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

Class code
ENGL-UA 9164

Instructor Details
Dr Chiara Gamboz
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Class Details
World Literature in English II: Australia, New Zealand and the Asia-Pacific

Mondays: 9am-12pm

Room 304
NYU Sydney Academic Centre

Prerequisites
None

Class Description
This course is an introduction to the literatures of Australia, New Zealand and the 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 Malaysia, Singapore, and the 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 issues of race and indigeneity been central to various discourses of nationalism? 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 globalizing 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 postcolonialism, 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
- To develop an understanding of the cultural context of Australian, New Zealand, and Asia-Pacific literature.
- To develop students’ critical analysis, reading and writing skills.
- To develop an understanding of postcolonial concepts and theories, and apply these to literary texts.
- To 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.
10%: Attendance and class participation
This is a seminar class, so active participation is required.

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.
Due Session 6
Details Released in Session 2 (including question and marking criteria).

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.

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.
Due Week 14: Friday May 16
Details Released in Session 8 (including questions and marking criteria).

*Failure to submit or fulfil any required course component results in failure of the class.*

NYU Sydney has a strict policy about course attendance and late submission of work. Make sure you familiarise yourself with the policies on attendance and late submission of work in the NYU Sydney Student Handbook.

Assessment Expectations

**Grade A:** Excellent performance showing a thorough knowledge and understanding of the topics of the course; all work includes clear, logical explanations, insight, and original thought and reasoning. Written work is of a highly sophisticated standard.

**Grade B:** Good performance with general knowledge and understanding of the topics; all work includes general analysis and coherent explanations showing some independent reasoning, reading and research. Written work is of a superior standard.

**Grade C:** Satisfactory performance with some broad explanation and reasoning; the work will typically demonstrate an understanding of the course on a basic level. Written work is of an acceptable standard.

**Grade D:** Passable performance showing a general and superficial understanding of the course’s topics; work lacks satisfactory insight, analysis or reasoned explanations. Written work is of a basic standard.

**Grade F:** Unsatisfactory performance in all assessed criteria. Written work is weak, unfinished or unsubmitted.
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.

It is a serious academic offense to use the work of others (written, printed or in any other form) without acknowledgement. Cases of plagiarism are not dealt with by your instructor. They are referred to the Director, who will determine the appropriate penalty (up to and including failure in the course as a whole) taking into account the codes of conduct and academic standards for NYU’s various schools and colleges.

All written coursework must be submitted as a hard copy AND in electronic form. All students must submit an electronic copy of each piece of written work to the plagiarism detection software turn-it-in. Instructions will be provided to you in class.

Required Texts

- Murtaza Ali Jafari, Refugee Art Project Zine #4

Supplemental & Recommended Texts (not required to purchase)

South Melbourne: Affirm Press.


Films

- *Once Were Warriors* (dir. Lee Tamahori) 1994
- *Boy* (dir. Taika Waititi) 2010

Additional supplementary materials to be posted in NYU Classes.

### Session 1

**Introduction: Postcolonial Literature in the Asia-Pacific**

**February 3**

**Reading**


**Assessment**

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

### Session 2

**Unit 1: Indigenous and Settler Literary Production - Australia (Weeks 2-5)**

**February 10**

**Aboriginal Literary Production**

**Reading**


**Supplementary reading**

- Graham Huggan. ‘Australian Literature, Race, and the Politics of Location.’ In
Australian Literature: Postcolonialism, Racism and Transnationalism.

Questions to guide your reading
- What major themes and issues can you trace in these works?
- How would you describe the development of Aboriginal literary production?

Session 3
Writing Aboriginality in Postcolonial Australia – Kim Scott

February 17
Reading
- Kim Scott. True Country

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?

Supplementary reading

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

Session 4
Indigenous identities – Tony Birch

February 24
Reading
- Tony Birch, Blood

Supplementary 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
- This week is available as a presentation week.
Session 5

White Identity in a Settler Society – Andrew McGahan

March 3

Reading
- Andrew McGahan. The White Earth

Questions
- 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
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 6

Unit 2: Indigeneity in Aotearoa New Zealand (Weeks 6-7)

March 10

Introducing Maori Aotearoa

Reading
- Selected stories by Patricia Grace

Assessment
- Midterm Paper, 4-6 pages (25%) due this week.

MIDTERM BREAK 17-21 MARCH

Session 7

Maori Masculinities

March 24

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

Supplementary 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?
Session 8

Unit 3: Race and Colonialism in the Pacific (Weeks 8-10)

March 31

Postcoloniality in the Pacific – Epeli Hau’ofa

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

Session 9

Polynesian Poetry (Field Trip, Bronte Beach)

April 7

Reading
- Michelle Keown. ‘Introduction: Voyaging Through the Pacific.’ *Pacific Islands Writing.*
- Robert Sullivan and Albert Wendt, eds. *Whetu Moana: Contemporary Polynesian Poetry in English* (selected poems will be workshopped in front of the sea, at Bronte)

Questions to guide your reading
- What is the significance of writing in English for Polynesian poets?
- 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?

Assessment
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 10

Rewriting the Canon

April 14

Reading

Questions to guide your reading
- How and to what effect is a classic belonging to the ‘canon’ used in this novel?

Assessment
- This week is available as a presentation week.

NB NO CLASS APRIL 21 (EASTER MONDAY PUBLIC HOLIDAY)
Session 11

Unit 4: Postcolonial Asia: Diaspora, Migration, Hybridity (weeks 11-12)
Singaporean Voices: Nation, Belonging and Migration

April 28 (no class April 21 due to Easter holiday)

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

Assessment
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 12

Writing the Asian Diaspora – Balli Kaur Jaswal

Friday May 2 (Make-up class for Easter Monday)

Reading

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
- This week is available as a presentation week.

Session 13

Unit 5: Whiteness, Race and Difference in Contemporary Australia (Weeks 13-14)

May 5

Multiculturalism in Australia: Identity (Field Trip to Cabramatta, western Sydney)

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?

Session 14

Multiculturalism in Australia: Migrating as a Refugee

May 12

Reading
- *Refugee Art Project Zine #4* by Murtaza Ali Jafari
- Short story ‘The Boat’ by Nam Le
Final Paper due by 5pm Friday 16 May

Classroom Etiquette

This is a seminar subject and requires active participation. It also requires respectful and engaged discussion, including listening to and respecting other points of view. Eating is not permitted in any classrooms. Please kindly dispose of rubbish in the bins provided.

Required Co-curricular Activities

Beyond the required readings note that Session 7 requires you to view the film *Once Were Warriors* before class.

Your Instructor

Dr. Chiara Gamboz (Ph.D., University of New South Wales) completed her PhD in English Literature with a thesis on Aboriginal petitions and the emergence and negotiations of Aboriginal writings. She has taught Aboriginal literature and writings at the University of Sydney, literary courses at UNSW, World Literature and language courses at the University of Western Sydney.