ENGL 2316.001: Literature and Culture: Traveling Racisms
Fall 2019
Tu/Th 9:30–10:45 AM
CI 127

Instructor: Corinne Zeman
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Office: Faculty Center Rm. 254
Office Number: TBD
Office Hours: Mon./Wed., 11:00–1:00 PM
Preferred Pronouns: She/Her

This course will explore how racial ideologies travel between texts and across time. Our primary materials include early modern tragedies, slave narratives, twentieth-century film, and postcolonial fiction. Through cooperative close reading as well as in-class performances, we will investigate how four centuries of writers and artists represent cross-cultural desire, the aesthetics of white and black bodies, racial masquerade, and the civilizing mission. As we jump between genres and centuries, we will be attending closely to the intertextuality of racism—that is, how appropriations of canonical texts like William Shakespeare’s Othello, Daniel Defoe’s Robinson Crusoe, Aphra Behn’s Oroonoko, and Joseph Conrad’s Heart of Darkness register or contest ongoing shifts in racial thought. Over the course of the semester, we will develop a vocabulary for discussing different forms of literary intertextuality; we will use this conceptual grounding to track the movements of bigoted rhetoric across temporal, geographical, and generic borders. How does the racialization of bodies differ on the page and in performance? And finally, how do present-day writers offer ameliorative visions of black and brown humanity?

Course Outcomes:
By the end of this course, students will be able to:
• Identify the complex, contradictory ways literary works represent racial difference on stage, in prose, and in verse.
• Reflect on how pre-modern constructions of race laid the foundations for our twenty-first-century racial imaginary.
• Recognize how literary devices, conventions, and genres structure meaning and interpretation.
• Construct thoughtful, persuasive arguments using their critical thinking and close reading skills.
• Explore the representational issues that arise when a text moves between media and genres.

Required Texts:

**Assignments and Evaluation:**

- In-Class Midterm Exam: 20%
- Take-Home Final Exam: 20%
- Close Reading Exercise (2–3 pp.): 20%
- Literary Analysis Essay (5 pp.): 25%
- Informal Writing Assignments and Class Participation: 15%

**Essays:** In this class, you will be asked to write two papers: a close reading and a longer argumentative essay. These exercises will hone your critical thinking, close reading, and analytical writing skills. Both will require you to identify the formal features of language, including diction, meter, sound symbolism, and imagery. Prompts will be distributed in class. Essays should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and spellchecked. Be sure to include page numbers, MLA- or Chicago-style citations, one-inch margins, and a 12-point font. Assignments are due by the start of class via email; unless otherwise stated, don’t submit your papers in hard copy.

**Exams:** The in-class midterm exam will comprise short-answer questions, quote identifications, and two essays. The take-home final will be composed of three essays (and will, of course, be open book).

**Class Participation:** Active participation is an essential part of this course. My expectation is that all students will make a substantive contribution to our discussions. Students who find it difficult to speak in class should contact me immediately to make alternative arrangements. Halfway through the semester, I will ask that you submit a self-evaluation in which you reflect on both your goals for and any obstacles you face when engaging in class discussions.

**Recommendations for effective participation:**

- Come to class prepared. Read actively, underlining and making marginal notes on conceptually significant passages. Pay attention to the specific language of the text. Identify striking formal features (e.g. syntax, meter, rhyme, etc.), and consider the rhetorical or affective impact of these features. Prior to class, jot down a few notes synthesizing your observations.
- Be an engaged and respectful listener. Take notes during class, both on the discussion and your own accompanying thought process.
- Relate your comments to the preceding discussion. Identify what your comment contributes to the conversation. Are you adding another example? Agreeing? Making a connection to another text or context? Asking for clarification? Qualifying a statement? Offering a contrasting interpretation of evidence already introduced? Offering a counterargument with new evidence?
Course Policies and Resources:
Attendance: You may miss up to three classes, no questions asked; after the third absence, your final grade will be penalized one grade increment (one-third of a letter grade) per each additional day that you miss. (So, for example, if you miss six classes, your final grade will be lowered one full letter; a B+ will become a C+.) More than six absences will result in a failing grade. Certain types of absences will be excused, including serious illnesses, extreme hardship, and religious observances. Athletic events, school-sponsored trips, and other voluntary activities will not be excused, but if you contact me in advance, we can make alternative arrangements.

Technology: No laptops, tablets, phones, etc. are to be used during class time. You must bring to class a printed copy of all readings; electronic copies are not permitted.

Extensions and Late Assignments: I am happy to offer extensions, but I require forty-eight hours’ notice. Late papers will be penalized one grade increment (or one-third of a letter grade) per calendar day.

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.

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. Degree plans are prepared in the CLA Academic Advising Center. The University uses an online Degree Audit system. Any amendment must be approved by the Department Chair and the Office of the Dean. All courses and requirements specified in the final degree plan audit must be completed before a degree will be granted. The CLA Academic Advising Office is located in Driftwood #203. For more information please call 361-825-3466.

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 your academic advisor, the Financial Aid Office, and me, before you decide to drop this course. 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. The last day to drop a course is Friday, November 8, 2019.
Grade Appeals: As stated in University Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, 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 Procedure 13.02.99.C2.03, Student Grade Appeals. These documents are accessible online at: http://academicaffairs.tamucc.edu/rules_procedures/assets/13.02.99.C0.03_student_grade_appeals.pdf. For assistance and/or guidance in the grade appeal process, students may contact the Associate Dean’s office in the college in which the course is taught. For complete details on the process of submitting a formal grade appeal in CLA, please visit the College of Liberal Arts website, http://cla.tamucc.edu/about/student-resources.html.

Statement of Civility: Texas A&M University-Corpus Christi has a diverse student population that represents the population of the state. Our goal is to provide you with a high quality educational experience that is free from repression. You are responsible for following the rules of the University, city, state and federal government. We expect that you will behave in a manner that is dignified, respectful and courteous to all people, regardless of sex, ethnic/racial origin, religious background, sexual orientation or disability. Behaviors that infringe on the rights of another individual will not be tolerated.

Course Schedule:

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<th>Date</th>
<th>Assignment</th>
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<td>Tuesday, Aug. 27</td>
<td>Introductions; Langston Hughes, “Theme for English B” (1959)</td>
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<td>Thursday, Aug. 29</td>
<td>Michel de Montaigne, “Of Cannibals,” from The essays or morall, politike and millitarie discourses (1580); Oswald de Andrade, “The Cannibalist Manifesto” (1928)</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Sept. 3</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1611), Acts 1–2</td>
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<td>Thursday, Sept. 5</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1611), Acts 3–4</td>
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<td>Tuesday, Sept. 10</td>
<td>William Shakespeare, The Tempest (1611), Acts 5; Aimé Césaire, extract from A Tempest (1969)</td>
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<td>Thursday, Sept. 12</td>
<td>Daniel Defoe, extract from Robinson Crusoe (1719)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Tuesday, Sept. 17</td>
<td>Daniel Defoe, extract from Robinson Crusoe (1719); Derek Walcott, “Crusoe’s Island,” from The Castaway (1965)</td>
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Thursday, Sept. 19  
James Nelson Barker, *The Indian Princess; or, La Belle Sauvage* (1808)

Tuesday, Sept. 24  
*Pocahontas* (1995)  
**Due: Close Reading Exercise**

Thursday, Sept. 26  
Hanay Geiogamah, *Foghorn* (1973)

Tuesday, Oct. 1  

Thursday, Oct. 3  

Tuesday, Oct. 8  

Thursday, Oct. 10  
**Midterm Exam**

Tuesday, Oct. 15  
William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), Acts 1–2

Thursday, Oct. 17  
William Shakespeare, *Othello* (1603), Act 3–4

Tuesday, Oct. 22  

Thursday, Oct. 24  
Adrienne Kennedy, *Funnyhouse of a Negro* (1964)

Tuesday, Oct. 29  
Aphra Behn, *Oroonoko* (1688)

Thursday, Oct. 31  

Tuesday, Nov. 5  
Olaudah Equiano, extract from *The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, the African* (1789)

Thursday, Nov. 7  
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902); Vachel Lindsay, “The Congo: A Study of the Negro Race” (1914)

Tuesday, Nov. 12  
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902)
Thursday, Nov. 14  Writing Workshop

Tuesday, Nov. 19  *Apocalypse Now!* (1979; dir. Francis Ford Coppola)
**Due: Literary Analysis Essay**

Thursday, Nov. 21  Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1969)

Tuesday, Nov. 26  Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1969)

Thurs., Nov. 28  **THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY – NO CLASS**

Tuesday, Dec. 3  Wrap-Up Discussion; Langston Hughes, “Let America be America Again”

Tuesday, Dec. 10  **Due by 5:00 PM: Take-Home Final**