

San José State University
Department of English and Comparative Literature
228, Seminar in Genre Studies: Postcolonial Realism, 01, Spring, 2022

Course and Contact Information

Instructor(s): Meghan Gorman-DaRif
Email: meghan.gorman-darif@sjsu.edu
Office Hours: Tuesdays 2-4 (via Zoom) and by appointment
Class Days/Time: Wednesdays 7-9:45pm
Prerequisites: Classified graduate standing or instructor consent

Course Description

English 228: Seminar in Genre Studies provides focused study of a single genre of British and/or World Literature. This section of 228 will be focused on the genre of Postcolonial Realism.

The study of postcolonial literature, guided by postcolonial theory's investment in concepts like mimicry, hybridity, indeterminacy, and so on, has often focused on genres like modernism or magic realism while overlooking realism itself. The genre of realism, in its claim to transparently represent "reality" has been routinely dismissed as Eurocentric and inherently conservative. Yet realism makes up a significant, if overlooked number of postcolonial literary texts. This course explores realism from a postcolonial context, starting from the anticolonial struggles of the 1960s and moving to the present day in fiction grappling with globalization and climate change. We will follow contemporary literary debates on the genre to ask, is realism capable of politically engaging with the world? Or is it only capable of sustaining the status quo? As a genre is postcolonial realism conservative or resistant?

Course Format

This is an online course. Students must have a computer (preferably with a camera), access to reliable internet connectivity, and the ability to log in to Canvas. All work will be submitted online. Class will meet virtually each week during our meeting time on Wednesdays, from 7:00-9:45pm

Faculty Web Page and MYSJSU Messaging

Course materials such as syllabus, handouts, notes, assignment instructions, etc. can be found on [Canvas Learning Management System course login website](#) at <http://sjsu.instructure.com>. You are responsible for regularly checking with the messaging system through [MySJSU on Spartan App Portal](#) <http://one.sjsu.edu> (or other communication system as indicated by the instructor) to learn of any updates.

MA in English Program Learning Outcomes (PLOS)

1. Students will demonstrate an appropriate level of expertise in literary history, literary theory, and rhetoric.
2. Students will demonstrate high-level proficiency in literary research and in the synthesis of research.
3. Students will demonstrate critical and analytical skills in the interpretation and evaluation of literary texts.
4. Students will demonstrate a command of written academic English, including the abilities to a) organize and present material in a cogent fashion, b) formulate and defend original arguments, c) employ effectively the language of their discipline and d) write under time constraints.
5. Students will demonstrate a reading knowledge of at least one foreign language.

To those ends we will engage in all phases of close reading, thinking, and writing processes that produce clear and purposeful critical writing and collaborative dialogue.

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to demonstrate the following:

- 1) Analyze, contextualize, and critically respond to both content and form of literary texts through close reading (Weekly response posts; final papers; class discussions)
- 2) Effectively locate, synthesize, and apply interdisciplinary research to develop original interpretations of literature (Presentations and annotated bibliography)
- 3) Efficiently and effectively develop sophisticated writing in response to texts and in conversation with theory (Weekly response posts; final essay)
- 4) Demonstrate familiarity with the theories and forms of postcolonial realism, including the main debates within the field relating to genre (Weekly response posts; class discussion; presentations).

Required Texts/Readings

Things Fall Apart, by Chinua Achebe

Twilight in Delhi by Ahmed Ali

The Joys of Motherhood by Buchi Emecheta

Nervous Conditions by Tsitsi Dangarembga

Petals of Blood, by Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o

The Hungry Tide by Amitav Ghosh

Crossbones by Nuruddin Farah

Secondary readings will be available via Canvas for download

Library Liaison

Peggy Cabrera Email: Peggy.Cabrera@sjsu.edu Phone: 408-808-2034

Course Requirements and Assignments

Weekly Response Papers

You will be asked to develop a crafted, claim-based response paper in response to the readings to post to our discussion board each week (for a total of ten posts). Your contributions will include both an original post (at least 500 words) and a response to a classmate's post (at least 100 words). **Papers are due Tuesday at midnight; responses are due by Friday.** These short critical essays should center on the course readings for that upcoming week, focusing on textual analysis through close reading skills and/or connecting the secondary readings to the primary text. Papers should make an argument about some element of the text, as well as providing support for the argument with textual evidence and your own interpretation and analysis of the evidence to support your point or idea. The audience for this will be your peers - educated readers familiar with the text - therefore, the goal is to produce a value-added piece of writing for the class that hinges on persuading your readers that your interpretation is valid (though debatable). Examples might include: a pattern or theme you have noticed developing in the text, and what you think the author is trying to reveal through it; a close reading of a particular scene in an attempt to get at its possible meaning or implications; the use of outside research or secondary readings to contextualize the text and make an argument about it; a consideration of how the text's conditions of production may relate to or influence its meaning, etc. These posts are designed for you to be able to practice your analytical skills, and receive substantive weekly feedback on your writing and critical thinking in preparation for our longer writing assignment, and to encourage attentive reading practices to facilitate class discussion.

Presentation/Discussion Facilitation

You will be asked to carefully read, summarize, and prepare discussion questions for one of the recommended texts on the syllabus. These presentations may either be individual or in pairs. Part of the presentation should be a handout with an annotation or summary of the source, highlighting the main claims/points made by the author, and crafted questions linking the claims of the source to the novel under discussion that day in class. Your grade for the presentation will be based on the handout and your brief (10 minutes max) presentation of the source and your discussion questions.

Annotated Bibliography

In preparation for the final paper, you will be asked to submit an annotated bibliography of at least 7 sources. The annotations for each source should include the MLA citation of the source itself and a 250 word max summary of the source. Sources may be theory, criticism, or works of literature, depending on the needs of your paper.

Final Paper

For the final paper, you will have a choice of style, ranging from a traditional seminar paper (for those interested in continuing on to a PhD), a conference paper (for those interested in exploring the style and format of a shorter, but still academic genre of writing), a prompt-based essay (for those concerned with practicing the writing skills for the MA exam), or a literature review and creative proposal (for those interested in applying the theory and literary styles covered in this course to their own creative writing).

All students are required to conference with me about their choice of and plan for the final paper in March, and to submit an annotated bibliography in April.

Grading Information

In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System"). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A = excellent; B = above average; C = average; D = below average; F = failure. Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g., B+/B/B-), the assignment of a + or - grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

There will be a series of short writing assignments and longer essays that make up the majority of the grade for this class. **Should you choose to revise essay 1, the deadline for revisions is one week from the date you receive your paper back with comments.** There will also be weekly blog posts, assignments and reading/lecture quizzes:

Weekly Response Papers	30%	CLO 1-4
Presentation	15%	CLO 2, 4
Annotated Bibliography	10%	CLO 2
Participation	15%	CLO 1, 2, 4
Final Essay	30%	CLO 1-4

<i>Grade</i>	<i>Percentage</i>
<i>A</i>	<i>93 to 100%</i>
<i>A minus</i>	<i>90 to 92%</i>
<i>B plus</i>	<i>86 to 89 %</i>
<i>B</i>	<i>83 to 85%</i>
<i>B minus</i>	<i>80 to 82%</i>
<i>C plus</i>	<i>76 to 79%</i>
<i>C</i>	<i>73 to 75%</i>
<i>C minus</i>	<i>70 to 72%</i>
<i>D plus</i>	<i>66 to 69%</i>
<i>D</i>	<i>63 to 65%</i>
<i>D minus</i>	<i>60 to 62%</i>

Classroom Protocol

Attendance: Your success in this class will largely be dependent on your attendance and active participation in our zoom lectures and discussions, as well as keeping closely up to date with our reading schedule. Staying on top of lecture and reading material will result in a better understanding of the material, which will translate into higher grades across all assignments. Please plan accordingly and develop a schedule to manage the variety of assignments for this course, including readings and written assignments

Scholastic Honesty: Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to all drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the appropriate Dean's office on campus.

SJSU's Credit Hour Requirement

Success in this course is based on the expectation that students will spend, for each unit of credit, a minimum of 45 hours over the length of the course (normally three hours per unit per week) for instruction, preparation/studying, or course related activities, including but not limited to internships, labs, and clinical practica. Other course structures will have equivalent workload expectations as described in the syllabus.

University Policies

Per [University Policy S16-9](#), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on [Syllabus Information web page \(https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php\)](https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php). Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

Accessibility: Universal design is an accessibility principle by which expanding access to a space (like a classroom) or a conversation (like a curriculum) benefits everyone. I aim for universal design in my courses, and at the same time, I assume that each student learns differently. If you are facing a barrier to access in my class, I invite (and encourage!) you to talk with me about it in my office hours or by e-mail. In addition, the university and San Jose community offer many kinds of support services

- **Accessible Education Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/> and on Facebook. You can also reach them at 408-924-6000 (voice) or by email at aec-info@sjsu.edu. AEC is the office that handles requests for accommodations (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/accommodation-information/index.html>). Their office is in the Administration Building (110), and they offer a variety of services to facilitate access for students at SJSU:
 - **Accessible Software and Training** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/center-for-accessible-technology/accessible-software-and-training/index.html>)
 - **Deaf and Hard of Hearing Services** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aec/current-students/deaf-and-hard-of-hearing-services/index.html>)
- **Gender Equity Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/genec/> and provides a variety of spaces and services including drop-in social spaces, free condoms, pads, and tampons, a lactation room, as well as events throughout the year. They are located in the Student Union, First Level, Room 1650. You can also reach them at 408-924-6500 or via email at sjsugenec@gmail.com
- **MOSAIC Cross Cultural Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/mosaic/> and on Facebook. They provide support and services for students from historically underrepresented groups, including educational and leadership opportunities through programming and training, a resource library and database of speakers, funding opportunities, and a space to study or connect. You can find them on the 1st floor of the Student Union Main Building. You can also reach them at 408-924-6255 or via email at mosaic@sjsu.edu
- **Pride Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/pride/> and provides support on campus to LGBTIQQA students. Their library has a variety of resources and the space is also available for meeting, studying, or socializing. They are located in the Student Union in the Main Section on the 1st Level.
- **Student Counseling and Psychological Services** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/> and are located in the Student Wellness Center, Third Floor (300B). You can schedule an appointment by calling 408-924-5910 or email them at counseling.services@sjsu.edu. You can also access their after hours crisis service by calling their main number, and pressing 4. If you are experiencing an emergency you can also reach the police at 911, campus police at 408-924-2222, the County Suicide and Crisis Line at 855-278-4204, or text ANSWER to 839863 to get a response from the Crisis Call Center.
 - **SCPS** has also compiled a list of local and community resources including resources for mental health, addiction issues, legal aid, and community and cultural groups, including veterans etc., which you can find at: http://www.sjsu.edu/counseling/students/Off-Campus_Assistance/Community_Resources/index.html - alcohol

- **The Office of Student and Faculty Success** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/sfs/> and they have a wide range of services to provide support for the campus community, including:
 - **#FinishIn4** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/californiapromise/>)
 - **Project Succeed** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/projectsucceed/>)
 - **Academic Advising and Retention Services** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aars/>)
 - **CommUniverCity** (<http://cucs.org/>)
 - **E-Campus** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/ecampus/>)
 - **Peer Connections** (<http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/>) offers peer mentoring and tutoring services
 - **Student-Athlete Success Services** (<https://sjsuspartans.com/sports/2018/8/3/ot-sjsu-academic-services-html.aspx>) offers academic and study skills services for student athletes
 - **Office of Supported Instruction** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/supportedinstruction/index.html>) offers courses in Math and Writing to first year students for college success.
 - **TRIO ASPIRE Program** (<http://www.sjsu.edu/aspire/index.html>) offers support services to students from underrepresented groups.
- **Student Health Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/studenthealth/>. In addition to general medicine, they also have a Wellness and Health Promotion Unit which provides support relating to nutrition, substance abuse, body image, sleep, sexual health, and violence prevention. Appointments can be made online, or you can call them at 408-924-6122.
- **YWCA Silicon Valley** (<https://ywca-sv.org/>) is a community center providing shelter and resources for survivors of domestic violence, sexual assault, and dating violence. Their 24-hour # is: 800-572-2782
- **San José State Writing Center** is online at <http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/> and offers free consultations about student writing. They're not line editors, they're way better: trained writing instructors who can help you at any point in your writing process. You can schedule an appointment online, or contact them at 408-924-2308. They are located on the second floor of the MLK library, as well as offering drop-in tutoring in Clark Hall 126.
- **Peer Connections** is online at <https://www.sjsu.edu/peerconnections/> offers peer-tutoring for SJSU students. You can book online or call 408-924-2587
- **Technology Resources:** if you need, you can check out technology equipment from IT at <https://www.sjsu.edu/it/services/academic-tech/equipment-loaning/index.php>
- **Study spaces:** SJSU has designated available classrooms for student study and workspace purposes. When these classrooms are not in use for teaching purposes, they are available for students to use. Students may use the classrooms for individual or group studying, attending online classes while on campus, and other student work activities. All classrooms have wifi. Only a limited number of outlets are available in any classroom. Find out the availability of these classrooms here: <https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/campus-resources/study-resources.php>

ENG 228: Postcolonial Realism, Spring 2022 Course Schedule

Below is a table with the proposed weekly agenda for the semester. This is subject to change with fair notice. Notification of changes will be made via Canvas Announcements, or in class. Please make sure that your email on Canvas is your preferred email.

1/26	Introductions, syllabus, key ideas and concepts for the course	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning Postcolonialism, John McLeod, Chapter 1: “From Commonwealth to Postcolonial” (pp. 6-34) Colonialism/Postcolonialism, Ania Loomba in Chapter 1, “Situating Colonial and Postcolonial Studies”: “Defining the terms” (pp. 19-39); “Colonialism and Literature” (pp. 81-103)
2/2	Defining the terms: postcolonialism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review Literary Movements: Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism “Realism after Modernism and the Literary World System” Joe Cleary “Peripheral Realisms Now”, Esty and Lye
	Unit One: Constructing the Nation	
2/9	Understanding the debate: Postcolonial realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Things Fall Apart</i>, Chinua Achebe “On National Culture”, Frantz Fanon from <i>The Wretched of the Earth</i> <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Chinua Achebe, The Generation of Realism” by Abdul JanMohamed from <i>Manichean Aesthetics</i>
2/16	Discussion of <i>Things Fall Apart</i> ; cultural nationalism: constructing the nation through literature	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>Twilight in Delhi</i>, Ahmed Ali Chapter 1: “Realism in the Colony” Anjaria, <i>Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel</i>, pp. 1-15. <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chapter 4, “Staging Realism and the Ambivalence of Nationalism” Anjaria, <i>Realism in the Twentieth-Century Indian Novel</i>

2/23	Discussion of <i>Twilight in Delbi</i> , the AIPWA, and Anjaria's analysis of the novel's realism	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Joys of Motherhood</i>, Emecheta • Excerpt from Boehmer on feminism and postcolonial writing <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The Joys of Daughterhood: Achebe, Nwapa, Emecheta” Andrade • Beginning Postcolonialism, John McLeod, Chapter 6: “Postcolonialism and Feminism” (pp. 172-203)
	Unit Two: Expanding / Critiquing the Nation	
3/2	Discussion of <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , feminism and postcolonialism, and Andrade's perspective in <i>The Nation Writ Small</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nervous Conditions</i> (half) • Elleke Boehmer “Independence” (pp. 180-222) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies, Lazarus, Chapter 11, “Feminism in/and postcolonialism, by Deepika Bahri, pp. 199-220)
3/9	Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i> and the disillusion after initial perspectives on nationalism/anticolonialist movements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Nervous Conditions</i> (half) • Beginning Postcolonialism, John McLeod, Chapter 4: “The Nation in Question” (pp. 102-136) <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Bildung in Formation and Deformation: Dangarembga and Farah”, Susan Z. Andrade
3/16	Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i> and Andrade's analysis of the novel as a postcolonial Bildungsroman	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Petals of Blood</i> half • Chapter 1: “Introduction: reading texts and contexts” in <i>Ngugi wa Thiong'o</i>, by Simon Gikandi <p>Recommended</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gikandi, “African literature and the colonial factor”
3/23		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Petals of Blood</i> finish • Chapter 5: “The poetics of cultural production: the later short stories and <i>Petals of Blood</i>” in <i>Ngugi wa Thiong'o</i>, by Simon Gikandi • Conferences this week <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Realism, Romance, and the Problem of African Literary History” Gikandi
	SPRING	BREAK

	Unit Three: Postnational Mapping: Globalization and Climate Crisis	
4/6		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Hungry Tide</i> half <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Globalization and the Claims of Postcoloniality” by Simon Gikandi • “The Criticism of Culture and the Culture of Criticism: At the Intersection of Postcolonialism and Globalization Theory” by Revathi Krishnaswamy
4/13		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Hungry Tide</i> finish <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Spatial Justice: The ecological imperative and postcolonial development” by Malcolm Sen • The Great Derangement: Climate Change and the Unthinkable by Amitav Ghosh
4/20		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Crossbones</i> half <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Teacherly Texts: Imagining Futures in Nuruddin Farah’s Past Imperfect Trilogy” by Harry Garuba • “The absent pirate: exceeding justice in the Indian Ocean” Stephanie Jones
4/27		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Crossbones</i> finish • Annotated Bibliography due <p>Recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Improbable Figures: Realist Fictions of Insecurity in Contemporary African Fiction” by Eleni Coundouriotis • Chapter 7, “Reconstructing the Subject in the Third Trilogy Links, Knots, and Crossbones” in Reading Nuruddin Farah: The individual, the novel & the idea of home by F. Fiona Moolla
5/4	Conferences for final papers	
5/11	Conferences for final papers	Final paper due May 18th