“Post-colonial Literature”
Credit Hours: 3
Dr. Rochelle Rives
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Office Hours: W 1-2, T 1-3 and by appointment
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Course Description
This course will introduce you to the expanding body of “postcolonial literature,” a term used to describe the work of writers from formerly colonized nations. In this course, we will focus primarily on writing in English as it developed from the experience of British colonization in Africa, India, and the Caribbean. By reading a diverse selection of both colonial and post-colonial texts—including poetry, short stories, and novels—we will examine how the lives and identities of their characters have been radically altered through the experience of colonialism. In doing so, we will engage the major themes, vocabulary, and problematics of postcolonial literature and criticism—including issues of nation, gender and sexuality, diaspora, resistance, language, education and hybridity—within our class discussion and in writing coherent, effective critical essays.

Prerequisites/Co-requisites
English 101 and 201

Student Learning Outcomes
By the end of this course, students will:

- Have developed an understanding of the historical forces and literary influences shaping writers from former British colonies [measurements: graded out-of-class essays, written responses, in-class discussion, research project]
- Be able to identify and articulate connections between the colonial and post-colonial situation in various texts [measurements: graded out-of-class essays, written responses, in-class discussion, research project]
- Have acquired a critical vocabulary regarding the themes and terms of analysis used in postcolonial criticism [measurements: graded out-of-class essays, written responses, in-class discussion, research project]
- Be able to employ this vocabulary in effective critical essays and research projects [measurements: graded out-of-class essays, written responses, in-class discussion, research project]

General Education Outcomes

- Communication Skills: Students will write, read, listen, and speak critically and effectively [measurements: class discussion, graded essays, research project, written responses]
- Values: Students will make informed choices based on an understanding of personal values, human diversity, multicultural awareness, and social
responsibility. [measurements: class discussion, graded essays, research project, written responses]

**Required Text & Readings (available at BMCC bookstore)**
Books will be available at the BMCC bookstore. You may buy these books elsewhere, but be sure to purchase the editions I have selected. I will distribute all other readings to the class in advance of our class discussion. 
*Heart of Darkness*, Joseph Conrad (Norton Critical)
*Things Fall Apart*, Chinua Achebe (Anchor)
*Wide Sargasso Sea*, Jean Rhys (Norton Critical)
*The Autobiography of My Mother*, Jamaica Kincaid (Plume)
*Nervous Conditions*, Tsitsi Dangarembga (Lynne Rienner)
*Interpreter of Maladies*, Jhumpa Lahiri (Mariner)

Please buy the editions I have selected, even if you buy them through another bookstore or internet site, so that we can all literally be “on the same page” in class discussions. All other readings that appear on the course syllabus will be provided by me via photocopy.

**Evaluation & Requirements of Students**

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Requirement</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Paper #1</td>
<td>15%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<td>Research assignment</td>
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<td>Weekly reading responses, due each Friday</td>
<td>25%</td>
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<tr>
<td>In-class writing and quizzes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Attendance and Participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
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**COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- Attendance is mandatory. See policy below.

- I view this syllabus as a contract. You agree to come to class **on time** having read any assigned material carefully, engage respectfully and to hand work in on time. In return, I agree to respond respectfully, evaluate your work in a timely manner, and be available to meet with you individually during office hours. Discussion is a crucial aspect of learning in this course, and I assume that students who participate in class discussion have prepared more diligently for class than those who sit silently. Quizzes may be given over the day’s reading assignment. We will write in class frequently.

- This class is writing intensive. You must complete two formal papers of varying lengths and submit weekly one-page written responses to the readings, due each Friday. You must also complete a research assignment, which I will explain in more detail. All writing should be typed, double-spaced, proofread, and stapled. Please include your name, course section, my name, and date of submission on the paper. **ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST BE SUBMITTED IN ORDER TO PASS THE CLASS. LATE PAPERS WILL BE PENALIZED 1/3 LETTER GRADE FOR EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE.**
• Communication. Please check your BMCC email accounts regularly for communication with me via blackboard. If you do not check your BMCC email, you will not receive communications from me regarding class cancellations, assignments, etc.

ABSENCES, LATENESS, AND CLASSROOM CONDUCT:
Absence is excused for compelling reasons: illness (with a doctor’s note); observance of religious holidays; serious personal crisis. At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the hours a class meets in one week. In this three hour class, you are permitted 4 hours of absence. More than four unexcused absences will result in failure of the course. Three or more unexcused absences will seriously affect your final grade, as will chronic lateness. If at all possible, please avoid scheduling doctor’s appointments during class time. Cell phones must be turned off during class time. You will be asked to leave and counted absent if your phone rings in class. You will also be counted absent if you feel you must leave the room to answer your phone. Do not plan to leave the classroom during class unless you are seriously ill.

Food and drink are permitted only if they do not disrupt the class and if you dispose of them afterwards. If you know in advance you must miss class, please contact me. If you miss class, unexpectedly, you may contact me via email or ask another student what you have missed. Quizzes and in-class writing cannot be made up. Students will receive a grade of “F” on these assignments if the absence is not excused. I will not reteach a missed class.

College Attendance Policy
At BMCC, the maximum number of absences is limited to one more hour than the number of hours a class meets in one week. For example, you may be enrolled in a three-hour class. In that class, you would be allowed 4 hours of absence (not 4 days). In the case of excessive absences, the instructor has the option to lower the grade or assign an F or WU grade.

Academic Adjustments for Students with Disabilities
Students with disabilities who require reasonable accommodations or academic adjustments for this course must contact the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities. BMCC is committed to providing equal access to all programs and curricula to all students.

BMCC Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Integrity Statement
Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else’s ideas, words or artistic, scientific, or technical work as one’s own creation. Using the idea or work of another is permissible only when the original author is identified. Paraphrasing and summarizing, as well as direct quotations, require citations to the original source. Plagiarism may be intentional or unintentional. Lack of dishonest intent does not necessarily absolve a student of responsibility for plagiarism. Students who are unsure how and when to provide documentation are advised to consult with their instructors. The library has guides designed to help students to appropriately identify a cited work. The full policy can be found on BMCC’s website, www.bmcc.cuny.edu. For further information on integrity and behavior, please consult the college bulletin (also available online).

A NOTE ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY:
Plagiarism and other forms of scholastic dishonesty will not be tolerated. You are responsible for knowing what constitutes academic dishonesty and for avoiding any instances of it. Failure to do so will result in failure of the course and in being reported to the dean of students. I am serious about this. Someone fails the course every semester because of plagiarism. We will spend time in class discussing what plagiarism is. I do not hesitate to fail and report students who plagiarize or turn in work that is not their own.

**Schedule of Readings and Assignments:**
The following is a tentative schedule of readings and due dates for the course. I will give specific assignments at the end of each class. All readings should be completed for the day they appear on the syllabus. I will distribute readings marked by an asterisk* in class.

**Week 1: What is “Postcolonial Literature?”**
F 1/29 Discuss Course Policies, read Rudyard Kipling, “The White Man’s Burden,” in class

**Week 2: Fictions of Empire**
T 9/1 Young, “Introduction”
F 9/4 Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

**Week 3: Imperialism in Africa**
T 9/8 *Heart of Darkness*
F 9/11 *Heart of Darkness*

**Week 4-6: Anti-Colonial Responses**
T 9/16 critical articles on *Heart of Darkness*
F 9/18 NO CLASS
F 9/26 Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
T 9/9 NO CLASS, classes follow Monday Schedule
F 10/2 *Things Fall Apart*, Young, “Subaltern Knowledge”

**Week 7-11: The Carribean Writes Back**
T 10/6 Paper #1 Due Poetry by Derek Walcott*
T 10/13 *Wide Sargasso Sea*
F 10/17 *Wide Sargasso Sea*
T 10/20 Critical Article; poetry
T 10/27 *The Autobiography of My Mother*
F 10/30 *The Autobiography of My Mother*
T 11/3 library visit
F 11/6 TBA

**Week 12-13: Coming of Age in Postcolonial Africa**
T 11/10 critical article, Franz Fanon, Young “Land and Space,” TsiTsi Dangarembqa, *Nervous Conditions*
F 11/13 *Nervous Conditions*
T 11/17 *Nervous Conditions*
F 11/20 *Nervous Conditions*

**Week 14-17: Transcultural Experience**
T 11/24 “The Partition of India,” RESEARCH PROJECT DUE
F 11/27 NO CLASS, THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY
T 12/1 The Interpreter of Maladies
F 12/4 Film
T 12/8 The Interpreter of Maladies
F 12/11 The Interpreter of Maladies, Final Paper Due
T 12/16 LAST DAY OF CLASS, FINAL PAPER DUE