ENGL 5317-001 and D01: Studies in Post-Colonial Literature

The Empire Codes Back

Tuesdays 6:00 - 8:50 p.m. (Room 308, English/Philosophy Bldg.)

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Office hours: Tuesdays 3-6 pm

Course Description

Postcolonial writers have consistently written back to Empire and power. One strategy employed is to re-code the canon in ways that indicate the racial, gendered, and class assumptions of works such as William Shakespeare's *The Tempest*, Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*, Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, and Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. This course will examine a few such instances to analyze how postcolonial authors revisit genre and emplotment, subvert normative gender codes, disrupt monochromatic racial coding, and how their works are placed within textual and digital codes of revisionary literary histories.

Our focus will be on a selection of texts which include the following: Edward Said's *Culture and Imperialism*; Aimé Césaire's rewriting of Shakespeare in *Une Tempête*; a revision of Bronte in Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Dorothea Smartt's *Reader, I Married Him and Other Queer Goings on*; a scathing critique of Conrad in Chinua Achebe's "An Image of Africa" and Sven Lindquist's *Exterminate All the Brutes*; Patience Agbabi's remixing of Chaucer in *Telling Tales* and the Global Chaucers blog, an "online archive and community for post-1945, non-Anglophone Chauceriana;" and Samuel Selvon's rewriting of Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe*. Our attempt to construct a revisionary literary history will be aided by influential DH projects such as *Postcolonial Digital Humanities*, *Women Writers Online*, and *Orlando: Women's Writing in the British Isles from the Beginnings to the Present*.

Objectives:

- To understand that postcolonial studies is an interdisciplinary mode of analysis: Class participation and presentations (20%)
- To examine the major currents in postcolonial studies such as political domination and movements emerging in response to these, gender and nationalism, cultural and linguistic imperialism, changing definitions of textuality and the archive: Responses (40%)
- To develop critical skills conversant with modes of postcolonial cultural studies: Paper 1 (20%) and Paper 2 (20%)
Assignments:

- **Presentations**: One 10-minute class presentation during the semester. Please use PPTs or Prezi to make your presentation clear and concise.
- **Responses**: Four three-page responses to the readings to be submitted on Blackboard. Think of these responses as springboards for your papers.
- **Paper #1** (10 pages) which employs modes of analysis as listed in bulleted points in the learning objectives. The paper may focus on either the contexts we have discussed in the course or any other that the student wishes to explore. This paper must use at least 5 external research sources.
- **Paper #2** (16-18 pages) at the end of the course. Please discuss the topic with me. This paper can build on the research undertaken for the short paper but must use additional sources. A minimum of 10 additional sources are required for this paper, 3 of these can be ones used for the first paper if the topic is closely related.

**LGBTQIA Support Statement**: I identify as an ally to the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer, intersex, and asexual (LGBTQIA) community, and I am available to listen and support you in an affirming manner. I can assist in connecting you with resources on campus to address problems you may face pertaining to sexual orientation and/or gender identity that could interfere with your success at Texas Tech. Please note that additional resources are available through the Office of LGBTQIA within the Center for Campus Life, Student Union Building Room 201, www.lgbtqia.ttu.edu. 806.742.5433.

**Attendance policy**: Since you will be making presentations on the readings, sharing your viewpoints during online discussions, and working on writing assignments, attendance is mandatory. You may miss a maximum of 1 class without the prior permission of the instructor. For every subsequent class missed you will be required to submit a 2-page response on the reading assigned for the day. In the absence of this submission you will be marked down half a letter grade on the overall grade for the course for each class you miss. Missing more than 2 classes without adequate documentation will lead to a fail grade for the course. Documented absences (illness, emergencies etc.) will be excused. However, prolonged absences, for whatever reason, will not be excused.

Regarding the observance of a religious holy day: a student will be excused from attending classes or other required activities, including examinations, for the observance of a religious holy day and the time necessary to travel for this observance. The student will not be penalized for the absence and will be permitted to take an exam or complete an assignment missed during the excused absence. No prior notification is required.

**Class Participation**: All students are required to show evidence of familiarity with the assigned readings for the day, to participate in weekly chats, and to make constructive contributions to them. The films are part of the course material. You may not miss or excuse yourself from a film discussion. Because we are in a formal learning environment, courtesy demands that you may not take any calls during class. In addition, you are expected to show respect for diverse opinions during class discussions. Also expected is respect for gender, racial, ethnic, religious, and sexual differences. Expression of racism, sexism, and homophobia will not be tolerated. Students who
do not follow norms of polite discussion may be asked to leave the online classroom. Class participation requires at least five substantive comments related to the course material during the time the class meets.

Class Presentation: Each student is required to sign up for one 10-minute class presentation on any aspect of the required reading related to the course. These presentations should be in the form of Power Point with textual, photographic or video materials. The presentations may be reworked as papers to be submitted during the semester in consultation with the instructor.

Responses: Responses are meant to explicate the readings we are doing in class and are to be submitted electronically on Blackboard. Please feel free to bring in additional information about other texts, which may relate to the reading. In addition, you may include photographs, film clips, and links to other material available on websites that may be pertinent to your discussion entry. I will read through the discussion every week, and occasionally comment on them as an indication of your class participation. You may also create a blogspace and post your Responses there.

Papers: All papers demonstrating a clear thesis, introduction, and conclusion, and adequate use of research sources, must be completed and submitted at the beginning of class on the day assigned in the proper format. Late submissions are unacceptable except in the case of documented medical emergencies. A late submission will be marked down one letter grade for each day after the due date. Each paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 12 font, double-spaced with one-inch margins with your name, course number, the name of the instructor and the date on the top left hand corner of the first page. You should keep a copy (xeroxed, printed or saved to disk) of each paper turned in.

Please remember that papers test your critical and analytical skills. Extensive use of block quotes with minimal analysis does not fulfill the paper requirements for this course. Evidence of plagiarism (use of another's ideas, data, and/or statements without acknowledgment or with only minimal acknowledgement) will lead to an “F” for the course.

We are committed to academic integrity in all its practices. The faculty value intellectual integrity and a high standard of academic conduct. Activities that violate academic integrity undermine the quality and diminish the value of educational achievement. Cheating on papers, tests, or other academic works is a violation of College rules. No student shall engage in behavior that, in the judgment of the instructor of the class, may be construed as cheating. This may include, but is not limited to, plagiarism or other forms of academic dishonesty such as the acquisition without permission of tests or other academic materials and/or distribution of these materials and other academic work. This includes students who aid and abet as well as those who attempt such behavior. Please review Department of English "Ethics in English: A Guide for Students." Further, you are expected to follow "netiquette." Related to this, if you see spam in your blog, you might use word verification.

Disability Policy: Any student who, because of a disability, may require special arrangements in order to meet the course requirements should contact the instructor as possible to make necessary arrangements. Students must present appropriate verification from Student Disability Services
during the instructor’s office hours. Please note that instructors are not allowed to provide classroom accommodation to a student until appropriate verification from Student Disability Services has been provided. For additional information, please contact Student Disability Services office in 335 West Hall or call 806-742-2405. (OP10.08).

See also the TTU Department of English Emergency Action Plan in case of fire, bomb threat, flood, tornado, or active shooter/armed subject emergency.

Assignment Expectations

- **A.** Your project is of impeccable (or almost impeccable) quality in both content and format design, with no major weaknesses in any area. It provides adequate information that users need and effectively fulfills the intended purposes. Presentation is of professional quality. There are few if any mechanical errors.
- **B.** Your project is of high quality in most of the major areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes quite effectively. Presentation is quite professional. There are only a few mechanical errors.
- **C.** Your project is of reasonable quality in most areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes to a large extent, although major deficiencies are observable. Presentation is of semi-professional quality. There are some mechanical errors, but not to the extent of seriously affecting readers' comprehension.
- **D.** Your project is of acceptable quality in most areas. It fulfills the user's needs and your intended purposes to some extent, but major deficiencies exist in several areas. Presentation quality is acceptable but low. There are a significant number of mechanical errors.
- **F.** Your project is unacceptable in quality. It does not fulfill the user's needs or your intended purposes. Major deficiencies are observed in most areas. Presentation quality is poor, and there are too many mechanical errors.

Required Texts:


Lindquist, Sven. “*Exterminate all the brutes*”: *One man’s odyssey into the heart of darkness and the origins of European genocide*. The New Press, 1997.


**Weekly Reading Schedule**

**Introducing Postcolonial Studies**

**Week 1 (January 22):** Introduction to the course; discussion on decoloniality/postcoloniality; Anne McClintock, “The Angel of Progress: Pitfalls of the Term ‘Post-Colonialism’” (I will provide the PDF); *The Empire Writes Back*, “Introduction” and “Chapter 1” (pages 1-36)

**Week 2 (January 29):** Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism* (I will provide the PDF); Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (available at: [http://shakespeare.mit.edu/](http://shakespeare.mit.edu/) or [https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/](https://www.opensourceshakespeare.org/)). We will discuss Open Source Shakespeare in class.

**Chaucer, Shakespeare, and their Women**

**Week 3 (February 5):** Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest: based on Shakespeare's The Tempest: adaptation for a Black theatre*; Sylvia Wynter, “Beyond Miranda’s Meanings: Un/silencing the ‘Demonic Ground’of Caliban’s ‘Woman.’” *Out of the Kumbla: Caribbean women and literature* (1990): 355-72 (I will provide the PDF); Response #1 due on Feb. 5

**Week 4 (February 12):** *The Empire Writes Back*, Chapters 2 and 4 (pages 37-76, 115-152); Choose one digital project to report on which may be a blog containing significant research sources, a website, a tool relevant for Digital Humanities (Omeka, Voyant etc.) or a digital sub-section of a physical library such as the Schomburg, the Beinecke, or the Library of Congress.

**Week 5 (February 19):** Geoffrey Chaucer, *Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, The Miller’s Tale* and *The Wife of Bath’s* available at [http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/kt-par0.htm](http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/kt-par0.htm) in interlinear translation; and as much (or as little) of Patience Agbabi’s *Telling Tales* as you would like to read. We will also look at the [Global Chaucers website](http://sites.fas.harvard.edu/~chaucer/teachslf/kt-par0.htm); Response # 2 due on Feb. 19

**Defoe and his Caribbean Inheritors**

**Week 6 (February 26):** Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Introduction and Chapter 1; introducing *Orlando: Women’s Writing in the British Isles*; 600 word outline of Paper 1 due on Blackboard on Feb 26.


**Bronte's Deranged Abused Women**

**Week 8 (March 12):** No Class (Spring Break)
**Week 9 (March 19):** Jane Eyre, Chapters I, VII, XII, XXVI, available at [http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1260/1260-h/1260-h.htm](http://www.gutenberg.org/files/1260/1260-h/1260-h.htm); Dorothea Smartt, *Reader, I Married Him and Other Queer Goings on* (I will provide the PDF)


**Conrad and the (Post) Colonialists**

**Week 11 (April 2):** Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* Chinua Achebe “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” (I will provide the PDFs)

**Week 12 (April 9):** Lindquist, Sven. “*Exterminate All the Brutes*”: One man’s Odyssey into the Heart of Darkness and the Origins of European Genocide; Binyawanga Wainaina, "How to Write about Africa”

**Week 13 (April 16):** No class (I am away for a conference); Response # 4 which is a 1000-word draft of Paper #2 due on April 16.

**Culture and Resistance**


**Week 15 (April 30):** *The Empire Writes Back*, Chapters 5 and 6 (pages 153-222)

**Week 16 (May 7):** Conclusion to the course; Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, Chapter 4, (pages 282-326)

**Paper # 2 due on May 9 by 4.00 p.m.**