

**Postcolonial Literatures I**

ENP1H9 (7.5 credits)

Autumn 2024

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Postcolonial Literatures I

7.5 hp Fall 2024

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course aims to familiarise the students with central issues in postcolonial literature and theory. The texts we will read originate from different backgrounds, but all emerge in a field of tension between a colonial history marked by the English language and the impulse to resist colonial and neo-colonial power. We will discuss such concepts as hybridity and mimicry, the nation and nationalism, cultural translation and resistance, and the relation between tradition and modernity. The course will also seek to place the questions posed by postcolonial theory in relation to the discourse of world literature.

INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES

In order to pass the course, students are expected to be able to:

- advance arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance;
- use postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts;
- offer an independent interpretation of a literary text;
- follow the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate;
- express themselves in academic English.

TEACHING AND COURSE ACTIVITIES

The course consists of eight two-hour seminars led by the instructor. The language of instruction will be English. Before each seminar, students are expected to finish the assigned reading and be prepared to discuss the reading at the seminar, taking the teacher's instructions and questions into account.

GRADING

The course adopts the 7-grade SU scale (A–F).

To receive a final grade, students must have completed all the examination assignments [not done all examination assignments=no grade].

To receive a passing grade (A to E), students must complete and pass all the examination assignments, and thus demonstrate that they achieved all the learning outcomes at least at the minimum level (as described below, Grading criteria).

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EXAMINATION

While attendance at seminars is not a requirement, it is strongly recommended that you attend and participate. You will be required to give an oral presentation at one of the seminars, in which you will

critically reflect on the set readings for that seminar and/or the previous seminar. Instructions are found below. The oral presentation is graded pass/fail. One longer essay will be written as part of your performance in this course (graded A-F). Instructions are found below. The essay is graded according to the grading criteria, found below.

SEMINAR PLAN

For times and rooms, see TimeEdit. Always check TimeEdit to see if there are changes in the schedule

- Seminar 1 Theorizing colonialism/post-colonialism.
Reading: Stuart Hall, “When Was the Post-colonial?”; Lazarus, “Introduction...”.
Key terms: Colonial, postcolonial
- Seminar 2 Modernism and colonial discourse.
Reading: Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*; Boehmer (intro, chapters 1-2); Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts.”
Key terms: Imperialism, colonialism, historicism, racism
- Seminar 3 Writing back.
Reading: Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*; Boehmer (chapter 3); in the Norton edition: Phillips, Irele, Wren.
Key terms: Decolonization
- Seminar 4 Theories of nationalism and literature.
Reading: Anderson (chapters 1-7); Fanon (chapters 1-3); Chrisman.
Key terms: Nations, Imagined communities
- Seminar 5 Hybrid nations.
Reading: Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*, Book One; Bhabha; Boehmer (chapters 4-6).
Key terms: Hybridity, Postmodernism, Magical realism
- Seminar 6 Allegories of the nation.
Reading: Earl Lovelace, *Salt*; Jameson; Ahmad; Chakrabarty
Key terms: Allegory, Nations, History, the three worlds
- Seminar 7 The Anglophone/Global novel and Colonial Memory
Reading: Ta Twan Eng, *The Garden of Evening Mists*; Boehmer (chapter 7); Ganguli.
Key terms: The global novel, histories, Memory
- Seminar 8 Postcolonial literature, the planet, the world.
Reading: Quayson et al; Graham et al.
Key terms: World literature, the anthropocene

COURSE LITERATURE

- Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*, Norton Critical Edition (2009 [1958])
- Ahmad, Aijaz. “Jameson’s Rhetoric of Otherness and the “National Allegory.”” *Social Text* 17 (Autumn 1987): 3-25.
- Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities* (1983) – Chapters 1-7.
- Bhabha, Homi. “Of Mimicry and Man.” *The Location of Culture*. Oxford: 1994. (E-book, SU)
- Boehmer, Elleke. *Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Migrant Metaphors*, 2nd ed. Oxford, 2005.
- Chakrabarty, Dipesh. “Post-Coloniality and the Artifice of History: Who Speaks for ‘Indian Pasts’?” in *Representations* 37 (1992). (E-journal at SUB)
- Chrisman, Laura. “Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies.” *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge, 2004. 183-98. (E-book at SUB)
- Eng, Ta Twan. *The Garden of Evening Mists*. (2012)
- Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth* (1961) – Chapters 1-3.
- Ganguli, Debjan. “Angloglobalism, Multilingualism and World Literature.” *Interventions* 25.5 (2023): 601-18.
- Jameson, Fredric. “Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism.” *Social Text* 15 (Autumn, 1986): 65-88. *JSTOR*.

- Graham, James et al. "Postcolonial Studies and World Literature." *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 48.5 (2012): 465-471. (E-journal at SUB)
- Hall, Stuart. "When Was the Post-Colonial? Thinking at the Limit." In *The Post-Colonial Question*, edited by Iain Chambers and Lidia Curti. Routledge, 1996. (E-book at SUB)
- Lazarus, Neil. "Introducing postcolonial studies." *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. (2004): 1-16. (E-book at SUB)
- Quayson, Ato et al. "Editorial: New Topographies." *The Cambridge Journal of Postcolonial Literary Inquiry* 1.1 (2014): 1-10. (E-journal at SUB)
- Rhys, Jean. *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1964).
- Rushdie, Salman. *Midnight's Children* (1981)
- Spivak, Gayatri Chakravarti. "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism." *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (Autumn 1985): 243-261.

GRADING CRITERIA (WRITTEN ASSIGNMENT)

Grade	Criteria
A: Excellent	<p>The student shows excellent ability when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advancing arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance; • using postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts; • offering an independent interpretation of a literary text; • following the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate; • expressing themselves in academic English.
B: Very good	<p>The student shows a very good ability when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advancing arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance; • using postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts; • offering an independent interpretation of a literary text; • following the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate; • expressing themselves in academic English.
C: Good	<p>The student shows good ability when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advancing arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance; • using postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts; • offering an independent interpretation of a literary text; • following the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate; • expressing themselves in academic English.
D: Satisfactory	<p>The student shows satisfactory ability when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advancing arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance; • using postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts; • offering an independent interpretation of a literary text; • following the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate; • expressing themselves in academic English.
E: Adequate	<p>The student shows minimally adequate ability when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advancing arguments about the literary, theoretical and critical texts in the course displaying critical distance; • using postcolonial critical and theoretical terms when discussing literary texts; • offering an independent interpretation of a literary text; • following the debate about the postcolonial condition and develop their own stance within that debate; • expressing themselves in academic English.

Fx: Fail (some additional work required)	The student's work demonstrates some but not all of the required skills specified in the learning outcomes at a minimally adequate level.
F: Fail (much more work required)	The student's work does not demonstrate the achievement of the learning outcomes of the course.

GRADING CRITERIA (ORAL PRESENTATION)

Criteria	Pass	Fail
Content	The presentation introduces the topic of the presentation in a clear and concise manner demonstrating the student's understanding of the literary and theoretical issues discussed. These issues are presented and discussed in a lucid manner.	In the presentation the student does not demonstrate a sufficient understanding of the literary and theoretical issues discussed. These issues are not presented and discussed in an adequate manner.
Organization and language	The presentation is well structured and easy to follow. The language used is academic and does not contain any severe mistakes.	The organization of the presentation is poor, and the language used contains several mistakes.

ORAL PRESENTATION ASSIGNMENT

The oral presentation assignment will demonstrate that you fulfill the learning outcomes for the course with regard to expressing yourself in academic English, advancing arguments about the course texts and using critical terms.

At the beginning of the course, we will distribute these assignments among the student group, so that in each seminar there will be one or several oral presentations in which students reflect critically on the readings for the previous and the current seminar. As part of these reflections, the student should take a stance vis-à-vis the theoretical or critical positions and making a point regarding their implications for how one (or several) of the literary works we have read for those two seminars can be analyzed.

The oral presentation should be at least five minutes long, and should not extend past ten minutes. It should be clearly structured, with an introduction and a conclusion. It should be addressed to your fellow students.

ESSAY ASSIGNMENT

Background

The course essay should demonstrate that you fulfill the learning outcomes for the course (see above).

Submission formalities

No later than one minute before midnight, November 3, you should submit a written essay in the form of a document uploaded to Athena. The document should be compatible with MS Word and it should be named “PoCo_I_essay_yourname.” The essay should be between 3500 and 4500 words long.

Content and aims

Drawing on at least two of the literary texts and two of the secondary texts from the reading list, as well as one additional source, synthesize and evaluate one or several key themes that have been addressed in the course readings: critiques of nationalism and nation-building, Eurocentric underpinnings of (national) history, the epistemological implications of imperialism/colonialism, the issue of the allegorical reading of postcolonial texts, the relation between postcolonial literature and world literature. Engage critically with the secondary texts.

Take care to present the positions you argue with or against: even a reader who hasn't taken this course should be able to follow your reasoning. The essay should display what Eric Hayot has called “citational density”: you are expected to put the critical texts you have read to work in your own writing. Since the essay is the primary means for you to show what you have learned in the course, it is important that you engage with a range of the critical readings. In addition, you should include at least one peer-reviewed source that you have located yourself that is relevant to your argument in the essay.

Formalities

Please use a 12-pt font, one-and-a-half-spaced lines, and either indented paragraphs or a space between paragraphs, and the normal, default margins. For documentation, use Chicago style, and include a full list of works cited. The essay should be carefully revised to avoid language errors, and it should have an introduction and a conclusion which do justice to the content. It should also have a title which serves to guide the reader's expectations of what will be found in the essay.

If you have any questions about the assignment, please contact me. And if you get stuck, do so as soon as possible: we don't want our students to succumb to writer's block. Often it helps just to talk about it.

Resubmission

Resubmission date: December 8, one minute before midnight. Please note that the instructions will be slightly amended, specifying particular literary texts for the task