

**Faculty of Liberal and Professional Studies  
English Department**

**Course: FLAPS/EN 3410. 3 OA (F) – Caribbean Literature**

**Term:** (Fall Term) 2018

**Course Instructor**

Professor Diana Cooper-Clark  
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Course consultation: By appointment

**Time of Course**

Thursday, 11:30-2:30

**Expanded Course Description**

EN3410 concentrates on some of the poetry, short stories and novels of the British Caribbean as well as essays written by a few of the authors. Postcolonial theory and its applications to literature are often contested terrain. The course looks at how the literature negotiates representations of gender, race, class, sexual politics, marginalization, and other issues. EN3410 also explores the ways in which the master narrative and language of England are challenged and de-constructed in Caribbean literature and re-worked as 'nation language'. In addition, Caribbean film and videos have become an important part of the narrative discourse and the course will include showings of *Dance Hall Queen* and *Bazodee*.

**Organization of the Course**

The course incorporates a 'formal' lecture and tutorial format that encourages students to ask questions and contribute their ideas on the topic. The required readings and other class materials are central to the course. Attendance in class is crucial. Lectures and readings will provide necessary information, but an equally important aim of the course is to offer an occasion for learning to ask questions and express ideas clearly both at an oral and a written level. At the written level, effective thinking is clear and cohesive thought, and clear thinking relates closely to effective writing. Writing is a craft: with tools, with methods, with standards of excellence. Like any craft, it involves a process, and one can specify procedures. There is no **one** way of writing an excellent essay. One method is to first choose a central thesis, then organize the paper, write the first draft, revise the drafts,

complete the final copy making sure that ideas are coherent and perceptive and that the technical details of grammar, spelling etc. are correct. On the oral level, the requirements of the life writing project and class participation develop confidence for public communication and the ability to articulate and develop ideas beyond the written page. The life writing assignment reinforces what students are learning about narrativity, symbolism, and writing styles in Caribbean literature. The in-class test assesses students' abilities to remember what has been taught and demonstrate that she/he has understood the arts and ideas of EN3410.

### **Course Learning Objectives**

#### **Brief Statement of Purpose:**

The purpose of the course is to develop the students' abilities to read authors writing in both standardized English and the nation language (often called 'patois') of their countries. Students will learn the ways in which Caribbean writers destabilize and disrupt the master paradigms of the English canon while creating their own New World visions and literary styles. Students, in turn, will have to interrogate their own assumptions and perspectives about "Third World" literature and question the embedded ideologies that have supported the aesthetic power and superiority of Western literature.

### **Grading, Assignment Submission, Lateness Penalties and Missed Tests**

**Grading:** The grading scheme for the course conforms to the 9-point grading system used in undergraduate programs at York (e.g. A+ = 9, A = 8, B+ = 7, C+ = 5 etc.).

Assignments and tests will bear either a letter grade designation **or** a corresponding number grade (e.g. A+ = 90 -100, A = 80 – 89, B+ = 75 – 79 etc.)

For a full description of York's grading system see the York University Undergraduate Calendar – [http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04\\_5\\_acadinfo.pdf](http://calendars.registrar.yorku.ca/pdfs/ug2004cal/calug04_5_acadinfo.pdf)

**Assignment Submission:** Proper academic performance depends on students doing their work not only well, but on time. Accordingly, assignments for this course must be received on the due date specified for the assignment. Assignments are to be handed in at the end of class or brought to my office on the due date.

**Lateness Penalty:** Assignments received later than the due date will be penalized by the loss of one-half letter grade per day that the assignment is late. Exceptions to the lateness penalty for valid reasons such as illness, compassionate grounds etc. will be considered by the Course Director but will require supporting documentation (e.g. doctor's letter).

**Missed Tests:** Students with a documented reason for missing a course test, such as illness, compassionate grounds etc. which is confirmed by supporting documentation (e.g. doctor's letter) may request accommodation from the Course Instructor. This accommodation would be writing a make-up test on a mutually agreed upon date. Further

extensions or accommodation will require students to submit a formal petition to the Faculty.

### **Important Course Information for Students**

All students are expected to familiarize themselves with the following information, available on the Senate Committee on Curriculum & Academic Standards webpage (see Reports, initiatives, Documents):

[http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate\\_cte\\_main\\_pages/ccas.htm](http://www.yorku.ca/secretariat/senate_cte_main_pages/ccas.htm)

- York's Academic Honesty Policy and Procedures/Academic Integrity Website
- Ethics Review Process for research involving human participants
- Course requirement accommodation for students with disabilities, including physical, medical, systemic, learning and psychiatric disabilities
- Student Conduct Standards
- Religious Observance Accommodation

### **Brief list of specific learning objectives of the course**

The specific objectives of the course are that students will be able to:

- demonstrate the ability to apply postcolonial theory to literature
- develop their critical skills in the written and oral format
- critically examine multiple formations of gender, class, race, and other issues in relation to the postcolonial legacy

### **Course Texts/Readings**

**Additional readings may be recommended during the course.**

The following books and course kit are readings for the course.

Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Penguin Books) ISBN 978-0-14-118542-2

V.S. Naipaul, *A House for Mr. Biswas* (Penguin Books) ISBN 978-0-676-97562-8

Shani Mootoo, *Cereus Blooms at Night* (McClelland & Stewart) ISBN 978-0-7710-6400-5

Patricia Powell, *The Pagoda* (Harcourt Brace & Company) ISBN 978-0-15-600829-7

**Course Kit:** Some works of Derek Walcott, Dionne Brand, Louise Bennett, Jean Rhys, Austen Clarke, Samuel Selvon, Fred D'Aguiar, V.S. Naipaul, Willi Chen, Olive Senior.

### **Evaluation**

The final grade for the EN3410 will be based on the following items weighted as indicated.

One 1000-word paper (25%)

One 1700-word paper (35%)

One life writing presentation (20%)

One in-class test (10%)

Class participation (10%)

**Email Policy**

With the exception of weekends, illness or other catastrophic happenings, the Course Instructor will try to respond to emails within 24 hours, 48 hours at the most. If students require help with their written work, please send only the introduction and/or central thesis. If the work is longer than a paragraph, please make an appointment.