

Saint Louis University Madrid · Department of English
ENGL 4680 Major Postcolonial Writers

Course Information

Professor: Matthew Kineen, PhD
Office: English & Spanish Part-time Faculty Office, Third Floor PIH
Office hours: Tuesday 16:00-17:00 or by appointment
E-mail: mkineen@slu.edu
Schedule: TR 17:30-18:45
Credits: 3
Prerequisites: ENGL-190; at least one 200-level English course recommended
Aula/classroom: Padre Ignacio Hall, Room B

Course Description and Objectives

This course examines English language literature written by authors from former colonies of the British Empire. We will focus on the complexity of the colonial and postcolonial situations, placing special emphasis on problems of identity—individual, cultural, social and national—caused by the imposition of the colonizing worldview on local cultures and traditions. Our reading will take us to the Caribbean, Africa, and India, as we chart the influence and after-effects of the European colonial period. Authors studied include Chinua Achebe, Nadine Gordimer, Salman Rushdie, Jamaica Kincaid, V. S. Naipaul and Derek Walcott.

Students will develop an accurate understanding of the concepts and terminology of postcolonial studies, approaching the issues from a diversified humanities perspective that begins with literature and expands into other disciplines. Upon completion of the course students should be able to demonstrate their understanding of key-words and concepts related to the topic in classroom discussion and written work. We will focus on several prominent authors, examining the literary aspects of their work and how it relates to the history and societies that they present. Students will also continue to develop skills in critical reading, academic writing, oral communication and research in the humanities.

Required Reading

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
Nadine Gordimer, *Jump and Other Stories*
Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (SLU Blackboard)
V. S. Naipaul, *Guerillas*
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
Selected postcolonial poetry and prose: Derek Walcott and others (SLU Blackboard)

Course Requirements and Policies

Attendance

Regular and punctual class attendance is mandatory. More than three unexcused absences will result in a lowered grade; repeated late arrival will also affect final grades. I will notify students as soon as attendance problems arise.

Coursework

Careful preparation of all reading assignments and other work is required. This a literature course, so the emphasis is on how the authors write, what they choose to write about, and how we respond to it. I will give reading and discussion questions in class for most of the reading assignments. Due dates for essays and other assignments are listed in the syllabus; topics for the essays will be distributed in class. All writing assignments must be completed following MLA style guidelines. Dates for mid-term and final exams are also listed in the syllabus; we will discuss the structure of the exams in class. Any student who does not notify the professor in advance that he/she will not attend the exam will receive an F. Make-up exams will only be granted in legitimate cases.

Late Assignments and Essays

Essays and other assignments are due in class or via email on the dates listed in the syllabus. Late submissions will fall one-half letter grade per class. Be sure to allow sufficient time for printing and other computer mishaps when preparing written work.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism constitutes a violation of academic integrity and may result in an F grade on a paper or an F grade for the course. You must always cite your sources according to academic guidelines. Do not hesitate to ask your professor about the correct ways of documenting and citing sources. Please review the SLU statement on academic integrity at the end of this document.

Special Accommodations

In recognition that people learn in a variety of ways and that learning is influenced by multiple factors (e.g., prior experience, study skills, learning disability), resources to support student success are available on campus. Students who think they might benefit from these resources can find out more about:

Course-level support (e.g., faculty member, departmental resources, etc.) by asking your course instructor.

University-level support (e.g., tutoring/writing services, Disability Services) by visiting the Academic Dean's Office (San Ignacio Hall) or by going to http://spain.slu.edu/academics/learning_resources.html.

Students who believe that, due to a disability, they could benefit from academic accommodations are encouraged to contact Disability Services at +34 915 54 58 58, ext. 204, send an e-mail to counselingcenter-madrid@slu.edu, or to visit the Counseling Office (San Ignacio Hall). Confidentiality will be observed in all inquiries. Course instructors support student accommodation requests when an approved letter from Disability Services has been received and when students discuss these accommodations with the instructor after receipt of the approved letter.

Collection of Student Work for Ongoing Assessment

Saint Louis University - Madrid Campus is committed to excellent and innovative educational practices. In order to maintain quality academic offerings and to conform to relevant accreditation requirements, we regularly assess our teaching, services, and programs for evidence of student learning outcomes achievement. For this purpose we keep on file anonymized representative examples of student work from all courses and programs such as: assignments, papers, exams, portfolios, and results from student surveys, focus groups, and reflective exercises. Thus, copies of your work for this course, including response papers, exams and essays may be kept on file for institutional research, assessment and accreditation purposes. If you prefer that Saint Louis University-Madrid Campus does not keep your work on file, you will need to communicate your decision in writing to your professor.

Grading Rationale

Attendance, preparation, participation	10% (includes "chutnification of history" presentation)
Response papers (3 x 2-3 pp each)	15%
Mid-term exam (take-home and in-class)	20%
Comparative literary essay (7-10pp)	25%
Final exam (cumulative)	30%

SYLLABUS – ENGL 4680 Major Postcolonial Writers

Week 1

Tuesday 2 September – General Course Introduction

Thursday 4 September

- Introduction: postcolonial studies and postcolonial literature
- read Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (Blackboard)
- read Ania Loomba, "Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies" (Blackboard)

Week 2

Tuesday 9 September

- Getting started: the writer, the text, the world and the reader(s)
- read Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Part One

Thursday 11 September

- Achebe and ethnography – writing the Ibo way of life
- read *Things Fall Apart*, Part One

Week 3

Monday 15 September – last day to drop a class without a grade of W and/or add a class

Tuesday 16 September

- Background lecture: European Colonization of Africa
- read *Things Fall Apart*, Part Two
- response paper 1 due

Thursday 18 September

- Knowledge as power in colonization; force as power in colonization
- read *Things Fall Apart*, Part Three

Week 4

Tuesday 23 September

- Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* – conclusions: What *falls apart* in the novel?

Thursday 25 September

- Introduction to V. S. Naipaul, *Guerillas*; read Naipaul, *Guerillas* (Chs. 1-3)

Week 5

Tuesday 30 September – last day to choose audit (AU) and pass/no pass (P/NP) options

Tuesday 30 September

- Background lecture: European colonization of the Caribbean
- read *Guerillas* (Chs 4-8)

Thursday 2 October

- Character analysis: understanding postcolonial ‘subjects’
- read *Guerillas* (Chs 9-10)

Week 6

Tuesday 7 October

- Things fall apart, again – postcolonial projects, postcolonial chaos
- read *Guerillas* (Chs 11-13)

Thursday 9 October

- Naipaul conclusions: levels of reading – real and allegorical
- read *Guerrillas* (Chs 14-16)

Week 7

Tuesday 14 October

- mid-term exam – take-home essay questions and in-class exam

Thursday 16 October

- Introduction to Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children* – postcolonial topics and postmodern writing
- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book One (Chapters 1-3)

Week 8

Tuesday 21 October

- Background lecture: British colonization of India and the 1947 Partition
- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book One (Chapters 4-6)

Thursday 23 October

- Saleem: “India, the new myth – a collective fiction”
- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book One (Chapters 7,8)

Week 9

Tuesday 28 October

- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book Two (Chapters 9-13)
- “chutnification of history” presentations

Thursday 30 October – last day to drop a class and receive a grade of W

Thursday 30 October

- Read *Midnight’s Children*, Book Two (Chapters 14-18)
- “chutnification of history” presentations

Week 10

Tuesday 4 November

- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book Two (Chapters 19-23)
- “chutnification of history presentations”

Thursday 6 November

- Rushdie and “a very Indian lust for allegory”
- read *Midnight’s Children*, Book Three (Chapters 24-27)

Week 11

Tuesday 11 November

- Rushdie conclusions: can fiction be ‘truthful’?

- read *Midnight's Children*, Book Three (Chapters 28-30)
- response paper 2 due

Thursday 13 November

- Introduction to Nadine Gordimer; Background lecture on South Africa
- read stories from *Jump and other Stories*

Week 12

Tuesday 18 November

- read stories from Gordimer, *Jump and other Stories*

Thursday 20 November

- read stories from *Jump*

Week 13

Tuesday 25 November

- read stories from *Jump*
- response paper 3 due

Thursday 27 November

- read stories from *Jump*
- final essay topic proposals and working outlines due

Week 14

Tuesday 2 December

- postcolonial poetics: read selected poems by Derek Walcott (Blackboard)
- final essay workshop

Thursday 4 December

- postcolonial poetry: read selected poems by Derek Walcott (Blackboard)

Week 15

Tuesday 9 December

- postcolonial poetics: read poems by selected authors
- the postcolonial in other contexts: further reading and films

Thursday 11 December

- course conclusions; review for final exam
- final essay due

FINAL EXAM

Thursday 18 December 15:30-18:30

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

The following is a statement of minimum standards for student academic integrity at Saint Louis University.

The University is a community of learning, whose effectiveness requires an environment of mutual trust and integrity, such as would be expected at a Jesuit, Catholic institution. As members of this community, students, faculty, and staff members share the responsibility to maintain this environment. Academic dishonesty violates it. Although not all forms of academic dishonesty can be listed here, it can be said in general that soliciting, receiving, or providing any unauthorized assistance in the completion of any work submitted toward academic credit is dishonest. It not only violates the mutual trust necessary between faculty and students but also undermines the validity of the University's evaluation of students and takes unfair advantage of fellow students. Further, it is the responsibility of any student who observes such dishonest conduct to call it to the attention of a faculty member or administrator.

Examples of academic dishonesty would be copying from another student, copying from a book or class notes during a closed-book exam, submitting materials authored by or editorially revised by another person but presented as the student's own work, copying a passage or text directly from a published source without appropriately citing or recognizing that source, taking a test or doing an assignment or other academic work for another student, tampering with another student's work, securing or supplying in advance a copy of an examination without the knowledge or consent of the instructor, colluding with another student or students to engage in an act of academic dishonesty; and making unauthorized use of technological devices in the completion of assignments or exams.

Where there is clear indication of such dishonesty, a faculty member or administrator has the responsibility to apply appropriate sanctions. Investigations of violations will be conducted in accord with standards and procedures of the school or college through which the course or research is offered. Recommendations of sanctions to be imposed will be made to the dean of the school or college in which the student is enrolled. Possible sanctions for a violation of academic integrity include, but are not limited to, disciplinary probation, suspension, and dismissal from the University. (4/21/04)