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ENG 2850-001: Post-Colonial Literatures in English

Michael Loudon
Eastern Illinois University

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January
T 13: Course introduction: Cultural diversity and multiculturalism
Overview of issues and themes

THE WEST INDIES

R 15: Stephanie Black, Jamaica Kincaid (narration), Mutabaruka (music),

T 20: Derek Walcott, Pantomime [play] (St. Lucia, Trinidad, USA)
Video of Pantomime

Discussion of universal elements in experience as compared with
culturally determined expressions of that experience; the
European Crusoe myth as colonial paradigm for the master-slave
relationship; racism, religion and enterprise as factors in
colonization; English as a global literature.

R 22: Pantomime (continued); please re-read the play; we’ll spend these
two weeks developing close reading skills with the play and
extracting thematic issues that will apply throughout the course.

T 27: Pantomime (continued)

and “The Schooner Flight.” (Handouts)

February
T 3: The Poetry of Derek Walcott (continued)

Writing Assignment: Essay #1 (6-8 typed pages); analysis of theme,
character, historical background, socio-political contexts or
linguistic and aesthetic uses of English in West Indian literature.

R 5: The Poetry of Derek Walcott (continued)

T 10: V. S. Naipaul, Guerrillas (Trinidad/England)

The Caribbean writer’s legacies—European, African and Asian;
cultural synthesis in the absence of indigenous heritage; the
relationship between colonial or post-colonial history and
fiction; the demagogue as revolutionary; the exile as observer;
self-hatred and self-respect in the colonized leader.

R 12: V. S. Naipaul, Guerrillas (continued)

T 17: V. S. Naipaul, Guerrillas (continued)
R 19: V. S. Naipaul, Guerrillas (continued)
Calypso tradition (video/handouts)
Carnival: Aesthetics of liberation or prison of self-interest?
Derek Walcott, “The Spoiler’s Return” (Handout)

Take-home midterm essay examination questions
T 24: Earl Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance* (Trinidad)

Carnival as liberation of personal spirit and simultaneous imprisonment from within by the "liberating" mask; the challenge of post-independent self-determination—personal opportunities and public alternatives; religious freedom and the changing forms of spiritual expression; urban "yard" life versus rural life in the third world; the West Indian linguistic continuum in English.

R 26: Earl Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance* (continued)

_Essay #1 DUE._

**WEST AFRICA**

_March_

T 3: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (Nigeria)

Anglophone versus Francophone colonization; the British in West Africa and the appeal of Christianity for the marginalized within Ibo traditional life; the role of ancestral religion and the conflict with colonial law; the use of traditional oral materials and of modern literary allusion in the Nigerian novel; the emergence of "third world literatures."

R 5: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (continued)

_Midterm essay examination DUE._

T 10: Wole Soyinka, *Kongi's Harvest* [play] and selected poems (Nigeria)

The basis of traditional authority and distinctions from modern dictatorship; the opposition between the humane and the monstrous, the life-giving and life-destroying senses of community and self; the use of Yoruba proverbs as structural devices; the problem of multiculturalism in colonially defined "nations" (comparison of Achebe and Soyinka; a note on the Biafran war).

R 12: Wole Soyinka, *Kongi's Harvest* (continued) and poems TBA

_M 16–F 20: No class—Spring Break_

T 24: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*

R 26: Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun* (continued)

_Writing Assignment:_ Essay #2 (6-8 typed pages); analysis of theme, character, historical background, socio-political contexts, or linguistic and aesthetic uses of English in African literatures.

**EAST AFRICA**

T 31: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *The River Between* (Kenya)

The politics of colonial education and traditional initiation rituals; irreversible historical change and nostalgic sentimentality; Gikuyu independence schools and Christian missions; European hegemony and potential cultural synthesis; the decolonization of tribal division through Mau Mau resistance and the role of revolutionary violence.
April
R 2: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, The River Between (continued)

T 7: Okot p'Bitek, The Song of Lawino and the Song of Ocol (Uganda)
Legacies of western colonial education; indigenous values versus modern scientific worldviews; potential for fusion of cultural systems; uses of oral tradition, Acholi proverbs and language; use of African natural imagery; the body and desire as metaphors for colonization and independence.
R 9: Okot p'Bitek, The Song of Lawino and the Song of Ocol (continued)

SOUTHERN AFRICA

T 14: Nadine Gordimer, July's People (South Africa)
The position of the white South African writers—British and Afrikaner; tensions and fluctuations among social roles under apartheid; disorientation, fragmentation and stereotyped perception in Fanon's "terrified consciousness"; language and codes of consciousness; psychological realism; the cultural construction of self and the ambivalence of will under apartheid.
R 16: Nadine Gordimer, July's People (continued)

T 21: Bessie Head, When Rain Clouds Gather (Botswana)
Apartheid and the legacies of exclusion; the need for escape; the passage from innocence to experience; the relationship between private freedom and public independence; the quest for personal voice and contentment; the alienated urban township versus the conservative rural tribe; the destruction of family and the responsibilities of love and affirmation.
R 23: Bessie Head, When Rain Clouds Gather (continued)
Essay #2 DUE.

INDIA

T 28: Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things
R 30: Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things (continued)

Final Examination: Thursday, May 5, 12:30-2:30