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English 8386
Topics in Postcolonial Studies:
Empire and American Fiction
Fall 2009
W 5:30-8:30
RG Cullen 114
section 32409

Required Texts:

Kathy Acker, *Kathy Goes to Haiti*
Paul Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*
Paul Bowles, *The Spider's House*
Patricia Henley, *The Hummingbird House*
Mahmoud Mamdani, *Good Muslim, Bad Muslim: America, the Cold War, and the Roots...*
Melani McAlister, *Epic Encounters: Culture, Media, and US Interests in the Middle East*
Cormac McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*
Reginald McKnight, *I Get on the Bus*
Tim O'Brien, *Going After Cacciato*
Norman Rush, *Mating*
Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*
Richard Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation: The Myth of the Frontier in Twentieth Century*

Course Description: This course juxtaposes writing about the social history of America's foreign relations after World War II with American novels set in "Third World" countries during this period in order to ask what if any correlation is discernible between U. S. literary culture and imperialism. We will start by discussing some basic principles of postcolonial theory as they are usually applied to European colonialism and European culture before moving to the question of the traces left by imperialism on America culture. Specifically, we will trace the ways writers of the literary novel in America increasingly turn their attention to America's spheres of influence in the "Third World" during this period. The hoped for outcomes of the course include a conversational command of the most basic paradigms in postcolonial theory, a more specialized command of debates and rhetoric around American imperialism, and broader familiarization with genres, themes, and settings in the contemporary American novel.

Requirements: Each student will give two brief oral presentations, write a short paper during the semester, and write a longer paper at the end of the course. Note that the first oral presentation will also require a Friday afternoon conference the previous week, and the final paper will require a prospectus with annotated bibliography the week before Thanksgiving.

Grades: Your final grade will be calculated as follows, final paper 60%, short paper 20%, presentations 10% each.

Absences: Beginning with your third absence ("excused" absences included), a minus will be added to your final cumulative grade for each class that you miss.

Schedule:

- W 8/26 Introductions
- W 9/2 Yeats, "Among the School Children," "The Second Coming"; Camus, "The Adulterous Woman"; Said, *Culture and Imperialism* introduction, Chapter 1, pp. 62-80, 97-132, 169-190, 209-239, Chapter 4
- W 9/9 Hardt & Negri, from *Empire* pp. 137-182*; Pease, "US Imperialism: Global Dominance without Colonies"*; Spivak, "Globalcities: Terror and Its Consequences"*; McAlister, "Introduction"
- W 9/16 Bowles, *The Sheltering Sky*; Edwards, "Sheltering Screens"*
- W 9/23 Bowles, *The Spider's House*
- W 9/30 McAlister, *Epic Encounters*, pp. 43-84; 155-end
- W 10/7 O'Brien, *Going After Cacciato*
- W 10/14 Slotkin, *Gunfighter Nation*, intro, chapters 1, 11, 14-end; Klein, "How to Be an American Abroad"*
- W 10/21 McCarthy, *Blood Meridian*#
- W 10/28 Acker, *Kathy Goes to Haiti*#
- W 11/4 Henley, *The Hummingbird House*#
- W 11/11 Rush, *Mating* #
- W 11/18 Mamdani, *Good Muslim/Bad Muslim*
- W 11/25 THANKSGIVING
- W 12/2 McKnight, *I Get on the Bus*
- W 12/9 FINAL PAPER DUE

#sign up for a presentation date

*consult e-reserves