Fall 8-15-2006

ENG 4850-001: Studies in Third-World Literature: "Africa is Woman?": Fictions of Gender & Nation

Dagni Bredesen
Eastern Illinois University

Follow this and additional works at: http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006

Recommended Citation
http://thekeep.eiu.edu/english_syllabi_fall2006/141

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the 2006 at The Keep. It has been accepted for inclusion in Fall 2006 by an authorized administrator of The Keep. For more information, please contact tabruns@eiu.edu.
Engl 4850: Studies in Third-World Literature:
“Africa is Woman?”: Fictions of Gender & Nation
Fall Semester 2006

Dr. Dagni Bredesen

Office Hours: Mondays and Wednesdays 2-2.50 pm o.b.a.
Office: Coleman Hall 3321 • Email: dabredesen@eiu.edu • Phone: 217-581-6294

Course Description and Objectives: This course focuses on South African literature, most of it produced in the period following the overthrow of the system of legislated racism known as “apartheid.” Through a lens of feminist and postcolonial theories, we will look at story-telling and its part in nation-building. In particular, we will examine those national allegories that imagine Africa as woman—mother, virgin and/or victim—in conjunction with other texts that resist this often violent representational practice.

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 texts produced in and reflective of diverse cultures. English 4850 is a writing-intensive course, intended to enable motivated students improve their written expression, as well as reading comprehension, critical thinking, and oral expression. Assignments will include student presentations of literary, historical, and critical secondary texts, short writing assignments, midterm and final examinations and a 10-12 page research-based paper.

Texts:
Beck, Roger. The History of South Africa
Coetzee, J.M. Disgrace
Haggard, H. Rider. King’s Solomon’s Mines
Krog, Antjie. Country of My Skull
Mda, Zakes. Madonna of Excelsior
Van Niekerk, Marlene. Triomf

Course Packet (TBA)

Strongly Recommended: MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers, 6th edition
Each student should also have a handbook of usage and a collegiate desk dictionary.
**Course Schedule:** This schedule is provisional and subject to change.

**Week 1 (8/22) Orientations “Rainbow Nation”**
Dr. Bredesen is teaching in South Africa during the first week of classes. She will return in time for our second class. Dr. Michael Loudon will distribute the syllabi and a handout to be read for Tuesday, August 29th. Dr. Loudon will also show the film *Stories My Country Told Me.* Please jot down your responses to the film guide and be prepared to discuss next class.

**Homework (HMWK):** For next class please read Haggard’s *King Solomon’s Mines* up to and including chapter 10. Also read chapters 1-3 in Beck’s *History of South Africa.*

**Week 2 (8/29) Background: “Dark Continent”**
Discuss *Stories My Country Told Me.* Discuss assigned readings.

**HMWK:** Finish *King’s Solomon’s Mines.* Read McClintock (handout to be distributed in class). Read Chapters 4-6 in Beck.

**Week 3 (9/5) Africa is Woman?: Eva/Krotoa**
Discuss assigned readings. **Presentation: Eva/Krotoa**

**HMWK:** Pick up packet. Read Beck chapters 7-8, and *Madonna of Excelsior* chapters 1-18.

**Week 4 (9/12) Africa is Woman?: “The Hottentot Venus”**
Discuss assigned readings. **Presentation: Sarah (Saartjie) Baartman**

**Historical Brief: “The Immorality Acts”**

**HMWK:** *Madonna of Excelsior,* chapters 19-35; Beck chapters 9-10; Spivak’s “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (packet).

**Week 5 (9/19) “The Ugly Word”**
Discuss assigned readings. **Presentation of Peter Blair’s essay “The Ugly Word” (packet);**

**HMWK:** *David’s Story* pages 1-106.

**Week 6 (9/26) “Not Proper History at All”**
Discuss assigned readings. Paper topics distributed.

**HMWK:** Read *David’s Story,* pages 107-213; Wicomb, “Shame and Identity: the case of the Coloured in South Africa” (packet).

**Week 7 (10/3) Who is Dulcie?**
Finish discussion of *David’s Story* and Wicomb’s essay.

Midterm Examination

**HMWK:** First Paper Due 10/10. Read *Triomf,* chapters 1-3. McClintock “Azikwelwa” (We Will Not Ride) (packet).

**Week 8 (10/10) “The Ghosts of Sophiatown and the policy of ‘Forced Removals’”**

**First Paper Due**
Discuss *Triomf* and McClintock

**HMWK:** Read *Triomf,* chapters 4-13; Viljoen essay “Postcolonialism and Recent Women’s Writings in Afrikaans” (packet)
Week 9 (10/17) “At Least We Have Each Other”: The Logic of Afrikaner Nationalism.
Discuss *Triomf* & Viljoen

Week 10 (10/24) “No Longer in a Future Heaven”
Discuss *Triomf* & McClintock.
HMWK: Finish reading *Triomf*.

Week 11 (10/31) “A Long Night’s Journey Into Day”
Wrap up discussion of *Triomf*.
Presentation on “The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC).”
In class viewing: *A Long Night's Journey into Day*
HMWK: Read *Country of My Skull*, chapters 1-12; Prospectus Due next week. Please meet with Dr. Bredesen to discuss topic.

Week 12 (11/07) Power and Limits of Personal Narratives
Discuss Film and assigned reading.
   Bring *Disgrace* to class. Prospectus Due

Week 13 (11/14) Truth is a Woman
Wrap up discussion of *Country of My Skull*.
Introduction to J.M. Coetzee and *Disgrace*.
HMWK: Read *Disgrace* chapters 1-6.

Week 14 (11/28) Rape and Reparation
Quiz on *Disgrace*
Discuss readings
Presentations of Final Papers Begin
HMWK: Finish *Disgrace*, chapters 7-24; read Gane’s “Unspeakable Injuries” (packet).

Week 15 (12/05): Rainbow Nation Revisited
Wrap up discussion of *Disgrace*
Presentations of Final Papers continued.
Final Papers due this class.

Final Examination; Tuesday, December 12th 7.30-9.30
Bring test booklets to your final exam

Course Assignments
JOURNAL ASSIGNMENT
Keep a separate notebook or journal in which you write your responses to reading assignments and class discussion. For each work that we read, please identify in your journal those issues of nationhood, gender, power, domination, oppression, resistance and reparation that you see in the text and your own thoughts about them. Identify also attitudes to the issues—the social and political views expressed in the text. In your journal, also take notes on your background reading in history, political science, and current
events. From time to time, you will be asked to write responses in class, and you should add them into your journal when they are returned. You will find a journal very useful in reviewing for exams and in planning your papers and oral presentations. I will not collect or grade journals.

PAPER I ASSIGNMENT
PAPER I (800-1000 words/ 3 to 4 computer-printed or typed double-spaced pages) is due on 10 October. Paper I is an essay analyzing the literary one or two works assigned for the course. As appropriate, you may refer to other works (literary or non-fictional) by the author you are discussing, historical background works, or works of political or social theory.

Paper I Assignment continued: In this and all papers, be sure to credit ideas and phrasing that you use in your analysis. Be sure to quote accurately, indicate all quotes and paraphrases, and document accurately (use the MLA system). Inform yourself about documentation conventions for electronic-media information and materials. All such materials must be documented, and citation forms are illustrated in recent handbooks; go to the Writing Center for assistance. Electronic-media materials must be evaluated for quality and reliability even more scrupulously than print materials. Please remember that you must absorb and process all materials: downloading is not research.

PAPER II ASSIGNMENT
PAPER II, due Tuesday, 5 December is a researched analytical study (2000--3000 words) discussing some specific aspect of the representation and treatment of gender and/or nationhood in two or three works of literature, at least one of which must be written by authors born or resident in countries of the southern hemisphere. One work must be chosen from among those assigned for the course, and one must be a text not discussed in class. Both the works discussed and the specific focus of the paper will be determined by each student in consultation with me. Topics must be approved.

A prospectus (one or two fully-developed paragraphs [5 to 7 sentences each], typed and double-spaced) is due on 7 November. The prospectus should clearly identify the issue to be discussed, the approach to be taken, and the point of view to be argued; it should also indicate the literary works and works of background research that will be referred to in the paper.

RESEARCH PAPER PRESENTATION: During the last two weeks of the semester, each student will present the material of his/her final research paper, according to an assigned schedule. The presentation should be carefully timed to last 10 minutes.

GRADE CALCULATION
Participation and Daily Preparation (including quizzes and oral presentations): 25%
Mid-Term Exam: 15%
Cumulative Final Exam: 20%
Paper I: 10%
Paper II (including Prospectus): 25%
Research Paper Oral Presentations--5%
COURSE POLICIES

CLASS ATTENDANCE, punctuality, preparation, and participation are expected and required. You are presumed to be professionals-in-training responsible for attending class regularly and participating in discussion. In order to deal with unforeseen emergencies, starting from week two, you are allowed to miss up to the equivalent of one week of class without documented excuse. 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 four classes (equivalent of four weeks) will earn a grade of F for the course.

ASSIGNMENTS are to have been completed by class time on the date for which they appear on the syllabus. The book(s) in which the day's assignments are contained 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. Students are responsible for material covered in class and announcements or assignments made in class as well as for assignments on the syllabus.

MAJOR TESTS AND 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 advance clearance will not be accepted. Any work turned in late with 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 9 x 11 paper. Computer print-outs must be "letter quality," 12-point size, clear, and dark--no pale 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. Repeat the title at the top of the first page of text. Papers must be stapled or clipped, and pages 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 material 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 to 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 Disability Services; you should, therefore, contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583) as soon as possible.

• • • •

"Africa is Woman." This cry of the early colonial poets galloping through the land echoes warmly in the chants of the poets of the New South Africa as they sing their praise songs to Mama Afrika. Woman as Mama remains a metonym for Africa; protean woman, who once also served the colonial project, has been refashioned to serve the national liberation movement. For the imagined community of the nation (see Anderson 1983) with its reliance on 'tradition', woman as mother, whose reproductive and nurturing powers are foregrounded, is a revered symbol of survival. It is her body that is written as a map: its rivers and plains and peaks, source of life and sustenance, landmarks and boundaries of the early colonial struggle, are also discursively drawn in the struggle over reproductive control.