

Gallatin School of Individualized Study, NYU  
Writing Seminar II: Decolonization: Political Event, Personal Event (K10.0671)  
Spring 2009  
Monday & Wednesday, 11:00-12:15 (Room 501)  
Instructor: Beata Potocki  
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Office hours: Monday, 12:30—2:30 pm and  
by appointment  
715 Broadway, Room 616  
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## COURSE DESCRIPTION

“The conquest of the earth,” writes Joseph Conrad in *Heart of Darkness*, “is not a pretty thing when you look at it too much. What redeems it is the idea only. An idea at the back of it; not a sentimental pretence but an idea; and an unselfish belief in the idea—something you can set up, and bow down before, and offer a sacrifice to.” In this writing seminar we will consider various efforts to undo the pervasive effects of colonialism, by examining texts, films and art that explore the political and ideological dimensions of colonialism as well as colonialism’s impact on culture and the individual psyche. We will read texts spanning different genres--political theory, cultural analysis, personal essays and fiction—and engage in careful examination of ideas through textual analysis. In the course of our inquiries, students will practice developing and supporting their own theses and arguments through the close examination of texts. Students will write three short critical papers (4-6 pages) and a longer research paper (8-10 pages).

## WRITING ASSIGNMENTS

You will need to bring in drafts of essays in progress for workshops. As successful workshops depend on each student having a draft to share, it is imperative that each student bring in his or her draft for workshops on the days indicated on the syllabus. Final drafts of your papers are due in class, unless indicated otherwise (see the syllabus for exact dates). These final drafts must be double-spaced, with one-inch margins on each side.

Shorter response papers to assigned readings consisting of a 1-page passage analysis are due on the dates marked on the syllabus.

## COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND GRADES

Writing Seminar II focuses on class discussion and analysis of assigned readings and on regularly scheduled writing workshops; therefore, your attendance and participation is of uttermost importance. If you cannot attend class, due to emergency or illness, please contact me so that I can let you know what you have missed and tell you how to prepare for the next class. Your participation and timely submission of papers is vital both to

your individual progress and to the success of the class. Excessive absence (more than two unexcused absences) can jeopardize your course grade.

Grades are based on the quality of submitted work, including papers and shorter assignments, as well as your class participation.

#### REQUIRED TEXTS

Carpentier, Alejo. *The Kingdom of this World*. Trans. Harriet de Onís. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2006.

Coetzee, J. M. *Disgrace*. New York: Penguin, 2000.

Duras, Marguerite. *The Lover*. Trans. Barbara Bray. New York: Pantheon, 1997.

Fanon, Frantz. *The Wretched of the Earth*. Trans. Constance Farrington. New York, Grove Press, 1965.

Texts are available at the Shakespeare & Co. bookstore (716 Broadway).

#### SYLLABUS

##### Week 1

January 21<sup>st</sup>: Introduction. Film clips: *Apocalypse Now*

##### Week 2

January 26<sup>th</sup>: Discussion of *Apocalypse Now*

January 28<sup>th</sup>: Edward Said, excerpts from *Culture and Imperialism*

**Response paper due**

##### Week 3

February 2<sup>nd</sup>: Raymond Betts, “Pronouncements, Denunciations, and the Search for Ideology” (*Decolonization*); Amílcar Cabral “Imperialism, Colonialism, and Neocolonialism” (*Imperialism*)

February 4<sup>th</sup>: Frantz Fanon, “The So-Called Dependency Complex of Colonized Peoples” (*Black Skin, White Masks*)

**Response paper due**

##### Week 4

February 9<sup>th</sup>: Alejo Carpentier, *The Kingdom of This World*

February 11<sup>th</sup>: *The Kingdom of This World* continued.

##### Week 5

February 16<sup>th</sup>: No class.

February 18<sup>th</sup>: **Writing workshop**

##### Week 6

February 23<sup>rd</sup>: Frantz Fanon, “Concerning Violence” from *The Wretched of the Earth*

**Paper # 1 due**

February 25<sup>th</sup>: *The Wretched of the Earth* continued

Week 7

March 2<sup>nd</sup>: Gillo Pontecorvo, *The Battle of Algiers* (screening time TBA);  
Fanon's "Algeria Unveiled" (*A Dying Colonialism*)

**Response paper due**

March 4<sup>th</sup>: Discussion of paintings by Marlene Dumas; Cornelia Butler, "Painter as Witness."

Week 8

March 9<sup>th</sup>: **Writing workshop**

March 11<sup>th</sup>: **Discussion of research essay and proposal**  
**Paper #2 due on March 13th by 5pm**

Week 9

**Spring Break**

Week 10

March 23<sup>rd</sup>: Duras, *The Lover*

**First draft of research paper proposal due**

March 25<sup>th</sup>: *The Lover* continued

Continued discussion of research paper and proposal

Week 11

March 30<sup>th</sup>: **Library Visit**

April 1<sup>st</sup>: Claire Denis, *Beau Travail* (screening time TBA)

**Response paper due**

Week 12

April 6<sup>th</sup>: James Baldwin (essay title tba)

**Final draft of research paper proposal due**

April 8<sup>th</sup>: **Writing workshop**

Week 13

April 13<sup>th</sup>: Desmond Tutu, "Nuremberg or National Amnesia? A Third Way" (*No Future Without Forgiveness*)

**Paper # 3 due**

April 15<sup>th</sup>: J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

Week 14

April 20<sup>th</sup>: *Disgrace* continued

**Annotated bibliography due**

April 22<sup>nd</sup>: Antjie Krog, "Beloved Country of Grief and Grace" (*Country of My Skull*)

**Response paper due**

Week 15

April 27<sup>th</sup>: Discussion of final research projects

April 29<sup>th</sup>: **Writing workshop:**

Drafts of research paper

Week 16

May 4<sup>th</sup>: Conclusion

**Final papers due on Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> by 5 p.m.**

