

The Postcolonial Short Story

Professor: Jason Richards
Office and Mailbox: 408 Halliburton Tower
Office Hours: MWF 12-1, TR 2-3 (and by appointment)
Office Phone: 843-3517
Email: richardsj@rhodes.edu (see email policy)

Course: ENGL 265.03
Semester: Fall 2009
Time: TR 12:30-1:45
Room: 207 Kennedy Hall

Course Description

This course examines short stories by writers from the former British colonies of India, Africa, the Caribbean, Canada, Ireland, Australia, and New Zealand. At its zenith, the British Empire held enormous sway over much of the globe, exerting linguistic, political, and cultural influence that continued beyond the formal dismantling of empire. In this course, we will read short stories that address the vexed legacies of colonization, grapple with the emergence of postcolonial identities, and explore the ongoing effects of colonialism on contemporary global culture. Since our focus is the short story, we will study the formal properties and conventions of this genre, with an eye to how postcolonial writers adapt this Western literary form to their own political and aesthetic purposes. To aid our analysis, we will work with concepts from postcolonial studies such as mimicry, Orientalism, hybridity, decolonization, and ambivalence. Writers will include Salman Rushdie, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi wa Thiong'o, V. S. Naipaul, Jamaica Kincaid, Margaret Atwood, James Joyce, Peter Carey, Witi Ihimaera, among others.

Required Texts

An Anthology of Colonial and Postcolonial Short Fiction
Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts (2nd Edition)

Grading

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|-------------------------------|------|
| Participation/Professionalism | 20% |
| Mini-Papers (1 page max.) | 2x5% |
| Paper 1 (3-4 pages) | 20% |
| Paper 2 (3-4 pages) | 20% |
| Research Paper (8-10 pages) | 30% |

A = 100-94; **A-** = 93-90; **B+** = 89-87; **B** = 86-84; **B-** = 83-80; **C+** = 79-77; **C** = 76-74;
C- = 73-70; **D+** = 69-67; **D** = 66-64; **D-** = 63-60; **F** < 60

Participation/Professionalism: While I will often begin class with a lecture, this course relies heavily on discussion. You are expected to have all the readings done for the day they are assigned and come prepared to discuss them, and you must always bring the text(s) we are discussing to class. Participation will be evaluated in terms of quantity and quality. Part of your participation grade includes quizzes, which are **unannounced** and given at the beginning of class. **If you are late or absent on a quiz day, you cannot make up the quiz.** I will drop your lowest quiz grade. Quizzes must be done on paper with clean edges. Finally, a lack of

professionalism (e.g., not following course policies, rude behavior, and so on) will negatively affect this portion of your grade.

Email Policy: The best way to address questions about our class is by meeting in person. I am always happy to talk with you during my office hours, by appointment, and after class. That said, I am available by email for **simple** queries. I typically respond to email once a day between 9am-6pm Monday-Friday. If you do need to email, here are some rules to follow:

- Email correspondence should be treated as formal communication
- Email is not the place to discuss grade concerns or negotiate any kind of special request
- Email is not the place to seek feedback on your writing or ideas; that must be done in person
- Do not email at the last minute (e.g., the night before an assignment is due) asking for help
- Do not email with a question that can be answered by our syllabus or College website
- Do not email about your absences, unless you miss two or more classes in a row

Mini-Papers: Mini-papers are designed to prepare you for the larger papers. For these brief assignments, you will use a concept from *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* to **analyze** some aspect of one of our stories. The mini-papers, like the other papers, must follow the mode-of-submission guidelines. **Note: You will lose points for exceeding the 1-page limit.**

Short Papers: For these papers, you will work with *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts* to critically analyze one or more of our short stories. You will receive a handout for each paper.

Research Paper: The final assignment asks you to compose an 8-10 page paper (consisting of an argument, original analysis, and research) on one or more of the texts we have read this semester. Remember, this is a research paper, which means you must assemble a variety of scholarly perspectives to help build an original, argumentative analysis. You will receive a handout for this paper.

Mode of Submission: Papers are due at the beginning of class. All papers must be in 12-point Times New Roman font, double spaced, with 1-inch margins on the top and bottom and 1.25-inch margins on the sides. Please use printer ink that produces a copy dark enough to be easily legible. Place your name, instructor's name, course number, and date in the upper left-hand corner of the first page. Your last name and page number should appear in the upper right-hand corner of all pages. Do not include a title page. Place your title above the text on page one and double space above and beneath it. Your title should not be underlined. Be sure to staple your paper. You may lose points for not following these guidelines. **Note: I do not accept papers by email.**

Late Work: All work must be turned in on time. If you will not be in class when a paper is due, it must be in my mailbox before the deadline. A late paper will lose one percentage point for each day it is late (e.g., 84% becomes 83%, and so on).

Submission of All Work: All major assignments are integral to the goals of the course. Failure to complete any major assignment will result in a grade of F for the course.

Intellectual Honesty: All work is assumed to be the student's own and produced exclusively for the course in which it is submitted. Papers written for one course, even if revised, are not to be submitted in another without the instructor's prior approval. Borrowing of ideas or language from other sources (including published material, other student papers, the internet or other electronic resources, etc.) must be carefully documented. Students are advised against posting their work on the internet since doing so may lead to suspicion of plagiarism. Students are advised to maintain drafts of their work to verify its originality. Cases of suspected plagiarism will be referred to the Honor Council, and the student if convicted will receive a grade of F in the course in addition to sanctions assigned by the Council. Carelessness in documenting sources, even if not technically plagiarism, will be penalized as the instructor deems appropriate. If you are uncertain about how or whether to document sources, consult me.

Attendance: While I expect you to attend every class, you are allowed two absences during the semester. After two absences, every additional absence will lower your final grade by one percentage point (e.g., 80% becomes 79%, and so on). If you miss more than six classes, you will fail the course. **Note: If you miss class, please don't contact me to ask what you missed. Instead, you should exchange contact information with other classmates and ask them what we covered in class.**

Tardiness: Please do not come late to class. Tardiness disrupts the flow of class and distracts other students. If you have a scheduling conflict, you are advised to drop the class. Tardiness will lower your participation/professionalism grade.

Disability Issues: Students with documented disabilities should meet with me at the beginning of the semester to discuss appropriate accommodations. Please contact the office of Student Disability Services for more information. In all cases, it is your responsibility to provide me with an official letter from SDS.

Schedule (subject to change)

SF = *An Anthology of Colonial and Postcolonial Short Fiction*

KC = *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*

Note: Read the headnote for each author

Week 1

Aug 27: Introduction to Course

Week 2: ENGLAND/INDIA/PAKISTAN

Sept 1: Introductory Essays (SF 2-18); "Eurocentrism," "Manicheanism," and "Orientalism" (KC); Woolf, "Pearls and Swine" (SF)

Sept 3: Introductory Essay (SF 513-20); "Mimicry" (KC); Hosain, "First Party" (SF); "Dependency Theory" and "Hegemony" (KC); Anand, "Cobbler and the Machine" (SF)

Week 3

Sept 8: "Exile" (KC); Jhabvala, "Miss Sahib" (SF); "Exotic/Exoticism" (KC); Divakaruni, "Clothes" (SF)

Sept 10: "Globalization," "Glocalization," and "Hybridity" (KC); Rushdie, "The Courter" (SF)

Week 4: AFRICA

Sept 15: Introductory Essay (SF 629-41); "Cartography" and "Colonial Desire" (KC); Conrad, "Heart of Darkness" (SF 103-27)

Sept 17: "Cannibal" and "Going Native" (KC); "Heart of Darkness" (SF 127-65)

Week 5

Sept 22: "Savage/Civilized" (KC); Ogot, "Green Leaves" (SF); "Agency" and "Post-Colonial Body" (KC); Thiong'o, "Minutes of Glory" (SF); **Mini-Paper Due**

Sept 24: "Anti-Colonialism" and "Contrapuntal Reading" (KC); Achebe, "Girls at War" (SF); "Comprador" (KC); Achebe, "Dead Men's Path" (handout)

Week 6

Sept 29: "Subject/Subjectivity" and "Testimonio" (KC); Saro-Wiwa, "Africa Kills Her Sun" (SF); Head, "Wind and a Boy" (SF)

Oct 1: "Apartheid" (KC); Gordimer, "Amnesty" (SF); Kanengoni, "Effortless Tears" (SF); **Paper 1 Due**

Week 7: CARIBBEAN

Oct 6: Introductory Essay (SF 433-40); "Abrogation" (KC); Selvon, "Cricket Match" (SF); "Diaspora" (KC); Sealy, "My Fathers before Me" (SF)

Oct 8: "Miscegenation" and "Whiteness" (KC); Rhys, "Day They Burnt the Books" (SF); Kincaid, "Blackness" (SF)

Week 8

Oct 13: "Surveillance" (KC); Naipaul, "Night Watchman's Occurrence Book" (SF); "Modernity" (KC); Stewart, "Old Men Used to Dance" (SF)

Oct 15: "Centre/Margin" and "Modernism and Post-Colonialism" (KC); Marshall, "To Da-duh, in Memoriam" (SF); Scott, "Ballad for the New World" (SF)

Week 9: CANADA

Oct 20: **Fall Recess**

Oct 22: Introductory Essay (319-27) "Authentic/Authenticity," "Cultural Tourism," and "First Nations" (KC); Garner, "One-Two-Three Little Indians" (SF); "Colonial Patronage" (KC); Blaise, "Class of New Canadians" (SF)

Week 10

Oct 27: "Contact Zone" and "Palimpsest" (KC); Bowering, "Bring Forth a Wonder" (SF); "Double Colonization" (KC); Brand, "Sans Souci" (SF)

Oct 29: "Decolonization" (KC); Bissoondath, "Digging Up the Mountains" (SF); **Mini-Paper Due**

Week 11

Nov 3: "Exploration and Travel" (KC); Atwood, "Age of Lead" (SF); Levine, "Something Happened Here" (SF)

Nov 5: **No Class**

Week 12: IRELAND

Nov 10: Introductory Essay (SF 259-62); Carleton, "Wildgoose Lodge" (SF); Joyce, "Eveline" (SF)

Nov 12: "Dislocation" (KC); O'Flaherty, "Going into Exile" (SF); "Ambivalence"; McCann, "Everything in This Country Must"; **Paper 2 Due**

Week 13: AUSTRALIA

Nov 17: Introductory Essay (729-37); "Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples" and "Settler Colony" (KC); Lawson, "The Drover's Wife" (SF); Bail, "The Drover's Wife" (SF)

Nov 19: "Ecological Imperialism" and "Frontier" (KC); Cowan, "The Tractor" (SF); Jolley, "Hedge of Rosemary" (SF)

Week 14

Nov 24: Carey, "War Crimes" (SF)

Nov 26: **Thanksgiving Break**

Week 15: NEW ZEALAND

Dec 1: Introductory Essay (823-30); "Native" (KC); Mansfield, "How Pearl Button Was Kidnapped" (SF); "Other" and "Othering" (KC); Gaskell, "School Picnic" (SF)

Dec 3: "Orality" and "Primitivism" (KC); Ihimaera, "The Whale" (SF); "Speciesism" (KC); Hulme, "One Whale, Singing" (SF)

Week 16

Dec 7: Conferences

Dec 8: Conferences

Dec 10: **Research Paper Due by 12:30pm (in my office mailbox)**