

Inst 316 • Topics in International Studies • Decolonization and Literature

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Office Hours • Croft 314 • Wednesday 1:00-2:00 p.m., or by appointment

Course Description

The transition to political independence of large areas of the world that had been controlled by European empires was one of the most important developments of the second half of the twentieth century, and this course is designed to help students understand its cultural and historical implications. The end of European control of large areas of Africa and Asia not only had political and economic consequences, it also marked an important rupture in the evolution of European society and the predominance of Western civilization. The experience of colonization and the struggle for independence called into question the presumed universality of European values.

This course focuses on both history and literature. The history of decolonization will be presented and discussed in class, and students will read and analyze works of literature related to decolonization.

Course Format

Class will be based on the presentation of historical material and the discussion of the assigned reading. The instructor is primarily responsible for presenting the historical material and the context of each assigned reading, while students are responsible for doing the assigned reading and contributing to the discussions. Since the course is based on the analysis on works of literature, it requires a large amount of reading. The goal of this reading should not be the memorization of every detail as much as an appreciation of the overall effect of the work, which can only be gained by reading the book from start to finish. These are not textbooks or scholarly monographs: they are novels, short stories, or manifestos.

Learning Objectives

After completing this class, students will:

- Understand better the cultural and historical implications of decolonization
- Appreciate the challenge to Western civilization represented by decolonization
- Recognize the extent and limits of decolonization
- Have gained an appreciation for the complexity and ambiguity of cultural and intellectual categories such as gender, race, religion, morality, power, and knowledge
- Have learned something of the academic study of literature, including its problems and methods
- Be able to present and support a written argument clearly

Assessment

Grades for this course will be assessed through the following:

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| • Participation and preparedness | 25% |
| • Three (3) short papers | 15% |
| • Group Project | 10% |
| • Final Paper | 15% |
| • Midterm Exam | 15% |
| • Final Exam | 20% |

Expectations

Grading Scale • Students will be assigned the following grades for this course: A: 93-100%, A-: 90-92%, B+: 87-89%, B: 83-86%, B-: 80-82%, C+: 77-79%, C: 70-76%, D: 65-69%, F: 64% and below.

Absences • Students are allowed five (5) absences for whatever reason without penalty; no documentation is required by the instructor. After five absences (for whatever reason), your final grade will be lowered 5% points for each additional absence, **WITHOUT EXCEPTION**. At most 5% points lost through excessive absences can be regained by writing an extra short paper. If you suffer from major illness that involves absence for more than 5 consecutive classes, you should notify the Dean's office to negotiate completion or withdrawal from this course. If you miss classes for official university activity, you must provide official documentation.

Participation and Preparedness • This is a seminar-style class, and all students are expected to participate in discussions. The instructor will make every effort to include every student in class conversations, but students also need to take the initiative and offer to respond to open questions and requests for comments and thoughts. Students are also required to come to class having completed the assigned reading.

Exam • The final exam will be held during the officially scheduled exam session for this course. There is no alternate or make-up session available, expect for students who have three or more exams in one day.

Academic Integrity • All work that you submit under your name for credit at UM is assumed to be your original work. Obviously, you will be incorporating the thinking of others in your work, but you must credit others' work when you rely upon it. In your written assignments, there are only three methods for properly importing the work of others: quotation, paraphrase, and summary. It is totally unacceptable for you to submit as your own any amount of text written by another person or any other person's ideas, whether that person is a published scholar, a friend, or someone paid to help you cheat in school. Depending on the serious of the offence, academic dishonesty or plagiarism will result in at least a score of zero (0%) on the assignment or at most automatic failure in this course. The applicable full UM policy is ACA.AR.600.001 and should be consulted by any student concerned with plagiarism. Broadly speaking, plagiarism is completely avoidable: if you are ever uncertain whether or not you are committing plagiarism, ask your instructor.

Open mind and respect for differences of opinion • The works of literature that we will be reading in this class deal with complex and sensitive issues such as religion, gender, race and racism, cultural difference, and the role and appropriateness of violence. The perspectives on these issues presented by the authors we read, the instructor, and other students in the class may challenge you or even make you feel uncomfortable. Keep an open mind and respect your fellow classmates. It is acceptable and expected to disagree, as long as disagreements are voiced respectfully and critically. If you ever feel that you are not being respected by your classmates or by me, please let me know.

Required Texts

Achebe, Chinua. *Things Fall Apart*
— *A Man of the People*
Betts, Raymond F. *Decolonization*
Djebar, Assia. *Women of Algiers in their Apartment*
Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*
Rushdi, Salman. *Midnight's Children: A Novel*