

**History and Literature 97  
Sophomore Tutorial in Postcolonial Studies  
Spring 2008**

**Postcolonial Conditions**

**Section 1: Tuesdays 1-4pm in Barker 118  
Section 2: Wednesdays 1-4pm Sever 204**

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**Course description and goals**

This tutorial provides an exploration of postcolonial history, literature, and theory. Our goal is to draw attention to some of the central issues and texts that emerge from parts of the world formerly responsible for, or subject to, conditions of European colonialism. During the semester we will explore important historical events and developments as well as key literary texts and movements, seeking to understand the processes and products of colonialism and its aftermath. Historical phenomena such as imperialism, decolonization, and migration will form the backdrop of our inquiries as we consider the effects of colonialism on language, location, identity, and narrative. Our readings will range from the literature and history of Africa and South Asia to texts and moments from Europe and the Americas. Throughout the semester we will be drawing on texts from such disciplines as history, literature, art, architecture, cultural studies and from genres such as film, poetry, prose, photography, and political discourse. Our aims in this course are threefold, to help you to: 1) develop substantive knowledge of particular moments and texts drawn from the field, 2) hone your research and writing skills, and 3) develop the skills you will need to do interdisciplinary work in the field.

**Required Readings** (available at the Harvard Coop under Hist-Lit 97 Hudson)

John Kucich, *Fictions of Empire* (2002) [New Riverside Editions]  
Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy* (1997) [Longman]  
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (2004) [Seal Press]  
Edward Said, *Orientalism* (1979) [Vintage Books]  
Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (2003) [Mariner Books]  
Bernard Dadié, *An African in Paris*, tr. Karen C. Hatch (1994) [University of Illinois Press]  
Fanon, Frantz. *A Dying Colonialism*, tr. Haakon Chevalier (1994) [Grove Press] Kushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (2006) [Lotus Collection Roli Books]

**Course Requirements**

**Class Participation:** This course will be conducted as a seminar. As such class attendance and participation is imperative. *We cannot stress enough how important it is that you come to every single class not only having completed the readings but also armed with notes, questions, thoughts, and befuddlements.* We expect you to ask questions,

articulate confusions, and to engage in lively but open-minded and respectful debate. Please note that since this is your first course in your chosen concentration, it should be your top priority!

**Oral Presentations:** because one of the requirements for the degree in History and Literature is the successful completion of an oral exam at the end of the senior year, we are dedicated to providing students with many opportunities to practice and refine their oral presentation skills. Over the course of the semester, each student will give 6 presentations, each one of a slightly different nature. Remember, this is your chance to teach us—so while it is perfectly fine to have notes to refer to, think of your audience and be as engaging and informative as possible!

**-OP on chosen object of study for the Sophomore Essay:** once you have identified your topic for the sophomore essay, you will give a 7-10 minute presentation of the background and rationale behind your choice. (March 11-12)

**-OP on Anthology Study:** although the Anthology Study is also a written assignment, you will also present your findings to the class in a 10 minute presentation (March 4-5).

**-OP on the Postcolonial Archive:** during the week of Feb 19-20, each student will be responsible for presenting one of the texts to the class. In a slightly longer presentation (15 minutes), you should attempt to provide an overview of the main arguments of each, identify problematic areas or areas for further discussion, and make connections and comparisons with the other texts on the syllabus for the day.

**-OP on Historical Context:** at different points throughout the course, a student will be responsible for providing the historical background for a given text or set of texts. Because each area in question has a vast amount of historiography associated it, we ask that you limit your presentation of 10 minutes to the history relevant to the primary object of study that week.

**-OP on Secondary Sources:** similar to the OP on historical context, presentations on a secondary source are given throughout the semester. Secondary sources are articles or essays that reflect on or theorize about a particular primary source. In your presentation, it is crucial that you outline the author's argument, present the stakes and the evidence, and suggest ways that the secondary source impacts our reading of the primary source.

**-OP close reading of poetry:** the week we study the Negritude poets, each student will be responsible for presenting a close reading of one of the poems on the list. Information on how to close-read poetry will be provided.

**Finally, the Sophomore Oral Exam:** At the end of the semester, you will take the Sophomore Oral Exam, which will test your ability to construct a topics list (based on materials from tutorial) and to answer questions and make oral arguments about historical and literary materials. We will give you more information on the exam later in the term.

### **Writing assignments**

In addition to the oral exam at the end of the senior year, all History and Literature concentrators write a senior thesis. This long paper requires substantial research and writing skills. To begin developing and honing these skills, you will work with a number of

different written forms over the course of the term.

**Short Writing Assignments:** these “mini-essays” of no more than two pages are designed to get you thinking critically about an aspect of a primary text. For each, a key question is provided to get you started; generally, these papers call for close-reading and the development of an argument brief enough to be treated within the defined limits.

**Exceptions to the short writing assignments:** occasionally, we have developed assignments that ask you to go a bit deeper, or to practice a different kind of writing. You will note, then, that certain writing assignments are longer and require a different kind of approach (see for example, Writing Assignments 1, 2, 3, 4).

**The Sophomore Essay (Sequenced Writing Assignment):** The central written project for this tutorial is the Sophomore Essay, a ten-page interdisciplinary research paper, due on May 15, 2008. You will choose your own topic for this essay, but we have planned a sequence of assignments which will lead up to a finished draft of the essay. All due dates are listed below.

### **Assignments and grading**

Preparation and participation:	25 %
Anthology assignment:	10 %
Sophomore essay:	30 %
Response papers:	15 %
Oral presentations:	10 %
Final oral exam:	10 %

### **Decoding the readings on the syllabus:**

**C = text available for purchase at The Coop**

**R = text on reserve at Lamont Library**

**P = text available in Barker 122 for photocopy**

**D = text may be downloaded from indicated electronic journal**

### **Readings and Weekly Assignments:**

#### **Unit 1: Approaching Postcolonialism**

Feb 5 + 6      The Perspective of the Colonizer

Rudyard Kipling, *White Man's Burden* (1899) (poem) (Kucich, *Fictions of Empire*, 326-27) C, R

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1902) (Kucich, 246-321)

Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa” (Kucich, 373-385)

Patrick Brantlinger, “Heart of Darkness: Anti-imperialism, Racism, or Impressionism?” (Kucich, 384-404)

Discussion of questions sent by Emily and Lia.

Feb 11 + 12 The Perspective of the Colonized

- Aidoo, Ama Ata. *Our Sister Killjoy or Reflections From a Black-Eyed Squint* (NY/London/Lagos: NOK Pub, 1979). (133 pages) C, R
- Hoeller, Hildegard. "Ama Ata Aidoo's Heart of Darkness." *Research in African Literatures* 35.1 (Spring 2004) 130-147. D
- Needham, Anuradha Dingwaney. "Reversing Europe's Gaze: Ama Ata Aidoo's Oppositional Art" in *Using the Master's Tools: Resistance and the Literature of the African and South-Asian Diasporas* (London: Macmillan, 2000) 73-90. P

**In class:**

- OP Historical context: colonial and postcolonial Ghana
- OP Secondary source: analysis of Hoeller article
- OP Secondary source: analysis of Needham article

**Writing assignment 1:** a 3-5 page essay comparing and contrasting the "postcoloniality" of *Heart of Darkness* and *Sister Killjoy*. Are these both "postcolonial" novels? How do we decide whether or not a cultural object is indeed "postcolonial"? Is "postcolonial" a way of reading or a way of writing? **This assignment is due today in class (Feb 11 or Feb 12)**

**Unit 2: Critical Perspectives and the Postcolonial Archive**

Feb 19 +20 What Goes in the Archive?: Defining Our Objects of Study

- Edward Said, *Orientalism*, Preface and Introduction. C, R
- Ashcroft, Griffiths, Tiffin, *The Empire Writes Back* (Introduction) 1-13. P
- Adam and Tiffin, *Past the Last Post* (Introduction) P
- Huggan, Graham. "Thinking at the Margins: Postcolonial Studies at the Millennium" in *The Postcolonial Exotic: Marketing the Margins* (London and NY: Routledge, 2001) 228-264. P

In class presentations on each text:

- 2 students present *Orientalism*
- 1 student presents *Empire Writes Back*
- 1 Student presents *Past the Last Post*
- 2 students present "Thinking at the margins"

Presentations should be 10-15 minutes in length, and should synthesize the author's (or authors' arguments), discuss the stakes of their arguments, and identify questions or areas that merit further attention.

**Writing assignment 2 due in class:** 1 page, single spaced synthesis of *Orientalism*. This is an exercise designed to get you thinking about condensation and synthesis of an argument.

**Presentation of writing assignment 3 (due March 4 and 5):** select a postcolonial reader or anthology from the list provided. Analyze your

particular anthology, paying close attention to the following elements: structure and organization of the tome, geographical areas represented by the various essays/entries, types of cultural productions analyzed, historical context, key terms used, philosophical or theoretical bias of the authors/editors (the editors' preface is the best place to look for this), treatment of the term "postcolonial": do the authors/editors define the term? Do they use a the hyphenated form (post-colonial) and do they comment on the semantics of the term? **Your analysis should be 5-7 pages in length, but you need to be prepared to present the highlights of your study orally (in a presentation of 10 mins or less) on Feb 25.**

Feb 26 + 27 Debating the Archive

Frederic Jameson, "Third-World Literature in the Era of Multinational Capitalism" *Social Text* 15 (Autumn 1986) 65-88. D  
Aijaz Ahmad, "Jameson's Rhetoric of Otherness and National Allegory," *Social Text* (Autumn 1987) 3-25. D

In class: Debate!

Three students will be responsible for presenting and arguing Jameson's case (that all 3rd world literature can be considered national allegory). Three students will be responsible for presenting and arguing Ahmad's case (that Jameson is incorrect in his reasoning). Be ready to presenting opening arguments, question the other side, and summarize your points in a "closing" argument.

Meeting with Joe Bourneuf at Widener Library 2:30 to 4pm.

Unit 3: Colonial Education

March 4 + 5 The Colonial Mission  
Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions* (1988) (209 pgs) C, R

**In class:**

**OP Historical contexts: colonial and postcolonial Rhodesia.**

**Oral presentations of anthologies in class.** 10 minutes each. Presenting the anthologies to our peers allows us to gain a better understanding of the wide variety of approaches to postcolonial studies.

**Writing assignment 3 due (Anthology study).**

Presentation (by Emily and Lia) of Sophomore Essay. (Note: Part 1 of Sophomore Essay due March 11 and 12.)

Mar 11 + 12 The Politics of Language and Literary Studies

Gauri Vishwanathan, *Masks of Conquest* (Selections) P

Thomas B. Macaulay, *Minute on Indian Education* (1835) P

In-class:  
Exercise on secondary sources  
Oral presentations of objects chosen for the Junior Paper (10 mins maximum)

**Sophomore Essay Part 1 due today in class:** Turn in a 1-page statement that identifies your object of study and provides an explanation/rationale for your choice.

**Also due today: Writing assignment 4: Outlining secondary sources.**

#### Unit 4: Colonial and Metropolitan Locations

Mar 18 +19 Colonial Calcutta

"Calcutta," *Imperial Gazetteer of India* (1908) (260-289)  
[http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/gazetteer/pager.html?objectid=DS405.1.I34\\_V09\\_266.gif](http://dsal.uchicago.edu/reference/gazetteer/pager.html?objectid=DS405.1.I34_V09_266.gif)  
Thomas Metcalf "Imperial Towns and Cities," *Cambridge Illustrated History of the British Empire* (1996) P  
Chattopadhyay, *Representing Calcutta* (2005) ("Introduction" and "The Colonial Uncanny") (1-75) P  
P.J. Marshall, "The White Town of Calcutta Under the Rule of the East India Company," *Modern Asian Studies*, vol. 34, no.2. May 2000 D  
Swati Chattopadhyay, "Blurring Boundaries: The Limits of 'White Town' in Colonial Calcutta," *Journal of Society of Architectural Histories*, vol. 59 no.2. D

In class:  
OP on historical contexts (The British in Calcutta)

**Writing Assignment 5 due: The Chattopadhyay and Marshall debate**

Mar 25 + 26 *Spring Break*

April 1 + 2 London in Calcutta, Calcutta in London

Amitav Ghosh, *The Shadow Lines* (1988) (250 pages). C, R

Writing Assignment 6 due: Close reading of a passage in Ghosh.

**NOTE: Sophomore Essay Part 2 (Annotated Bibliography) due this Friday, April 4.**

April 8 + 9 Ambivalence and Identity

Bernard Dadié, *An African in Paris*, tr. Karen C. Hatch (Champaign-

Urbana : U of Illinois P, 1994). Original title : *Un nègre à Paris* (1959). C, R

Christopher Miller, "Hallucinations of France and Africa," *Nationalisms and Nomads* (55-89). P

In class:

OP on Historical context (Black culture in France in the 1950s)

OP on secondary source (Miller article)

**Writing assignment 7 due:** Close reading of a passage of *An African in Paris*.

## Unit 5: Responding to/Resisting Imperialism

Apr 15 + 16 Independence in the Maghreb: the Algerian example

Pontecorvo, Gilles, dir. *Battle of Algiers* (1965). C, R

Fanon, Frantz. *A Dying Colonialism*. Tr. Haakon Chevalier (NY: Grove P, 1967). *L'An cinq de la révolution algérienne*, 1959. (160 pgs). C, R

David Prochaska, "The Return of the Repressed: War, Trauma, Memory in Algeria and Beyond" in Lorcin, Patricia, ed. *Algeria and France 1800-2000: Identity, Memory, Nostalgia* (Syracuse: Syracuse UP; 2006). 257-276. P

Jo McCormack, "Memory in History, Nation Building, and Identity: Teaching about the Algerian War in France," also in Lorcin, pgs 135-149. P

In class

OP Historical contexts of the war in Algeria

OP on secondary source (Prochaska article)

OP on secondary source (McCormack article)

Apr 22 + 23 The Negritude Poets

Phyllis Taoua, "The Emergence of Anti-Colonial Protest in the Imperial Crucible," Forms of Protest: Anti-Colonialism and Avant-Gardes in Africa, the Caribbean, and France (Portsmouth, NH: Heineman, 2002) 51-95. R

Etienne Lero, "Legitimate Defense" Get text in EN and FR. P

In *Voices of Negritude: The Expression of Black Experience in the poetry of Senghor, Césaire and Damas*, ed. Edward A. Jones (Valley Forge: Judson Press, 1971) read the following:

- Preface (9-10)
- Introduction (13-17)
- Leopold Sédar Senghor (19-21) and poems: "Femme noire" (Black Woman), "Prière aux masques" (Prayer to Masks), "Aux soldats négro-américains (à Mercer Cook)" (To the American Negro Soldiers (To Mercer Cook)), "Prière de paix" (Prayer for Peace).

- Léon-G. Damas (63-64) and poems: “Limbe” (Spleen) and “Solde” (Clearance).  
(All above will be photocopied)

Aimé Césaire, *Cahier d'un retour au pays natal* 1939. Bilingual version translated by Mireille Rosello. R

In class:  
Workshop on close-reading poetry.  
OP Close reading of poetry. Each students presents a poem to the class (10 mins).  
OP secondary source (on Taoua)

**NOTE: Sophomore Essay Part 3 (rough draft of paper) is due this Friday, April 25.**

### Unit 5: Decolonization and Its Discontents

Apr 29 + 30 The Partition of India

Kushwant Singh, *Train to Pakistan* (with photographs by Margaret Bourke-White) (1956) . C, R  
Elspeth H. Brown, “Reading the Visual Record” P  
Workshop: Reading Photographs as Primary Documents

In class:  
OP Historical context (Overview of Partition)  
Workshop on “reading” photographs.

May 6 + 7 Identity and/in Exile

Dir. Stephen Frears, *My Beautiful Laundrette* (1985) C  
Dir. Mathieu Kassovitz. *La Haine* (1995) [Jodie foster interview] C

<http://www.stanford.edu/group/SHR/5-2/sussman.html> (review of La Haine)

<http://criticalsense.berkeley.edu/archive/spring2002/dyer/1.htm>

Rebecca Dyer, “Dirty Work, Asian Entrepreneurship, and Labors of Love in Hanif Kureishi's *My Beautiful Laundrette* ”

<http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/Kureishi.html> (good link to Kureishi's life and works)

<http://www.mathieukassovitz.com/english/index.htm> (Kassovitz's website, blog in french)

In class:

Writing assignment 8 due: “Review” of one of the two films (3 pages)

maximum).

May 15

May 15-23

**Sophomore Essay Part 4 DUE: THE FINAL PRODUCT  
ORAL EXAMS WILL BE SCHEDULED DURING THIS TIME**

NOTE:

Reading period: Reading period May 3-14

Exam period: 15-23