

## English 563: Contemporary Literature

“The Postcolonial and the Postmodern”

MW 9:30-11:18, Denney Hall 250

Winter 2008

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### Dr. Pranav Jani

Assistant Professor, Department of English

Hours: M 3:30-5:30 or appointment

262 Denney Hall, [jani.4@osu.edu](mailto:jani.4@osu.edu)

<http://people.cohums.ohio-state.edu/jani4/>

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### Course Description

Postcolonialism. Postmodernism. You’ve heard these terms before, but what do they mean? Do they overlap and intersect? Is, as one critic put it, the “post” in postcolonial the “post” in postmodern? Through our study of major postcolonial writers and theoretical texts, we will investigate how postcolonial/postmodern narrative strategies have challenged older styles of realism and modernism and resisted continuing legacies of Orientalism, racism, and patriarchy. At the same time, we will explore the tensions between postmodern ideas and postcolonial texts, especially around narratives of solidarity, recovery, and emancipation

### Required Texts (available at SBX, 1806 N High St)

Danticat, Edwidge. *The Dew Breaker*

Hagedorn, Jessica. *Dogeaters*

Hamid, Mohsin. *Moth Smoke*

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*

Rushdie, Salman. *Haroun and the Sea of Stories*

### Course Web Page(s) and Email:

Log on at [www.carmen.osu.edu](http://www.carmen.osu.edu) for

- Interactive Syllabus
- Articles marked “C” on the syllabus
- Dropbox for turning in papers
- Discussion threads for Carmen posts

**Note:** Important and personal messages requiring a response from me should be sent to [jani.4@osu.edu](mailto:jani.4@osu.edu), not posted on Carmen.

### Course Requirements

Class Participation	20%
Carmen (10 entries)	10%
3 Short Papers (1-2 pages)	45%
Final Paper (6-7 pages)	25%

## Grading

- **Class Participation:** Engaged, active participation in the class will be crucial to your grade. This includes, but is not limited to: arriving to class on time, bringing in the texts we're reading that day, being alert during lecture and discussion, raising questions and comments in the discussion period. Multiple absences, as described below, can detract from your participation grade.
- **Carmen:** To receive the full 10% of the grade, you must post at least 10, paragraph-length entries to the discussion threads on Carmen. These may be anything from general observations on the reading to close readings of passages to comments about issues raised in the class but not discussed fully. You may either initiate a new thread or respond to others' comments. Balancing original comments and responses, of course, will help develop online interaction.
- **Short Papers:** The short papers are designed to help you focus on understanding individual texts. Topics for short papers will be posted on Carmen, though original ideas are encouraged. Students are also considered to use response papers as a way to build ideas for the final research paper.
- **Final Paper:** You will be asked to bring critical, historical, and/or theoretical texts to your interpretation of one or more texts from the course. The assignment will be posted on Carmen by the middle of the quarter.

## Course Policies

- 1) **Absences:** 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.
- 2) **Plagiarism:** 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.
- 3) **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. Contact the ODS at 292-3307 and see their website at [www.ods.osu.edu](http://www.ods.osu.edu).

## Course Outline

### Basic definitions

- F Jan 4 Introduction: The Postcolonial and the Postmodern  
M Jan 7 **NO CLASS**  
W Jan 9 "What is Postcolonial?" -- Browse articles at  
<http://www.postcolonialweb.org/poldiscourse/themes/1.html>  
"Postmodernism" -- from U Colorado professor Mary Klages  
<http://www.colorado.edu/English/ENGL2012Klages/pomo.html>

Familiarize yourself with Deepika Bahri's Postcolonial Studies website at Emory University: <http://www.english.emory.edu/Bahri/>  
\*Optional: K. Anthony Appiah, "Is the 'post' in 'post-colonial' the 'post' in 'post-modern'?" (C)

#### The Politics of Knowledge

- M Jan 14 Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place* (1-81)  
W Jan 16 Edward Said, from *Orientalism* (C)  
Wes Cecil, Pranav Jani, Stacy Takacs, "India Is(n't): (Mis)representations of India in the US Media" (C)  
M Jan 21 **NO CLASS**  
W Jan 23 Rushdie, *Haroun and the Sea of Stories* (complete the novel)  
F Jan 25 **Due: Paper #1 (1-2 pages)**—Carmen dropbox by 9am

#### Fictions of Martial Law

- M Jan 28 Jessica Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*  
W Jan 30 Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*  
  
M Feb 4 Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*  
W Feb 6 Hagedorn, *Dogeaters*  
**Due: Paper #2 (1-2 pages)**—Carmen dropbox by 9am

#### Nukes and Narratives

- M Feb 11 Mohsin Hamid, *Moth Smoke*  
W Feb 13 Hamid, *Moth Smoke*  
  
M Feb 18 Hamid, *Moth Smoke*  
W Feb 20 Hamid, *Moth Smoke*  
**Due: Paper #3 (1-2 pages)** —Carmen dropbox by 9am

#### The Limits of Hybridity

- M Feb 25 Edwidge Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*  
W Feb 27 Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*  
  
M Mar 3 Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*  
W Mar 5 Danticat, *The Dew Breaker*  
  
M Mar 10 **DUE: Final Paper (6-7 pages)**—Carmen dropbox by 9am