World Literature in English II: Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific

Class code
ENGL-UA 9164

Instructor Details
Dr. Chiara Gamboz
cg127@nyu.edu
Consultations by appointment.
Please allow at least 24 hours for your instructor to respond to your emails.

Class Details
Spring 2015

World Literature in English II: Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific

Thursday, 3:00 – 6:00pm
February 2 to May 24
Room 304
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course is an introduction to the literatures of Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific region, with a focus on Indigenous, migrant and diasporic writing. In addition to major texts from Australia and New Zealand, we will also encounter a range of works from Singapore, Hawaii and other Pacific islands. Some questions we will tackle include: How have the cultural, historical, and economic processes of colonialism, diaspora and migration connected and shaped this diverse region? How have different authors addressed these processes in their literary works? How have issues of race and indigeneity been central to various discourses of nationalism? What is the place of these issues in early and more contemporary postcolonial literary works in English? What particular roles have Australia and New Zealand, as colonial powers in their own right, played in the region? Finally, what can the latest generation of migrant writing from Australia show us about new forms of interconnections across the globalising Asia-Pacific?

Students in this course will examine novels, poetry, films and theoretical texts to develop their critical thinking, reading and writing skills. Along the way, they will gain a solid grounding in the concepts of post-colonialism, race, diaspora, indigeneity, nationalism and multiculturalism.

This class will be run as a weekly 3-hour seminar with required readings and class
participation every week.

**Desired Outcomes**

As a result of successfully completing this course, students will be able to:

- Develop an understanding of the cultural context of Australian, New Zealand, and Asia-Pacific literature.
- Develop critical analysis, reading and writing skills.
- Develop an understanding of postcolonial concepts and theories, and apply these to literary texts.
- Develop an understanding of the concepts of race, diaspora, indigeneity, multiculturalism, nationalism and national identity and their relevance to Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific.

**Assessment Components**

10%: Attendance and Class Participation
This is a seminar class, so active participation is required. This assessment will be formalised in Session 7 and 14.

15%: Presentation (beginning week 3)
You will be responsible for a 10-15 minute presentation on one of the texts.
Details released in Session 1 (including assessment guidelines and marking criteria).

25%: Midterm paper. 4-6 pages
This is a short paper based on one of the literary texts read.
Details Released in Session 2 (including question and marking criteria).
Due Session 5 (before the Mid-term Break).

10% Proposal for final paper. 1-2 pages
The Proposal for the final paper should include a) a draft introduction; b) bullet points outlining the content of the paragraphs constituting the body of the paper and developing a cohesive and coherent argument; c) a draft conclusion.
Due Session 12.

40%: Final paper. 12-15 pages
This is a research paper that should go beyond the scope of the class, but include at least two readings from the syllabus.
Details Released in Session 8 (including questions and marking criteria).
Due before 5.00 pm, Friday 15 May

*Failure to submit or fulfill any required course component will result in failure of the class.*

**Grade A:** Excellent work showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics, with excellent use of scientific language, detailed analysis and clear logical explanations,
Expectations showing insight, independent, original thought and reasoning.

**Grade B:** Good work with good general knowledge and understanding of the topics, accurate use of scientific language, good general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory work, broadly correct both factually and analytically, with some explanation and reasoning: the work will typically demonstrate a basic understanding of the topic.

**Grade D:** Passable work, showing a general, superficial knowledge and understanding of the topic, lacking satisfactory use of scientific language or adequate analysis.

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**Grade Conversions**

This course uses the following scale of numerical equivalents to letter grades:

- **A = 94-100**
- **A- = 90-93**
- **B+ = 87-89**
- **B = 84-86**
- **B- = 80-83**
- **C+ = 77-79**
- **C = 74-76**
- **C- = 70-73**
- **D+ = 67-69**
- **D = 65-66**
- **F = below 65**

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**Late Submission of Work**

Written work due in class must be submitted to your instructor during class time.

Late work should be submitted in person to the Academic Coordinator during regular office hours (9:00am-5:00pm, Monday-Friday). In the absence of the Academic Coordinator, another member of the administrative staff can accept the work in person. The NYUS staff will mark down the date and time of submission in the presence of the student. Students must also submit an electronic copy of late written work to Turn-It-In within 24 hours.

Work submitted after the submission time without an agreed extension receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100-point scale (for the assignment) for each day the work is late.

Written work submitted beyond five (5) weekdays after the submission date without an agreed extension fails and is given a zero.

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**Plagiarism Policy**

The academic standards of New York University apply to all coursework at NYU Sydney. NYU Sydney policies are in accordance with New York University’s plagiarism policy. The presentation of another person’s words, ideas, judgment, images or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism.
Penalties for confirmed cases of plagiarism are severe and are dealt with by the Director, NYU Sydney, not your instructor. Your home school will be notified and you will be dealt with according to the standards of that school. The codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges are outlined in the respective school’s academic resources.

**Attendance Policy**

Study abroad at Global Academic Centres is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. **To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centres is mandatory, and unexcused absences will be penalised with a two percent deduction from the student’s final course grade for every week of classes missed.**

The class roster will be marked in the first five minutes of class and anyone who arrives after this time will be considered absent. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences will result in harsher penalties, including failure.

**Classroom Expectations**

This is a seminar subject and requires the active participation of all students. It also requires engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Your behaviour in class should respect your classmates’ desire to learn. It is important for you to focus your full attention on the class, for the entire class period.

- Arrive to class on time.
- Once you are in class, you are expected to stay until class ends. Leaving to make or take phone calls, to meet with classmates, or to go to an interview, is not acceptable behaviour.
- Phones, digital music players, and any other communications or sound devices are not to be used during class. That means no phone calls, no texting, no social media, no email, and no internet browsing at any time during class.
- Laptop computers and tablets are not to be used during class except in rare instances for specific class-related activity expressly approved by your instructor.
- The only material you should be reading in class is material assigned for that class. Reading anything else, such as newspapers or magazines, or doing work from another class, is not acceptable.
- Class may not be recorded in any fashion – audio, video, or otherwise – without permission in writing from the instructor.

**Required Texts**

• Refugee Art Project Zine #5 (provided by NYUS)

**Supplemental & Recommended Texts (Available in NYUS Library)**


Films
- Once Were Warriors (dir. Lee Tamahori) 1994
- Boy (dir. Taika Waititi) 2010
- The Stuart Hall Project (dir. John Akomfrah) 2013

Session 1     Introduction: Postcolonial Literature in the Asia-Pacific
Thursday February 5

Required Reading:

Assessment Details:
- Details and criteria for participation and presentation assessment items released and discussed.
- Presentation topics and weeks allocated.

UNIT 1: INDIGENOUS AND SETTLER LITERARY PRODUCTION – AUSTRALIA (WEEKS 2-5)

Session 2    Protest Poetry
Thursday February 12

Required Reading:
- Selected poems by Ali Cobbi Eckerman and Romaine Moreton.

Recommended Reading:

Questions to guide your reading:
- What major themes and issues can you trace in these works?
- In what way are such themes and issues addressed in protest poetry?

Assessment Details:
- Questions released for midterm paper (including marking criteria).
Session 3  Writing Aboriginality in Postcolonial Australia – Kim Scott and David Unaipon – A Comparison
Thursday February 19

Required Reading:
- Kim Scott. *True Country*
- A selection from ‘Legendary Tales of Australian Aborigines’ by David Unaipon

Recommended Reading:

Questions to guide your reading:
- How does the novel represent conflict, difference and cooperation within and between white and Indigenous Australian people?
- How does the novel relate to the past? To the future?
- How does Scott develop multiple Aboriginal voices within the text?
- How are the two authors influenced by the time in which they write?

Assessment Details:
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 4  Indigenous Identities: Tony Birch
Thursday February 26

Required Reading:
- Tony Birch, *Blood*

Recommended Reading:

Questions to guide your reading
- How does this book confound the reader’s expectations of ‘Aboriginal literature’?
- What is the relationship between indigeneity, place and belonging in *Blood*, as compared to *True Country*?
- How can we understand Indigenous identities in relation to concepts such as hybridity?

Assessment Details:
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 5  White Identity in a Settler Society – Andrew McGahan (part 1)
Thursday March 5

Required Reading:
- Andrew McGahan. *The White Earth* (part 1)

Questions to guide your reading:
- How does McGahan’s work treat whiteness?
- Can this book be said to be postcolonial?
- How does McGahan position his reader in terms of race, nation and power?

Assessment due: Midterm Paper (25%), 4-6 pages

UNIT 2: INDIGENEITY IN AOTEAROA NEW ZEALAND (WEEKS 6-7)

Session 6  Introducing Maori Aotearoa

Thursday March 12

End of Unit 1 Required Reading:
- Andrew McGahan. *The White Earth* (part 2)

We will focus on historical narratives and differing formations of national identities in the novel.

Required Reading:
- Selected short stories by Patricia Grace

Questions to guide your reading:
- How is Indigeneity expressed in these works? What role does language (Te Reo Maori) play in them?

SPRING BREAK: March 16-20

Session 7  Maori Masculinities - Representations of Culture and Violence

Thursday March 26

Required Films:
- Lee Tamahori, dir. *Once Were Warriors*. 1994
- Taika Waititi, dir. *Boy*. 2010

Please note: You must have watched these films before class. Copies are available in the NYUS Library.

Recommended Reading:
- Excerpts from Alan Duff’s *Once Were Warriors* will be discussed in class.
Questions to guide your viewing:

- How do these films negotiate representations of cultural damage and cultural strength in Maori communities?
- How does gender work to complicate issues of race and power in these particular texts?

UNIT 3: RACE AND COLONIALISM IN THE PACIFIC (WEEKS 8-10)

Session 8 Postcoloniality in the Pacific – Epeli Hau’ofa

Thursday April 2

Required Reading:

- Epeli Hau’ofa. *Tales of the Tikongs*.
- Epeli Hau’ofa. ‘Our Sea of Islands’, ‘The Writer as an Outsider’ in *We Are the Ocean*.

Questions to guide your reading:

- How does Hau’ofa relate to history, modernity and development?
- How does geography impact on Hau’ofa’s writing and the sense of cultural identity conveyed in the text?
- How does postcolonial literature and culture differ in a non-settler society?

Assessment Details:

- This week is available as a presentation week.
- Questions released for final paper (including marking criteria).

Session 9 Polynesian Poetry

Tuesday April 9

Required Reading:

- Michelle Keown. ‘Introduction: Voyaging Through the Pacific.’ *Pacific Islands Writing*.
- Robert Sullivan and Albert Wendt, eds. *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poetry in English*

Questions to guide your reading:

- What is the significance of writing in English for Polynesian poets? And in using other languages?
- What, if any, are the distinguishing features of postcolonial poetry?
- How does poetry communicate issues to do with race and colonialism differently to prose fiction?

Session 10 Rewriting the Canon

Thursday April 16

Required Reading:
Questions to guide your reading:
- How and to what effect is a classic belonging to the ‘canon’ used in this novel?
- How are issues of colour/race addressed in this novel?

Assessment Details:
- This week is available as a presentation week.

UNIT 4: POSTcolonial asia: diaspora, migration, hybridity (weeks 11-12)

Session 11 Writing the Asian Diaspora – Balli Kaur Jaswal
Thursday April 23

Required Reading:
- Balli Kaur Jaswal, Inheritance.

Questions to guide your reading:
- What does Jaswal’s novel tell us about nationhood?
- How does Singapore’s contemporary identity arise out of its colonial past?
- How does Jaswal negotiate issues of race and power within her novel?

Assessment Details:
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 12 Singaporean Voices: Nation, Belonging and Migration
Thursday April 30

Required Reading:
- Selected essays from Kim Cheng Boey, Between Stations: Essays
- Selected poems by Edwin Thumboo and Arthur Yap

Questions to guide your reading:
- How do Thumboo and Yap construct the city-state of Singapore in their poems?
- How does migration impact on the sense of belonging and nation in Kim Cheng Boey’s essays?

Assessment Details:
- This week is available as a presentation week.

UNIT 5: Whiteness, race and difference in contemporary australia (weeks 13-14)

Session 13 Multiculturalism in Australia: Identity (Field Trip to Cabramatta, Western Sydney)
Thursday May 7
Required Reading:

Questions to guide your reading:
- What does ‘multiculturalism’ mean in Australian public discourse?
- How do these writers negotiate their difference in varying ways?
- What is the role of language in these writers’ identities?

Required field trip/excursion: Cabramatta, Western Sydney

Session 14   Multiculturalism in Australia: Migrating as a Refugee
Thursday May 14

Required Reading:
- *Refugee Art Project Zine #5* - recent collections of drawings, poems and interviews with refugees in detention
- *The Boat* by Nam Le (opening and closing story)

*Final Paper (40%) due by 5pm, Friday 15 May*

Your Instructor

Dr. Chiara Gamboz (Ph.D., University of New South Wales) completed her Ph.D. in English Literature with a thesis on Aboriginal petitions and the emergence and negotiations of Indigenous authorship and writings. She has taught *Introduction to Aboriginal literature* and *Reading Indigenous Writings* at the University of Sydney, *Introduction to English: Literary Genres* at UNSW, *World Literature in Translation* and *Italian* language courses at the University of Western Sydney.