

HON412: “Seas of Stories”: Postcolonial Literature and Theory
Online (and possibly Hyflex later) T/Th 1:00-2:15
Spring 2021



Professor: Justine K. Van Meter

Office: Virtual Realm! I'm everywhere at all times and yet nowhere at any time!

Office Hours: Remote (by email and/or Zoom); please contact me to arrange a meeting as needed.

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Catalog Description:

Prerequisite, acceptance to the University Honors Program, or consent of instructor. Using an interdisciplinary approach, we will explore diverse “seas of stories” (as Salman Rushdie terms it) from various parts of the world. We will focus on key issues involved in postcolonial theory as well as the complexities, possibilities, and challenges of this particular theoretical approach to the study of literature and culture.

Course Objectives/Outcomes:

In this course, we will read authors and theorists who explore how their cultures, identities, and stories have been interrupted and/or transformed by colonial and postcolonial contacts between East and West. Our study of these authors and their works will primarily be structured around issues that are prevalent within the field of “Postcolonial Studies.” In exploring diverse “seas of stories” that flow between East and West, we will have a greater understanding of the contexts in which these authors are writing and of the issues that comprise this emerging field. We will particularly focus on **anti-colonialism, Orientalism, gender matters, the notion of hybridity, and postcolonial gothicisms.**

Major Topics Covered:

- Diverse experiences, definitions and expressions of culture and identity.
- Major historical figures and theorists in the field of “Postcolonial Studies.”
- Postcolonial interpretations/approaches to reading literature.
- Storytelling and stories as creators of community, culture, identity, and nation.
- The “Self,” the “Other,” and the “in-between.”

Honors Program Learning Outcomes:

- Obtain a starting point for integrative exploration of the development of cultures and intellectual achievements through a variety of disciplinary and interdisciplinary perspectives;
- Sharpen the ability to critically analyze and synthesize a broad range of knowledge through the study of primary texts and through engagement in active learning with fellow students, faculty, and texts (broadly understood);
- Understand how to apply more integrative and interdisciplinary forms of understanding in the advancement of knowledge and in addressing complex challenges shaping the world;
- Develop effective communication skills, specifically in the areas of written and oral exposition and analysis.

General Education Learning Outcomes:

In addition to the outcomes specified above, this course also satisfies the following General Education areas:

- 7AI (Artistic Inquiry): Students compose critical or creative works that embody or analyze conceptually an artistic form at a baccalaureate/pre-professional level.
- 7SI (Social Inquiry): Students explore processes by which human beings develop social and/or historical perspectives.

Required Texts:

Faqir, *Pillars of Salt*

McPherson, *The Weir*

Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

Handouts (posted on Blackboard)

Requirements:

- I. Readings and informal writing assignments: as you will notice on the syllabus, there are many materials that will be posted on Canvas for your convenience. Please be sure to have the readings and assignments completed on the day that they are listed on the syllabus. **It usually is very obvious when that's not happening, so do your business so that we can all do our business together!**
- II. Essay 1 (200 points): Your essay needs to be submitted **by class time (11:30)** on the date listed on the syllabus and must be submitted using Turnitin on Canvas. **No late papers accepted!**
- III. Essay 2 (300 points): Your essay needs to be submitted **by 6:00pm** on the date listed on the syllabus and must be submitted using Turnitin on Canvas. Your presentation at the end of the semester will be based on this essay (more on this later!). **No late papers accepted!**

- IV. Presentation (100 points): More information will be distributed as this assignment approaches.
- V. Final Exam (300 points): The final will be comprehensive. More on this later!
- VI. Participation/Attendance (100 points): It is more than likely that, at this point in the syllabus and in your time in the Honors program, you are aware that your active participation in this class is necessary. We are in this together, to critically explore and examine a variety of texts, images and ideas; as such, all of our voices must be heard! **This is even more important with an online format, so please be sure to be present with both audio and video! To not do so means that you may be counted as absent for the day. If there are technical difficulties at any point that make this impossible on a particular day, please let me know.**

Additionally, software **may** be used to record live class discussions. As a student in this class, your participation in live class discussions will be recorded to assist those who cannot attend the live session, or to serve as a resource for those who would like to review content that was presented. These recordings will be made available **only** to students who are enrolled in the class, and **only** during the period in which the course is offered. All recordings will become unavailable to students in the class shortly after the course ends.

Regardless of the format, expectations regarding absences and tardies remain the same as if we were together in person, so please be aware that excessive unexcused absences (meaning absences that are not cleared with me **prior** to class and that are not legitimized by either a doctor's/dean's note or by other satisfactory means) or excessive tardiness will result in a reduction in your final grade according to the table shown below:

Absence #3	20 point deduction
Absence #4-5	50 point deduction
Absence #6 and beyond	Failure in the class
Tardies	3 Tardies=1 Unexcused Absence

Special Note: Please do not use other distracting devices during our class time! If there is an emergency or circumstance in which one or both of these is required, please let me know before class begins.

Chapman University's Students with Disabilities Policy: In compliance with ADA guidelines, students who have any condition, either permanent or temporary, that might affect their ability to perform in this class are encouraged to inform the instructor at the beginning of the term. The University, through the Disability Services Office, will work with the appropriate faculty member who is asked to provide the accommodations for a

student in determining what accommodations are suitable based on the documentation and the individual student needs. The granting of any accommodation will not be retroactive and cannot jeopardize the academic standards or integrity of the course.

Grades: I am painfully aware of the emphasis that we all place on the grades that we receive. Although I have listed below the point values/percentages assigned to the various course requirements, I would like to remind you to please keep in mind as we proceed that *learning* is a process, one which points and percentages are very often incapable of measuring (corny, but true). Enjoy the process!

Important Note: We'll discuss the writing process and the (often inadvertent) potential for plagiarism when working from sources throughout the semester; please note, though, that – due to the increase in academic dishonesty since working virtually – the university is monitoring websites such as Chegg and Coursehero. Any violation of our academic integrity standards will result in action from the Academic Integrity Committee.

		Grade Scale:
Essay 1	200 points	A 950-1000
Essay 2	300 points	A- 910-949
Final Exam	300 points	B+ 880-909
		B 840-879
		B- 810-839
Presentation	100 points	C+ 780-809
Participation	100 points	C 740-779
		C- 710-739
		D+ 680-709
		D 640-679
		D- 610-639
		F 0-609
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TOTAL	1000 points	

Helpful Resource:

On the website below, you will find a list of articles about postcolonialism, postcolonial theory, or specific authors/works which might be helpful in the future:

http://www.eng.fju.edu.tw/Literary_Criticism/postcolonism/postcolonial_link.htm

Schedule of Classes

*I reserve the right to alter the syllabus as needed.

Week 1:

T 02/02 Introduction to the Course/Review of Syllabus

	Th	02/04	Defining our term(s): What is meant by the word "Postcolonial"? Which authors or artists would be called this and why? What are some of the potential difficulties with this term?
Week 2:			
	T	02/09	(Very, very brief) summary of Empire (handout on Canvas) The "Anticolonial": Memmi, <i>The Colonizer and the Colonized</i> (handout on Canvas)
	Th	02/11	Zoom Break! View <i>Frantz Fanon: Black Skin, White Mask</i> (documentary by Isaac Julien) on Kanopy: https://chapman.kanopy.com/node/5534956
Week 3:			
	T	02/16	Fanon, <i>Black Skin, White Masks</i> (handout on Canvas)
	Th	02/18	The Postcolonial "Moment": Salih, <i>Season of Migration to the North</i> (read 1/3 for today)
Week 4:			
	T	02/23	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i> (read next 1/3 for today)
	Th	02/25	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i> (read last 1/3 for today)
Week 5:			
	T	03/02	Orientalism: Said (handout on Canvas)
	Th	03/04	Gender Matters: Leila Ahmed, "The Discourse of the Veil" (handout on Canvas)
Week 6:			
	T	03/09	The Torah, the Bible, the Quran: Representations of Women in East and West/Islam and Christianity (read powerpoint on Canvas and write an informal response for the purpose of discussion on the following: How effective is this approach? Is there an alternative way that this group might present their information?)
	Th	03/11	Zoom Break! Essay 1 DUE at 1:00pm via Turnitin on Canvas. No late papers will be accepted!
Week 7:			
	T	03/16	<i>Pillars of Salt</i> (read 1/2)
	Th	03/18	<i>Pillars of Salt</i> (finish book)
Week 8:			

T	03/23	Spring Break (NO CLASSES)
Th	03/25	
Week 9:		
T	03/30	Hybridities: The Empire comes “home”: “Britishness” and Black Britain (selections from <i>Writing Black Britain</i> on Canvas)
Th	04/01	Continue with <i>Writing Black Britain</i>
Week 10:		
T	04/06	Rushdie, “Imaginary Homelands” (handout on Canvas)
Th	04/08	Bhabha’s “How Newness Enters the World” (at the end of <i>Writing Black Britain</i> handout) and “The Third Space Interview” (handouts on Canvas)
Week 11:		
T	04/13	<i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> (read 1/3)
Th	04/15	<i>Haroun and the Sea of Stories</i> (read next 1/3)
Week 12:		
T	04/20	Finish <i>Haroun</i> (finish book)
Th	04/22	Hauntings: The Postcolonial Gothic and Ireland (handout on Canvas)
Week 13:		
T	04/27	Ireland and McPherson, <i>The Weir</i>
Th	04/29	Zoom Break! Essay 2 DUE at 1:00 via Turnitin on Canvas. No late papers accepted!
Week 14:		
T	05/04	Presentations
Th	05/06	Presentations
Week 15:		
T	05/11	Presentations

Th 05/13 Presentations

Final Exam: Friday 05/21 (10:45am-1:15pm)