

COMP_LIT 486-0-20(31936) Studies in Lit & Disciplines ENGLISH 461-0-20(32210) Studies in Contemporary Lit

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Indian Ocean Epistemologies

With the dominance of the Atlantic as a model for the study of cultural exchanges between continents, the Indian Ocean is often excluded from critical theory discussions despite its centrality in the circulations of various philosophical traditions in Africa, Asia, Australia, New Zealand, and Latin America. This course will use literary and philosophical texts from and about the Indian Ocean to comparatively examine how intellectuals and artists have viewed the world using scripts and terms different from those developed in the West. It is out of convenience that we use epistemology as an entry point toward a comprehensive engagement with Indian Ocean critical theory; much of the philosophical debates from the region. However, a transdisciplinary reading of each text will engage with various perceptions of the critical practice the Global South, including the interface of aesthetics and activism. Taking Indian Ocean theories of knowledge as multiple because of their diverse sources and cross-cultural interactions for centuries, the course will be interested in unearthing the splintering differences among the philosophers and the changes over time in what might be considered a single school of thought. We also use the readings to survey the evolving trends in contemporary writing and literary studies from the Global South and the place of modernism and postcolonialism in the study of the literatures. Indian Ocean philosophical traditions to be compared with western ones (and with one another) include Sufism, Negritude, Créolité, Transmodernism, Coolitude, and Ubuntu.

At the end of the course, the student should be able to:

- 1) Demonstrate sensitive thematic and stylistic responses to postcolonial texts, especially those from the Indian Ocean region;
- 2) Examine the role of religion (e.g., Christianity, Hinduism, Islam) in Indian Ocean cultural production;
- 3) Appreciate the specific historical contexts within which Indian Ocean texts are produced and circulated;
- 4) Respond to the localized use of epistemic traditions in Indian Ocean texts;
- 5) Engage theories of postcolonialism and global circulation of texts and write short critical responses on the theoretical and creative texts under analysis;

- 6) Perform close readings of at least five major creative works from the Indian Ocean region (e.g., novels, books of poetry, plays, films, music etc.).
- 7) Use critical theory to compose a 15-page essay analyzing a literary text from the Global South, preferably a text from the Indian Ocean.

Evaluation Method: Active participation in class, periodic self-assessment, peer critiques, a 15-page paper.

Teaching Method(s): short lectures, class discussions.

CLASS ASSESSMENT ACTIVITIES

Background Probe

You will write a 1-page introduction of yourself, listing the reasons you joined the course; the other literature courses you have done; and the global Anglophone/postcolonial texts you have read; and your expectations from the course.

Term paper: You will write a 15-page term paper, double spaced. You will generate a topic for this paper. We will brainstorm ideas about the essay and you are welcome to talk to me one on one about your ideas. The paper will account for 50 % of your final grade. The student should propose a topic for the term paper at the end of the fifth week of the term and a draft for peer critique by the 8th week. The paper is due June 17.

Participation and Attendance: The course is structured as a series of seminars. You are expected to participate in discussions. Points will be deducted from your final grade every time you miss a class without permission. You cannot miss more than three classes and pass the course. Class attendance and participation will account for 50 % of your final grade.

GRADING SCALE:

100-95	= A	74-72	= C+
90-94	= A-	70-71	= C
85-89	= B+	65-69	= C-
80-84	= B	64-60	= D
75-79	= B-	0-59	= F

PLAGIARISM:

You are expected to acknowledge the sources of your ideas using the MLA documentation method or any other recognized citation method, depending on the house style of the journal you project to publish your work in. Plagiarists will get grade F in the course.

PROVISIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES

Any student with a verified disability requiring special accommodations should speak to me and to the Office of Services for Students with Disabilities (847-467-5530) as early as

possible in the quarter. All discussions with me regarding conditions of disability will remain confidential.

Reading schedule

Week 1: April 2: Introduction to Postcolonial Studies

Introduction, Background Probe, Draft Syllabus. Some rationale for the course. Outline of major issues in postcolonial literary studies. Methods of reading colonial/postcolonial texts

- 1) "Abolishing the English Department"
- 2) Ashcroft et al's *Empire Writes Back*, pp.1-36 (Canvas)
- 3) Chapters 1 & 9, Leela Gandhi's *Postcolonial Theory* (Canvas)
- 4) Chapters 1-2, Dipesh Chakrabarty's *Provincializing Europe* (Canvas)
- 5) Introduction, Chapter 1 and Afterword of Edward Said's *Orientalism* (Canvas)

Primary texts

- 1) Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* **or**
- 2) Jean Rhys's *Wide Sargasso Sea* **or**
- 3) Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* **or**
- 4) Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *A Grain of Wheat*

Further reading

1. Bhabha's *Location of Culture*
2. Mudimbe's *The Invention of Africa*
3. "Beyond Eurocentrism" by Enrique Dussel (Canvas)
4. "Coloniality of Power, Eurocentricism and Social Classification" by Anibal Quijano
5. "Globalization, Civilization Processes, and Relocation of Languages and Cultures" by Walter D. Mignolo. (Canvas)
6. Introduction & Conclusion of Mwangi's *Africa Writes Back to Self* (canvas)

Week 2: April 9: The Black Atlantic

- 1) Chapters 1 and 2 of Paul Gilroy's *The Black Atlantic* (Canvas)
- 2) Page 1-35 from Edouard Glissant's *Poetics of Relation*
- 3) Chapter 12 from Ian Baucom's *Spectres of the Atlantic*
- 4) Methods: Distant Reading (Moretti; Canvas) and Surface Reading (Steven Best et al.; Canvas)
- 5) Chapter 1 & Conclusion of Paget Henry's *Caliban's Reason: Introducing Afro-Caribbean Philosophy* (Canvas)

Primary texts

- 1) Fred D'Aguiar's *Feeding the Ghosts* or Toni Morrison's *A Mercy* **and**
- 2) Derek Walcott's poem "The Sea is History" **and**
- 3) David Dabydeen's poem "Turner"

Further reading

1. Saidiya Hartman's "The Time of Slavery"
2. Chapter 1 & 2 of Charles Mills' *Blackness Visible*
3. "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?" by Kwame A. Appiah (Canvas; JSTOR)
4. Ngugi wa Thiong'o's *Decolonising the Mind*

Week 3: April 16: The Black Atlantic meets the Indian Ocean

- 1) Isabel Hofmeyr's "The Black Atlantic Meets the Indian Ocean: Forging New Paradigms of Transnationalism for the Global South - Literary and Cultural Perspectives."
- 2) Hofmeyr's "Universalising the Indian Ocean"
- 3) Hofmeyr's "The Complicating Sea: The Indian Ocean as Method"
- 4) Markus P.M. Vink. "Indian Ocean Studies and the 'New Thalassology'"
- 5) Gaurav Desai's "Oceans Connect: The Indian Ocean and African Identities"

Primary texts

- 1) Abdulrazak Gurnah's *By the Sea* **and**
- 2) Anthony Doerr "The Shell Collector" (short story Canvas)

Further reading

1. Moradewun Adejunmobi's "Claiming the Field: Africa and the Space of Indian Ocean Literature."
2. Chapters 1-4 of Tina Steiner's *Translated People, Translated Texts*
- 3.

Week 4: April 23: Alternative Modernities in Indian Ocean

Epistemologies/ Indian Ocean Ways of Knowing/Translational modernism

- 1) Moorthy and Jamal's "Introduction: New Conjectures in Maritime Imaginaries"
- 2) Sugata Bose's *A Hundred Horizons: The Indian Ocean in the Age of Global Empire*, chapters 1 & 2.
- 3) Engseng Ho's *The Graves of Tarim: Genealogy and Mobility across the Indian Ocean*, Chapters 1 & 2.

- 4) Simpson and Kresse's *Islam and Cosmopolitanism in the Western Indian Ocean* (particularly the essay on Sufi writers by Nile Green and on Cosmopolitanism by Anne Bang)
- 5) Abdul Sheriff's "Globalization with a Difference" from *The Indian Ocean: Oceanic Connections and the Creation of New Societies* (Canvas).

Primary texts

- 1) Amitav Ghosh's *In an Antique Land: History in the Guise of a Traveler's Tale* **or** Jamal Mahjoub's *The Carrier*

Further reading

1. "On Alternative Modernities" by Dilip Parameshwar Gaonkar (Canvas/JSTOR)
2. Chapter 6 of Mwangi's *Translation in African Contexts* (Canvas)

Week 5: April 30: Slavery and Indenture in the Indian Ocean World
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- 1) Chapter 1 & 4 of Abdul Sheriff. *Slaves, Spices, & Ivory in Zanzibar*
- 2) Gabeba Baderoon: *Regarding Muslims: From Slavery to Post-Apartheid* (pp.1-45 & 133-160.; Canvas)
- 3) Gwyn Campbell's "Slavery and the Trans-Indian Ocean World Slave Trade"
- 4) Meghan Vaughan, Chapter 4 "Roots and Routes: Ethnicity without Origins" in *Creating a Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth Century Mauritius.*"
- 5) Introduction, Chapter 1, 4 & 5 of Khal Torabully, and Marina Carter's *Coolitude: An Anthology of the Indian Labor Diaspora*

Primary texts

1. Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* **or**
2. M.G. Vassanji's *The In-Between World* **or** Vikram Lall **or**
3. Yvette Christiansë's *Unconfessed* **or**
4. Naivo's *Beyond the Rice Fields* **or**
5. Maxine Case *Softness of the Lime*

Further reading

- 1) Stephanie Jones's "Merchant-kings and Everymen: Narratives of the South Asian Diaspora of East Africa"
- 2) Ex Emad Mirmotahari's *Islam in the East African Novel*
- 3) Richard B. Allen's *European Slave Trading in the Indian Ocean, 1500-1850.*
- 4) Rahul C. Oka and Chapurukha M. Kusimba's "Siddi as Mercenary or as African Success Story on the West Coast of India."

Week 6: May 14: Commerce, Crime and Piracy in the IO

- 1) Chapters 1 & Coda of Gaurav Desai's *Commerce with the Universe*.
- 2) Lakshmi Subramanian's "Commerce, Circulation, and Consumption: Indian Ocean Communities in Historical Perspectives." (Canvas)
- 3) "Colonialism and its Replicants" by Mabel Morana et al. (Canvas)
- 4) Stephanie Jones's "The absent pirate: exceeding justice in the Indian Ocean."
- 5) Gwyn Campbell's "Early exchange between Africa and the Wider Indian Ocean World".

Primary texts

1. Piracy: Nuruddin Farah's *Crossbones* **or**
2. Commerce: Abdulrazak Gurnah's *Paradise* (if you haven't read it in week 5 already)

Further reading

- 1) Charne Lavery's "The Darker Side of Durban" South African Crime Fiction and Indian Ocean Underworlds"
- 2) "Is There an Alternative to (Capitalist) Globalization? The Debate about Modernity in China" by Liu Kang (Canvas/JSTOR)
- 3) "Beyond the Third World: imperial Globality, global Coloniality and anti-globalisation social movements" by Arturo Escobar (Canvas/JSTOR)
- 4) "End of Free States: On Transnationalization of Culture." By Subramani (Canvas)

Week 7: May 21: Travel in the Indian Ocean World

- 1) Graham Huggan's "Counter-Travel Writing and Post-Coloniality" (Canvas)
- 2) Tina Steiner's "Dwelling-in-Travel: Modes of Transport in M.G. Vassanji's fiction"
- 3) Chapter 1 of Abdul Sheriff, *Dhow Cultures of the Indian Ocean*
- 4) Clarissa Vierke's "From Across the Ocean: considering travelling literary figurations as part of Swahili Intellectual history"
- 5) Claire Anderson's "Process Geographies' of Mobility and Movement in the Indian Ocean: A Review Essay"

Primary texts

1. M.G. Vassanji's *The Gunny Sack* **or**
2. Nadifa Mohamed's *Black Mamba Boy* **or**
3. Pyamootoo's *Benares*

Further reading

- 1) Chapter 2 of Dan Ojwang's *Reading Migration and Culture. The World of East African Literature*

<u>Week 8: May 29: Gender and Travel in the Indian Ocean</u> <u>Extra class w/ Tina Steiner, Stellenbosch University</u>

- 1) Sophia Mustafa's *The Tanganyika Way*, Reissue TSAR Publications 2009.
- 2) Intro, Chapters 1 & 4 & afterword, in Erin Stiles et al.'s *Gendered Lives in the Western Indian Ocean*
- 3) Devarakshanam Govinden's "The Indentured Experience: Indian Women in Colonial Natal" in Hawley's *India in Africa, Africa in India*
- 4) Stephanie Jones's (2011). [The politics of love and history: Asian women and African men in East African literature](#). *Research in African Literatures*, 42(3), 166-186.
- 5) Chapter 5 of Dan Ojwang's *Reading Migration and Culture. The World of East African Literature*

Primary texts

1. Shalja Patel's poetry collection *Migritude* **and**
2. Jameela Siddiqi's novel *The Feast of Nine Virgins* **or**
3. Short stories by Agnes Sam from her collection *Jesus is Indian* **or**
4. Shiraz Dhalla's novel *Ode to Lata*

Further reading

- 1) Richa Nagar's "Communal Discourses, Marriage, and the Politics of Gendered Social Boundaries among South Asian Immigrants in Tanzania" (Canvas)

<u>Week 9: June 4: Creolization, Islands, Languages</u>
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1. Chapters 1& 4 of Larson's *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora*
2. Françoise Lionnet's "Créolité in the Indian Ocean: Two Models of Cultural Diversity."
3. Françoise Lionnet's *The Known and the Uncertain: Creole Cosmopolitics of the Indian Ocean*

4. Amitav Ghosh, “Of fanás and forecastles: the Indian Ocean and some Lost Languages of the Age of Sail”
5. Raphaël Confiant, Jean Bernabé, and Patrick Chamoiseau “Éloge de la Creolité” [Creole manifesto].

Primary text

1. Any part of Amitav Ghosh’s Ibis Trilogy: *Sea of Poppies* **or** *River of Smoke* **or** *Flood of Fire*

Further reading

- 1) Bhabha’s *Location of Culture*
- 2) “Island Writing, Creole Cultures” by Elizabeth Deloughrey.
- 3) Françoise Lionnet’s “World Literature, Postcolonial Studies, and Coolie Odysseys: J.-M.G. Le Clézio’s and Amitav Ghosh’s Indian Ocean Novels”

Week 10: June 11: peer review of essays

-Way forward