Course Title: Post-Colonial Women Writers

Updated: Spring 2014

Course Number: ENG 232
Credit: 3 lecture hours

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Catalog description: Examines works written in English by women of color in Asia, Africa, the Americas, and Australia. Explores contributions of the writers to the body of modern world literature – poetry, fiction, drama – along with aspects of the writers’ politics and the social milieus that form their works.

What is Postcolonial Literature? It is generally understood as the literature written in countries that have gone through colonization and decolonization. Postcolonial literature includes writing concerned with a wide variety of political and literary issues that include, but are by no means limited to:

- Colonial power and anticolonial conflict
- Political and cultural legacies of imperialism in the newly independent colony and the role of diaspora
- Postcolonialism & feminism

Our class will be structured around these three broad sets of ideas (with primary focus on the so called ‘third-world woman’), and will attempt the daunting work of balancing a global understanding of the various moves in postcolonial literature with an intense analysis of individual works.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

The student will be able to:

- Understand the term and genre, “postcolonial”;
- Research the background, the history and the cultural context of the authors;
- Analyze the social conditions that shaped their writing;
- Discuss the shared histories;
- Combine and apply the informative and analytical skills acquired in this course in a final, comprehensive 7-10 page research paper using credible reference/literary resources;
- Write fresh interpretations of texts and/or issues in literary studies in which she/he will 1) perform a reasonable close reading by analyzing relevant literary elements (techniques, themes, forms/genres, stylistic choices, or other literary devices), and 2) make appropriate references to relevant texts;
- Indicate how she/he (might) use or adapt literary elements (techniques, themes, forms/genres, stylistic choices, or other literary devices) used by writers in this course for personal critical thinking;
draw upon course materials to develop further, meaningful questions about this course;

- demonstrate how common or culturally specific heritages, perspectives, histories, and/or belief systems influenced postcolonial writers and the forms or genres in which they wrote;

- identify the political and social aims of postcolonial authors and determine the role of literature and culture in the pursuit of these goals;

- trace the relationship between more recent postcolonial texts and earlier ones in order to find the literary and ideological connections as well as divides between different generations of writers.

**Information resources:** (Describe the primary information resources that support the course, including books, videos, journals, electronic databases, websites, etc. at: www.mccc.edu/student_library_course_form.shtml) Mercer County Community College Library’s Bibliographic Instruction Program: literature/poetry databases.

**Other learning resources:** Reading and writing tutors are available in the Mercer County Community College Learning Center. • In class, or online discussion and study groups.

**Course-specific General Education Knowledge Goals and Core Skills.**

**General Education Knowledge Goals**

**Goal 1.** Communication. Students will communicate effectively in both speech and writing.

**Goal 4.** Technology. Students will use computer systems or other appropriate forms of technology to achieve educational and personal goals.

**Goal 6.** Humanities. Students will analyze works in the fields of art, music, or theater; literature; philosophy and/or religious studies; and/or will gain competence in the use of a foreign language.

**Goal 7.** History. Students will understand historical events and movements in World, Western, non-Western or American societies and assess their subsequent significance.

**Goal 8.** Diversity. Students will understand the importance of a global perspective and culturally diverse peoples.

**Goal 9.** Ethical Reasoning and Action. Students will understand ethical issues and situations.

MCCC Core Skills Goal A. Written and Oral Communication in English. Students will communicate effectively in speech and writing, and demonstrate proficiency in reading.

**Goal B.** Critical Thinking and Problem-solving. Students will use critical thinking and problem solving skills in analyzing information.

**Goal C.**
Ethical Decision-Making. Students will recognize, analyze and assess ethical issues and situations.

**Goal D.**
Information Literacy. Students will recognize when information is needed and have the knowledge and skills to locate, evaluate, and effectively use information for college level work.

**Goal E.**
Computer Literacy. Students will use computers to access, analyze or present information, solve problems, and communicate with others.

**Goal F.**
Collaboration and Cooperation. Students will develop the interpersonal skills required for effective performance in group situations.

**Goal G.**
Intra-Cultural and Inter-Cultural Responsibility. Students will demonstrate an awareness of the responsibilities of intelligent citizenship in a diverse and pluralistic society, and will demonstrate cultural, global, and environmental awareness.

**Units of study in detail.**

**Unit I**
Introduction to Postcolonial Literature Learning Objectives The student will be able to… understand the objectives of the course (Course Competency 1; Gen Ed Goals 1, 2, 6; Core Skill A); scholarly analyses of the meaning and function of postcolonial literature (Course Competency 1; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B, C, D, G); get a historical overview of postcolonial literature (Course Competency 1; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 8, 9; Core Skills A, G);

**Unit II**
Knowing Postcolonial Literature Learning Objectives The student will be able to… read short stories, a novel, and poems (Course Competency 1; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6; Core Skill A,); understand the nature and impact of colonization (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B, C, G); understand the nature and impact of post colonialism (Course Competencies 1, 2, 3, 4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B, C, G);

**Unit III**
Understand the impact of gender Learning Objectives The student will be able to… identify themes (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); identify characters (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); identify plot (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); identify setting (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); identify point of view (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B).

**Unit IV**
Understanding the story, the storyteller, and the audience Learning Objectives The student will be able to… understand the value of the storyteller’s craft (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); get a sense of story (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B); get a measure of the sense of audience (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core Skills A, B).

**Unit V**
Understanding the value of critical review Learning Objectives The student will be able to… appreciate literary criticism (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9; Core
Skills A, B) value the critic’s voice (Course Competencies 1-4; Gen Ed Goals 1, 8; Core Skills A, B).

COURSE POLICIES:

ATTENDANCE
Promptness and attendance are imperative in a discussion/workshop class. It should go without saying that you should arrive to class on time and well prepared. Tardiness, like sporadic absences, disrupts the class. Don’t enter the class more than fifteen minutes after it has begun. Three instances of tardiness counts as one absence, and your final grade is compromised after two unexcused absences. If you miss two full weeks of class or more, you may fail the course. If you miss class, you are responsible for getting any assignments and making up any work. Keep in mind that a lot of group workshops and in class work cannot be made up.

CONFERENCES
I encourage you to see me during my office hours throughout the semester, especially when you have questions about an assignment, need help with a particular writing problem, want extra feedback on a draft, or have questions about my comments on your work. Of course, we can also correspond via e-mail.

Evaluation of student learning

ASSIGNMENTS
§ All written assignments are due at the beginning of class on the due date. Late assignments are graded down a half of a letter grade for every day that they are late. Five minutes after class starts counts as day one. So, if you are late to class, your paper is late to class.
§ All written assignments have to be typed and double-spaced. Use only Times New Roman font, size 12 with left/right margins set to 1.25 inches, and top/bottom margins set to 1 inch. Always print out your assignment the night before it is due. It will give you more time to deal with any printer/computer problems that might come your way.
§ The following are only brief descriptions of your assignments. You will receive more detailed assignment sheets as the semester progresses.

➢ CLASS PARTICIPATION (This will include quizzes, presentations, and active engagement in class): 10%
➢ ANALYTICAL PAPER: 15%
   You will write one three-page essay which will take the form of polished, analytical and proofread response to the texts we read this semester. The paper response will consider a novel and a shorter work, and work towards presenting a single, cohesive argument about the texts.
FILM RESPONSES (2 X 15%): 30%
For each of the films we watch, you will write a 1 page response, focusing on a single issue, character, or theme you noticed in the film. As with the other essays, your response will be polished and formal, and center itself around an argument.

TEAM PRESENTATION: 10%
By the end of the first couple of weeks of class, you will get into groups of three or four and sign-up for a presentation on a novel that we’ve read. The presentation will include some biographical information on the writer as well as an analytical comparison with a different, shorter work.

SYMPOSIUM:
The students will make a 10-minute presentation to the Honors community at the end-of-semester Symposium on Saturday December 7th from 10-12. The goal of the presentation should be to introduce the audience to compelling findings or ideas from the course. (Feel free to use the film responses or team presentation, or a combination of the two.): 5%

RESEARCH PAPER: 30%
- Presentation- 10%
- Paper- 20%

Academic Integrity Statement: Students will be expected to abide by all aspects of the Academic Integrity Policy.

Texts:
1. The Inheritance of Loss by Kiran Desai
2. Salt & Saffron by Kamila Shamsie
3. The Collector of Treasures by Bessie Head
4. The Saffron Kitchen by Yasmin Crowther
5. The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures by Ashcroft, Griffiths & Tiffin
6. One text or film chosen by students
7. Additional articles & literature will be supplied by the instructor.