

Course code – Postcolonialism and Beyond: A Foray into Postcolonial Literature and Thinking

Lecturer: Catherine AMANDOLESE-ROVERA

Contact information:

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Department: International affairs

Semester: 1

Course level: L3 Undergraduate

Domain: Postcolonial Studies

Teaching language: English

Number of in-class hours: 33

Number of course sessions: 10 + Exam

ECTS: 6

Course description and objectives

The course aims to approach and delineate “postcolonialism” through the lens of literature, written in English by authors from countries that formerly belonged to the British Empire and are now part of the Commonwealth of Nations.

After being introduced to postcolonial theory, students will be able to reappraise the concept through excerpts from essays, novels or short stories, as well as videos and podcasts, spanning multiple time periods (from the mid-20th century to the present) and geographic areas as diverse as India, Africa and the Caribbean. All these documents will be discussed in class. Contemporary women writers will be given prominence on the syllabus. Students will become familiar with a wide range of topics and narrative tools used by these many writers to address and condemn the legacies of imperialism. The course will take them on a journey across borders, revisiting issues of race, class and gender, and allowing for broader discussions on societal issues as well as heated debates in the field of art and culture (intersectionality, cancel culture, sensitivity readers, repatriation of cultural artifacts etc.).

The course will be highly interactive, taking the form of classroom debates, book club discussions, oral presentations, reading sessions, podcasts, booktubes, and even creative writing for those willing to engage in it.

Prerequisites

B2 level in English is recommended

Learning outcomes

Students will improve their linguistic and cultural fluency, their reading and public speaking skills, and their critical thinking abilities in English, by engaging with and sharing opinions about challenging texts (by award-winning authors) and topics (such as trauma, migration, hybridity, transcultural identity etc.). By the end of the course, not only will they have a comprehensive overview of the current publishing trends in English-speaking countries. But the course will also help them boost their intercultural competence and problem-solving skills through questioning. Where politics fails, what about the redeeming power of the written word? What about storytelling as an act of resistance against various forms of oppression and enduring cultural stereotypes or mental constructs? Such questioning will open new perspectives and broaden their understanding of the contemporary world in various fields, be they cultural, societal or (geo-) political. In our globalized world, more than ever, postcolonial studies may offer them fresh insights and a valuable lens through which to apprehend international relations, lingering inequalities, and even the climate emergency.

Assignments and grading

- Active participation and contribution in class 40%
- Student presentations 30%

- Final exam 30%

The numerical grade distribution will dictate the final grade. The passing grade for a course is 10/20.

Class participation: Active class participation – this is what makes classes lively and instructive. Come on time and prepared. Class participation is based on quality of comments, not quantity.

Exam policy: In the exam, students will not be allowed to bring any document (except if allowed by the lecturer). Unexcused absences from exams or failure to submit cases will result in zero grades in the calculation of numerical averages. Exams are collected at the end of examination periods.

Course structure

Session	Topic
1	Introduction to postcolonial theory and literature
2	“The Empire Writes Back with a Vengeance”: Salman Rushdie, Arundhati Roy [India]
3	“There is always the other side, always”: Jean Rhys, Caryl Phillips [The Caribbean]
4	Writing as activism, resisting apartheid: Doris Lessing, Nadine Gordimer [South Africa]
5	The “rememory” of slavery: Toni Morrison [United States]
6	“The danger of a single story”: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie [Nigeria]
7	Black feminism and “fusion fiction”: Bernardine Evaristo [Britain/Nigeria]
8	Displacement, war trauma: Mohsin Hamid [Pakistan], Ocean Vuong [Southeast Asia]
9	Postcolonial art and aesthetics (visual arts, exhibitions)
10	Current debates
11	Final Exam

Bibliography

- A select bibliography (critical essays and fiction) will be given in class or through Moodle.

Lecturer’s biography

Dr Catherine Rovera is a senior lecturer at Université Paris-Dauphine and head of the James Joyce research team at Institut des textes et manuscrits modernes (ITEM, UMR 8132 CNRS/ENS), Paris Sciences & Lettres. She is a specialist in genetic criticism, and her research work encompasses modernist and postcolonial literature.

Moodle

This course is on Moodle: **Yes**

Academic integrity

Be aware of the rules in Université Paris Dauphine about plagiarism and cheating during exams. All work turned in for this course must be your own work, or that of your own group. Working as part of a group implies that you are an active participant and fully contributed to the output produced by that group.

