

**ENGLISH 3373: LITERARY CULTURES**  
**CONTEMPORARY WORLD LITERATURE**

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Office: Slider 303

Office Hours: MWF 9:00-10:00am, 1:00-2:00pm  
TR 11:00-12:00pm, 2:00-3:00pm  
and by appointment

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

One of the most prominent debates in contemporary literary studies concerns what constitutes “world literature.” We will investigate the following questions: What is world literature and how does it challenge our efforts to categorize by national and chronological boundaries? What problems and opportunities are associated with the global dominance of writing in English rather than native languages? Which books get published in a global marketplace catering to an international, non-native audience? We will read fiction published in the last thirty years and written by authors typically excluded from the British and American canon, focusing on Nigeria, Zimbabwe, South Africa, India, the Caribbean, Canada, Iran, and immigrants to the UK. Of those authors, the majority will be women writers including Zadie Smith (*White Teeth*), Marjane Satrapi (*Persepolis*), NoViolet Bulawayo (*We Need New Names*), and Arundhati Roy (*The God of Small Things*), as well as short stories by Jamaica Kincaid and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. We will also read novels by Yann Martel (*Life of Pi*) and J.M. Coetzee (*Waiting for the Barbarians*).

We will begin by framing our discussion with key terms from the emerging discourse of world literature. Of particular interest will be Rebecca Walkowitz’s notion of world literature as “born translated,” in that, from its inception, it is written and marketed for a global, multilingual audience. We will compare this notion to other contemporary definitions and theories of world literature as well as earlier debates in postcolonial studies over textual classification. For example, we will analyze the debate over what language African literature should be written in, as typified by the debate between Chinua Achebe and Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o. Moving to the primary texts, in the first half of the semester, we will analyze the relationship between colonialism, postcolonialism, and neocolonialism, particularly as applies to language in a global literary marketplace. After the midterm, we will focus primarily on diaspora as one of the defining features of contemporary world literature. We will encounter a wide variety of texts in each unit, negotiating breadth and depth as we discuss the socio-cultural and historical backgrounds for each work. To develop such a detailed critical understanding of the works, we will pay close attention to their formal features as well as the social, historical, biographical, and political contexts from which they emerge.

Literary Cultures is designated as a Writing Intensive course. As a result, students will compose approximately 3500 words over the course of the semester, including drafts and revisions. A significant portion of the final semester grade will be determined by writing assignments (see below).

### **OFFICIAL COURSE DESCRIPTION:**

Advanced study of particular literary cultures and their works as both separate from and a part of larger cultures. Literary cultures might include the Metaphysical or Cavalier Poets, American Transcendentalists, Southern Writers, the Harlem Renaissance, the British War Poets, the Irish Renaissance, the Beats, the Confessional Poets, the Black Arts Movement, the Existentialists, Kentucky/Appalachian Writers, or Nature and Environmental Writers. Use of secondary sources and research writing will be included. This course emphasizes intellectual development, critical analysis, cultural literacy, and, when applicable, global awareness. Topics, subject matter, and approaches will vary depending upon the instructor. This course may be repeated once for credit. *Prerequisite:* ENGL 2103 or ENGL 2203. *Course rotation:* Spring.

### **REQUIRED TEXTS:**

English 3373 Course Packet (available at the bookstore)

J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians*

Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things*

NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names*

Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis*

Yann Martel, *Life of Pi*

Zadie Smith, *White Teeth*

### **ASSIGNMENTS:**

- **RESPONSE PAPERS (20%):** You will be required to write two brief (2 pages) response papers analyzing a text on the syllabus. These short essays will be an opportunity for you to practice literary analysis in preparation for the final essay. You can also use them as an opportunity to experiment with a close reading that you can then incorporate into the final essay. More information to follow.
- **MIDTERM EXAM (20%):** There will be a midterm exam that will cover the main theoretical and critical terms discussed in relationship to world literature and postcolonial studies, along with the texts covered up to that point in the term. The exam will include identifications, passage analysis, and short essay. More information to follow.
- **FINAL RESEARCH ESSAY (35%):** Each student will be required to compose an original, argumentative final paper that includes at least 2 secondary sources and is 7-9 pages. Students can write about any text on the syllabus. You will also be required to compose a 1-page research proposal in preparation for the final essay. More information will be provided later in the term.
- **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION (25%):** As in all small seminars, daily participation in the form of thoughtful and productive contributions to class discussion is vital. As a community of readers, it is everyone's responsibility to come prepared to share interpretations and insights to enrich our collective understanding of the texts.
  - There will be several pop reading quizzes throughout the semester to ensure that everyone is prepared. **You are expected to have the class text in hand for each**

**class meeting.** *Repeatedly coming unprepared to class without the text will result in an absence for those class meetings.*

### **GRADES:**

I will grade all of your essays electronically in Microsoft Word. I will make every effort to return essays to you within 2 weeks of the due date. The following scale will be used to determine grades:

93-100	A
90-92	A-
87-89	B+
83-86	B
80-82	B-
77-79	C+
70-76	C
60-69	D
0-59	F

Some best practices to follow when receiving grades:

- **Wait 24 hours after receiving a grade to contact your professor.** This allows you time to consider the grade and, more importantly, the comments and reasons behind the grade. It will prevent you from approaching the conversation impulsively or with frustration.
- **Always read your professor's comments.** Especially in literature and writing classes, the comments are more important than the letter grade for your future essays. I provide detailed comments on each of your assignments because I see them as an extension of the classroom. Comments are an opportunity for me to work with you one-on-one. They allow me to address aspects unique to your writing and to clarify how what we're learning in the large group setting applies to your specific writing. **Please download the essays and open them in Word** (not Google or Preview) when you receive them via email so you see both marginal and end comments.
- **Consider the grade breakdown.** I will always share the grade breakdown for the entire class so you know where you stand in relation to your peers. This is designed to show that, more often than not, you are not alone in receiving a particular grade.
- **I am happy to discuss grades with you.** These conversations are always better in a face-to-face setting. Please plan to come to office hours if you would like clarification on your grade.

### **GUIDELINES FOR TYPEWRITTEN WORK:**

Unless otherwise noted, all of your work, including drafts, must be typed, and should follow MLA formatting guidelines. These include the following:

- ✓ Double-spacing
- ✓ Times New Roman 12-point font
- ✓ 1-inch margins on all sides (older versions of Microsoft Word default to 1.25")
- ✓ The following information, single-spaced in the upper-left corner of the first page with each item on a separate line: your first and last name, English 3373, professor's name, assignment name, due date
- ✓ A title, centered and printed in Times New Roman font (no italics, no underlining, and no size changes). Please do not use a separate title page.
- ✓ Last name and page number in upper-right header of every page (not in the body of the essay)

### **LATE WORK**

Work turned in late, including drafts, will result in grade penalties. *For every calendar day an assignment is late (24 hours), your grade will drop a full letter grade.* Work more than a week late will not be accepted. Never assume I will give you an extension on a paper; if you're struggling to meet a deadline, please contact me before the due date so we can discuss options. Missed in-class writing cannot be made up unless prior arrangements have been made.

### **ATTENDANCE & PARTICIPATION**

Attendance is required. English 3373 is a small seminar and the presence of each student matters. You need to be in class, on time, and prepared for every meeting. For those unavoidable times when you are sick or otherwise unable to come to class, the attendance policy allows *6 absences without penalty*. Your final grade will be *lowered by ½ letter grade for each subsequent absence*.

It is always considerate to notify me by email about an absence. If you miss class, it is *your* responsibility to find out what you missed and to make up any work as required. Be sure you're prepared for the next session by consulting the course calendar and contacting peers. *Do not ask if you missed anything important since every class meeting is significant.* Excessive or habitual tardiness (at least 10 minutes late) may be counted as an absence.

Merely attending class and turning in your work on time, of course, aren't enough. You need to come to each class meeting prepared and be an active participant when you're here. Speaking up during class is easier for some than others. If you don't know how to enter the conversation, talk to me after class, in office hours, or send an email.

### **CLASSROOM ETIQUETTE**

During class, cell phones, tablets, iPods, and computers must be silenced and kept out of sight. It is disruptive in a discussion setting to have interruptions. Please do not bring laptops or e-readers to class unless you arrange something with me ahead of time or I have requested them for that particular class meeting. Tobacco products *of any kind* are not allowed in the classroom.

### **ACADEMIC INTEGRITY AND PLAGIARISM**

*Plagiarism will result in a failed assignment and possible failure in the class;* all such instances of plagiarism will be forwarded to Academic Affairs. According to the Lindsey Wilson student handbook:

Academic integrity is essential to the existence of an academic community. Every student is responsible for fostering a culture of academic honesty, and for maintaining the integrity and academic reputation of Lindsey Wilson College. Maintaining a culture that supports learning and growth requires that each student make a commitment to the fundamental academic values: honesty, integrity, responsibility, trust, respect for self and others, fairness and justice.

Violations of the academic integrity policy include cheating, plagiarism, or lying about academic matters. Plagiarism is defined as any use of another writer's words, concepts, or sequence of ideas without acknowledging that writer by the use of proper documentation. Not only the direct quotation of another writer's words but also any paraphrase or summary of another writer's concepts or ideas without documentation is plagiarizing that writer's materials. Academic dishonesty is a profoundly serious offense because it involves an act of fraud that jeopardizes genuine efforts by faculty and students to teach and learn together. It is not tolerated at Lindsey Wilson College. Students who are determined to have plagiarized an assignment or otherwise cheated in their academic work or examinations may expect an F for the activity in question or an F for the course, at the discretion of the instructor. All incidents of cheating or plagiarism are reported by the instructor to the Academic Affairs office along with copies of all relevant materials. Each instance of cheating or plagiarism is counted separately. A student who cheats or plagiarizes in two assignments or tests during the same semester will be deemed guilty of two offenses. If the evidence is unclear or if a second offense occurs, the Vice President for Academic Affairs or Associate Academic Dean will refer the case to the Judicial Board for review. Violations will ordinarily result in disciplinary suspension or expulsion from the College, depending on the severity of the violation involved. **Note:** The College has purchased Turnitin.com, a web product used to detect plagiarized documents.

Plagiarism is a serious offense, and it can occur in drafts as well as in final papers. Plagiarism includes all of the following:

- ✓ Cutting and pasting from another source without using quotation marks or citing the source
- ✓ Using someone else's words or ideas without proper documentation when quoting and paraphrasing
- ✓ Copying any portion of your text from another source without proper acknowledgement
- ✓ Borrowing another person's specific ideas without documenting the source
- ✓ Having someone rewrite or complete your work (not including feedback from a writing group or individual in the class)
- ✓ Turning in a paper written by someone else, an essay "service," or from an Internet source (including reproductions of such essays or papers)
- ✓ Turning in a paper that you wrote for another course, or turning in the same paper for more than one course, without getting permission from your instructors first.

In all of the above cases, plagiarism has occurred when the use of someone else's words and/or ideas takes place without proper citation and documentation *no matter* what kind of text is the origin of the words and/or ideas.

### **ACCOMMODATIONS FOR STUDENTS WITH LEARNING DIFFERENCES**

Lindsey Wilson College accepts students with learning disabilities and provides reasonable accommodation to help them be successful. Depending on the nature of the disability, some students may need to take a lighter course load and may need more than four years to graduate. Students needing accommodation should apply as early as possible, usually before May 15. Immediately after acceptance, students need to identify and document the nature of their disabilities. It is the responsibility of the student to provide to the College appropriate materials documenting the learning disability, usually a recent high school Individualized Education

Program (IEP) and results from testing done by a psychologist, psychiatrist, or qualified, licensed person. The College does not provide assessment services for students who may be learning disabled. Although LWC provides limited personal counseling for all students, the College does not have structured programs available for students with emotional or behavioral disabilities. For more information, call Ben Martin at 270-384-7479.

### **CONTACTING ME**

Please contact me if you have questions about course materials, assignments, or policies. I am always happy to meet with you. The best way to handle substantive issues is through a face-to-face meeting—you can either come unannounced to my office hours or, better yet, you can make an appointment with me via email.

Use email professionally from your LWC account and include your full name in the message. All LWC students are required to communicate with faculty and staff via LWC email address only. Alternative email addresses should not be used when communicating with LWC faculty and staff. **You should check your email daily** since I will frequently communicate with you and return all written assignments through this channel.

### COURSE CALENDAR

Please have assigned readings completed on the day they are listed. "CP" refers to the course packet.  
Videos will be watched in class and do not need to be viewed ahead of time.  
Calendar is tentative and subject to change.

#### WEEK ONE:

Weds, Jan 20

- Introductions and Syllabus

Friday, Jan 22

- TED Talk: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Danger of a Single Story"

#### WEEK TWO:

Mon, Jan 25

- Taylor Swift, "Wildest Dreams"
- CP: Viviane Rutabingwa and James Kassaga Arinaitwe, "Taylor Swift is Dreaming of a Very White Africa"

Weds, Jan 27

- CP: Chinua Achebe, "The African Writer and the English Language"
- CP: Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, selection from "The Language of African Literature"

Fri, Jan 29

- CP: Salman Rushdie, "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist" from *Imaginary Homelands*

#### WEEK THREE:

Mon, Feb 1

- CP: David Damrosch, "World Enough and Time" from *What is World Literature?*

Weds, Feb 3

- CP: Rebecca Walkowitz, "Theory of World Literature Now" from *Born Translated* (p. 1-10 and "English Now" p. 20-5)
- Caroline Levine, "For World Literature" (handout)

Fri, Feb 5

- CP: Jamaica Kincaid, "Girl"

#### WEEK FOUR:

Mon, Feb 8

- J.M. Coetzee, *Waiting for the Barbarians* (Chapter 1, p 1-27)

Weds, Feb 10

- Coetzee Continued (Ch 2-3, p 29-87)

Fri, Feb 12

- Coetzee Continued (Ch 4, p 89-139)

WEEK FIVE:

Mon, Feb 15

- Coetzee Continued (Ch 5, p 141-65)

Weds, Feb 17

- Coetzee Continued (Ch 6, p 167-80)

Fri, Feb 19

- Arundhati Roy, *The God of Small Things* (Chapter 1, p 1-33)

WEEK SIX:

Mon, Feb 22

- Roy Continued (Ch 2-3, p 35-89)

Weds, Feb 24

- Roy Continued (Ch 4-6, p 90-147)

Fri, Feb 26

- Roy Continued (Ch 7-10, p 148-204)

WEEK SEVEN:

Mon, Feb 29

- **First Response Paper Due**
- Roy Continued (Ch 11-13, p 205-253)

Weds, March 2

- Roy Continued (Ch 14-17, p 254-287)

Fri, March 4

- Roy Continued (Ch 18-21, p 288-321)

WEEK EIGHT:

Mon, March 7

- Marjane Satrapi, *Persepolis* (p 1-79)

Weds, March 9

- Satrapi Continued (p 80-153)

Fri, March 11

- **Midterm Exam**

WEEK NINE:

- No Classes: Spring Break



WEEK TEN:

Mon, March 21

- Satrapi Continued (p 155-245)

Weds, March 23

- Satrapi Continued (p 246-341)

Fri, March 25

- No Classes: Good Friday

WEEK ELEVEN:

Mon, March 28

- CP: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Thing Around Your Neck"

Weds, March 30

- Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Ch 1-20, p 3-63)

Fri, April 1

- Martel Continued (Ch 21-44, p 63-119)

WEEK TWELVE:

Mon, April 4

- Martel Continued (Ch 43-60, p 119-177)

Weds, April 6

- Martel Continued (Ch 61-89, p 177-240)

Fri, April 8

- **Second Response Paper Due**
- Martel Continued (Ch 90-95, p 240-319)

WEEK THIRTEEN:

Mon, April 11

- NoViolet Bulawayo, *We Need New Names* (p 3-74)

Weds, April 13

- Bulawayo Continued (p 75-146)

Fri, April 15

- Bulawayo Continued (p 147-186)

WEEK FOURTEEN:

Mon, April 18

- Bulawayo Continued (p 187-238)

Weds, April 20

- Bulawayo Continued (p 239-292)

Fri, April 22

- Zadie Smith, *White Teeth* (Ch 1-2, p 1-38)

WEEK FIFTEEN:

Mon, April 25

- **Final Essay Proposal Due**
- Smith Continued (Ch 3-5, p 39-102)

Weds, April 27

- Smith Continued (Ch 6-8, p 105-174)

Fri, April 29

- Smith Continued (Ch 9-10, p 175-217)

WEEK SIXTEEN:

Mon, May 2

- Smith Continued (Ch 11-12, p 221-94)

Weds, May 4

- Smith Continued (Ch 13-16, p 295-360)

Fri, May 6

- Smith Continued (Ch 17-20, p 361-448)

FINALS WEEK:

Weds, May 11

- **Final Essay Due**