ENG 4850-001: The Postcolonial Psyche in 20th Century Third World Literatures: India, Africa and the Middle-East

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English 4850: The Postcolonial Psyche in 20th Century Third World Literatures: 
India, Africa and the Middle-East 
Fall 2009

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Office hrs: TR 11:00 a.m.-12:00 noon and by appointment

Course Description:

This course will be a study of 20th century narratives by authors from India, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Sudan, and Egypt who have defined themselves with and against European cultures, in particular the British culture, in order to understand the psychological and emotional make-up of postcolonial characters within a framework, which may be labeled as the ‘memory of the past.’ Through an in-depth analysis of issues pertaining to nationalist struggles for political and gender freedoms, notions of ‘home’ and ‘homelands,’ indigenous traditions and westernization, transnational and inter-cultural circulation of themes and responses, and normative gender roles and identities, we will theorize the multifarious configurations of the postcolonial psyche contextualized by the cultural and socio-political past of colonial and pre-colonial times as remembered by postcolonial literati. The writers included in this course are R.K. Narayan, Arundhati Roy, Girish Karnad, Chinua Achebe, Thiong’o wa Ngugi, Okot p’Bitek, Nawaal El Saadawi, Tayeb Salih, and Naguib Mahfouz. Course requirements will include mid-term response paper, final research paper, one class-presentation, and active preparation and class participation.

Course Requirements:

One class presentation on a single topic or work: 15%
One mid-term paper, 7-8 pages: 30%
One final paper, 8-10 pages: 40%
Active Preparation and Class Participation: 15%

Texts Required:

Okot p’Bitek. Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol
Chinua Achebe. Things Fall Apart
Girish Karnad. Hayavadana
Naguib Mahfouz. Midaq Alley
Thomas Mann. The Transposed Heads
Arundhati Roy. The God of Small Things
Nawaal El-Saadawi. Woman at Point Zero
Tayeb Salih. Season of Migration to the North
Ngugi Wa Thiong’o. Weep Not, Child
Heinrich Zimmer (Trans.) The King and the Corpse
Course Policies:

The course format will be informal lecture and exploratory discussion. Class participation, therefore, will be a significant component of this course. Your presence in the class is important for everyone, but especially for you. Each unexcused absence will bring your final grade down by 1%. Three late appearances will equal one unexcused absence.

Papers are due at the beginning of the class on the day they are due. For each day that the paper is late, the letter grade will fall by one full grade; an ‘A’ essay due on Friday will be an ‘F’ by next Thursday.

Plagiarism Policy (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 own original work” (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) – has the right and responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of a grade of F for the course, and to report the incident to the Judicial Affairs Office.

Information for Students with Disabilities:

If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

Tentative Syllabus

Week 1

8/25 – Introduction to the Course

Segment 1: Notions of ‘Home’ and Homeland: Traditions and Postcoloniality

8/27 – Chinua Achebe. Things Fall Apart

Week 2

9/1 – continued
9/3 – continued

Week 3

9/10 – continued
**Week 4**

9/15 – continued, Naguib Mahfouz. *Midaq Alley*
9/17 – continued

**Segment 2: Gender Roles, Identities, and Freedoms**

**Week 5**

9/22 – continued, Nawal El Saadawi. *Woman at Point Zero*
9/24 – continued

**Week 6**

9/29 – continued, Okot p’Bitek. *Song of Lawino*
10/1 – continued

**Week 7**

10/6 – continued, Arundhati Roy. *The God of Small Things*
10/8 – continued, Mid-term Paper due

**Week 8**

10/13 – continued

**Segment 3: Nationalism and Trans-cultural Circulation of Themes and Responses**

10/15 – continued, Zimmer. *The King and the Corpse* (p. 210) and Thomas Mann. *The Transposed Heads*

**Week 9**

10/20 – continued
10/22 – continued, Girish Karnad *Hayavadana* (in *Three Plays*)

**Week 10**

10/27– continued
10/29– continued, Tayeb Salih. *Season of Migration to the North*

**Week 11**

11/3– continued
11/5– continued, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o. *Weep Not Child*
Week 12

11/10- continued
11/12- continued

Week 13

11/17- Class Presentations
11/19- Class Presentations

Week 14

12/1- Class Presentations
12/3- Class Presentations

Week 15

12/8- Class Presentations
12/10- Review: Theorizing the Postcolonial Psyche, Final Paper due