

ENG 240: LITERATURE AND EMPIRE
11:00-12:15 TF
FISK 313

PROFESSOR WATERMAN
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OFFICE: FISK 321

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course will examine the ways in which historically-specific modes of imperial practice have inflected the development of literary cultures. Moving between periods and national-imperial traditions, this course traces the development of the novel in relation to the history of the nation, capital, and empire. It also explores literature as a domain of resistance to empire, and a site through which to imagine different modes of social organization and cohabitation.

REQUIRED TEXTS

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (Penguin)
Herman Melville, *Typee* (Penguin)
Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine* (Riverhead)
Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony* (Penguin)
Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat* (Penguin)
Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie* (HarperCollins)

COURSE OBJECTIVES

Students will learn to identify the historical, social, and formal context of texts in relation to specific episodes in the history and practice of empire; they will explore the interplay of genre and form with respect to histories of nationalism, imperialism, and anti-colonialism; they will consider the relationship between aesthetics and cultural values in the long history of empire and anti-imperial struggle.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS

This is a reading intensive course. You are expected to have completed the assigned readings, and to be prepared to discuss them, in class, on the day designated by the syllabus. Throughout the course, you should practice reading closely, and critically; you are encouraged to keep a notebook of thoughts, comments, and questions that occur to you while reading; and you should come to class prepared to share your observations. You are expected to offer topics for discussion during class, and throughout the semester you will be called upon to do so.

ATTENDANCE

Attendance will be taken. Because our time in class is limited, you are expected to be present, in your seats, at the start of each session. Tardiness will be noted and will hurt your overall class participation grade. In this matter, I will accept no excuses. If there is some personal matter so dire that you absolutely must attend to it, and this means that you are going to be late for class, it is probably better to miss class, deal with your situation, and return--promptly--for our next session. You may take three unexcused absences. After three, each absence will cost you one point off your final grade (and put your participation grade in doubt). The only legitimate excuses for

missing a class are medical, but you must provide documentation of your medical condition. Students who miss more than one-fifth of the sessions in the first ten weeks of the semester will be dropped from the course.

ASSIGNMENTS: SUBJECT TO CHANGE AT THE DISCRETION OF THE PROFESSOR

There are three writing assignments in this course:

- 1) Short essay: What is imperialism and what does it have to do with literature? Drawing upon theoretical writings on imperialism (Edward Said, Amy Kaplan, George Steinmetz) discuss the nature and extent of imperialism as it concerns the realm of ideas. **THREE-TO-FIVE PAGES: DUE OCTOBER 3**
- 2) Short essay: How does empire inflect literary culture? Develop an analysis of the ways in which imperialism appears in Herman Melville's *Typee*, Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*, and Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie*. Do these authors adapt deliberate strategies for its representation? Or does imperialism merely serve as a context for their literary productions? How is imperialism registered in a text? Is it addressed thematically or within the terms of the narrative? Does it have a formal presence? **FIVE-TO-SEVEN PAGES: DUE NOVEMBER 5**
- 3) Short essay: How have "the colonized" responded to imperialism through literature? What strategies have they employed in developing critiques of empire? How do those critiques differ from one another? In what manner are they similar? **FIVE-TO-SEVEN PAGES: DUE DECEMBER 12**

GRADING POLICIES

Grades are not given; they are earned. As such, I will not discuss your grade. I will provide comments on your written work and your classroom presence. I will gladly discuss ways to improve your academic performance. These discussions are for your benefit, and should not be taken as negotiations concerning the grade you will eventually receive.

- Participation 10%
- First short essay 25%
- Second essay 30%
- Final essay 35%

Grading will follow the criteria posted on the AUB website.

90-100	Outstanding
85-89	Excellent
80-84	Very Good
75-79	Good
70-74	Fair
60-69	Weak
Below 60	Fail

COMPUTER AND CELLPHONE POLICIES

Computers, e-readers, and cell phones will be allowed in class for the purposes of note taking and internet research. You are responsible for monitoring your use of these technologies.

PLAGIARISM

At its most basic, plagiarism implies the reproduction of other people's words, work, or ideas without citation. Do not do it. All academic work is, at some level, based upon collaboration, so you need to know and understand what other people have written and said about any given subject before you can write or speak effectively about it. Nonetheless, other people's work or ideas or writing should be thought of as the seed from which "the plant" of your work grows. You can--indeed, you must--use other people's words and ideas, but you cannot build a paper from quotations, and you must give credit where it is due. If you have questions about what sorts of practices constitute plagiarism, please feel free to ask.

All incidents of *suspected* plagiarism will be referred to the relevant disciplinary committee.

CLASS SCHEDULE

1.

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 5

Introductions

2.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 10

Introductions

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 12

George Steinmetz, "Return to Empire: The New US Imperialism in Comparative Historical Perspective"

3.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Edward Said, "Overlapping Territories, Intertwined Histories," from *Culture and Imperialism*

Amy Kaplan, "Introduction," to *The Anarchy of Empire in the Making of US Culture*

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Herman Melville, *Typee*, 1-75

4.

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 24

Herman Melville, *Typee*, 76-148

THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 26

Herman Melville, *Typee*, 149-209

5.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 1

Herman Melville, *Typee*, 210-258

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 3

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 3-37

6.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 8

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, 38-96

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 10

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, 1-98

7.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15-THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17 EID AL-ADHA

8.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, 99-207

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 24

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, 208-273

9.

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29

Laura Ingalls Wilder, *Little House on the Prairie*, 274-335

THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31

Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine*, 1-87

10.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 5

Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine*, 89-175

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 7

Najla Said, *Looking for Palestine*, 177-258

11.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 12

Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, 1-55

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 14

Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, 56-118

12.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 19

Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, 119-172

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 21 NO CLASS

Ngugi wa'Thiongo, *A Grain of Wheat*, 173-243

13.

TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 26

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, 1-58

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 28

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, 59-120

14.

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 3

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, 121-186

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 5

Leslie Marmon Silko, *Ceremony*, 186-243