

Rhode Island College  
Spring 2010

## ENGLISH 336: NON-WESTERN LITERATURES

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Dr. Anita Duneer

Office: Craig-Lee 352

Office Hours: M 9:15-9:45 a.m., 1:00-1:30 p.m.; T 2:30-3:30 p.m.; and by appointment.

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Class meets Tuesdays, 4:00-6:50, in Craig-Lee 051.

### COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will introduce students to African and Caribbean literatures in a variety of genres: from the novel, memoir, travel narrative and essay to poetry, drama, and film. Following Shakespeare's dramatization of the "brave new world" in the British imagination, course readings will include voices of Anglophone, Francophone, and Spanish-speaking authors who "write back to the Empire." Our readings will be informed by "key concepts" in post-colonial studies, such as national identity, hybridity, creolization, resistance to oppression, neocolonialism, dislocation, exile, and globalization. Students will consider intersections of postcolonial studies with other fields of contemporary criticism, including feminist/gender studies, critical race studies, environmental studies and cultural studies.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Bill Ashcroft, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin, *Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*

Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of this World*

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Edwidge Danticat, *After the Dance: A Walk Through Carnival in Jacmel, Haiti*

Lovelace, Earl. *The Dragon Can't Dance*.

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*.

Achy Obejas, *Ruins*

Selected poems, stories, and essays on Blackboard.

**All required books are available at the Off Campus Bookstore, 1017 Smith Street, Providence. Any edition of these texts will be acceptable.**

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS

- **Participation**

Your participation in class discussion will demonstrate that you have read the assigned readings. More important, conversations with your peers will open up multiple perspectives on the readings, and challenge you to deepen your analysis of the texts and of the larger contextual issues informing them.

- **Attendance**

Since class discussion is integral to the course as a whole, attendance is not optional. If you don't come to class, you simply are not taking the course. Since we meet for a three-hour class period, more than one unexcused absence will lower your final grade, one letter grade for each missed classed. Two late arrivals or early departures will equal one missed class.

- **Electronic Devices**

Turn off all cell phones, I-phones, and Blackberries before you come to class. If your phone accidentally rings, quickly turn it off without answering. Any student observed "texting" will be asked to leave class.

- **Quizzes**

To encourage you to keep up with the reading, and to stimulate class discussion, there will be unannounced quizzes and in-class writing assignments. There will be no make-ups for quizzes, but I will drop the lowest quiz score.

- **Blackboard**

It is your responsibility to check Blackboard and your RIC email frequently. You will find supplementary materials on Blackboard, along with a list of "key concepts" for each week. You should read your peers' postings and be prepared to respond to their writing during class discussion. Bring to class a hard copy of what you post so you will be able to discuss your ideas if asked to clarify or expand on what you wrote.

- **Weekly Reading Responses**

### **Three Close Readings (1-2 pages each)**

These will be tightly focused papers that include a reading of at least one passage, with close attention to details of language. These papers may suggest an idea for your term paper. If so, the text may be "recycled" and revised as a component of the longer paper.

As specified on the Schedule of Reading and Assignments, you will have two topic options for each of these papers. For full credit, close readings must be submitted both online and handed to me in class on the date due in hard copy.

### **Discussion Questions**

Each week that you do not turn in a close reading, you will identify a passage that you would like to discuss in class, followed by a question for discussion. The purpose of your posting will be to set up your question. What about the passage do you find compelling, disturbing, perplexing, or intriguing? Effective questions will not ask, What do you think? or, Do you agree? Your question should raise a particular issue or problem that you see reflected in the word choices, narrative perspective, or style of the passage.

The discussion questions you post and your response in class to other students' questions will factor into your participation grade.

**For full credit, discussion questions must be posted before midnight the night before we discuss the text. Discussion questions are not due on the same day that you turn in a paper.**

▪ **Research Presentation**

Topics may include literary criticism, a postcolonial issue under debate, a literary/artistic style, or historical/social/cultural/political context.

Requirements for the assignment:

- Sign up in groups of two or three.
- Groups will prepare a one-page handout for the class, which will include the names of the presenters, the title of your presentation, key points and brief textual examples, and Works Cited.
- Presentations should be 12-18 minutes, delivery divided equally among the presenters. (In other words, plan on about 6 minutes per person.)
- In addition to presenting research findings, the group should apply these findings to one or two specific examples in the text.
- Presenters should conclude with questions for discussion. (Avoid yes or no questions like "Do you agree?")

▪ **Two Analytical Essays (6-8 pages each)**

We will discuss possible paper topics and critical approaches in class. I will be happy to discuss drafts of your paper at any stage of the writing process if you bring it to me at least one week before it is due, so that you have time for revision before the due date. Papers are due at the beginning of class, and will be marked down one letter grade for every day they are late. If you anticipate missing a deadline because of extenuating circumstances, please talk to me in advance and we can discuss alternatives.

**Format of Papers**

All written assignments must follow MLA format: typed, 12-font Times New Roman or similar style, 1-inch margins, double-spaced, with appropriate parenthetical citations. Papers not meeting the length requirements (either too short or too long) will be penalized a minimum of one grade.

▪ **Make-up assignments**

A missed homework assignment or presentation may only be "made up" in the case of *unexpected* extenuating circumstances, accompanied by appropriate documentation. Arrangements should be made to complete the assignment in advance of a foreseeable absence (e.g., a religious holiday or your sister's wedding).

**INSTRUCTOR AVAILABILITY**

I will be happy to meet with you to discuss anything pertaining to the class—the readings, your writing, or any issues that arise during class discussions or on WebCT. I will also be delighted to talk with you about anything that interests you, whether directly related to the class or not. If my office hours are not convenient for you, I will make other arrangements to meet with you.

### THE WRITING CENTER

Peer tutors in the Writing Center can offer you feedback at any stage of the writing process. To schedule an appointment, call 456-8141. For more information, visit <http://www.ric.edu/writingCenter/index.php>.

### ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

If you have a documented disability that qualifies under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), and you require accommodations for this class, you must first contact the Disability Services Office. Students are assured that only their accommodation needs will be shared with their professor, and that all other information/documentation (including your diagnosis) is held in strict confidence by the Disability Services staff. Once a Request for Reasonable Accommodation form is obtained from Disability Services, you should then make an appointment with me to give me the form and to discuss your accommodation needs.

Contact information for Disability Services: Craig-Lee 127

Voice: 401-456-8061

For Deaf and Hard of Hearing: TTY/TDD via RI Relay: 1-800-745-5555.

### PLAGIARISM POLICY

Intentional plagiarism—also known as academic fraud—is a serious offense. Plagiarism will carry heavy consequences. The minimum penalty for academic fraud is an “F” for the paper. The *RIC College Handbook* defines plagiarism as “intentionally or knowingly representing the words or ideas of another as one’s own in any academic exercise” (3.9.1). For the full text of this policy, visit [http://www.ric.edu/administration/pdf/College\\_handbook\\_Chapter\\_3.pdf](http://www.ric.edu/administration/pdf/College_handbook_Chapter_3.pdf). If you have questions about the proper way to cite your sources, please ask.

### GRADING

Participation

(class discussion, group work, quizzes, and online postings) 25%

Research Presentations 10%

Three Close Readings (1-2 pages) 15%

Two Analytical Essays (6-8 pages each) 50%

### SCHEDULE OF READING AND ASSIGNMENTS

**Note: The schedule is subject to revision.** A number of historical documents and critical articles will also be assigned to complement the following primary readings. Supplementary materials will be distributed as handouts or accessible on Blackboard.

#### 1/26

Introduction to the course.

Christopher Columbus, from “Letter to Luis de Santangel Regarding the First Voyage” (1493)  
and from “Letter to Ferdinand and Isabella Regarding the Fourth Voyage” (1503)

Bartolomé de las Casas, from “The Very Brief Relation of the Devastation of the Indies” (1552)

Kamua Brathwaite, “Colombe” (handouts)

2/2

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1611)

Criticism:

John Jowett, "Plantation of this Isle" (Blackboard)

George Lamming, "Introduction to 1984 Edition," "Introduction" and "A  
Monster, A Child, A Slave" from *The Pleasures of Exile* (1960) (Blackboard)

Film:

William Shakespeare's *The Tempest* (selected scenes in class)

**Due: Close reading option 1-a**

2/9

Aimé Césaire (Martinique), *A Tempest* (1969)

Poetry:

Orlando Ricardo Menes, "Caliban Cimarrón" (Blackboard)

Elaine Savory, "Miranda: the first voicing" (Blackboard)

Erik Turkman, "Song for Caliban" (Blackboard)

Kamau Brathwaite, "Caliban" (Blackboard)

**Due: Close reading option 1-b**

**Alice Pung**

Familiar and Familial Tales:

Transforming those you know and love into non-fiction,  
fiction, and autobio-fiction, a reading and discussion.

When: Wednesday, 2/10, at 12:30 p.m.

Where: Alger Hall 110

**For extra credit, submit a one-page response to the event.**

2/16

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

**Due: Close reading option 2-a**

2/23

Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*

**Due: Close reading option 2-b**

3/2

Group Poetry Presentations

**3/9**

Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*

Film: *Life and Debt*

**Due: Critical Essay #1**

### **Spring Break**

**3/23**

Edwidge Danticat, *After the Dance: A Walk Through Carnival in Jacmel, Haiti*

**3/30**

Earl Lovelace, *The Dragon Can't Dance*

**Due: Close reading option 3-a**

**4/6**

Short stories, TBA (Blackboard)

**4/13**

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

**Due: Close reading option 3-b**

**4/20**

Short stories, TBA (Blackboard)

**Film: TBA**

**Due: Critical Essay #2**

**4/27**

Achy Obejas, *Ruins*

**5/4**

Roundtable Discussions: Key Concepts in African and Caribbean Literatures