

**NOTE:** Although offered under the course number 8386, this course was considered to be a version of 7369, Introduction to Postcolonial Studies, which didn't yet have a new course number when it was first offered.

**English 8386**

**Topics in Postcolonial Studies:  
Postcolonial Theory and Its  
Discontents / Spring 2011**

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**Required Texts:**

Adonis. *Introduction to Arabic Poetics*.

Amin, Samir. *Eurocentrism*.

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin...*

Chrisman and Williams, eds. *Colonial Discourse and Postcolonial Theory*.

Flaubert, Gustave. *Flaubert in Egypt: A Sensibility on Tour*.

Kipling, Rudyard. *Kim*.

Mernissi, Fatima. *The Veil and the Male Elite*.

Said, Edward. *Orientalism*.

Salih, Tayib. *Season of Migration to the North*.

Spivak, Gayatri. *The Death of a Discipline*

All other readings are available via the "packet" on e-reserve.

**Course Description:** The goal of this course is to equip the student to understand, deploy, and/or critique the language of postcolonial theory—a very important skill in literary studies in the United States today. In order to do this we will spend the semester probing the limits and challenging together the truisms of this currently very high profile literary critical field. The course will begin by focusing on the foundation set down for postcolonial discourse in the work of Edward W. Said. As we move beyond these two foundational figures we will take up the following topics: colonial discourse and the British empire, nationalism and "postnationalism," the relationship between imperialism and culture, difference within the postcolonial world, the politics of literary representation, questions of language and translation, the legacy of the contemporary 'Third World' intellectuals and their differences from American postcolonial discourse, and the discourse of gender in the context of postcoloniality. Since literary study is our primary focus as critics and readers, and postcolonial studies often strays far from questions of the literary, we will regularly return to novels, poetry, and film, as a way of testing the relevance of the critical discourse of postcolonialism for study of the literary.

**Goals:** By the end of the course, students should be (preliminarily) equipped to discuss and apply postcolonial theory, as well as being aware of some of the major critiques of the field. But the goal is not only to be able to understand, deploy, and/or critique the language of postcolonial theory, but also to explore (to the extent possible) the ideas, traditions and histories of the Nonwestern World on their own terms, without having to constantly run these traditions through a Euro-American filter.

**Course Requirements:** Each student will give two brief oral presentations, write a short paper during the semester, and write a longer paper at the end of the course. Note that the first oral presentation will also require a Friday afternoon conference the previous week.

**Grades:** Your final grade will be calculated as follows, Final paper 60%, short paper 20%, presentations 10% each.

**Absences:** Beginning with your third absence ("excused" absences included), a minus will be added to your final cumulative grade for each class that you miss.

**Schedule of Readings:**

1/18 **Backgrounds:**

1/25 Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians* Chapters 6#; Flaubert, *Flaubert in Egypt*, chapters 1,5,6, 10, and Editor's Epilogue; Foucault, "The Orders of Discourse"#, Said, *Orientalism* pp1-30

2/1 **Edward Said:** Said, *Orientalism* pp. 31-end; Porter, "Orientalism and Its Problems"\*; Ahmad, "Orientalism and After"\*

2/8 Kipling, *Kim*; Williams, "Kim and Orientalism"\* †

2/15 **Nationalism:** Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*

2/24 **Globalization:** Moretti, "Conjectures on World Literature"; Damrosch, "Where is World Literature?"; Tanoukhi, "The Scale of World Literature"

3/1 **America:** Hardt & Negri, from *Empire* pp. 137-182#; Pease, "U.S. Imperialism: Global Dominance without Colonies"#; McAlister, "Iran, Islam and the Terrorist Threat"#; Derrida, "Letter to a Japanese Friend"# †

3/8 **Gayatri Spivak:** Davis and Gross, "GCS and the Ethos of the Subaltern"#; Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak"\*; *The Death of a Discipline* Chapter 1; Spivak, "Globalcities: Terror and Its Consequences"#

3/15 SPRING BREAK

3/22 **Colonial Discourse:** Viswanathan, from *Masks of Conquest*#; Appadurai, "Playing with Modernity: The Decolonization of Indian Cricket"#; Cleary, "Misplaced Ideas?"#; Colla, "The Artifaction of the Memnon Head"# †

3/29 **Poetics:** Said, "Yeats and Decolonization"#; Ramazani, *The Hybrid Muse* Introduction#; Shankar, "Midnight's Orphans"#; Adonis *Introduction to Arabic Poetics*†

4/5 **History:** Mariátegui, "An Outline of the Economic Evolution"#; Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*, chapter 6#; Amin, *Eurocentrism* Introduction, Part II; Chakrabarty, "Marx after Marxism: History, Subalternity, and Difference"#

4/12 **Gender:** Mohanty, "Under Western Eyes"\*; Mernissi, *The Veil and the Male Elite* Introduction, chap. 3-5, 7, conclusion; Massad, from *Desiring Arabs*#

4/19 **The Third World Again:** Sembene Ousmane (dir.): *Gruelwaar*

4/26 **TWA:** Salih, *Season of Migration to the North*

5/5 FINAL PAPER DUE

\*see Chrisman and Williams

#see Packet

†presentation panel date