

FACULTY OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

English 491-01

Winter 2014

Postcolonial and Diasporic Literatures: Selected Region (Africa)

Instructor: Dr. Shaobo Xie
Class time: MWF 10:00 - 10:50 p.m.
Location: SS 010
Office: SS 1012
Office hours: Wed. 11:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.
Telephone: 220-5478
Email: sxie@ucalgary.ca

Course Objectives:

To study postcolonial and diasporic literature is to open up to geographical, cultural, and racial/ethnic Others, to express a self-enriching readiness to appreciate the Other in the self and the self in the Other, to break out of various forms of ethnocentrism, especially euro- or west-centrism, and to challenge ideological biases and boundaries that separate and alienate culture from culture and people from people. Students in this course will be exploring how the representations of the cultural/racial/ethnic Other in the postcolonial novels they read challenge, question, and deconstruct eurocentric or (neo)primitivist conceptions of the non-western or indigenous subaltern, situating these literary representations in the moment of empire writing back. Students will also investigate how English literature produced by people from the geopolitical periphery decenters, revises, and enriches the canon of English literature established in the imperial center.

Students will begin the course by taking up some of the key concepts for postcolonial studies to acquire critical and conceptual tools for postcolonial criticism. The course format will be a mixture of lectures, class conversations, group discussions and presentations, and Blackboard online discussion. Each group will present a critical reading of one of the novels included in the course syllabus. The presentation will take 35 minutes and leave 15 minutes for response from the rest of the class. Everyone will be expected to actively participate in Blackboard online discussion. You will write a research paper of 3000 words or 12 typed pages. You will need to do library and/or online research before you start writing the paper. Your essay must have a clear, arguable thesis, and should be coherently structured and rigorously argued. To ensure that you will be on the right track, you should submit an essay proposal two weeks prior to the due date.

Prerequisite: English 302 & either 240 or 340.

Texts:

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *The River Between*
Nadine Gordimer, *July's People*
J. M. Coetzee, *Foe*
Ama Ata Aidoo, *Changes: A Love Story*

Young, *Postcolonialism: A Very Short Introduction*
Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/Postcolonialism*
Bill Ashcroft et. al., *Postcolonial Studies: The Key Concepts*

Assignments:

Online discussion	20%
Critical essay	35%
Class participation	10%
Group presentation	10%
Take-home examination	25%

There will be no Registrar-scheduled exam in this course.

Group projects will be presentations on chosen texts or topics. The group work grade is designed to encourage students to take group work seriously. All members of a group will receive the same grade, except for students absent when the group work assignment is prepared or presented, who will receive an F.

Students must submit all assignments to qualify for a passing grade. All take-home written assignments must be typewritten and double-spaced. You should use a 12 point type-size and a readable font. Take-home essays must adhere to the format and documentation outlined in the *MLA Handbook* (6th or 7th Edition). To avoid plagiarism, please read the attached statement on plagiarism.

Please keep a copy of everything you submit. Except in cases of illness or crisis, late papers will be penalized a fraction of a grade per day (i.e., a B paper handed in a day late will receive a B-; a B paper handed in two days late will receive a C+).

Grading System:

Letter Grade	Percentage	Grade Point Value
A+	90+%	4.0
A	85-89%	4.0
A-	80-84%	3.7
B+	77-79%	3.3
B	74-76%	3.0
B-	70-73%	2.7
C+	67-69%	2.3
C	64-66%	2.0
C-	60-63%	1.7
D+	55-59%	1.3
D	50-54%	1.0
F	0-49%	0

Plagiarism:

Using any source whatsoever without clearly documenting it is a serious academic offense. Consequences include failure on the assignment, failure in the course and possible suspension or expulsion from the university. Please refer to the following information and make sure you are familiar with the statement below on plagiarism.

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-2-1.html>

Scribe and Muse Club for English Students:

The Scribe and Muse Reading and Writing Club (SMRWC) fosters and champions reading and writing through community service, leadership, and engagement. We strive to enhance the academic and social experience of undergraduate students by promoting academic excellence and interaction between students, faculty, and the community, through social, cultural, and academic events <http://english.ucalgary.ca/scribe-and-muse-english-club>.

Our email address is smec@ucalgary.ca.

English Department Website:

For more information about courses, programs, policies, events and contacts in the Department of English, please go to our website at <http://english.ucalgary.ca>. Please note that the course outlines posted on the English Department website constitute the official course outline for purposes of appeals. Students should verify any hard copies against this posted version. For courses which employ numerical grades, the official departmental percentage to letter grade conversion scale is also posted on the department website.

Writing support:

The Student Success Centre offers both online and workshop writing support for U of C students. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/ssc/writing-support>

Library and Research Support:

Melanie Boyd, Librarian for English, offers research support to students, including strategies for finding articles, books, and other library materials. Contact: maboym@ucalgary.ca
Find *The English Pages* research guide here: <http://libguides.ucalgary.ca/english>

Follow the Department of English on Facebook & Twitter:**Academic regulations and schedules:**

Consult the Calendar for course information, university and faculty regulations, dates, deadlines and schedules, student, faculty and university rights and responsibilities. The homepage for the University Calendar is

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/index.htm>

Grade appeals:

Consult the following University Calendar link and request advice from the English Department office, SS 1152. Please note that “mere dissatisfaction with a decision is not sufficient grounds for the appeal of a grade or other academic decision.”

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i.html>

Deferral of term work and final examinations:

Should you require an extension for completion of term papers or assignments beyond the deadline of five days after the end of lectures, an Application of Deferment of Term Work form must be completed. The University also has regulations governing the deferral of final examinations. See Calendar: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-6.html>, <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/g-7.html>.

Academic Accommodation:

It is the students’ responsibility to request academic accommodations. If you are a student with a documented disability who may require academic accommodations and have not registered with Student Accessibility Services, please contact them at 403-220-6019. Students who have not registered with Student Accessibility Services are not eligible for formal academic accommodations. More information about academic accommodations can be found at www.ucalgary.ca/access.

Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/emergencyplan/assemblypoints>;

Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act:

<http://www.ucalgary.ca/legalservices/foip/>

“Safewalk” Program:

Campus Security will escort individuals day or night: call 220-5333 for assistance. Use any campus phone, emergency phone or the yellow phone located at most parking lot pay booths. <http://www.ucalgary.ca/security/safewalk/>

Faculty of Arts Program Advising and Student Information Resources:

Have a question, but not sure where to start? The new Faculty of Arts Program Information Centre (PIC) is your information resource for everything in Arts! Drop in at SS110, call us at 403-220-3580 or email us at artsads@ucalgary.ca. You can also visit the Faculty of Arts website at <http://arts.ucalgary.ca/undergraduate> which has detailed information on common academic concerns.

For program planning and advice, contact the Student Success Centre (formerly the Undergraduate programs Office) at (403) 220-5881 or visit them in their new space on the 3rd Floor of the Taylor Family Digital Library.

For registration (add/drop/swap), paying fees and assistance with your Student Centre, contact Enrolment Services at (403) 210-ROCK [7625] or visit them at the MacKimmie Library Block.

Contact for Students Union Representatives for the Faculty of Arts:

arts1@su.ucalgary.ca, arts2@su.ucalgary.ca, arts3@su.ucalgary.ca, arts4@su.ucalgary.ca

Contact for Students Ombudsman's Office: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/provost/students/ombuds>

Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI):

"At the University of Calgary, feedback provided by students through the Universal Student Ratings of Instruction (USRI) survey provides valuable information to help with evaluating instruction, enhancing learning and teaching, and selecting courses (www.ucalgary.ca/usri). Your responses make a difference - please participate in USRI Surveys."

PLAGIARISM

Plagiarism is an extremely serious offence. Please read the following information carefully. The penalty routinely recommended by the English Department for documented plagiarism is failure of the course in which the offence occurred; academic probation is also routinely applied at the Faculty level. Suspension or expulsion can result from severe or repeated plagiarism.

The University Calendar states:

1. Plagiarism - Essentially plagiarism involves submitting or presenting work in a course as if it were the student's own work done expressly for that particular course when, in fact, it is not. Most commonly plagiarism exists when:

- (a) the work submitted or presented was done, in whole or in part, by an individual other than the one submitting or presenting the work (this includes having another impersonate the student or otherwise substituting the work of another for one's own in an examination or test),
- (b) parts of the work are taken from another source without reference to the original author,
- (c) the whole work (e.g., an essay) is copied from another source, and/or,
- (d) a student submits or presents work in one course which has also been submitted in another course (although it may be completely original with that student) without the knowledge of or prior agreement of the instructor involved.

While it is recognized that scholarly work often involves reference to the ideas, data and conclusions of other scholars, intellectual honesty requires that such references be explicitly and clearly noted.

Plagiarism occurs when direct quotations are taken from a source without specific acknowledgement, or when original ideas or data from the source are not acknowledged. Citing your sources in a bibliography is not enough, because a bibliography does not establish which parts of a student's work are taken from other sources. MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation or other recognized forms of citation must be used for this purpose. Advice on adequate documentation can be found at the following web sites:

<http://www.dianahacker.com/resdoc/>

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/747/01/>

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STATEMENT ON PRINCIPLES OF CONDUCT

According to the University Calendar, (<http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/j.html>)

“The University of Calgary community has undertaken to be guided by the following statements of purpose and values: to promote free inquiry and debate, to act as a community of scholars, . . . , to respect, appreciate, and encourage diversity, [and] to display care and concern for community”. The Department of English, like the university as a whole, is committed to a “positive and productive learning and working environment.” This environment is characterized by appreciation and encouragement of diversity and respect for the dignity of all persons: students, support staff, and faculty. The department will not tolerate unacceptable behaviour, such as threatening gestures, threatening or abusive verbal or written communication (including e-mails), or any conduct that “seriously disrupts the lawful education and related activities of students and/or university staff”. Any cases of such misconduct should be reported immediately to the department Head, who, depending on the nature and severity of the incident, may then take further appropriate action.