Syllabus

J. M. Coetzee: Postcolonial Metafiction - 44732

Last update 26-10-2014

HU Credits: 2

Degree/Cycle: 2nd degree (Master)

Responsible Department: English

Academic year: 1

Semester: 1st Semester

Teaching Languages: English

Campus: Mt. Scopus

Course/Module Coordinator: Louise Bethlehem

Coordinator Email: louise.bethlehem@mail.huji.ac.il

Coordinator Office Hours: Monday 14-15

Teaching Staff:
Dr. Louise Bethlehem
Course/Module description:

Course description

This course offers concentrated insight into the work of Nobel prizewinner, J.M. Coetzee through considering his writings as postcolonial metafiction. Post-colonial theory explores the impact of European colonization upon the societies which it subjugated, recognizing that the cultural and political struggles which colonization set in motion continue to influence the present. Postcolonial literary theory investigates these concerns on the basis of texts produced in the colonial setting, whether by colonizers or by colonized subjects. Apartheid, the regime of racial segregation current in South Africa between 1948 to 1990, constituted a special form of colonialism. Coetzee’s texts address the political situation of the country of his birth obliquely, unlike the dominant forms of writing that apartheid South Africa produced. Using the notion of metafiction, we will explore the singularity of J.M. Coetzee’s writing as a response to conditions of racial and political oppression. The corpus to be investigated comprises two apartheid-era texts, _Dusklands_ (1974, with an emphasis on “The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee”) and _Waiting for the Barbarians_ (1980), as well as one transitional or post-apartheid text, _Disgrace_ (1998).

Course/Module aims:

Course aims

The course seeks to elucidate the paradigm of postcolonialism with special reference to postcolonial literary studies. It aims to apply a postcolonial literary analysis to a determinate instance of racial oppression, apartheid South Africa. It explores how J.M. Coetzee’s early texts, “The Narrative of J.M. Coetzee” and _Waiting for the Barbarians_ deviate from the rhetoric of urgency (Bethlehem 2006) associated with anti-apartheid literature. It contrasts Coetzee’s texts with short examples of dominant struggle-era writing. It then goes on to explore the singularity of Coetzee’s poetics through mobilizing literary theoretical concepts such as allegory, social realism, metafiction, and situational metafiction (David Attwell, 1993). Finally, it turns to Coetzee’s most celebrated, or most notorious, work _Disgrace_ to inquire about the relations of continuity or rupture that hold between it as a post-apartheid text, and its predecessors. In summary, the course investigates the relations between a particular set of literary texts and the political context in which these texts are embedded.

Learning outcomes - On successful completion of this module, students should be able to:

Course outcomes

To contextualize Coetzee's work in its historical setting.

To identify the characteristics of apartheid-era literature in English, and to compare Coetzee's writing with this corpus.

To investigate the possible relations between Coetzee's text and the social and political settings in which they are embedded.

To historicize works of postcolonial literature.

To describe the singularity of Coetzee's poetics in formal terms and to locate these in relation to metropolitan literary theoretical concepts such as "estrangement," "defamiliarization," and "metafiction."

Attendance requirements (%):

100

Teaching arrangement and method of instruction: Weekly seminars
Regular weekly attendance is obligatory. Roll call will be taken. Students are required to cover selected readings in the theoretical bibliography in accordance with the weekly schedule of readings. Students are expected to show close familiarity with the primary and theoretical texts under discussion. Only students who have submitted two short response papers will be permitted to submit term papers or seminar papers in this course.

Course/Module Content:

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

Week 1 27/10/14
Introduction: Postcolonialism, Metafiction, Apartheid
David Attwell interviews John Coetzee in the wake of the Nobel Prize 2003
http://www.dn.se/kultur-noje/an-exclusive-interview-with-j-m-coetzee
Said, Edward

Waugh, Patricia

Week 2 03/11/14
Allegory and the struggle; Allegories of struggle
Comparative Primary Texts
Gordimer, Nadine
Wilhelm, Peter
1975 “Pyro Protram,” in LM and Other Stories, 55-64 (Johannesburg: Ravan).

Secondary Bibliography
Bethlehem, Louise

Week 3 10/11/14
Historical and Literary Contexts
Attwell, David
Morphet, Tony
Phillips, Caryl

Optional:
Crewe, Jonathan
DOI://dx.doi.org/10.4314/cja.v40i1.l

Week 4 17/11/14
Rivalry or Supplementarity
Attwell, David
Easton, Kai
Week 5 24/11/14
Otherness
Attridge, Derek

Week 6 01/12/14
Into the Dark Chamber
Coetzee, J.M.

Week 7 08/12/14
Body
May, Brian
Scarry, Elaine

Optional
Hill, Shannen
Valdez Moses, Michael

Week 8 15/12/14
Agony and Allegory
Saunders, Rebecca

Optional:
Attridge, Derek
Craps, Stef

Week 9 22/12/14
Liberal Funk
Marais, Mike
2001 [Very morbid phenomena: Liberal Funk, the Lucy-syndrome and JM Coetzee's Disgrace. Scrutiny2 6(1):
Optional
McDonald, Peter D.
Marais, Mike

Week 10 29/12/14
Adamastor’s Daughters
Camões, Luis Vaz de
Graham, Lucy
Optional
Ahmed, Sarah
Bethlehem, Louise
2014 [Refusing Adamastor: Lucy Lurie and White Writing in Disgrace. in Approaches to Teaching Coetzee’s Disgrace and Other Works, edited by Laura Wright, Jane Poyner and Elleke Boehmer, 105-111 (New York: Modern Language Association).**
Gray, Stephen

Week 11 05/01/15
Realism and Rape
Cornwell, Gareth

Optional
Boehmer, Elleke

Week 12 12/01/15
Sanders, Rebecca  

Week 13 19/01/15  
Eight Lessons?  
Gaylard, Gerald  
Spivak, Gayatri Chakravorty  

Presentation of Synthesis Matrices

Week 14 26/01/15  
Coda: Reeling in Disgrace: Film Screening of Steve Jacobs' 2008 movie, Disgrace.

Required Reading:  
Primary Texts: Any edition of the text may be used.

Coetzee, J. M.  
1974 _Dusklands_ (Johannesburg: Ravan Press) ["The Narrative of Jacobus Coetzee"]  
Coetzee, J.M.  

See WEEKLY SCHEDULE in the Course Content bloc for required reading of SECONDARY or THEORETICAL material.

Additional Reading Material:  
Recommended Reading

Coetzee, J.M.  
1990 _Age of Iron_ (Harmondsworth: Penguin).


A secondary bibliography will be provided separately.

**Course/Module evaluation:**
- End of year written/oral examination 0 %
- Presentation 0 %
- Participation in Tutorials 10 %
- Project work 50 %
- Assignments 0 %
- Reports 40 %
- Research project 0 %
- Quizzes 0 %
- Other 0 %

**Additional information:**
Students wishing to write a seminar paper in this course must set a topic with Dr. Bethlehem by Monday 15 December 2014 at the latest.