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ENGL 363-01, 20th Century British Literature, Fall 2007

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English 363
Twentieth Century British Literature
Britain's Angry Decades: Literature, Culture and Revolution 1945-1965
Course Syllabus, Fall 2007

Instructor: J Edward Mallot
Office Location: 304 Palmer
Office Hours: 3:00-5:00 Mondays and Fridays
(also available by appointment)
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Required Texts

Amis, Kingsley. Lucky Jim
Banks, Lynne Reid. The L-Shaped Room
Burgess, Anthony. A Clockwork Orange
Dunn, Nell. Up the Junction
Fleming, Ian. From Russia with Love
MacInnes, Colin. Absolute Beginners
Orwell, George. 1984
Osborne, John. Look Back in Anger
Pinter, Harold. The Birthday Party
Selvon, Sam. The Lonely Londoners
Spark, Muriel. The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie

These texts are all currently available at Rhodes Bookstore. The MacInnes novel Absolute Beginners is only available in a big volume entitled The London Novels.

At this point, the bookstore only has enough copies of Pinter's The Birthday Room for about half the class. If you can, go ahead and buy one of these (you may need to ask where to find them). More copies will arrive at the bookstore soon.

There are a few short additional readings for the semester; these will be available through the English department folders on the Rhodes computer system. The address is \\Fileserver1\acad_dept_pgm\English\Mallot_J_Edward\Public

Finally, I will ask you to attend three film screenings this term; screenings are indicated on the reading schedule. For now, you should plan on those screenings to be held in our regular classroom. The library's Media Reserve Services has ordered copies of these films (once they arrive, the copies will stay on reserve). If you are unable to attend screenings, you must watch the film(s) on your own before the relevant class.

Course Description

The years following the Second World War comprised one of the most unstable periods of modern British history. In the face of continued Austerity, Britain reiterated its commitment to establishing a welfare state. While the home economy sputtered, the loss of India in 1947 presaged a wholesale dismantling of the British empire. And as increased Americanization threatened to diminish British influence in both politics and culture, Britons debated whether joining the European Common Market would help bolster its international standing, perhaps irreparably damaged by the 1956 Suez crisis. Crowds celebrated the coronation of Elizabeth II in 1952, but the country would soon enter what many have called its "Angry Decade," marked by both economic worries within Britain and the frustration of a diminished role on the international stage.

This course examines the literature and culture of the United Kingdom in the tumultuous period between the close of World War II and the emergence of a reinvented Britain, in many ways once again the center of global culture. Literary texts will concern new and lingering international concerns after the war, revolution in men's and women's roles after 1945, the creation of both a welfare state and the so-called "Permissive Society," the fall of Empire and concerns about increased immigration, and the first signs of a youth-driven counterculture, seen in the rise of the "Mods," the phenomenon of "Swinging London" and the preoccupation with juvenile delinquency. Discussions will seek to tie specific literary texts with the broader social issues impacting the postwar nation.

Course Requirements

Participation: After four absences your grade will be dropped. As I don't differentiate between excused and unexcused absences you'll need to contact me if you have an emergency that affects your ability to come to class. As a general rule, however, don't skip class just to skip class. Good attendance, however, does nothing itself to build a good participation grade. When I grade "Participation," I look for the following: does the student offer multiple meaningful, relevant contributions to our discussion every class? Is this really "meaningful" participation in terms of the quality of commentary and/or questions, or just empty words? Are the student's contributions unsolicited, or do I have to "drag" them into discussion? Is it clear that the student is listening to others' comments, and contributing to this group discussion in an appropriate manner? Discussion is *the* essential element to a successful, enjoyable literature course; I expect (and, in terms of your grade, demand) genuinely active participation.

Reading Quizzes: As participation is such a crucial element to this course, and as I really want you to come to class familiar with the material and ready to discuss it, sixteen of our sessions will begin with a brief quiz over factual matters in the text under discussion for that day. These quizzes will be unannounced, but if you are reading attentively this should cause no reason for alarm. Fifteen of these quizzes will count toward your final grade, for a total of 150 points. This is in case you miss a quiz (as I will not do "make ups") or to compensate for a poor performance.

Papers: You will compose three analytical, argumentative essays over the course of the term. Due dates are indicated on the reading schedule; further details about specific requirements will be available as deadlines approach. I offer late paper policies, but the penalties tend to be severe; be aware of due dates and plan your semester accordingly. I will be available to meet with you to discuss ideas about your papers, though I do not proofread drafts. The first essay will be worth 50 points; the second essay will be worth 100 points. The final essay will serve as our “final exam,” and is also worth 100 points. Please note: according to English Department policy, failure to complete any major assignment will result in an F for the entire course.

Other Important Information

Office Hours: I am available outside of class to discuss ideas you have or problems that may arise. If my office hours are inconvenient for you we can easily set up a time to meet. I encourage all of you to come and talk about what’s on your mind or simply chat. If at any time you are upset or concerned about something said in class, by me or anyone else, please come see me about it. I want everyone to feel comfortable coming to class.

Students with Disabilities: If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at extension 3994 as soon as possible. Arrangements need to take place well in advance, and this process can take time. I am more than willing to try to accommodate reasonable requests, but you’ll need to get underway with the process of documentation now.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is literary theft. It occurs when you use someone else’s ideas as your own, without proper citation. Plagiarism is committed if you copy someone’s words without documentation—whether the original source was published or not (this includes “borrowing” someone’s paper, or using something from the Internet). Plagiarism is committed when you closely paraphrase a source without proper acknowledgement. Students who commit plagiarism at Rhodes College are referred to the Honor Council for disciplinary action. If convicted, the student 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 have any questions about plagiarism, or want to speak to me about how to avoid plagiarism in your own papers, please come to me before handing in an assignment.

According to English Department policy, 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. 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. Finally, all work for this course will be subject to the Rhodes College Honor Code. For each paper and the final exam, you will be asked to copy this code *in full* and sign your pledge.

Tentative Schedule

(Note: This schedule may change, depending on what happens over the term. "Folder" refers to material located in the department folders in the Rhodes computer system; these can be accessed at \\Fileserver1\acad_dept_pgm\English\Mallot J Edward\Public)

Unit One Fears of a Red Planet

- 22 Aug Introduction/Syllabus
- 24 Aug George Orwell, 1984 (Chapters 1.1-1.6)

- 27 Aug Orwell (Chapters 1.7-2.5)
- 29 Aug Orwell (Chapters 2.6-2.10)
- 30 Aug (Thursday) Film Screening: *Passport to Pimlico* (8 pm)
- 31 Aug Discussion of Film

- 03 Sep Labor Day—No Class
- 05 Sep Orwell (Chapter 3)
- 07 Sep Constantine FitzGibbon, excerpts from When the Kissing Had to Stop (Folder)

- 10 Sep Ian Fleming, From Russia with Love (Chapters 1-10)
- 12 Sep Fleming (Chapters 11-20)
- 14 Sep Fleming (Chapters 21-28)

Unit Two Angry Young Men: The Generation of Discontent

- 17 Sep John Osborne, Look Back in Anger (read entire text)
- 19 Sep Osborne, "A Letter to my Fellow Countrymen" (handout)
- 21 Sep Kingsley Amis, Lucky Jim (Chapters 1-5)

- 24 Sep Amis (Chapters 6-11)
Poetry by Philip Larkin (handout)
- 26 Sep Amis (Chapters 12-18)
- 27 Sep (Thursday) Film Screening: *The Loneliness of the Long-Distance Runner* (8 pm)
- 28 Sep Discussion of Film

- 01 Oct Amis (Chapters 19-25)
- 03 Oct Harold Pinter, The Birthday Party (read entire text)
- 05 Oct Pinter continued

Unit Three

Only Halfway to Paradise: Gender and Minority Issues

- 08 Oct Lynne Reid Banks, The L-Shaped Room (Chapters 1-4)
10 Oct Banks (Chapters 5-10)
11 Oct (Thursday) **Paper One Due, 5 pm**
12 Oct Professor Mallot at KC Conference, No Class
- 15 Oct Fall Break, No Class
17 Oct Banks (Chapters 11-16)
19 Oct Banks (Chapters 17-25)
- 22 Oct Nell Dunn, Up the Junction (Pages 1-68)
24 Oct Dunn (Pages 69-127)
26 Oct Barbara Bell, excerpts from Just Take Your Frock Off! (Folder)
- 29 Oct Muriel Spark, The Prime of Miss Jean Brodie (Chapters 1-3)
31 Oct Spark (Chapters 4-6)
02 Nov Spark continued
- 05 Nov Sam Selvon, The Lonely Londoners (Pages 1-71)
07 Nov Selvon (Pages 71-142)
08 Nov (Thursday) **Paper Two Due, 5 pm**
09 Nov Selvon continued

Unit Four

The Trouble with Kids Today: The Rise of Youth Countercultures

- 12 Nov Terry Rawlings, excerpts from Mod: A Very British Phenomenon (Folder)
14 Nov Colin MacInnes, Absolute Beginners ("In June")
16 Nov MacInnes ("In July" and "In August")
- 19 Nov MacInnes ("In September")
21 Nov Thanksgiving Recess, No Class
23 Nov Thanksgiving Recess, No Class
- 26 Nov Anthony Burgess, A Clockwork Orange (Part One)
28 Nov Burgess (Part Two)
29 Nov (Thursday) Film Screening: *Blow-Up* (8 pm)
30 Nov Discussion of Film
- 03 Dec Burgess continued
05 Dec Burgess (Part Three)

Paper Three Due: Wednesday 12 December, 1 pm