

M. Soledad Caballero
Topics in Postcolonial Literature
Contact information: Oddfellows 215, ext. 4329
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Office hours: MW 1:30-3:30
T 3-5

Required Texts:

Frantz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart
Ngugi Wa Thiong'o, A Grain of Wheat
Ama Ata Aidoo, Our Sister Killjoy
Buchi Emecheta, The Joys of Motherhood
Tstitsi Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions
Jamaica Kincaid, A Small Place
Handouts (given in class, usually)

Objectives:

Nearly three-fourth of the people of the world have at some point in their history been under colonial rule as colonial subjects. Postcolonial generally refers to the moment of decolonization, when the ruling nation leaves its colonies and they become “independent” nations. In other words, these “new” nations were “colonies” and after “independence” from their colonial rulers, they are now in the postcolonial stage of their national history. In this class we will read literature written by English speaking post-colonial writers that detail life under colonialism as well as life at the moment of decolonization and afterwards. We will also read historical and theoretical material that will contextualize the authors, their nations’ histories, and the colonial regimes that ruled them. Most of the texts from this class are written by African writers who, through their literary endeavors, attempt to work out questions of identity, language, and education during and after colonialism. Some of the questions we may ask: What is post-colonial literature? How does it engage and image the Western canon which it both works in and writes against? How is post-colonial subjectivity imagined? Is there an “authentic” post-colonial identity? How does gender fit in the narrative of postcolonialism?

Requirements:

Two 8-10 page literary/interpretive analytical essays: 20% and 35% (second one researched)
Annotated Bibliography: 10%
Two 3-page response papers: 10%
Take home final: 15%
Participation and Attendance: 10%

Please be aware that all writing that is not done in class must be typed, double-spaced with 1” inch margins and in an appropriate font (Times New Roman in 12 point is usually standard), paginated, dated, and with your name at top of the first page. Do not add any unnecessary spaces between paragraphs or before the first line of your essay. Use MLA (Modern Language Association) documentation format when necessary.

Students are encouraged to avail themselves of the tutors in the Learning Commons as they begin and work through assignments.

Participation and attendance:

Class participation is central to the success of your experience in this class. This means that you have carefully read each assignment, have thought about it in the context of our other classes and conversations, are ready with questions and concerns that you have, and are energized and excited about our class time. You may find the material difficult to follow and hard to read, and for this reason, class discussion is a crucial. This is not a time to be “timid” or “shy;” remember that a well-asked and well thought out question is as valuable in a discussion as a declarative statement. Keep in mind, however, that quantity of comments and questions does not trump quality. Talk often and insightfully. Not doing so will detrimentally affect your grade. For example, talking once each class period throughout the semester will earn you C-.

All work must be submitted to pass the course. Active, engaged class participation and attendance are expected. Six or more absences will result in automatic failure for the class. Late essay are not accepted and will be knocked down one full letter grade for each day they are late, including weekend. Late response essays are not accepted.

IMPORTANT NOTE: If you do not bring your books, handouts, materials to class, you will be asked to leave and get them and then return to class. Too many of these incidents will detrimentally affect your final grade.

Other Information:

Students should schedule appointments during office hours. Students may contact Professor Caballero via email. Please allow 2 business days for email responses.

Students will conduct themselves in a responsible and respectable manner towards fellow students and professors.

Please turn off cell phones for class. If a cell phone rings, Professor Caballero will answer it.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is another word for stealing. When you plagiarize you directly or indirectly use the ideas and/or language of another person or persons without acknowledgement and claim these words and ideas as your own. Not only is it a serious offense and grounds for academic expulsion, it is also against the law. You are plagiarizing if you do any or all of the following, though please keep in mind that these are not the only ways to plagiarize: 1) Use others’ words directly without proper citation and quotations, 2) Use others’ ideas and wording so closely (paraphrasing) that you are essentially quoting them without proper acknowledgement, 3) re-use assignments not written for this class and pretend that they are written for this class, 4) Borrow, buy, steal, download (you get the idea) others’ essays, ideas, words, language, etc. and pass them off as your own. I should say that I regularly visit on-line websites that sell college essays and that I belong to a large network of websites that assist me in finding stolen essays students have bought on line. Please see me at any time if you have citation and documentation questions.

The calendar is subject to change as the semester progresses.

Any student who feels the need for an accommodation based on a documented disability should contact me. Please also contact John Mangine in the Learning Commons (john.mangine@allegheny.edu, 332-2898). The Learning Commons arranges reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities.

Calendar

Week 1 Thursday, Aug. 30	Introductions --
Week 2 Tuesday, Sept. 4 Thursday, Sept. 6	Frantz Fanon, pg 1-62 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> pg 1-13 Fanon pg 1-62 continued
Week 3 Tuesday, Sept. 11 Thursday, Sept. 13	Fanon, pg 1-62 and 97-144 <u>Things Fall Apart</u> pg 3-74 (Response #1 Due)
Week 4 Tuesday, Sept. 18 Thursday, Sept. 20	<u>Things Fall Apart</u> pg 75-153 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> 14-36 <u>Things Fall Apart</u> pg 154-209
Week 5 Tuesday, Sept. 25 Thursday, Sept. 27	<u>A Grain of Wheat</u> pg 1-69 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> , pg 37-56 <u>A Grain of Wheat</u> pg 70-121
Week 6 Tuesday, Oct. 2 Thursday, Oct. 4	<u>A Grain of Wheat</u> pg 122-186 (top of the page) <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> 56-76 <u>A Grain of Wheat</u> pg 186-247
Week 7 Tuesday, Oct. 9 Thursday, Oct. 11	<u>The Joys of Motherhood</u> pg 7-81 <u>The Joys of Motherhood</u> pg 82-125 (Annotated Bibliography Due)
Week 8 Tuesday, Oct. 16 Thursday, Oct. 18	Fall Break <u>The Joys of Motherhood</u> pg 126-169 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> 77-96
Week 9 Tuesday, Oct. 23 Thursday, Oct. 25	<u>The Joys of Motherhood</u> pg 170-224 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> pg 96-114 <u>Our Sister Killjoy</u> pg 3-45 (Essay #1 Due)
Week 10 Tuesday, Oct. 30 Thursday, Nov. 1	<u>Our Sister Killjoy</u> pg 46-108 <u>Our Sister Killjoy</u> pg 109-134 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> pg 115-133

Week 11	
Tuesday, Nov. 6	<u>Nervous Conditions</u> pg 1-76 <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> 134-152 (Response #2 Due)
Thursday, Nov. 8	<u>Nervous Conditions</u> pg 77-119
Week 12	
Tuesday, Nov. 13	<u>Nervous Conditions</u> pg 120-175
Thursday, Nov. 15	<u>Nervous Conditions</u> pg 176-204 Fanon 181-233
Week 13	
Tuesday, Nov. 20	Fanon and Nervous Conditions
Thursday, Nov. 22	Thanksgiving Day
Week 14	
Tuesday, Nov. 27	<u>The Empire Writes Back</u> pg 153-192
Thursday, Nov. 29	<u>The Empire Writes Back</u> continued Postcolonial literature today (Essay #2 Due)
Week 15	
Tuesday, Dec. 4	<u>A Small Place</u> pg 3-81
Thursday, Dec. 6	<u>A Small Place</u> <u>The Empire Writes Back</u> pg 193-222
Week 16	
Tuesday, Dec. 11	<u>A Small Place</u> and wrap up Last day of classes
Take Home Final Exam Due:	
Wednesday, Dec. 19 th	2 pm