelyn Accad, *L'Excisée*; Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*, *Anthills of the Savannah*; Etel Adnan, *Sitt Marie-Rose*; Leila Ahmed, *A Border Passage*; Ayi Kwei Armah, *The Beautiful Ones Are Not Yet Born*; Tawfiq Awwad, *Death in Beirut*; Amit Chaudhuri, _____; J. M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*, *Disgrace*; Anita Desai, *Fire on the Mountain*, *Baumgartner's Bombay*; Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*; Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*, *Burger's Daughter*, *My Son's Story*; Sunetra Gupta, _____; Gurnah, Abdulrazak, *Paradise*; Wilson Harris, *Palace of the Peacock*, *Ascent to Omai*; Bessie Head, *A Question of Power*; Ruth Praver Jhabvala, *Heat and Dust*; Jamaica Kincaid, *Annie John*; George Lamming, *Natives of My Person*; Doris Lessing, *The Grass Is Singing*; Naguib Mahfouz, *Midaq Alley*, *Palace Walk*; Bharati Mukherjee, *Jasmine*; Abdelrahman Munif, *Cities of Salt*; V.S., Naipaul, *The Mimic Men*, *In a Free State*, *Guerrillas*, *A Way in the World*; R.K. Narayan, *The Vendor of Sweets*, *The Painter of Signs*; Flora Nwapa, *Efuru*; Michael Ondaatje, *Anil's Ghost*; Ben Okri, *The Famished Road*; Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, *Shame*, *The Moor's Last Sigh*, *The Ground Beneath Her Feet*; Nawal el-Saadawi, *God Dies by the Nile*, *Woman at Point Zero*, *Two Women in One*; Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*; Ken Saro-Wiwa, *Sozaboy: A Novel in Rotten English*, *Prisoners of Jebes*; Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat*, etc.; M.G. Vassanji, *The Book of Secrets*.

ENGLISH 2850--COURSE POLICIES

Class attendance, punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. Unless it is otherwise indicated, works should be read by the first class period for which they are assigned according to the syllabus. Students are responsible for all material covered in class and all announcements or assignments made in class as well as for all assignments on the syllabus. Class preparation and participation in class discussion are important and will count significantly in the final course grade.

PLEASE NOTE THAT TO "PARTICIPATE," YOU MUST BE PRESENT IN CLASS. IN A COURSE THAT MEETS ONCE A WEEK, MISSING ONE CLASS MEANS MISSING AN ENTIRE WEEK OF THE COURSE. AVOID ABSENCES AT ALL COSTS.

ORAL REPORTS MUST BE PRESENTED ON THE ASSIGNED DATE. All students are expected and required to listen attentively to and be prepared to comment on the reports and presentations of their classmates. Failure to present reports on the assigned date will result in a grade of "0."

ALL PAPERS AND OTHER WRITTEN WORK must be handed in on the date due. **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.**

Bring test booklets to the Mid-Term and Final Exams.

A NOTE ON THE PRESENTATION OF PAPERS: Papers must be computer-printed or typed (double-spaced; 10 to 12 point type) on heavy or medium-weight white 9 x 11 paper. Print must be dark and clear (no pale dot matrix); continuous-form sheets must be separated and edges removed; pages must be numbered and clipped or stapled together in order. There should be adequate margins. Each paper must have a separate title sheet that includes the title of the paper, course title, instructor's name, student's name, and date of submission. Repeat the title at the top of the first page of text.

DOCUMENTATION: Use the MLA system (latest version) to cite both primary and secondary sources used in your papers. Provide yourself with a copy of the most recent edition of the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. Be sure to name and identify sources of analysis and opinion in the text of your essay in addition to providing parenthetical citation and bibliographic entries.

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 that you evaluate as well as indicate the source of information and that you process material from electronic sources as critically and creatively as you do books or articles that you read and then use in writing your own essays and reports: **DOWNLOADING IS NOT RESEARCH.**

ACADEMIC HONESTY: All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must be original and independent. Please make sure that 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 course.

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