

# World Literature (ENGL 117-01) Fall 2020: Voices of Tradition and Challenge.



**Fall 2020: T 1 - 2:15 pm – Zoom**

**F 1 - 2:15 pm – Zoom**

**The zoom link below is a recurring one for the term:**

Professor Fawzia Afzal-Khan

Email: [khanf@montclair.edu](mailto:khanf@montclair.edu)

Spring Office Hours: TR 11am-12pm

Ext. 7309; office: Dickson 454

**Description:**

We will read some wonderful short stories, novels, poems, and plays, as well as watch some feature and documentary films from countries and cultures as diverse and rich as India, Pakistan, UK, Sudan, Algeria, Palestine and The Caribbean among others. Our aim will be to see how, in the same culture, writers and other artists, express at times, their

love of certain traditional values and beliefs, whilst at other times we can glimpse voices of resistance and change in their works.

**We Will Ask: *What are the historical and political conditions governing writers' artistic responses and aesthetic choices?***

Since this course is focused on work from the 20<sup>th</sup>—21<sup>st</sup> centuries, the material studied will help students grasp a better understanding of our world, focusing on issues of **colonialism** and its aftermath, and to the **neo-imperialist** moment we live in today.

**Additional Information:**

[TA] Alex Mazen

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**The Course:**

- Meets Gen Ed 2002—Humanities, World Literature or General Humanities.
- Meets the 1983 General Education Requirement (GER)-Humanities, World Literature, or General Humanities.
- (3 credits)

**Required Literary Texts (all available on Files section of Canvas in PDF folder):**

-Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* – (British/Polish)

-Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* – (Nigeria)

-Jamaica Kincaid, *Lucy* – (West Indies/USA)

-Tayyeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* – (Sudan)

-Kanafani, Ghassan. *Men in the Sun* – (Palestine)

**Required Literary Texts (available on Canvas course site in “Files”):**

-Rukhsana Ahmad, *We Sinful Women* – (Pakistan)

-Aime Cesaire, *Return to the Native Land*- (Martinique)

**Background Articles/chapters on Canvas in Files:**

Achebe, Chinua. “An Image of Africa.”

Daulatzai, Sohail. *Fifty Years of The Battle of Algiers: Past as Prologue*. U of Minnesota Press, 2016.

Afzal-Khan, Fawzia. "Charlie Hebdo and the Return of the Postcolonial." Online: *Counterpunch* <https://www.counterpunch.org/2015/01/21/charlie-hebdo-and-the-return-of-the-postcolonial/>

**Films:** (the ones with DVD numbers are on reserve for our course at Sprague; however, we will watch them together in class. **Fire** is available on youtube)

**Sugar-Cane Alley** (Martinique) (Call Number: DVD NO.1412: SUGAR CANE ALLEY)

**Fire** (India) (Call Number: VT NO.4769: FIRE)

**Reluctant Fundamentalist** (Pakistan/USA), Fawzia Personal Copy

**Apocalypse Now** (USA) (Call Number: DVD NO.22: APOCALYPSE NOW)

**Battle of Algiers** (Italy/Algeria) (Call Number: DVD NO. 590: BATTLE OF ALGIERS) Also available on streaming video at: <https://montclair.on.worldcat.org/oclc/900276236>)

## Requirements:

**[ ! ] NOTE: Everything listed below is a requirement; you cannot pick and choose assignments. Failure to hand in or participate in everything listed above can result in a failing grade for the course.**

- **Attendance and class participation (20%)**
  - **1 Group "Provocation" (20%). These will take place during the final two weeks of the semester (Dec 1-Dec 11)** – Each group is expected to present a dynamic discussion about issues and topics that the works assigned to them bring up. The purpose of this assignment is to allow you to dig deeper into questions you had as a result of the texts assigned to your group, but which we never got to explore fully in class. **The point is NOT to get stuck in the texts on things we have already covered before--**but rather, to make connections to historical, geographical, political, cultural contexts in which these works are set, and then connect these to contemporary events they evoke in your mind, through reference to music and artists and politicians and documentaries and other news and happenings on social media that link up to the questions these texts raised for your group, etc. etc. You should all use the "Collaborations" section of Canvas to work on a doc that I can also see. In your provocation (rather than a dull "presentation")-get creative, make up a powerpoint, insert media clips to provoke discussion and ask interesting, open ended questions that arise as a result of your collaborative exchange. You can also come up with some sort of activity that the rest of the class can engage in to illustrate your insights or questions etc
- Group 1: Your assigned texts are **We Sinful Women**, and the film **Fire**. (30 mins)
- Group 2: Your assigned texts are **Men in the Sun** and **Battle of Algiers** (30 mins)
- Group 3: Your assigned text is **Season of Migration to the North** (30 mins)
- Group 4: Your assigned texts are **Reluctant Fundamentalist** and the short story (available in Files) "My Son the Fanatic." Focus on their points of convergence and difference if you like; but also really investigate the careers of Riz Ahmed and Hanif Koreishi; and that of filmmaker Mira Nair (30 mins)

Group 5: Your assigned “texts” are the writers Jamaica Kincaid (**Lucy**) and Euzhan Palcy (**Sugar Cane Alley**) (30 mins)

Group 6: Your assigned “texts” are Achebe and Conrad--thinking of **Heart of Darkness**, and Achebe's accusations, Mark Twain's **King Leopold's Soliloquy** would be a good doc to look up, and to think of the destruction of colonial statues in Europe in the wake of Floyd's murder, etc....(30 mins)

**Group 7:** Your assigned “text” is the Vietnam War--explore its connections to other wars of our times, for eg the Afghan War. Look back at career of boxer Mohammad Ali (formerly Cassius Clay) and his stance, and that of Martin Luther King, on the Vietnam War. What else was going on in the 1960s of relevance to our class discussions? (30 mins)

**Important Note:** *Remember, these texts are meant only to serve as a basis for your reflections and questions; what I need to see you do is bring in other materials from outside of class which can help you "provoke" the class to join you in pushing your thoughts to the extreme outer edge! Interesting questions that point to the complexity of our world rather than any simple answers is what I'm looking for here...*

3) **Discussion Posts on Canvas=20%.** These are threaded discussions with due dates marked in each module, where EVERYONE needs to post **at least** 1 question or comment of their own first, then respond, raising a further question in 1 other response to another class member's question/comment (you can post more than 2 total responses each time, but are not required to). **Please refer to particular scenes in films we watch, lines spoken by characters or passages that grab your attention in the texts we read, as the basis for any questions/comments you make. As you get into the course readings/films, each subsequent discussion post should try to look back at earlier works studied and incorporate insights from them to build deeper, interconnected and increasingly more sophisticated questions and comments as the course progresses.**

**NOTE:** your participation in these online weekly discussions on Canvas is a requirement for this course, and the quality and quantity of your posts will factor into the final grade you receive for this course (20%).

**Grading Rubric: If you participate in at least 80% of the discussions, post intelligent and open ended comments and questions that touch on the main themes and topics, and cite accurately from the texts so that your responses and questions are specific, which show me you're reading rather than pulling ideas out of the air, you will get an A on this part of the course.**

**If you participate between 60-80% in the discussions, show you're engaged with others and have familiarity with the readings and films through adequate quotes, you will get a B in this portion of the course**

**If you participate less than 50% to 60% (missing almost a half of the discussions) and/or make only general observations that aren't backed up by specific quotes and references from the actual texts, and/or are not really engaged with themes of the course, you will get either a C or D grade.**

**Anything under 50% postings will automatically result in an F**

**I will assign grades for this assignment once around midterm, then at the end of term.**

**HERE ARE EXAMPLES OF WHAT I'M LOOKING FOR IN YOUR TWO ENTRIES PER POST:**

- 1) When Marlow says, "*insert quote here*" in the beginning of his speech to the others on the deck of the ship he is sitting on, I felt confused (*say why*) at first, but then wondered if "*your question here?*" Dig deeper, by adding "*or maybe, this could signal his.....*"
  
  - 2) Hey "*insert name of classmate whose question or comment you are responding to,*" I too was really puzzled by this description of Kurtz: "*retype the quote from text here your peer responded to.*" While I agree/disagree with what you are saying about....., I also find that im left questioning whether or not "*blahblahblah.*" Don't you think its therefore possible that Kurtz is also....?
- **One Midterm**, Essay Style Exam administered during class on Oct 13, which you must upload on to Canvas at the end of the class period. If you miss it you will not be allowed to make it up without a doctor's note. (20%)
  - **One Final**, Essay-Style Exam due on Sunday Dec 13<sup>th</sup> by 11:59 pm; you will have the question by Friday Dec 11<sup>th</sup>. (20%)

## **COURSE CALENDAR:**

**The course schedule is laid out in the modules section of Canvas. Please consult that for weekly readings and films as well as due dates of assignments.**

**Additional Information:**

Department website: <http://english.montclair.edu>  
My webpage: <http://english.montclair.edu/afzal-khan>



I love the smell of class in the afternoon