Global Women’s Literature

Fall 2015

Prof. Krupa Shandilya

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301E Johnson Chapel

Office hours: Wednesdays 3pm-5pm

Course Description:

What do we mean by “women’s fiction”? How do we understand women’s genres in different national contexts? This course examines topics in feminist thought such as marriage, sexuality, desire and the home in novels written by women writers from South Asia, Africa and the Caribbean. We will draw on postcolonial literary theory, essays on transnational feminism and historical studies to situate our analyses of these novels. Texts include South African writer Nadine Gordimer’s *My Son’s Story*, Indian novelist Kiran Desai’s *The Inheritance of Loss,* and Caribbean author Shani Motoo’s *Cereus Blooms at Night*.

Course Protocol

1. You are required to attend every class and post on the films and the readings for each class. The Class Attendance grade will depend on your attendance and your posts.

2. Read the readings *before* class, *not* during or after class or right before the papers are due. The focus is on reading closely and thinking carefully about the nuances of the text.

1. Distribution of grades is as follows:

Paper 1: (4-6 pages) 20% of base grade

Paper 2: (4-6 pages) 20%

Paper 3: (6-8 pages) 25%

Class Attendance: 25% (includes Attendance and Moodle Posts)

Class Presentation : 10%

4. On top of the base grade, your participation in class discussion will result in one of three adjustments, a null grade, a quarter grade increase, or a half a grade increase. You will not be graded down for anything you say (or don’t say) in class. However if you say nothing or almost nothing you will not receive any grade benefit.

Student Conferences

These conferences will be scheduled before each mid-term to help facilitate the beginning of a paper and clear any doubts. **Students must schedule a conference at times to be announced.**

Absences

Students are allowed two unexcused absences. Further absences without a medical (please bring a signed note from the doctor which states that you were ill) or another valid explanation will deleteriously affect your grade. Attendance and participation are absolutely necessary.

**Book List**

Nadine Gordimer, *My Son’s Story*

Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Maryse Conde, *Heremakhonnon*

Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India*

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

INTRODUCTION

WEEK 1

Tuesday Sept. 8th: **Why Read Women’s Fiction?**

“The Second Shelf” New York Times, March 30th 2012

< http://www.nytimes.com/2012/04/01/books/review/on-the-rules-of-literary-fiction-for-men-and-women.html>

Thursday Sept. 10th: **Race, Gender and Empire I**

Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. “Infection in the Sentence.” Feminisms: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism. Ed. Robyn R. Warhol and Diane Price Herndl. New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers UP (1997): 21-32.

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* Chapter 2

WEEK 2

Tuesday Sept. 15th: **Race, Gender and Empire II**

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* Chapter 3

UNIT I : THE CARIBBEAN AND THE AFRO-CARIBBEAN DIASPORA

Thursday Sept. 17th: **Desire and Empire I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* 1-76

WEEK 3

Tuesday Sept. 22nd : **Desire and Empire II**

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* p.76-176

Ciolkowski, Laura E. "Navigating the Wide Sargasso Sea: Colonial History, English Fiction, and British Empire." Twentieth Century Literature (1997): 339-359.

Thursday Sept. 24th: **Desire and Empire III**

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “Three women's texts and a critique of imperialism.” Critical inquiry (1985): 243-261.

WEEK 4

Tuesday Sept. 29th: **The Quest for History I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Maryse Conde, *Heremakhonon* Part I

Thursday October 1st: **The Quest for History II**

Maryse Conde, *Heremakhonon* Part II

WEEK 5

Tuesday Oct. 6th: **The Quest for History III**

Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty. “The staging of time in Heremakhonon.” *Cultural studies* 17.1 (2003): 85-97.

Corbin, Laurie. "The Voicing of Desire: The Quest for History in Heremakhonon and The Women of Tijucopapo." *Callaloo* 35.2 (2012): 425-441.

UNIT II: AFRICA

Thursday Oct. 8th: **Feminist Revolutions I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Nadine Gordimer, *My Son’s Story*

**Friday Oct. 9th: Paper 1 Due**

WEEK 6

Tuesday Oct. 13th: FALL BREAK (NO CLASS)

Thursday Oct. 15th: **Feminist Revolutions II**

Nadine Gordimer, *My Son’s Story*

WEEK 7

Monday Oct. 19th: Make-Up Class (time TBD)

Nadine Gordimer, *My Son’s Story*

Tuesday Oct. 20th: **Feminist Revolutions III**

J. U. Jacobs, “Nadine Gordimer's Intertextuality: Authority and Authorship in "My Son's Story"” *English in Africa* Vol. 20, No. 2 (Oct., 1993), pp. 25-45

Greenstein, Susan M. “'My Son's Story': Drenching the Censors-The Dilemma of White Writing." (1992): 191-212.

Thursday Oct. 22nd : NO CLASS

WEEK 8

Tuesday Oct. 27th: **Decolonizing the Self I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*,

Thursday Oct. 29th: **Decolonizing the Self II**

Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*

WEEK 9

Tuesday Nov. 3rd: **Decolonizing the Self III**

Tsitsi Dangaremba, *Nervous Conditions*

Thursday Nov. 5th : **Decolonizing the Self IV**

Sugnet, Charles. “ ‘Nervous Conditions’: Dangarembga's Feminist Reinvention of Fanon.” (1997).

Jean Paul Sartre, Preface to Franz Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*

**Friday Nov. 6th: Paper 2 Due**

UNIT III: SOUTH ASIA

WEEK 10

Tuesday Nov. 10th: **Woman as Nation I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India* (1991) Chapter 1-11

Thurs. Nov. 12: **Woman as Nation II**

Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India* (1991) Chapter 12-21

WEEK 11

Tuesday Nov. 17th: **Woman as Nation III**

Bapsi Sidhwa, *Cracking India* (1991) Chapter 22-32

Thursday Nov. 19th : **Woman as Nation IV**

Ritu Menon, “Reproducing the Legitimate Community,” *Appropriating Gender* (ed.) Patricia Jeffery and Amrita Basu (1997): 15-32 (E)

Jill Didur, “Lifting the Veil?: Reconsidering the Task of Literary Historiography” *Interventions*, Volume 3, Issue 3 November 2001, pp. 446 – 451

WEEK 12

THANKSGIVING BREAK

WEEK 13

Tuesday Dec. 1st:**Caste, Gender and Body I**

Student Presentation: Author, Text and Context

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)

Thursday Dec. 3rd : **Caste, Gender and Body II**

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (1997)

WEEK 14

Tuesday Dec. 8th: **Caste, Gender and Body III**

Brinda Bose, “In Desire and in Death: Eroticism as Politics in Arundhati Roy's 'The God of Small Things” *ARIEL: A Review of International English Literature* 29, no. 2 (1998 Apr): 59-72

Dingwaney Needham, Anuradha. "‘The Small Voice of History’in Arundhati Roy's The God of Small Things." Interventions 7.3 (2005): 369-391.

Thursday Dec. 10th : Student Conferences

WEEK 15

Tuesday Dec. 15th: **Paper 3 Due**