ENGL 2334.02 Themes and Genres in English Literatures  
Prof. Josh Epstein <joshua.epstein@tamucc.edu>  
Class Sessions: Tuesday and Thursday, 8:00-9:15 p.m., CI 126

Office: Faculty Center 287  
Phone: 361.825.2395  
Office Hours: Mon., 10 a.m.-1 p.m.; Tues. 2:30-3:30 p.m.; Wed., 12-1 p.m.; or by appointment.

This course surveys a range of modern literature from Britain and former colonies, focusing on how writers represent these colonial encounters. How, for example, do they use popular genres like the "adventure story" or the pilgrimage myth to narrate their excursions into unknown and already occupied lands? How do their treatments of landscape and the human body lead us to rethink our notions of national citizenship and personhood, to question what it means to be "British"? How do the colonies "write back" to their current and former rulers, as active rather than passive agents?

**Required Texts**

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*  
E.M Forster, *A Passage to India*  
H. Rider Haggard, *She*  
V.S. Naipaul, *Guerrillas*  
Nadine Gordimer, *The Conservationist*  
Diana Hacker, *Pocket Style Manual* (or any up-to-date style guide with latest MLA format guidelines).  
Other readings made available online or as copies. Please keep these organized in a folder or binder.

**Student Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- Recognize the connections between literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
- Respond critically to literary works.

**Graded Activity**

- Paper 1: Draft (ungraded) and Revision (10%)
- Paper 2: Draft (5%) and Revision (15%)
- Paper 3: Draft (5%) and Revision (15%)
- Participation, Quizzes, and In-Class Writing (a.k.a. "Daily Diligence") (15%)
- Creative Adaptation Project (15%)
- Take-Home Final Exam (10%)
- Oral Presentation (10%)

**Coursework Guidelines**

**Analysis Papers:** You will write three papers, each of ~1300-1600 words (~5 double-spaced pages). Each essay should present an original interpretation (thesis) of the text(s) that motivates the essay's development, and should be built on close critical reading of the text's language. Outside research will not generally be required, but any sources that you decide to consult must be fully acknowledged. After submitting each paper and reading my comments, you will have the chance to revise and resubmit it. You are also welcome to come meet with me to discuss revision strategies.
*** Paper Submission Guidelines: Papers must be written in correct MLA format. Works Cited pages are required only if you use sources from beyond the syllabus. Use the Pocket Style Manual to double-check format conventions, grammar questions, etc.

I require both a hard copy and an electronic copy of all papers (drafts and revisions). For each essay, please bring the hard copy to class and email the essay within 24 hours.

I do not accept late work unless you have made arrangements in advance of the deadline. Extensions will be allowed only for serious, unavoidable, documented emergencies.

Creative Adaptation: You will write/compose/…? an adaptation of a text or passage from our syllabus. This may include "translating"/adapting a plot to the present day; remaking a text in a radically new genre or style; a stylistic parody of one of our writers (you'll want to think about what is to be gained from doing that); a short play or video; etc. I will ask for (and appreciate!) volunteers to present/perform/explain their creative projects on the last two days of class, when they are due.

Group Presentation: Students will provide invaluable background for the contexts of our readings by researching the history of various encounters of the British in India, Australia, South Africa, and the Caribbean. This project (including presentation and individual portfolios) will comprise 10% of your final grade. Students will present and “teach” their material, using whatever visual aids or presentation methods they find suitable, and will need to distribute a handout that includes any useful information they'd like people to have, as well as a bibliography. Further details TBA.

Take-Home Final Exam: This will be an essay exam that allows you to bridge the historical materials from the group presentations with your close readings of the literature. It will be designed to take the same amount of time as a conventional final exam (keeping in mind that this does not include time spent studying, rereading, etc., as you would for an ordinary final). Further details TBA.

Participation/"Daily Diligence": You are expected to be at every class, having done the reading and ready to discuss it with your classmates and me. "Doing the reading" requires more than letting your eyes drift passively over the page. Good reading involves writing: take notes, identify intriguing passages, and write down questions and arguments that you’d like to hash out in class. To encourage careful preparation, I will give reading quizzes and in-class writing assignments, with or without advance notice. Quizzes and in-class work cannot be made up, but I'll drop your two lowest "Daily Diligence" scores, including those missed due to absence or tardiness.

Be aware that the reading load will be quite heavy once we start in on the novels. Please plan to budget additional time for reading during these weeks.

Policies

I cannot reverse time. (If only!) Once an assignment is done, it's done; once a deadline has passed, it's passed. Please let me know of problems when they arise, not later.

Emails/Office Hours: You are encouraged to email me at any time, to see me during office hours, or to schedule an appointment. Emails are best for short questions; detailed ones are better addressed in person. For example, I do not discuss grades or to answer "What did I miss?" inquiries over email. I also ask that you treat emails as professional communications (for additional advice, see http://tinyurl.com/emailprof).
**Decorum.** Listen attentively, minimize side-conversations, don't text/web-surf during class, and respect others. Do not shy away from speaking your mind, but do respect and engage with others with whom you disagree. Insulting other students, minimizing their contributions, disrupting the class, or using racist/sexist/homophobic language may be grounds for dismissal. Where such language appears in the texts themselves (as it sometimes will), simply make it clear what you are quoting, and why. This can be done responsibly, respectfully, and in good faith.

**Attendance:** You are granted three free absences: no questions asked, no excuses needed. For every absence thereafter, you will lose 0.1 from your final average (e.g. if you have a 3.6 and five absences, your final average will be 3.4). In general, *I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences,* as in the workforce, either you're here or you aren't. Exceptions will be made only for serious emergencies or official school commitments (ROTC, debate, etc.). Let me know ASAP if such circumstances arise, and be prepared to produce documentation. *If you do miss class, you are responsible for all information given in your absence.* Contact a classmate to find out what you missed.

**Be on time.** I realize the early hour may not suit everyone, but we need to start on time. Feel free to bring a cup of coffee. Late arrival or early departure (±10 minutes) will be counted as an absence.

**Academic Misconduct:** Any incident of academic misconduct will result in a grade of F for the entire course, and will be reported to Student Affairs. Such violations include, but are not limited to: plagiarism, cheating, falsifying sources, re-submitting papers from other classes, writing papers for someone else (or vice-versa), forging graded work for additional credit, or colluding with another student in committing a violation. Every use of someone else's words or ideas must be properly cited. For example, when using someone's exact phrasing, put the quoted words in "quotation marks" and identify the page number parenthetically (Palmer 42). Further citation rules can be found in the *Pocket Style Manual.* If you are ever in doubt about what you are doing, you should consult with me before submitting the assignment. Uncertainty about the rules is not an excuse for violating them.

While your essays must represent your own words and ideas, you are encouraged to consult with the **Writing Center,** located in Glasscock 212 ([http://casa.tamu.edu/wc.php](http://casa.tamu.edu/wc.php)). Consultants do not edit papers for you, but can help with writing projects at any stage of the process.

**Academic Advising:** The College of Liberal Arts requires that students meet with an Academic Advisor as soon as they are ready to declare a major. The Academic Advisor will set up a degree plan, which must be signed by the student, a faculty mentor, and the department chair. The College's Academic Advising Center is located in Driftwood 203E, and can be reached at 825-3466.

**Reminder to English Majors:** As part of the English undergraduate capstone course (ENGL 4351), all English majors are required to submit a portfolio of writings in different discourse genres that they have completed for their college classes. To help you prepare for this assignment, you should keep a copy of all essays, research papers, literary analyses, creative and report writing, etc., so that you will have an ample selection from which to choose when the portfolio comes due.

**Students with Disabilities:** The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please call or visit Disability Services at (361) 825-5816 in Corpus Christi Hall 116. If you are a returning veteran and are experiencing cognitive and/or physical access issues in the classroom, or on campus, please contact the Disability Services office for assistance.
Assessment

Grading: A grading rubric for essays is attached at page 7 of this syllabus. Grades are calculated using the 4-point GPA scale (A = 4, B = 3, C = 2, D = 1, F = 0) and the percentages above. Final averages are rounded up at the .5 mark (e.g. 2.5 is a B, 2.49 is a C). I do generally stick to these numbers; however, I recognize there is some degree of subjectivity in (for example) assessing participation. Hence, if your grade is on the cusp at the end of term, I may consider individual improvement as a mitigating factor. To be fair to all students, I make these decisions based solely on coursework submitted—not based on effort, on future goals, on your personal GPA needs, etc. While I do not negotiate grades, I am happy to discuss strategies for improvement; if you have concerns about graded work, feel free to discuss them with me during office hours.

Grade Appeals: As stated in University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, a student who believes that he or she has not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in the class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. The burden of proof is upon the student to demonstrate the appropriateness of the appeal. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details, including the responsibilities of the parties involved in the process and the number of days allowed for completing the steps in the process, see University Rule 13.02.99.C2, Student Grade Appeals, and University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.01, Student Grade Appeal Procedures. These documents are accessible through the University Rules Web site at http://www.tamucc.edu/provost/university_rules/index.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Office of Student Affairs.

The schedule follows on the next page. Please use this space to take down the contact information of 2-3 classmates you can contact in case you are absent.

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Schedule:

Selections marked (x) will be made available online or as handouts.
Readings and assignments are to be completed before class on the days indicated.

Thurs, 8/23: Introduction to the course.

Tues, 8/28: *Heart of Darkness* (read whole thing).
Thurs, 8/30: *Heart of Darkness*, cont. Achebe, "Image of Africa" (x). Sample Presentation (from the professor): Belgian Congo

Thurs., 9/6: *Heart of Darkness*, cont. No new readings; get started on *She!* In class: scenes from Coppola, *Apocalypse Now*

Thurs., 9/13: *She*, chs. 11-15

Tues., 9/18: *She*, finish
Thurs., 9/20: *She*, cont. **Paper 1 Revision due in class.** Please bring hard copy to class and email copy by Fri., 9/21.

Thurs., 9/27: **Conservationist**

Tues., 10/2: **Conservationist. Presentation: The British in South Africa since 1961**
Thurs., 10/4: **Paper 2 due in class.** Please bring hard copy to class and email copy by Fri., 10/5.

Tues., 10/9: Kipling, "White Man's Burden"; "Recessional"; "Gunga-Din"; "Mark of the Beast" (x).
Thurs., 10/11: Kipling, cont. (no new readings; get started on *Passage to India*)

Tues., 10/16: *Passage to India*, "Mosque" (through p.132). **Presentation: the British in India 1715-1857**
Thurs., 10/18: **Class Cancelled (prof. at a professional conference)**. Keep reading in *Passage*.

Tues., 10/23: *Passage*, "Caves" (through p.314). **Group Presentation: the British in India 1858-1947**
Thurs., 10/25: *Passage*, "Temple"

Tues., 10/30: **Paper 2 revision due in class.** Please bring hard copy to class and email by Wed., 10/31 (oooh, spooky!). In class: scenes from David Lean, *Passage to India.*

Tues., 11/6: Joyce, "The Dead."
Thurs., 11/8: Heaney, "Ocean's Love to Ireland," "Punishment." Boland, "Listen. This is the Noise of Myth," (x). **Paper 3 due.** Please bring hard copy to class and email by Fri., 11/9.
Tues., 11/13:  *Guerrillas* (pages TBA). **Presentation: The British in the Caribbean**
Thurs., 11/15:  *Guerrillas*.

Tues., 11/20:  *Guerrillas*.
**Wed., 11/21**  Paper 3 revision due by 5. (Just an emailed copy will be sufficient.)

**Thanksgiving Break**

Thurs., 11/29:  Presentations of creative projects.

Tues., 12/4:  Presentations of creative projects. **Creative Projects Due.**

Take-Home Final Exam due by 10:30 a.m. on Thurs., December 6.
## ENGL 2334 Grading Rubric for Essays (Epstein)

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<th>Area</th>
<th>A = Excellent</th>
<th>B = Good</th>
<th>C = Average</th>
<th>D = Poor</th>
<th>F = Failing</th>
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<td><strong>Argument/Interpretation</strong></td>
<td>Argues for an interesting and plausible reading of the text(s) that shows advanced critical insight and independence. Presents a strong interpretive thesis, which an intelligent reader might disagree with but still find of interest.</td>
<td>Offers a solid and well-reasoned interpretation that makes good sense and shows good judgment. Presents a sound thesis, if a conventional or limited one.</td>
<td>Thesis may be vaguely stated, or may not go beyond class discussion, but is generally relevant and responsive to the prompt.</td>
<td>Argument may be incoherent or may address the prompt in only a coincidental or rudimentary way. Thesis may only be implied.</td>
<td>There is no thesis, or the thesis is incomprehensible or unresponsive to the prompt.</td>
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<td><strong>Analysis/Persuasion</strong></td>
<td>Claims are argued, not just asserted. Claims are well-supported with textual evidence, which is closely read and analyzed in a way that develops the thesis and sheds new light on the material. The paper may convincingly anticipate counter-arguments and recognize their strengths.</td>
<td>Most claims are argued, not just asserted. Claims are supported with evidence that clarifies the central argument, even if it is not analyzed particularly closely or in-depth. Counter-claims may be introduced but not genuinely grappled with.</td>
<td>Has a general grasp of the material, but may rely more on assertion than on argument. The essay may often resort to plot summary and flawed generalizations rather than textual support, or may be marked by logical flaws or inconsistencies</td>
<td>May fail to recognize the distinction between assertion and argument. The logic of the argument is unsound; evidence is absent or misread; relationship between evidence and the claims is weak.</td>
<td>The essay lacks basic clarity about support for its claims.</td>
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<td><strong>Organization/Continuity</strong></td>
<td>The argument clearly progresses from step to step in a way that convincingly develops the thesis; transitions are fluid and effective; introduction and conclusion frame the argument without resorting to clichés or easy generalizations.</td>
<td>Sound and logical, though possibly wooden or static; transitions are clear, if not elegant; the paper consistently reinforces the thesis, but may merely repeat the argument, rather than develop it, as the paper proceeds. Intro and conclusion are clear, though perhaps stilted.</td>
<td>The organization, adequately but inconsistently develops the argument, with noticeable structural problems. Transitions are jarring and confusing. Intro and conclusion may be hasty or perfunctory.</td>
<td>Organization is haphazard, making it difficult to follow a central line of reasoning. Paragraphs are underdeveloped or lacking in purpose. Transitions are rarely effective. May lack intro or conclusion.</td>
<td>Discussions are unfocused, undeveloped, or incoherent.</td>
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<td><strong>Style/Mechanics</strong></td>
<td>Style is fluid, sophisticated, vigorous, and appropriate. Sentences are complex yet concise, graceful, and grammatically correct. Active voice predominates. Errors are few or non-existent and do not impede clarity. Essay follows all format guidelines.</td>
<td>Good facility with language, using appropriate syntax and vocabulary. Minor infelicities, tics, or recurring errors do not impede the essay's clarity. Essay follows all format guidelines.</td>
<td>Is generally clear, but shows limited control over vocabulary, syntax, and grammar. Errors may interfere with meaning. Essay may have formatting problems.</td>
<td>Has chronic problems of grammar and expression that often inhibit clarity. May have formatting problems.</td>
<td>Grammar and expression problems frequently and severely inhibit clarity. May have formatting problems.</td>
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Please note: while I do consider these criteria in grading your essays, I do not simply average/"add up" these categories; each essay is considered and graded as a whole. Especially good or weak performance in one area (e.g. strong argument, careless proofreading) can have added effect on the success of the essay.