ENGL 613 Modern British Fiction Course Information Sheet
Instructor: Dr. Katarzyna Jakubiak

Required Readings

Novels
Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*
James Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*
E.M. Forster, *A Passage to India*
Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*
Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*
Caryl Phillips, *Crossing the River*
Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

Critical Theory

Additional theoretical readings on the novel genre, modernism/postmodernism as well as colonial/postcolonial writing will be assigned

Course Overview:

This course will allow you to look at the development of the 20th century English novel from the perspective of postcolonial studies, a vital theoretical strand in contemporary scholarship. Our course will be divided into two parts. In part one, “Imperialism and Colonialism,” we will analyze the role of the novel genre in the British quest for empire. We will investigate to what extent the early 20th century writers supported or questioned British imperial and colonial politics. We will also examine how the signature characteristics of literary modernism – aesthetic innovation and formal experimentation – were shaped by British colonialism. In the second part of the course, “Postcolonialism,” we will read novels, mostly from the contemporary period, that demonstrate how the empire “writes back” to its colonial center. We will discuss the strategies that postcolonial writers employ to question the established European models, values and historical narratives, and we will explore the connection between these strategies and the aesthetics of postmodernism. In this context, we will engage with some of the key concepts of postcolonial theory: decolonization, migration, diaspora and hybridity.
Course Goals

By taking this course you will

- become familiar with significant modern and postmodern English novels which engage with the themes of imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism
- reflect on the themes of imperialism, colonialism and postcolonialism in English fiction in an informed way
- become conversant with the discipline of postcolonial studies -- its major concept, thematic concerns, methods and debates – and apply your knowledge to the analysis of selected 20th / 21st century English novels
- learn to recognize connections between historical conditions of literary production and the aesthetics of 20th / 21st century English novels. (For example, you will see how colonialism and postcolonialism have influenced the development of modernism and postmodernism.)
- develop your skills of close reading, interpretation, synthesis, and critical analysis of 20th / 21st century fiction and literary theory
- improve your abilities of conducting research and writing critical papers, according to professional standards of literary studies
- enhance your ability of engaging with literature and literary theory on creative and personal levels