

Spring 1-15-2009

# ENG 3809-001: Contemporary British and Anglophone Literatures

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**ENG3809 Contemporary British and Anglophone Literatures**  
**Meeting Time and Place: MWF 10:00 - 10:50 AM, Coleman Hall 3150**  
**Instructor: Assistant Professor Weihsin Gui**  
**Office: Room 3821, Coleman Hall**  
**Office Hours: MWF 3-4 PM and by appointment**  
**E-mail: wgui@eiu.edu**

**Course description:**

This course is an introduction to late twentieth-century British literature. We will look at how British writers discuss the aftermath of World War II and the end of the British empire, changing social and gender roles, multiculturalism and immigration from South Asia and the Caribbean, and the resurgence of cultural nostalgia and nationalism. We will think about how personal and group identities are formed and questioned through the characterizations, writing styles, and narrative techniques used by writers such as A. S. Byatt, Julian Barnes, Graham Swift, Kazuo Ishiguro, Andrea Levy, Samuel Selvon, and George Lamming.

**Course objectives:**

By the end of this course, students should be able to

- 1) become familiar with several important contemporary British writers and their representative works.
- 2) understand and discuss some of the ways in which these writers use literature to discuss changing social and gender roles, nationalism and culture, and race and ethnicity in late twentieth-century Britain.
- 3) acquire good reading and writing skills for literary analysis.

**Course policies:**

\* **Attendance** in class is required. If you are absent for more than 5 class meetings your course grade will be lowered by one letter grade. Exceptions will only be made in the event of religious events, participation in University activities, serious illness, or other emergencies. A letter or medical certificate will be required for you to be excused.

\* **Participation** is also required. This means taking notes while you are reading, preparing questions for class discussion, and responding to other students' ideas in a thoughtful and respectful manner while offering your own.

\* **Class presentation:** You will be required to give 1 in-class presentation and help lead discussion for that day's class meeting. This may be done in a group, or by yourself. A sign-up sheet will be given out during the second week of the course.

\* **Assignments and grading breakdown:**

\* Section 1: Two 5-6 pp. papers: 40%

\* Section 2: Response and close reading papers (1-2 pp.): 15%

\* Section 3: In-class quizzes: 15%

\* Section 4: Participation and class presentation: 15%

\* Section 5: Final examination: 15%

\* **Response/analysis papers:** I will grade these using the following scale:

✓- (check-minus = needs improvement)    ✓ (check = ok)    ✓+ (check-plus = good)

To get the full 15% for this section, more than half of your papers must be ✓+, otherwise you will get a 10% score. If you have 3 or more papers with ✓- , then you will only get a 5% score.

\*\*\* **You must complete all written assignments and the final exam to pass this course.**

\*\*\* **Do NOT e-mail me to ask about your grade. I will show you how to calculate your grade in class.**

**E-mail submission and "Track Changes":**

\* For this course, you will submit almost all written assignments electronically to me using e-mail. Use this e-mail address for work submission: [wgui@eiu.edu](mailto:wgui@eiu.edu)

\* I will be using the "Track Changes" feature to comment on your papers, so you should learn how to use it (try looking it up in MS Office Help).

\* When you send me your assignment, the subject/title line of your e-mail should follow this format:

**3809 [assignment number] [your name]**

\* So if your name is Clive Owen and you are e-mailing me your second response paper, the subject line should read:

**3809 Response Paper #2 Clive Owen**

**\* It is your responsibility to make sure that your work gets to me punctually.** Use a reliable e-mail client or server, and have a backup in case the first one is temporarily offline. I will not remind you that your work is overdue. **Late work will be lowered by 1 letter grade for every day past the due date.**

**Students with disabilities:** If you have a documented disability and wish to receive academic accommodations, please contact the Coordinator of the Office of Disability Services (581-6583).

**Academic Honesty:** All written work (papers, exams, tests, quizzes) must be original and independent. Do not resort to prefabricated papers and research materials found on the Internet. Make sure that you understand the meaning of plagiarism and the policy of the English Department:

*Any teacher who discovers an act of plagiarism -- "the appropriation or imitation of the language, ideas, and/or thoughts of another author and representation of them as one's original work" (Random House Dictionary of the English Language) -- has the right and the responsibility to impose upon the guilty student an appropriate penalty, up to and including immediate assignment of the grade of F for the course, as well as to report the incident to the university's Judicial Affairs Office. Respect for the work of others should encompass all formats, including print, electronic, and oral sources.*

**Required texts:**

Graham Greene, *The Quiet American*

Julian Barnes, *England, England*

Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

Graham Swift, *Waterland*

A. S. Byatt, *Possession*

Andrea Levy, *Fruit of the Lemon*

\* Samuel Selvon, selected short stories (in course packet)

\* George Lamming, selected essays (in course packet)

\* Selected critical articles (in course packet)

\*\*\* The course packet is available from Copy-X on Lincoln Avenue.

**SCHEDULE OF READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS:**

**WEEK 1 1/12 – 1/16: INTRODUCTION AND “AFTER EMPIRE”**

Introduction; Critical articles on British identity, nationalism and culture, and postcolonial literature (course packet)  
Greene, *The Quiet American*

**WEEK 2 1/21 & 1/23: “AFTER EMPIRE,” CONTINUED**

*The Quiet American*

**WEEK 3 1/26 – 1/30: “FASHIONING BRITAIN”**

Barnes, *England, England*

**WEEK 4 2/2 – 2/6: “FASHIONING BRITAIN,” CONTINUED**

*England, England*

Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day*

**WEEK 5 2/9 & 2/11 “FASHIONING BRITAIN,” CONTINUED**

*The Remains of the Day*

**WEEK 6 2/16 – 2/20**

Individual Conferences; Paper #1 Due

**WEEK 7 2/23 – 2/27: “LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIES”**

Swift, *Waterland*

**WEEK 8 3/2 – 3/6 “LANDSCAPES AND HISTORIES,” CONTINUED**

*Waterland*

*Waterland* (film screening)

**WEEK 9 3/9 – 3/13 “THE ROMANCE OF THE ARCHIVE”**

*Possession* (film screening)

**WEEK 10 3/16 – 3/20**

SPRING BREAK: NO CLASSES

**WEEK 11 3/23 – 3/27 “THE ROMANCE OF THE ARCHIVE,” CONTINUED**

Byatt, *Possession: A Romance*

**WEEK 12 3/30 – 4/3 “ THE ROMANCE OF THE ARCHIVE, CONTINUED**

*Possession: A Romance*

**WEEK 13 4/6 – 4/10 “POSTCOLONIAL BRITAIN”**

Selvon, selected stories (course packet)

Lamming, selected essays (course packet)

**WEEK 14 4/13 – 4/17 “POSTCOLONIAL BRITAIN,” CONTINUED**

Levy, *Fruit of the Lemon*

**WEEK 15 4/20 – 4/24 “POSTCOLONIAL BRITAIN,” CONTINUED**

*Fruit of the Lemon*

**WEEK 16 4/27 – 5/1**

Individual Conferences; Paper #2 Due

**\*\*\* FINAL EXAM: date and time to be announced**