

**ENGL 447-O/2: British Prose after 1900**  
**Fall 2007**

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**Course Description:**

This course offers a broad overview of literature written in Britain and the British Commonwealth in the twentieth century, a period that saw dramatic literary, cultural, and societal upheavals. We will examine the role that writers' choices of literary form played in questioning the transformations of their time, such as (but not exclusively) the shock of two world wars, the unraveling of Britain's colonial project, and the proliferation of diverse ethnic and sexual identities. Central to our discussions will be the problems of writing that twentieth-century writers confronted as they met the challenge of registering the effects of change: in a world in which everything seems uncertain, to what extent can language and literature reflect reality? And to what extent can critical terms such as "modernism" and "postmodernism"—developed to describe styles and attitudes often associated with twentieth century literary and cultural production—help us to understand the different approaches that twentieth-century writers took to these problems?

We will approach these questions through extensive reading and in-class discussion. Though I will sometimes present you with background material or literary criticism designed to prompt discussion of the novels, this is not a lecture course but rather a small, discussion- and groupwork-based seminar. The most successful courses of this nature are collaborations between students and professor, so your timely preparation for and active participation in our class meetings will be crucial to your own leaning and to that of your classmates.

All baccalaureate students at UAF are required to complete one "O" course or two "O/2" courses to develop their skills in oral communication. This course has been designed as an "O/2" course, and thus will require each student to give two formal oral presentations that will complement our readings and written assignments.

**Prerequisites:**

- ENGL 211X or ENGL 213X
- COMM 131X or COMM 141X

## Required Books:

### *Novels:*

- Achebe, Chinua. Things Fall Apart. 1959. New York: Anchor, 1994. ISBN 0385474547.
- Carter, Angela. Nights at the Circus. 1984. New York: Penguin, 1993. ISBN 0-14-007703-0.
- Conrad, Joseph. Heart of Darkness. 1902. New York: Penguin, 1995. ISBN 0-14-018652-2.
- Forster, E.M. A Passage to India. 1924. New York: Harcourt, 1984. ISBN 0-15-671142-7.
- Hall, Radcliffe. The Well of Loneliness. 1928. New York: Anchor Books, 1990. ISBN 0385416091.
- Joyce, James. A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man. 1916. New York: W. W. Norton, 2007. (Norton Critical Edition.) ISBN 0-393-92679-6.
- Rhys, Jean. Voyage in the Dark. 1934. New York: Norton, 1994. ISBN 0393311465.
- Rushdie, Salman. Midnight's Children. 1980. New York: Penguin, 1980. ISBN 0140132708.
- Smith, Zadie. White Teeth. 2000. New York: Vintage, 2001. ISBN 0375703861.
- Winterson, Jeannette. Oranges Are Not The Only Fruit. 1985. Grove, 1997. ISBN 0802135161.
- Woolf, Virginia. To the Lighthouse. 1927. New York: Harcourt, 1989. ISBN 0156907399.

### *Critical Studies:*

- Gregson, Ian. Postmodern Literature. London: Arnold, 2004. ISBN 0-340-81371-7.
- Matthews, Steven. Modernism. London: Arnold, 2004. ISBN 0-340-76325-6.

### *A Note about the Texts:*

- Literature and other forms of cultural production provide valuable opportunities for reflection on the full complexity of human experience, an activity that college-level education is designed to facilitate. Among other themes, our texts will ask students to engage issues of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, nationality, economics, and power. By enrolling in this course, you acknowledge that you understand that these topics are part of our subject matter and that you will be expected to read, discuss, and write about texts that address them.

## **Course Policies:**

### Requirements and Criteria for Evaluation:

#### *Grading:*

- **20% Essay, 5-6 pp.**, due at the beginning of class on **October 4**
- **10% Prospectus** for Final Paper **4-6 pp.**, plus an **Annotated Bibliography** of 3 scholarly sources; both due at the beginning of class on **November 8**

- **50% 12-15 pp. Research Paper**, due at 10:15 AM on **December 18**; for this paper, you may recycle content from your Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography, but not from your 4-6 page essay
- **2.5% Handout for Oral Presentation #1**, outlining an author's life and works
- **2.5% Short Oral Presentation**, min. 5 minutes, overview of an author's life & works
- **5% Long Oral Presentation**, min. 8-10 minutes, on the topic of your research paper, on either **December 4 or December 6**
- **10% Everyday Attendance and Participation**

In order to earn credit for ENGL 447, you must complete the 5-6 pp. essay, the prospectus and annotated bibliography, the research paper, and the group exercise in staging, as well as attend class regularly as outlined below.

This course will **not** be graded on a curve. Grading standards will follow UAF guidelines. Plus/minus grading will be used within the following ranges:

- A = An honor grade, indicates originality and independent work, a thorough mastery of the subject, and the satisfactory completion of more work than is regularly required
- B = Indicates outstanding ability above the average level of performance
- C = Indicates a satisfactory or average level of performance
- D = The lowest passing grade, indicates work of below average quality and performance
- F = Indicates failure to meet lowest standards

A note on **“What’s my grade?” queries**: I am responsible for returning graded essays and examinations to you during the semester but do not calculate grades until the end of the course except when required by UAF. Unless you are required by the university to submit grades partway through the semester, please do not e-mail me for an estimate of your final grade or for a tally of your absences earlier than that. If you desire an estimate of your grade earlier than the end of classes, you may calculate your own grade using the above percentages. The letter grades you receive on your assignment can be converted to numbers according to the following scale:

A	4
A-	3.7
B+	3.3
B	3
B-	2.7
C+	2.3
C	2
C-	1.7
D+	1.3
D	1
D-	0.7
F	0

When 100% of your assignments are graded, their totals are reconverted back to a letter grade using the above scale.

### *Graded Essay:*

For the first essay, due on **October 4**, I will distribute an Assignment Sheet containing essay topics and instructions in advance and discuss them with you in class; you should consider the Assignment Sheet to be an extension of this syllabus. They must be picked up in person and will not be distributed by e-mail. You are welcome to stop by my office hours to receive commentary on an early draft of your essay or to discuss preliminary plans for it. You may also e-mail me a thesis statement and outline for feedback, but not an entire draft of the paper.

The final version of your essays (and the drafts) must be submitted in hard copy; I do not accept essays sent by e-mail. Your essays should be typed in a font no larger than Times 12 and double-spaced, with pages numbered and margins no larger than one inch. At the top left, please write your name, ENGL 447, Dr. Coffman, the assignment number, and the date of the assignment. Papers must be stapled (before class—I do not carry a stapler). Unstapled papers are one of my pet peeves! When citing sources other than our assigned texts, include a Works Cited page; all documentation should be done in MLA Style. (Rasmuson Library and the Writing Center both have copies of the *MLA Handbook*, which explains MLA Style.) Also, please check your assignments carefully before submission. You alone are responsible for their completeness; papers with missing pages or other errors will not be returned for correction and will be graded in the state in which I receive them. To prevent the stress of last-minute computer or printer problems, I suggest that you not wait until the last minute to print your essays. You are also responsible for keeping a second paper copy (not just an electronic file) of each paper.

*Unexcused late papers will be penalized by one-half grade level per day late, including weekends.* Extensions will only be granted for compelling reasons for which you can provide documentation, and are more likely to be given if requested well in advance of the date due.

### *Prospectus and Research Paper*

For the Final Paper, I would like you to develop a topic—drawn from one or more of the assigned readings—that you would like to investigate in depth. The Final Paper should use at least four (4) scholarly sources, at least one of which must be an item available only in print, and argue a thesis about its topic.

The **Prospectus** due on **November 8** is designed to help you develop your material for the Research Paper by outlining the topic you would like to pursue in your paper. The prospectus should be focused on a central concern and articulate the questions that you would like to explore in your paper; you need not argue a thesis in the prospectus, though. The text of the prospectus should comprise 4-6 pp. and should be followed by an **Annotated Bibliography** that summarizes and evaluates at least three scholarly books or articles that you have read and found helpful in addressing your topic. At least one of these must be a print source available only in the library, and all must be drawn from scholarly books and journals rather than from popular magazines or general-interest books. I will distribute Instructions for the Final Paper and the

Prospectus, as well as a handout on preparing the Annotated Bibliography, well in advance of the Prospectus' due date, and you should take these as extensions of this syllabus.

*A Note on Sources for Essays:*

Whenever you include outside sources in your work for this course, you should be careful to select materials that are appropriate for a college essay. The UAF library hosts an extensive network of online databases that will point you to scholarly sources that are appropriate for use in college work; the librarians at the reference desk at Rasmuson Library can help orient you to them.

By contrast, using “Google” or other search engines to identify random sources for your work in this class is a quick way to jeopardize your grade. Many sites on the Internet contain materials that are not produced by experts or that are designed as online competitors for *Cliff Notes*; these sources have no place in a college essay. While some online encyclopedias are credible, Wikipedia is not compiled by experts and thus is also not an appropriate source in a university context. Papers that cite non-scholarly sources—whether from the Internet or elsewhere—will be downgraded one full grade level per non-scholarly source.

Before your Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography are due, we will be discussing strategies for determining appropriate sources; at that time, you will receive a handout on “Scholarly Vs. Non-Scholarly Sources” and should take it as an extension of this syllabus. I would be happy to provide this handout in advance to anyone that plans to use research in earlier papers.

*Plagiarism:*

While most people know that submitting papers written by others constitutes plagiarism, many often do not understand that it also includes using others' ideas and turns of phrase without appropriate documentation. Whenever you consult sources other than our assigned readings for your essays, you must attach a Works Cited page in MLA Style and refer to its contents (both direct quotations and paraphrases) within the body of your text using the MLA format. Keep in mind that materials available on the Internet must be credited in your work just like any other source; the *MLA Handbook* explains how to cite them properly.

Plagiarism can also take place through sloppy citation of our assigned texts or of outside sources: it is always important to distinguish your ideas and words from those of others. Pages 331-39 of Diana Hacker's *A Writer's Reference* (available in the UAF Bookstore and at the Writing Center), which explain how to integrate other authors' words into your essay while giving them proper credit, should help you to avoid accidental plagiarizing of the assigned texts. Because papers that do not properly use quotation marks or indentation to give credit to their sources violate academic integrity, you should be sure that you understand how to integrate quotations effectively.

Plagiarism is one of the most serious violations of academic integrity, and if I find that you have submitted a paper that is largely written by another person or lifted from the Internet (or any other source of prepared papers) you *will* receive an F for the assignment and for the course.

Moreover, if I find that any of your assignments includes some passages that have been lifted from others' texts without attribution, whether from printed texts or from the Internet, you will receive an F for the assignment, and possibly for the entire course as well. Please consult the Student Code of Conduct on pp. 80 of the *University of Alaska Fairbanks 2007-2008 Catalog* for UAF's policies concerning the serious consequences of plagiarism, cheating, and other violations of academic integrity, as well as your right to due process.

It is your responsibility as a student to understand and avoid plagiarism, and my role as university faculty to help you understand. If you continue to have questions about plagiarism after reading *A Writer's Reference* and the online materials, feel free to schedule an appointment with me or to drop by during office hours. It is much better to ask questions about whether you are citing your sources properly than not to ask and to submit something about which you are uncertain.

### *Oral Presentations:*

This course has been designed to fulfill the requirements for its O/2 designation by asking you to give two oral presentations.

For the **first oral presentation**, you will be asked to research and present to the class an overview of an author's life and works. This presentation must be a **minimum of 5 minutes** for it to count toward your fulfillment of the O/2 requirement. You will have the opportunity to sign up for an author at the beginning of the course, and may only change authors if you can find a classmate willing to trade with you.

For the **second oral presentation**, you will be asked to give a research-based sketch of the topic of your final paper. This presentation must be a **minimum of 8-10 minutes** for it to count toward your fulfillment of the O/2 requirement. You will be asked to sign up at the beginning of the course for a presentation that will take place on either Tuesday, December 4 or Thursday, December 6; only those students that can document an illness or other emergency in keeping with the course's attendance policy will be allowed to make up missed presentations. An Assignment Sheet will be distributed that will describe the requirements for this presentation, and those instructions should be taken as an extension of this syllabus.

### *Attendance:*

This is a classroom-based section, not an online or correspondence course; it is designed so that in-class activities are just as valuable to your learning as your written work. If you are not present for class, you will miss most of the material of the course, and effectively will not really have taken it. Thus, *prompt attendance at each class is required.*

You will be *excused* from class for illness (including the unexpected illness of an immediate dependent), personal or family emergencies, and religious holidays; in these situations, please send me an e-mail describing your situation. If your absence falls on the date of a test or an essay deadline, or if the quantity of your absences becomes excessive, I will ask for

documentation. Student athletes will be excused from class for competitions upon furnishing me with appropriate documentation, and should submit in advance all work due during absence.

You are also allowed two (2) “freebie” *unexcused* absences that you may use for any reason, after which point your final course grade will be lowered by one half grade-level per excess absence. Keep in mind that the “freebie” unexcused absences are not intended as “vacation” absences but rather as tools for resolving conflicts that may arise between your obligations as a student and your responsibilities in other parts of your life. Absences for reasons of work or family (other than emergencies as described above) fall under this “freebie” policy.

In any case, if you must miss class, please inform me by e-mail as soon as possible and contact a classmate to find out what you missed; after you have discussed the missed class with your classmate you are welcome to approach me with follow-up questions. You are responsible for all material covered in class, even if you are absent or late when it is discussed.

Finally, as the arrival of late students is extremely disruptive to the progress of the class, I ask that you arrive in class on time. If an emergency dictates that you absolutely must arrive late to a given class, try to enter through a back door and make as little noise as possible. Students who arrive late in class without a compelling explanation will have 1/2 of an unexcused absence noted in my grade book; be aware that these can quickly add up to significant deductions from your final grade!

#### *Participation:*

As this is a discussion-based course, your constructive participation in your own learning and that of your classmates will be key to your success. Accordingly, your work in group and class discussions will be graded. The quality of your participation in the course’s ongoing dialogue will determine the bulk of your participation grade. I may require occasional written in-class activities that will also contribute to a small portion of your mark for participation.

Some of the most productive learning experiences take place when different arguments are submitted to the tests of evidence and critical reasoning, so I encourage you to question the assertions of others and to express your own views during our discussions. To ensure that everybody in the classroom feels empowered to contribute, I ask that you be respectful in your choice of language and courteous in your interactions with all of the members of the classroom community.

#### Office Hours:

I keep 3 office hours per week, listed at the top of this syllabus. This is time that I make myself available to discuss any questions or concerns that you might have about the course: to comment on drafts of your paper, to clarify writing assignments and examinations, to answer questions about my feedback on your work, to discuss reasons for absence or other concerns about the course, or simply to chat about the assigned texts or courses that I plan to offer in the future. Generally you may drop in without an appointment during office hours, but if my office hours are very popular on a given day (the day before an exam is scheduled or a paper is due, for

example), I may post a sign-up sheet for your convenience. Also, if other obligations dictate that you can only appear in office hours at a specific time, feel free to contact me in advance to see if you can schedule accordingly.

Because university faculty have multiple responsibilities on campus, *I am only able to take unscheduled drop-in appointments during my posted office hours.* If you have a school- or work-related conflict with my scheduled office hours, I would be happy to consult with you briefly by e-mail (I can offer feedback on thesis statements but not entire papers that way) or to schedule an appointment at another time that I am on campus. *Please e-mail or talk to me in advance to identify a meeting time that fits both of our schedules.*

#### Cellular Phones and Other Noisy Devices:

Noises from cellular phones and other electronic devices are extremely disruptive to the class, and demonstrate a lack of respect for everyone in the room. I turn off my phone before class, and ask that you turn yours off as well. I reserve the right to ask you to leave for the rest of the day if your device makes noise in class.

#### Computers:

You will need to have Internet access and your UAF e-mail account for this course, and should check e-mail daily. You may check your UAF e-mail from off-campus computers by going to <http://webmail.uaf.edu>

#### Students with Disabilities:

I am happy to accommodate students with documented disabilities; if you plan on requesting such arrangements, please discuss them with me during the first two weeks of class. You will need to provide documentation of your disability to Disability Services in the Center for Health and Counseling, 474-7043, TTY 474-7045, in order to receive accommodations.

#### The Fine Print:

I reserve the right to modify this syllabus.

#### **Tentative Schedule:**

**9/6 (Th):** First day of classes

**9/11 (T):** Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Ch. 1 & 2, pp. 13-90  
Matthews, *Modernism*, Ch. 1 & 4

**9/13 (Th):** Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*, Ch. 3, pp. 90-124

**9/18 (T):** Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Ch. 1-2, pp. 5-101

Matthews, *Modernism*, Ch. 2 & 5

**9/20 (Th):** Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Ch. 3-4, pp. 102-173

From the Norton Critical Edition of *Portrait*:

- Cixous, "The Artist and the Law," pp. 361-366
- Lawrence, "Gender and Narrative Voice in *Jabob's Room* and *The Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," pp. 381-389

**\*\*\*Topics for October 4 Essay distributed in class\*\*\***

**9/21 (F):** Last day for student- or faculty-initiated drops

**9/25 (T):** Joyce, *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*, Ch. 5, pp. 174-253

From the Norton Critical Edition of *Portrait*:

- Valente, "Thrilled by His Touch: Homosexual Panic and the Will to Artistry in *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man*," pp. 422-439
- Eide, "The Woman of the Ballyhoura Hills: James Joyce and the Politics of Creativity," pp. 439-451

**9/27 (Th):** Forster, *A Passage to India*, Book I ("Mosque"), pp. 1-132

**10/2 (T):** Forster, *A Passage to India*, Book II ("Caves"), pp. 133-314

**\*10/4 (Th):** Forster, *A Passage to India*, Book III ("Temple"), pp. 315-362

**\*\*\*5-6 pp. Essay due at the beginning of class\*\*\***

**10/9 (T):** Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, "The Window," pp. 3-124

Matthews, *Modernism*, Ch. 3

**10/11 (Th):** Woolf, *To the Lighthouse*, "Time Passes," pp. 125-143, and  
"The Lighthouse," pp. 145-209

**10/16 (T):** Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, Books I & II, pp. 1-205

**10/18 (Th):** Hall, *The Well of Loneliness*, Books III-V, pp. 206-437

**10/23 (T):** Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, Part I, pp. 5-100

**\*\*\*Instructions for the Prospectus, Annotated Bibliography, and Long Oral Presentation distributed in class\*\*\***

**10/25 (Th):** Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*, Parts II & III, pp. 101-188

**10/30 (T):** Matthews, *Modernism*, Ch. 6  
Catch-up  
Final Paper Prep Day: Presentation by a librarian? Time for preliminary consultations with me about the final paper? Do let me know what will help.

**11/1 (Th):** Class does not meet: research day.  
Work independently on your Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography.

*11/2 (F): Last day for student- and faculty-initiated withdrawals*

**11/6 (T):** Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Part I, pp. 1-125  
Gregson, *Postmodern Literature*, Introduction & Ch. 4

**\*11/8 (Th):** Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, Part II, pp. 127-209

**\*\*\*Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography due at the beginning of class\*\***

**11/13 (T):** Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Book I, pp. 1-133

**11/15 (Th):** Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Book II, pp. 135-393

**\*\*\*Prospectus and Annotated Bibliography returned\*\*\***

**11/20 (T):** Rushdie, *Midnight's Children*, Book III, pp. 395-533

**11/22 (Th):** NO CLASS: THANKSGIVING HOLIDAY

**11/27 (T):** Student Choice: Carter or Winterson  
Gregson, *Postmodern Literature*, Ch. 2, Ch. 5

**11/29 (Th):** Student Choice: Carter or Winterson

**\*12/4 (T):** *Long Oral Presentations (Research-based)*

**\*12/6 (Th):** *Long Oral Presentations (Research-based)*

**12/11 (T):** Student Choice: Winterson or Smith

**12/13 (Th):** Student Choice: Winterson or Smith

**\*12/18 (T), 10:15 AM: Final Paper due to me in our regular classroom or to my mailbox in the English Department**