

English 864: Seminar in Postcolonial/Transnational Literatures
Fall 2004: MW 9:30-11:18, Denney Hall 245
Prof. Pranav Jani

Office Hours: M 3:30-5, T 10-12
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Course Description

“Nationalism and Resistance in the Postcolonial World”

Throughout the twentieth century, intellectuals and artists from the formerly-colonized world have criticized colonialism and its accompanying hierarchies of nation, race, and class, often under the rubric of anticolonial nationalism. However, nationalism has also been widely criticized for serving mainly elite interests, ignoring continuing inequalities based on gender, class, ethnicity, and religion. As a result, the dominant trend in postcolonial studies in both literature and theory has been the outright rejection of nationalism in favor of resistance imagined in terms of cosmopolitanism, hybridity, and subalternity.

But the post-Cold War context of economic globalization and neo-colonial conquest has raised several new (and old) questions about nationalism, resistance, and culture. This course will investigate literary, cinematic, theoretical, and historical texts in order to get a grasp of: 1) how the national question has been represented by intellectuals, activists and writers across the twentieth century, 2) how the questions of nation and empire are being currently debated in postcolonial theory, 3) the specific histories of national liberation movements, and 4) the continuing importance of the national question in today’s world, especially colonialism and resistance in Iraq and Palestine

Required Texts

Ama Ata Aidoo, *No Sweetness Here*
Tariq Ali, *Bush in Babylon*
Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
Basil Davidson, *The Black Man’s Burden*
Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*
Jessica Hagedorn, *Dream Jungle*
Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*
Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*
Ngugi wa Thiong’o, *A Grain of Wheat*
Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

Electronic Reserve readings on WebCT (details in class, or check <http://reserves.lib.ohio-state.edu/current/Eres/eres2001.html>)

Course Requirements

Exact assignments and deadlines to be decided in collaboration with classmates, within the following guidelines: regular, short pieces on theoretical and literary texts, oral presentations, incorporation of students' own interests into course material, assignments that can be used for future papers or publications

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, which offers services for students with documented disabilities. Contact the ODS at 2-3307.

Course Outline

ER = Electronic Reserve; * = Supplementary Readings

Weeks 1-2: Nationalism and Postcolonial Studies

- W 9/22 Introduction
- M 9/27 Ania Loomba, *Colonialism/postcolonialism*, especially chapters 1 and 3
W 9/29 Benedict Anderson, *Imagined Communities*
- M 10/4 Partha Chatterjee, "The Moment of Maneuver: Gandhi and the Critique of Civil Society" (ER)
W 10/6 Neil Lazarus, "Disavowing Decolonization: Nationalism, Intellectuals, and the Question of Representation in Postcolonial Theory" (ER)
*Amilcar Cabral, "National Liberation and Culture" (ER)

Weeks 3-6: Anticolonial Nationalisms and "the Mourning After"

- M 10/11 Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *A Grain of Wheat*
*Salman Rushdie, "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist" (ER)
*Chinua Achebe, "The African Writer and the English Language" (ER)
*Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature" (ER)
*Salman Rushdie, "Introduction" to *Mirrorwork* (ER)

W 10/13 Timothy Brennan, "The National Longing for Form" (ER)
Homi Bhabha, "DissemiNation: Time, Narrative, and the Margins of the Modern Nation" (ER)

Su 10/17 Viewing and Discussion of *The Battle of Algiers* (Gillo Pontecorvo)
M 10/18 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*
W 10/20 V. I. Lenin, from *Imperialism*:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1916/imp-hsc/index.htm>
V. I. Lenin, from "The Rights of Nations to Self-Determination":
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/lenin/works/1914/self-det/index.htm>
Leon Trotsky on the Chinese Revolution, 1925-27:
<http://www.marxists.org/archive/trotsky/works/china/index.htm>

M 10/25 Tanika Sarkar, "A Pre-History of Rights? The Age of Consent Debates in Colonial Bengal" (ER)

W 10/27 Leila Ahmed, "The Discourse of the Veil" (ER)
*Jenny Sharpe, "The Unspeakable Limits of Rape: Colonial Violence and Counterinsurgency." (ER)

M 11/1 Ama Ata Aidoo, *No Sweetness Here*
Kumari Jayawardena, *Feminism and Nationalism in the Third World* (ER)

W 11/3 Basil Davidson, *Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*

Weeks 7-8: Cosmopolitanism/Globalization

M 11/8 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*
*Salman Rushdie, "The Riddle of Midnight: India, August 1987" (ER)

W 11/10 Edward Said, "Reflections on Exile" (ER)
*Amitav Kumar, from *Bombay-London-New York* (ER)
*Carol Breckenridge, et al, "Introduction" from *Cosmopolitanism* (ER)

M 11/15 Jessica Hagedorn, *Dream Jungle*

W 11/17 Timothy Brennan, "Cosmopolitanism and the Explorer's Eye" (ER)
Nicholas Van Hear, "Migrants and Hosts, Transnationals and Stayers" (ER)
Aijaz Ahmad, "Languages of Class, Ideologies of Immigration" (ER)

Weeks 9-10: Islamism and Resistance Today

M 11/22 Sahar Khalifeh, *Wild Thorns*

W 11/24 Hanif Qureshi, "My Son the Fanatic" (ER)
Chris Harman, "The Prophet and the Proletariat":
<http://www.marxists.de/religion/harman/>

M 11/29 Tariq Ali, *Bush in Babylon*

W 12/1 NO CLASS (due to my Tunisia conference)

SET UP INFORMAL GATHERING FOR LAST CLASS (TBA)