

ENGLISH 439A / A01

Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial
Studies

CRN 22564

Spring Semester 2010

M/R 11:30-12:50 David Strong C130

Dr. Lincoln Shlensky

Office: CLE D332

Office Hours: R 1:00-1:30, 3:30-6:00

(please make an appointment)

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Course Web site: www.practa.com

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will offer an advanced introductory survey in the field of postcolonialism for students with diverse disciplinary backgrounds in the humanities. We will read and analyze postcolonial fiction and theory, with a special emphasis on contemporary Caribbean literature. We will discuss how problems of literary and political representation are uniquely addressed in postcolonial literature, particularly in the aftermath of liberation struggles and the “decolonization” process. We will specifically ask how postcolonial literatures conceptualize the past and imagine the future. Is there a shared memory or perceived pattern of historical events to which postcolonial literatures refer, and to which they aim to respond? To which material traces, documentary sources, and popular expressions of the past do these literatures have most frequent recourse? How do literary works respond to—and shape—collective accounts of the past and projects intended to chart a better future? How are postcolonial societies

able to evoke the otherness of their shared memories in relation to official history? In answering these questions we will explore topics such as: the maroon and marronnage, creolization, feminism, sexuality, collective memory, patriarchalism, mimeticism, tourism, revolution/aries, AIDS, environmentalism, and post- or trans-nationalisms.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will gain familiarity with postcolonial discourse in English and in translation. The course will permit students to develop a deeper understanding of literary forms and rhetorical modes by introducing critical and theoretical approaches that elaborate on the primary literature and its themes. Students will build skills and increase their knowledge through reading assigned material, consistently attending seminars and participating in class discussion, writing assigned essays, and taking and reviewing detailed preparatory and discussion notes. Evaluation will take the form of occasional reading quizzes, short and longer essays, and a final exam.

REQUIRED TEXTS

- 1) Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton 1998; 0393960129); 123 pp
- 2) George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (U Mich 1991; 0472064681); 314 pp
- 3) Earl Lovelace, *Salt* (Faber 1998; 0571192947); 272 pp
- 4) Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (Farrar 2000; 0374527075); 96 pp

- 5) Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge* (HarperCollins 2004; 0006485952); 305 pp

Additional course materials will be available for purchase as a course reader, or online when possible. Online texts *must be printed* and all materials must be *brought to class* on the due dates. Printing costs for these materials may be considered part of your book costs for the course.

COURSE GRADES

Final course grades will be determined as follows (as a percent of the final grade):

- 1) CLASS PREPARATION & PARTICIPATION, INCLUDING OCCASIONAL 'POP' QUIZZES (*NO MAKE-UPS*): 10%
- 3) TWO SHORT ESSAYS (750 words each): 30%
- 4) FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY (2000 words): 40%
- 5) FINAL EXAM: 20%

Grades will be assigned according to the following English Department guidelines:

A+	90-100	B-	65-69
A	85-89	C+	60-64
A-	80-84	C	55-59
B+	75-79	D	50-54
B	70-74	F	0-49

For more specific information about my grading criteria, see my document "Assessment Criteria for Student Research Essays" at www.practa.com » Assignments.

Note: Students will be given adequate notification should it become necessary to alter the schedule of assignments or reduce the number of assigned readings. Evening film screenings will be arranged to suit the most students; those unable to attend will need to make arrangements with the library to screen films at a different time.

Students with bona fide disabilities will be afforded reasonable accommodation. If you require such accommodation, please register at the Resource Centre for Students with a Disability and inform me of your needs at the outset of the semester.

WRITING YOUR ESSAYS

Your essays must offer an *argument* that utilizes texts assigned in the course or approved outside research materials. Each essay should frame its argument in relation to assigned texts, course themes, and/or research materials. Your work will be graded on the basis of its creativity, contextualization, and the overall persuasiveness of its argument. If you are unsure of your topic or argument, please see me in office hours. (For more information about my grading criteria, see my document "Assessment Criteria for Student Research Essays" at www.practa.com » Assignments.)

ESSAY SUBMISSION

Completed written work must be emailed to me at <assignments.shlensky@gmail.com> and, if you are participating in the Learning and Teaching Centre project, cc'd to the LTC's Dr. Li-Shih Huang <lshuang@uvic.ca> on the due date. I may also request a printed copy. If you are participating in Dr. Huang's LTC

project, you will be granted an automatic one-week extension of your paper's final due date, with the proviso that you submit a first draft to me and Dr. Huang by the syllabus due date, and that your final revised version sent to me and Dr. Huang within one week of the original due date differs from the first draft. (If this process does not work out well, I may cancel the extension policy.) Your essay should include a title page with your name, date, and course identifying information. The electronic file you send must include *your last name as part of the document's file name*. Failure to keep a copy of the essay will result in denied credit should the submitted materials be lost.

LATE & MISSING ASSIGNMENTS

If writing assignments are submitted after the beginning of the class period during which they are due, credit will be deducted by 1/3 of a letter-grade per day, starting with the due date. The return email you receive from me once you send in your essay is your acknowledgment of receipt. Extension of a due date must be negotiated with me *in advance*, and medical or other emergency exceptions to this policy must be properly documented. Students are required to complete all assigned course work in order to receive a passing grade for the course.

WRITING IMPROVEMENT

I may require you to seek general writing improvement and/or assignment tutoring at The Learning and Teaching Centre. If so, you will be required to do so and to rewrite your work within three weeks of receiving notice from me. Please consult practa.com » UVic Resources for information on making appointments at The Learning and Teaching Centre. There you will also

find a form required by the Centre authorizing you to receive tutoring for a given assignment.

FINAL ESSAY INSTRUCTIONS

Your final essay will be a 2000 word comparison of two texts of your choosing from the course. The final essay must include discussion of at least *two* peer-reviewed academic sources (i.e., scholarly books or academic journals). You also must make significant reference to at least *two* of the theoretical texts discussed in the course. Your essay should be an argumentative essay: that is, in the course of your essay, you will give a brief summary of the texts you are discussing, and then make an argument about them. Use your outside sources to help support/deepen your argument or to show how your argument differs from others' views. In the introductory section of your essay, you must present your argument in relation to the primary texts you will be discussing, explain why your argument is vitally important, and offer a "road map" of how your essay will prove the argument you are making. The essay must prove your claims and reach a conclusion. Be sure to carefully proofread your essay; errors of grammar, diction, and structure will lower your grade. Citations in your essay should use in-text citation format (see www.practa.com » Guidelines for Writing and Research for citation pointers), with a works-cited list at the end.

ATTENDANCE POLICY

More than four (4) absences shall result in reduction of the student's grade by half a grade per additional absence. Medical and other emergency exceptions

to this policy will be accepted with proper documentation.

COMPUTER POLICY

Please refrain from using computers, hand-held devices, and phones in the classroom, except for specifically designated assignments. Students with documented disabilities who require a computer for note-taking are excluded from this policy.

ELECTRONIC MATERIALS

Some required materials for the course will be available exclusively on the course Web site (www.practa.com). These materials *must be printed out and brought to class* on the due dates. I will expect students to check email at least twice a week for possible course updates. Please alert me immediately of any e-mail address changes.

LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

The University of Victoria is committed to promoting, providing, and protecting a positive, supportive, and safe working and learning environment for all its members. Students and faculty members are expected to adhere to the UVic human rights policy, located at: <http://bit.ly/4AuuT2>. Please alert me if you have any questions about this policy and its application, or if you have concerns about course proceedings or participants.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

Students are expected to adhere to the UVic academic integrity policy (search the current UVic Calendar for the “Policy on Academic Integrity”). Violations of this policy will result in a failing grade for the given assignment and may additionally result in a failing grade for the course. By taking this

course, you agree that all submitted assignments may be subject to an originality review.

SCHEDULE OF ASSIGNMENTS

Students are expected to have read the material assigned before they come to class, to bring reading materials to class when assigned, and to be prepared to discuss all the material for the day. Occasional 'pop' quizzes will cover materials for the course up to and including the assignments due for that day.

Monday, January 4
Course Introduction.
Syllabus available at practa.com.
In class: Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (excerpts, 4 pp.)

Thursday, January 7
Reading assignment for today:
Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land* (1939, 1944, 1956), pp. 37-65 (Course Reader).
Required: Send an email message with **English 439A** and **your full name** in the Subject line, and **your phone number** in the body of the message to shlensky@uvic.ca.

Monday, January 11
Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, 66-92 (Course Reader).

Thursday, January 14
Alison Donnell and Sarah Lawson Welsh, "1930-49: Creative Disturbances," in the Routledge Reader in Caribbean Literature (1996), pp. 107-27; Una Marson, "In Jamaica," 131-2; "Quashie Comes to London," **pp. 132-**

Monday, January 18
Una Marson, *Pocomania* (1938), pp. 117-147 (Course Reader)

Thursday, January 21
Further discussion of Una Marson, *Pocomania*; Louise Bennett (-Coverley), "Jamaica Oman," 145-6, "Beeny Bud," 149-50 (Course Reader). Louise Bennett, "Colonization in Reverse," "No Lickle Twang," "Speechify" (Course Reader).

Monday, January 25
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), 15-60.

Thursday, January 28
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), 60-120.

Monday, February 1
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966), 120-171.

Thursday, February 4
Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (1952), "The Fact of Blackness," 109-140 (Course Reader).

Monday, February 8
In-class video: Isaac Julien, *Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask*
FIRST ASSIGNMENT DUE:
MARSON, RHYS (750 WORDS)

Thursday, February 11
George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (1953), first third.

Monday, February 15
Reading break

Thursday, February 18
Reading break

Monday, February 22
George Lamming, *In the Castle of My Skin* (finish the book).

Thursday, February 25
Edward Kamau Brathwaite, "English in the Caribbean: Notes on Nation Language and Poetry" (1979), pp. 15-46 (Course Reader).

Monday, March 1
Derek Walcott, "The Schooner Flight" (1979), 12 pp. (Course Reader)

Thursday, March 4
In-class film: Derek Walcott's *Pantomime* (1995) [1979], dir. Paul Kafno

Monday, March 8
Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1988), 96 pp.

Thursday, March 11
Earl Lovelace, *Salt* (2004), first third of the novel.

Monday, March 15
Earl Lovelace, *Salt* (2004), second third of the novel.
SECOND ASSIGNMENT DUE:
LAMMING, KINCAID (750 WORDS)

Thursday, March 18
Earl Lovelace, *Salt* (2004), end of the novel.

Monday, March 22
Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge* (2003), first third of the novel.

Thursday, March 25
Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge*, second third of the novel.
In-class film: Laurent Cantet, *Vers le sud* [Heading South] (2005, France/Canada, 108 mins., based on stories by Dany Laferrière), first part.

Monday, March 29
Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge*, end of the novel.
In-class film: *Vers le sud* [Heading South] (2005, France, 108 mins.), second part.

Thursday, April 1
DUE IN CLASS AND BY EMAIL:
PROPOSAL, OUTLINE, AND
ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY FOR
FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY
COMPARING LOVELACE AND
ESPINET.
Peer editing.

Monday, April 5
Easter break

Thursday, April 8
Aisha Khan 2004: "Sacred Subversions?," 18 pp. (Course Reader)
Discussion of Ramabai Espinet, *The Swinging Bridge*

FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY (2000 WORDS) DUE APRIL 13, 12:00 NOON

FINAL EXAM: ESPINET & OTHER TEXTS