

## English 543: 20<sup>th</sup> Century British Fiction

“Modernism and Empire”

T Th 9:30-11:18, Denney 253

Summer Quarter 2005

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### Dr. Pranav Jani

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### Course Description

*“Things fall apart; the center cannot hold,  
Mere anarchy is loosed upon the world...”*

W.B. Yeats, “The Second Coming”

Between the late 1800s and the 1940s, things in Europe were indeed falling apart. Industrialization, colonization, world wars, and revolutions instigated an intense upheaval in society and corresponded, in turn, to a shift in the way Europeans thought about society. “Modernism” is the name given to a diffuse grouping of European art that broke sharply with the dominant conventions of nineteenth-century art during this period.

This course will study race, empire, and British writing within and around the modernist period, taking up both canonical authors and less famous figures. How did being an imperial superpower impact British writing of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century? What notions of self and nation (Englishness in relation to Irishness, Africanness, Indianness) emerged amidst two brutal world wars and crumbling colonial regimes? How did the radical aesthetics of modernism – highlighting fragmented subjects and narratives – reveal and shape such ideas?

**Required Texts** – available at SBX bookstore (1806 N. High Street)

Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

James Joyce, *Dubliners*

Sean O’Casey, *Three Plays*

George Orwell, *Burmese Days*

Other readings are located on Electronic Reserve (ER), access via <http://library.ohio-state.edu/>

### Basis for Evaluation

Participation/Attendance:	15%
Presentation:	5%
Short Responses:	10%
Paper #1 (3-4 pages):	20%
Midterm Exam:	20%
Paper #2 (5-7 pages):	30%

## **Course Policies and Guidelines**

### Teaching Philosophy

Despite the large enrollment in English 543, I would like our classroom to be an interactive space in which discussion of the text and its contexts helps us in our reading, writing, and general comprehension. While short lectures on my part will still be important in framing the direction of the course, I would like to develop your skills in engaging with your classmates' comments and becoming more confident about expressing your own ideas. We want to generate a vibrant and democratic arena for inquiry and knowledge by doing away with the scenario in which the student, whose main task is to passively absorb enough information to do well and fulfill a requirement, meets the teacher who drones on and on as long as he gets his paycheck. (These characters, in fact, are products of one another: see the opening scene of Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*.) A more dynamic environment, I strongly believe, will aid your critical skills individually even as it enlivens our class as a whole – and we'll need it to go a full quarter through the summer months!

### Participation and Attendance

In this light, I will try to make the material as interesting and relevant as I can, but you must also meet that effort with your own. Students who receive the highest marks in participation will be those whose involvement in the course helps to drive it forward. This involves being alert and attentive in class, being familiar with the day's reading assignment, and making a consistent effort to connect the ideas in your head with those of your classmates. A required classroom presentation and a scheduled debate should also aid these efforts.

Participation, finally, requires being present. More than 2 absences from class will harm your participation grade, with a loss of 1/3 of a grade for each day lost. Emergencies should be reported to me as soon as possible, and may require documentation from the University.

### Writing and Assignments

This class requires two short response papers, a midterm, and two longer essays. Please use my office hours and/or the help of the writing center (see [http://cstw.osu.edu/writing\\_center/](http://cstw.osu.edu/writing_center/)) for individual discussion of your ideas and projects. I will attempt to return papers as quickly as possible so you can get feedback on how you're doing in the course.

Plagiarism is the representation of another's works or ideas as one's own: it includes the unacknowledged word for word use and/or paraphrasing of another person's work, and/or the inappropriate unacknowledged use of another person's ideas. All cases of suspected plagiarism, in accordance with university rules, will be reported to the Committee on Academic Misconduct.

### Help with Disabilities:

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss your specific needs. We will coordinate something with the Office for Disability Services, located in 150 Pomerene Hall, which offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

## Course Outline

### Week 1: Introduction

- T 6/21 Topic: Imperialism and Britain in 1900
- Rudyard Kipling, “White Man’s Burden” (in class)
    - <http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/kipling.html>
  - Sixto Lopez, “The Filipinos Will Not ‘Take Up the White Man’s Burden’” (in class)
    - [http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/lopez\\_wmb.html](http://www.boondocksnet.com/ai/kipling/lopez_wmb.html)
  - Pears Soap advertisements (in class)
  - *Further Readings*: Various responses to the “White Man’s Burden” (ER – from [www.boondocksnet.com](http://www.boondocksnet.com))
- Th 6/23 Topic: Themes of Modernism
- Virginia Woolf, “Modern Fiction” (ER)
  - Woolf, “Street Haunting” (ER)
  - *Further Reading*: Michael Bell, “The Metaphysics of Modernism” (ER)
  - *Further Reading*: Raymond Williams, “Metropolitan Perceptions” (ER)

### Weeks 2-3: Empire and the (White) Self - I

- T 6/28 Topic: Marlow and the Narrative Structure
- Josef Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
- DUE: Short response paper (imperialism)**
- Th 6/30 Topic: Conrad and Imperialism
- Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
- T 7/5 Topic: Conrad’s Critics
- Chinua Achebe, “An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*” (p. 251)
  - C. P. Sarvan, “Racism and the *Heart of Darkness*” (p. 280)
  - *Further Reading*: Frances B. Singh, “The Colonialistic Bias of *Heart of Darkness*” (p. 268)
- Th 7/7 Classroom debate (topic to be determined by students)

### Weeks 4-6: Nations and Wars

- M 7/11 **Due: Paper #1** (send as Word attachment to [jani.4@osu.edu](mailto:jani.4@osu.edu))
- T 7/12 Topic: Nations as Imagined Communities
- Benedict Anderson, preface to *Imagined Communities* (ER)
  - Selected Poetry from World War I, from “An Introduction to World War I Poetry”:  
<http://www.oucs.ox.ac.uk/ltg/projects/jtap/tutorials/intro/>
- Th 7/14 Topic: The Colonized Intellectual
- W. B. Yeats, “The Lake Isle of Innisfree”
    - <http://www.bartleby.com/103/44.html>
  - Joyce, “The Dead” in *Dubliners*
  - *Optional Reading*: Stories from *Dubliners*

T 7/19      **MIDTERM EXAM**

Th 7/21      Topic: Nationalism of the Oppressed

- Yeats, “Easter 1916”
    - <http://www.litfix.co.uk/yeats/part110.html>
  - Edward Said, “Yeats and Decolonization” (ER)
- Further Reading:* C.L. Innes, “Modernism, Ireland, and Empire” (ER)

T 7/26      Topic: Nationalism’s Accents

- Sean O’Casey, “Juno and the Paycock” in *Three Plays*

Th 7/28      Topic: Gender and Nation

- Sean O’Casey, “Juno and the Paycock” in *Three Plays*

**Weeks 7-8: Empire and the (White) Self - II**

T 8/2      George Orwell, *Burmese Days*

Th 8/4      Orwell, *Burmese Days*

**Due: Short Response (Irish writers)**

T 8/9      Orwell, *Burmese Days*

Th 8/11      Orwell, *Burmese Days*

**Due: Proposal for Final Paper**

**Week 9: Third World Modernisms**

T 8/16      Mulk Raj Anand, *Untouchable*

Th 8/18      Anand, *Untouchable*

*Optional Reading:* Leopold Senghor, “New York” (handout)

T 8/23      **DUE: Final Paper** (Send as Word attachment to [jani.4@osu.edu](mailto:jani.4@osu.edu))