English 3321.001
Postcolonial Literature and Film
Spring 2015
TTR 3:30-4:45 P.M.
Bay Hall 126

Instructor: Dr. Dale Pattison
Office: Faculty Center 255
Office Hours: Tuesday 4:50-6:50; Wednesday 11-1; Thursday 2:20-3:20 and by appointment
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Course Description
This course examines film and literature emerging from postcolonial contexts. Exposing students to filmic and literary texts from Southeast Asia, Australia, Africa, and the Americas, the course will address the complex cultural and political tensions that emerge as European powers relinquish control in colonial environments. Attentive to the ways in which cultures transform as a result of colonization and decolonization, students will use the texts to offer commentary on postcolonialism as a condition of everyday social and political life. Students will furthermore gain an understanding of basic postcolonial theories and will use these theories to analyze the primary texts on the course syllabus. Finally, students will develop a vocabulary in both film and literary studies and will identify the unique opportunities that each of these media present for deep critical analysis.

Course Texts

Literature
Patricia Grace, *Potiki*
Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*
J.M. Coetzee, *Foe*
Albert Camus, *The Stranger*
Ed Sikov, *Film Studies: An Introduction*

Films
You are required to watch all films on your own time. I’ve provided links to Amazon Instant Video. You may also choose to purchase the films or stream them on Netflix.

*Caché* (Dir. Michael Haneke, 2006) ([http://tinyurl.com/qe5uszy](http://tinyurl.com/qe5uszy))
*Smoke Signals* (Dir. Chris Eyre, 1998) ([http://tinyurl.com/le63mae](http://tinyurl.com/le63mae))
*Whale Rider* (Dir. Niki Caro, 2003) ([http://tinyurl.com/nf4mun5](http://tinyurl.com/nf4mun5))
*Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Dir. Peter Weir, 1975) ([http://tinyurl.com/moa39rr](http://tinyurl.com/moa39rr))
*District 9* (Dir. Neill Blomkamp, 2009) ([http://tinyurl.com/lz4sd5y](http://tinyurl.com/lz4sd5y))
*Slumdog Millionaire* (Dir. Danny Boyle, 2009) ([http://tinyurl.com/lfnkfry](http://tinyurl.com/lfnkfry))
Course Grading

The course will be structured on a 1000-point scale. The scores you receive on your assignments, exams, blackboard postings, draft workshops, and participation will be totaled at the end of the semester, and your final grade will be calculated based on this score. The points will be distributed as follows:

- Writing Assignment #1: 200 points
- Writing Assignment #2: 200 points
- Writing Assignment #3: 300 points
- Poster Presentation: 100 points
- Blackboard Discussions: 100 points
- Participation: 100 points

Participation will be calculated based on class attendance, participation in class discussions, and preparedness for class discussions. Reading quizzes may be factored into this grade as well. If a student is absent for a class period, he/she is not participating. Students will be expected to bring their text to class every day, having read the assignment due for that day.

Course Objectives

1. To examine the connections between filmic and literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts by reading and viewing texts by authors from a range of cultural backgrounds.
2. To explore the distinctive characteristics of film and literature as narrative-based media.
3. To understand and use basic literary and filmic terms and concepts.
4. To develop analytic skills by close reading, class discussion, and writing.
5. To use writing as a tool for learning.
6. To gain a basic understanding of postcolonial theory.

Student Learning Outcomes

Students who successfully complete ENGL 3321 will be able to:

1. Recognize the connections between filmic and literary works and their social, historical, and cultural contexts;
2. Respond critically to filmic and literary works;
3. Communicate their ideas through cogent critical analysis of the course texts;
4. Read filmic and literary texts through the critical lens provided by postcolonial theory.

Class Policies

Academic Honesty/Plagiarism

University students are expected to conduct themselves in accordance with the highest standards of academic honesty. Academic misconduct for which a student is subject to penalty includes all forms of cheating, such as illicit possession of examinations or
examination materials, falsification, forgery, complicity or plagiarism. (Plagiarism is the presentation of the work of another as one’s own work.) In this class, academic misconduct or complicity in an act of academic misconduct on an assignment or test will result in automatic failure of the course and possible expulsion from the university.

Grade Appeals
Students who feel that they have not been held to appropriate academic standards as outlined in this class syllabus, equitable evaluation procedures, or appropriate grading, may appeal the final grade given in the course. A student with a complaint about a grade is encouraged to first discuss the matter with the instructor. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, cla.tamucc.edu/students/studentinfo.html. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean.

Policy on class attendance: Students are allowed a maximum of four (4) absences. All absences count equally, irrespective of the cause, and students who exceed four absences will be penalized fifty points on their final grade for every absence over the limit.
- If you are unable to attend class, you do not need to email me to explain the circumstances. You should contact another student in class and copy his/her notes.

Dropping a Class: I hope that you never find it necessary to drop this or any other class. However, events can sometimes occur that make dropping a course necessary or wise. Please consult with me before you decide to drop to be sure it is the best thing to do. Should dropping the course be the best course of action, you must initiate the process to drop the course by going to the Student Services Center and filling out a course drop form. Just stopping attendance and participation WILL NOT automatically result in your being dropped from the class.

If I am absent: If I need to cancel class because my car broke down, or if I am ill, etc., I will try to get someone to post a sign. I also will try to email you all before class. However, if you come to class and I am not here by the time 15 minutes has elapsed (from when class is to start), please assume that class is canceled.

Late Writing Projects: All papers are due on the date listed on the syllabus. Students submitting their papers after this time will lose one letter grade for every class period that the paper is late. Students must submit their assignments via the link provided on Blackboard.

Blackboard Grade Center: You will see grades for assignments, exams, and blackboard discussion postings appear on Blackboard during the semester. While these scores may be useful in tracking your grade throughout the semester, they should NOT be used to calculate your final grade. Several point categories will not appear on Blackboard (such as Participation and Reading Quizzes), and only I will have access to these scores. If you are ever concerned about your grade, visit me in my office and we can discuss the issue in person.
**Statement of Academic Continuity:** In the event of an unforeseen adverse event, such as a major hurricane and classes could not be held on the campus of Texas A&M University–Corpus Christi; this course would continue through the use of Blackboard and/or email. In addition, the syllabus and class activities may be modified to allow continuation of the course. Ideally, University facilities (i.e., emails, web sites, and Blackboard) will be operational within two days of the closing of the physical campus. However, students need to make certain that the course instructor has a primary and a secondary means of contacting each student.

**Classroom/Professional Behavior:** Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi, as an academic community, requires that each individual respect the needs of others to study and learn in a peaceful atmosphere. Under Article III of the Student Code of Conduct, classroom behavior that interferes with either (a) the instructor’s ability to conduct the class or (b) the ability of other students to profit from the instructional program may be considered a breach of the peace and is subject to disciplinary sanction outlined in article VII of the Student Code of Conduct. Students engaging in unacceptable behavior may be instructed to leave the classroom. This prohibition applies to all instructional forums, including classrooms, electronic classrooms, labs, discussion groups, field trips, etc.

**Resources**

**Academic Advising:** It is imperative that all students visit regularly with an academic adviser. Each college within the university has an academic advising center, staffed by full-time, professional advisers to assist students with course selection, degree plans, and other academic matters. To find out how to contact the right adviser, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php](http://www.tamucc.edu/academics/advising.php). Students who have yet to declare a major are advised by the Academic Advising Transition Center. For more information, go to: [http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac](http://www.tamucc.edu/~aac). 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.

**Disabilities Accommodations:** 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 at (361) 825-5816.

Blackboard 9.1: To log into Blackboard, go to: http://bb9.tamucc.edu. You must have a NET ID (also known as an Active Directory account) to log in. For instructions on how to get this account and more information about using Blackboard, go to: http://distance-education.tamucc.edu/student_resources.html. If you need additional help at any time to access, download, or print course materials on Blackboard, please contact the Island Online (IOL) Help Desk by telephone at (361) 825-2825 or by email at iolsupport@tamucc.edu.

Schedule of Classes

Unit One—South Africa and Subalternity

Thursday, January 22nd
• Introduction to Postcolonialism
• Syllabus Overview

Tuesday, January 27th
• J.M. Coetzee, Foe (1-111)
• Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Can the Subaltern Speak?” (Blackboard)

Thursday, January 29th
• J.M. Coetzee, Foe (112-157)

Tuesday, February 3rd
• District 9 (Dir. Neill Blomkamp, 2009)
• Read Sikov, Introduction and Chapter One
• Blackboard Posting #1 Due High Noon

Thursday, February 5th
• Read Sikov, Chapter Two

Unit Two—India and Orientalism

Tuesday, February 10th
• Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things (1-83)
• Edward Said, "Introduction to Orientalism" (Blackboard)

Thursday, February 12th
• Arundhati Roy, The God of Small Things (84-156)
Tuesday, February 17th
• Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (157-251)

Thursday, February 19th
• Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (252-321)

Tuesday, February 24th
• *Slumdog Millionaire* (Dir. Danny Boyle, 2009)
• Read Sikov, Chapter Three
• Blackboard Posting #2 Due High Noon

Thursday, February 26th
• Read Sikov, Chapter 4
• Writing Assignment #1 Due

**Unit Three—Whiteness and the Postcolonial Subject**

Tuesday, March 3rd
• Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (Chapters 1-4)
• Frantz Fanon, “On Violence”

Thursday, March 5th
• Albert Camus, *The Stranger* (Chapters 5-Finish)

Tuesday, March 10th
• *Caché* (Dir. Michael Haneke, 2006)
• Read Sikov, Chapter Four
• Blackboard Posting #3 Due High Noon

Thursday, March 12th
• *Caché* (Dir. Michael Haneke, 2006)
• Read Sikov, Chapter Five

Tuesday, March 17th
• *Spring Break*—Surfing Lessons at Bob Hall Pier

Thursday, March 19th
• *Spring Break*—Catching Rays at J.P Luby

**Unit Four—Reclaiming Indigenous Identity**

Tuesday, March 24th
• Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (1-120)

Thursday, March 26th
• Patricia Grace, *Potiki* (121-185)

Tuesday, March 31st
• *Whale Rider* (Dir. Niki Caro, 2003)
• Read Sikov, Chapter Six

Thursday, April 2nd
• *Picnic at Hanging Rock* (Dir. Peter Weir, 1975)
• Blackboard Posting #4 Due High Noon

**Unit Five—Postcolonialism at Home**

Tuesday, April 7th
• Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (1-63)
• Writing Assignment #2 Due

Thursday, April 9th
• Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (63-138)

Tuesday, April 14th
• Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (138-212)

Thursday, April 16th
• Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (212-262)

Tuesday, April 21st
• *Smoke Signals* (Dir. Chris Eyre, 1998)
• Read Sikov, Chapter Seven

Thursday, April 23rd
• *Smoke Signals* (Dir. Chris Eyre, 1998)

Tuesday, April 28th
• Work on Poster Presentations

Thursday, April 30th
• Work on Poster Presentations

Tuesday, May 5th
• Poster Presentations
• Final Writing Assignment Due