Studies in Prose Genres: Post-Colonial Readings of Classic Texts

Class code
Undergraduate Program V45.9868.003

Instructor Details
Claire de Obaldia
Clairobscur2@gmail.com
Tues/Thurs by appointment

Class Details
Spring 2016
Tues 2:15-3:45; Thurs 3:00-4:30
Classroom: tba

Prerequisites

Class Description
In this course we focus on four contemporary novels in which the world of the character, the narrator, or the author is read through the lens of a literary classic. In each case, the reading and rewriting of the primary text involves temporal and spatial displacements that generate shifting perspectives and a constant reshuffling of centre and periphery. Between a reverential affiliation to the past and a creative misreading and rewriting of it, these intertextual encounters with “great” Western literary works insistently raise the questions of identity, originality, and “writing back”. Exploring these questions will therefore also involve drawing on comparative, translation, and postcolonial studies.

Format: Seminar

Desired Outcomes
*To familiarize ourselves with a variety of modes and styles of writing and manage a broad range of issues and topics
*To examine and challenge underlying assumptions, beliefs, and values
*To formulate relevant questions and hold multiple perspectives
*To develop or refine our analytical skills while learning to think comparatively. We will practice close reading, synthesizing and summarizing, but we will also look at ways in which arguments can be broadened and extended beyond the assigned excerpts or prompts – generalizing, making new connections, working with hypotheses or alternative scenarios

Assessment Components
Written assignments = 60%
4 take-home papers (6-8 pages, double-spaced, + abstract and outline).
Revisions: At least 2 (graded) papers can be revised or extended at home (subject to instructor’s approval).

Attendance and participation = 30%, which includes:

* Abiding by NYU Absence Policy (see below) and catching up in case of a missed class
* Being up to date with the assigned reading
* Engaging in class discussions

Oral presentations = 10%

* Presenting work in class on either a prompt, an excerpt, or a related topic (prepared at home)

Assessment Expectations

Grade A: Superior (A-) or Outstanding (A) applies to work that is very well argued and structured; that gives evidence both of close reading and of extensive knowledge; that shows originality, or particular imaginative flair and insight.

Grade B: Very good (B+), Good (B), Adequate or decent (B-): Applies to work which demonstrates an ability to conceptualize the key issues and debates and to formulate relevant points or questions, but which may need to be more thorough, better structured, and/or show more independent thinking and originality.

Grade C: Showing signs of reaching above average (C+), Average (C), Just Below Average (C-)
Applies to work which, though it may raise a couple of interesting points or questions, remains too superficial, or undeveloped, or poorly structured, and/or shows insufficient grasp of the subject or material.

Grade D: Work which is weak (D+), Very Poor Work (D), Unsatisfactory Work (D-)
Presents incorrect or confused information, misunderstandings of the subject or text, lack of coherence, lack of editing and structure or absence of development, an inability to make proper use of references and quotations, serious inadequacies of expression (syntax, grammar, vocabulary).

Grade F: For non- or late submission of work without a valid medical excuse, or for work which is unintelligible, illegible, or wholly irrelevant; for plagiarism or work which uses unattributed material.

Grade conversion

A = 16 Félicitations
A- = 15 Excellent
B+ = 14 Très bien
B = 13 Bien
B- = 12 Encourageant/Assez bien
C+ = 11 Moyen plus
C = 10 Moyen
C- = 9 Passable
D+ = 8
D = 7
D- = 6
Grading Policy

NYU Paris aims to have grading standards and results in all its courses similar to those that prevail at Washington Square.

Attendance Policy

Here is NYU's Attendance Policy for students studying away at a Global Academic Center:

*Study abroad at Global Academic Centers 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 centers is mandatory, and unexcused absences will affect students' semester grades. Students are responsible for making up any work missed due to absence. Repeated absences in a course may result in failure.*

Beginning Fall 2014, at all Global Academic Centers, unexcused absences will be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade.

Other guidelines specific to NYUParis include:

- **Attendance to class and all course-related events, even outside of regularly scheduled course times, is expected and mandatory. Some class outings/make-up classes take place on Fridays.**
- **Under no circumstances will non-University-related travel constitute an excused absence from class.** DO NOT book travel until you have received and carefully studied the syllabus of each of your classes.
- **If you are not sick enough to go to the doctor, you are well enough to go to class.** Doctor's notes will be expected for all medical-related absences.
- **No tests, quizzes, or exams will be made up.** A missed test, quiz, or exam will result in a zero. Questions about this policy should be directed to the Academic Affairs team, not your professor.

Late Submission of Work

*Late papers cannot be accepted without a valid medical excuse. Any written work turned in after due dates will count as a contribution to the "Class participation" grade.*

*Handwritten papers are OK in case of a computer/printer failure!*

Plagiarism Policy

New York University in Paris, as an academic community, is committed to free and open inquiry, to creating an intellectual and social environment that promotes this, and to upholding the highest standards of personal and academic integrity.

All NYUP students have the responsibility to uphold these stated objectives. As a member of this community, you accept the responsibility for upholding and maintaining these standards which include refraining from all forms of plagiarism and cheating as detailed below.

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1 NYU’s "Policies and procedures for students studying away at a Global Academic Center"
Cases of plagiarism at NYUParis will be brought to the attention of NYUParis academic administration as well as the implicated student's home school Dean.

PLAGIARISM: a form of fraud, presenting someone else's work as though it were your own²

- A sequence of words from another writer who you have not quoted and referenced in footnotes³
- A paraphrased passage from another writer's work that you have not cited.
- Facts or ideas gathered and reported by someone else⁴
- Another student's work that you claim as your own
- A paper that is purchased or "researched" for money
- A paper that is downloaded free of charge from the Internet

N.B. Students using critical material will be expected to provide exact references (in footnotes, endnotes, or brackets), and any internet material must be printed out and turned in with the paper.

Required Text(s)

Fiction (read in this order):
- Tournier, Michel, Friday, transl. Norman Denny [Vendredi ou Les Limbes du Pacifique]
- Brontë, Charlotte, Jane Eyre (Norton Critical Edition)
- Rhys, Jean, Wide Sargasso Sea
- Dickens, Charles, Great Expectations (Norton Critical Edition)
- Lloyd Jones, Mister Pip
- Flaubert, Gustave, A Simple Heart in Three Tales, transl. AJ Krailsheimer [Un Coeur simple in Trois Contes]
- Barnes, Julian, Flaubert's Parrot

Non-Fiction (articles and chapters) in Reader available through NYU:

Further Suggested Reading:
- Bhabha, Homi, The Location of Culture (Routledge, 1994)

² NYU's Expository Writing Department's Statement on Plagiarism
³ NYU Statement on Plagiarism
⁴ NYU Statement on Plagiarism
  *The Western Canon: The Books and School of the Ages* (Papermac, 1995)
Chamoiseau, Patrick, L’Empreinte à Crusoe (Gallimard, 2012)
Deleuze, Gilles, *Différence et répétition* (PUF, 1968)
Derrida, Jacques, *Writing and Difference* (Routledge, 2001)
  *Palimpsestes* (Seuil, 1982)/*Palimpsests : Literature in the Second Degree* (University of Nebraska Press, 1997)
Hillis Miller, Joseph, *Fiction and Repetition: Seven English Novels* (Harvard UP, 1982)
Hutcheon, Linda, *A Theory of Parody* (Methuen, 1985)
  *A Poetics of Postmodernism* (Routledge, 1988)
  *Culture and Imperialism* (Chatto and Windus, 1993)
  *The Post-Colonial Critic: Interviews, Strategies, Dialogues* (Routledge, 1990)

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<th>SCHEDULE</th>
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<td>Tues 19 Jan</td>
<td>Introduction</td>
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<td>Thurs 21 Jan</td>
<td>Introducing Defoe and the 18th century</td>
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<td>Tues 26 Jan</td>
<td>Robinson Crusoe (1)</td>
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<td>Thurs 28 Jan</td>
<td>Robinson Crusoe (2)</td>
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<td>Tues 2 Feb</td>
<td>Robinson Crusoe (3)</td>
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<td>Thurs 4 Feb</td>
<td>Tournier, Friday (1)</td>
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<td>Tues 9 Feb</td>
<td>Friday (2)</td>
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<td>Thurs 11 Feb</td>
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<td>Tues 16 Feb</td>
<td>Comparative session</td>
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<td>Thurs 18 Feb</td>
<td>Paper 1 due. Introducing Charlotte Brontë and Victorian literature</td>
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<td>Tues 23 Feb</td>
<td>Jane Eyre (1)</td>
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<td>Thurs 25 Feb</td>
<td>Jane Eyre (2)</td>
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<td>Tues 1 March</td>
<td>Jane Eyre (3)</td>
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<td>Thurs 3 March</td>
<td>Rhys, <em>Wide Sargasso Sea</em> (1)</td>
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<td>Tues 8 March</td>
<td><em>Wide Sargasso Sea</em> (2)</td>
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<td>Thurs 10 March</td>
<td>Comparative session</td>
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Tues 15 March  **Paper 2 due.** Introducing Dickens
Thurs 17 March  *Great Expectations* (1)

Tues 22 March  *Great Expectations* (2)
Thurs 24 March  *Great Expectations* (3)

Tues 29 March  Lloyd Jones, *Mister Pip* (1)
Thurs 31 March  *Mister Pip* (2)

Tues 5 April  *Mister Pip* (3)
Thurs 7 April  Comparative Session

Tues 12 April  **Paper 3 due.** Introducing Flaubert
Thurs 14 April  Flaubert, *A Simple Heart*

**Tues 19, Thurs 21, Tues 26, Thurs 28 April:** Spring Break

Tues 3 May  Barnes, *Flaubert’s Parrot* (1)
Thurs 5 May  No class
Fri 6 May (same time, same classroom)  *Flaubert’s Parrot* (2)

Tues 10 May  **Final paper due** (+ oral presentations)

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**Classroom Etiquette**

- No eating in class.
- No cell phones in class.
- No laptop computers in class unless permission is expressly given by your professors.
- Leaving class to go to the bathroom or yawning in class is considered rude in France.

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**Required Co-curricular Activities**

[Click here and enter information about required activities, whether organised by NYU or not.]
Suggested Co-curricular Activities

[Click here and enter information about suggested activities, societies, lectures, etc.]