

TEXAS A&M UNIVERSITY
ENGL 481-902 AND AFST 481 – 500
Black British Literature
Spring Semester 2005

Instructor: Dr. P. K. Muana

Telephone: 979-458-3367 and **832-215-4258 (preferable)**

Office: Rm. 204E Blocker Building

Office Email: muana@tamu.edu **Home Email:** PKMuana@gmail.com

Office Hours: Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday 2:00 p.m. – 4 p.m. and by appointment.

LECTURE TIME – TR 12:45-2:00 p. m. ROOM: BLOC Room 109

Course Web Site – <http://www-english.tamu.edu/pers/fac/muana/blackbrit.htm> Check the web site regularly for all class updates. I will place electronic reading materials and copies of seminar presentations on the course web site. I will regularly make and distribute photocopies of all other class documents. All assignments and due dates will be available on the course web site as both word and PDF documents. Please send an Email to the instructor if you have questions about the course web site.

Library – I will be referring you to books and other resources located in the Evans Library. Please take some time to familiarize yourself with the location numbers I will give to you in class.

Primary Texts – Please purchase and read all of the following texts.

Sam Selvon	<u>The Lonely Londoners</u>	Longman, 1956	0582-64264-7
Buchi Emecheta	<u>In the Ditch</u>	Heinemann, 1972	0-435-90994-0
Diran Adebayo	<u>Some Kind of Black</u>	Virago, 1996	1-86049-143-X
Zadie Smith	<u>White Teeth</u>	Vintage, 2000	0-375-70386-1
Abdulrazak Gurnah	<u>By the Sea</u>	Bloomsbury, 2001	0-7475-5785-3
Caryl Phillips	<u>A Distant Shore</u>	Knopf, 2003	

Additional reading materials in various electronic and audio-visual media will be provided by the instructor on the course web site.

I will also make and distribute photocopies of additional secondary reading materials

Students also need an external storage device (CD-RW, Floppy Disk, USB drives etc) for keeping copies of work typed for this course.

University Writing Center -- <http://uwc.tamu.edu/hours.html> Do not hesitate to use the resources available to you at the University Writing Center.

ENGL 481, Senior Seminar, with "W" Designation

The Faculty Senate Core Curriculum Council has designated ENGL 481, Senior Seminar, a "W" course, one that will meet the University's new requirement of a writing course within a student's major beginning with the **127 Texas A&M University Under-graduate Catalog** (i.e., 2004-05). As a consequence, writing assignments and essay responses on examinations, regardless of their percentage of the final grade, take on a special significance. Students are expected to demonstrate writing skill. Any student who does not earn a passing average on the writing component(s) of the course cannot receive a passing grade in the course because of its "W" designation. The Department of English submitted the Senior Seminar, its capstone course for the major, for approval because it has always incorporated significant writing. In the interest of fairness, all students in the course—even students governed by earlier catalogs or who are not majors but are using the course for other requirements—are bound by the rules for "W" courses. For additional information on the requirements/expectations from students who take courses with the "W" designation, please see <http://uwc.tamu.edu/faculty/proposing/Checklist.html>

Course Description

The course focuses on fiction by black British writers since the arrival of the Empire Windrush in 1948, and it examines the contested notions of Black Britishness in those works. Using "black" in its most restricted sense to refer to people with an African heritage who have maintained a continuous presence on the British Isles as a consequence of such historical forces as the trans-Atlantic slave trade and Britain's numerous imperial ventures, the course is developed around the contested perception that the black experience in Britain should be examined solely in terms of the twin stable paradigms of race and identity. The course questions the notion of a unitary "Black Experience" enunciated mainly in autobiographical narratives. It encourages students to examine contemporary Black British fiction as it is situated and forged by larger cultural forces that are mutable, and culturally and spatially non-static and non-specific. Students will study how the Black British experience is complicated by, among other things, the Diaspora, displacement, racial admixture, gender and sexuality, and uncertain positions on nationhood. In addition, they will study trends in the evolution of genre in Black British fiction writing by studying how the earlier preference for the autobiographical narrative has been replaced with experimentation with other generic forms.

Learning Outcomes

At the end of this semester, students would have achieved the following:

- Understand and explain the issues, terms and concepts involved in discussing Black British fiction
- Understand the core concepts of Black Britishness (identity, representation, displacement, hybridity, transnationalism, migration, race, class, Britishness, British modernities/modernisms)
- Be familiar with the body of critical knowledge developed on Black Britishness and Black British writing
- Write clear, well-developed and well-organized essays that demonstrate rigorous critical thinking, mastery of writing skills, competence in integrating research into writing, and documentation of all primary and secondary sources
- Lead peers in academic discussions on the core issues/texts in the course.

Assessment

The following assessment schedule gives every student the opportunity to work with another student to create and lead class discussions on key elements of the readings in this course, work with another student on a collaborative oral report, write two individual papers and undertake research on a key area of interest.

Assessment	Description	Length	Grade %
Class Discussions	Two persons will lead two different class discussions based on class readings (one on a primary text, and one critical work on the primary text) – 10% each	1 page handout for the entire class – use your own words and use bullet points to highlight your discussion points	20%
Essays	Two brief take-home examinations – 20% each	At least 3 pages excluding the works cited list	40%
Final Research Paper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Propose a topic; do research (at least 5 book and/ or journal article sources) – 10% • Write the final paper – 30% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Highlight purpose, key issues and thesis • At least 5 pages excluding the works cited list 	40%
TOTAL			100%

Class Discussions – Two students will be asked by me to lead a class discussion on the discussion points of the day. This presentation is based on the course reading for the day's lecture. On the day of the presentation, the students will be expected to prepare a one-page handout for distribution to each person in class in which they will highlight key issues or passages pertinent to their class discussion. There will be one content-based presentation and one critical text based one. I will archive each presentation on the course web site. To get credit for this segment, the two presenters **MUST SEND AN ELECTRONIC COPY OF THEIR HANDOUT TO THE INSTRUCTOR BEFORE THE PRESENTATION** – PKMuana@gmail.com

Essays – There will be two very brief take home examinations. For these essays, students will be expected to demonstrate knowledge of critical scholarly works and readings that are relevant to the topics of the essays. The papers must be well thought out, well-organized and well-written. Students will be expected to demonstrate rigorous critical thinking, mastery of writing skills, competence in integrating research in their research, and documentation of all primary and secondary sources. All essays must be securely bound in a plastic folder. I will distribute a sample to everyone in class on the first class day.

Final Research Paper – The student will undertake substantial research for a five or more page essay that deals with a key issue that has stood out for him/her during the course of the semester. The student will propose a topic of research, present a working bibliography for that research topic and then write the research paper. The same expectations of critical thinking and excellent writing will apply to this paper as well.

Type set – Please use Arial 10 font, double-space for all papers submitted for this course.

Documentation – Please use the MLA format. If you have questions, either ask me or work with the good folks at the University Writing Center. I will discuss how to cite sources, use word processors to format papers and other essential techniques through out the semester.

Deadlines – Please follow the deadlines in the syllabus. I will not accept late essays without university-approved excuses. I will be available on telephone, in person or by Email if you wish to discuss special constraints and conditions. If you have no university-approved excuse, I will accept the paper but mark it down one letter grade.

Make-up Policy – I do not give personalized make-up tests. All students are assessed using the same assignments. I will give extensions on deadlines if you give me advance notice of your absence. I will not give make-up work for tests/assignments missed as a result of

unexcused/undocumented absences. See the Texas A&M student rules posted on the course web site for more information on this policy.

Quality of Work and grading – The assessment of all essays written in fulfillment of the requirements of this course will be based on the course's "W" designation. I will therefore be keeping copies of each of your essays for program assessment purposes. I expect well-organized, well-written, and documented essays and presentations written in grammatically correct English. This expectation means that students must put exceptional effort and initiative into writing, revising and editing their papers and handouts, as well as in preparing for the class discussions they will lead. I will deduct a significant number of points for spelling, grammatical, formatting and documentation mistakes. I will mount the assignments on the course web site one and one half weeks before they are due; I will return graded assignments within one week.

Attendance – I expect you to attend every class. The class meets between 12:45 p.m. and 2:00 p.m. Tardiness is disruptive, discourteous, and therefore unacceptable. If you must come late to class or leave early, please ensure that you send me Email notification for every event. If you fail to send me the Email notification, I will consider your early departure or late arrival as tardiness. I will record attendance at any time between 12:45 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. If you are not in class when I record attendance, I will mark you absent. After the first three recorded absences, I will deduct (without issuing a notice) 3% points from your final grade for each additional class meeting missed.

Class Policies -The class will be conducted along guidelines established in the Texas A&M University Student Rules - <http://student-rules.tamu.edu/> These policies cover a range of issues – attendance, classroom behavior, grade appeals, harassment, incompletes, and plagiarism.

Aggie Honor Code – Remember: "An Aggie does not lie, cheat, or steal or tolerate those who do." Please review the Honor Council Rules and Procedures on the web - <http://www.tamu.edu/aggiehonor> In addition, I will request you to sign the following statement for every major assignment you will be submitting for this course:

"On my honor, as an Aggie, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid on this academic work."

Signature of student

ADA

The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) is a federal anti-discrimination statute that provides comprehensive civil rights protection for persons with disabilities. Among other things, this legislation requires that all students with disabilities be guaranteed a learning environment that provides for reasonable accommodation of their disabilities. If you believe you have a disability requiring an accommodation, please contact the Department of Student Life, Services for Students with Disabilities in Room 126 of the Koldus Building, or call 845-1637.

Important Dates – From the TAMU Academic Calendar --

http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/records/academic_calendar.html#04a

January 17	Monday. Martin Luther King, Jr. Day. Faculty and Staff holiday
January 18	Tuesday. First day of spring semester classes.
January 24	Monday. Last day for adding/dropping courses for the spring semester.
January 28	Friday. Last day to apply for all degrees to be awarded in May.
March 14 - 18	Monday - Friday. Spring break.
March 25	Friday. Reading day, no classes.
April 5	Tuesday. Last day for all students to drop courses with no penalty (Q-drop). Last day to change Kinesiology 198/199 grade type. Last day to officially withdraw from the University.
April 21**	Thursday. Muster. Campus ceremony.
May 2	Monday. Dead day, classes meet but no major exams.
May 3	Tuesday. Last day of spring semester classes. Redefined day, students attend their Friday classes. Dead day, classes meet but no major exams.
May 4 - 5	Wednesday - Thursday. Reading days, no classes.
May 6	Friday - Spring semester final examinations for AFST 201 students.

****All dates and times are subject to change.** Approved 12/06/04 (OAR)

Final Exams Schedule – From TAMU Final Examination Schedule, Spring 2005

<http://www.tamu.edu/admissions/records/FESSpring2005.htm>

Final Examination Schedule – Spring 2004

WARNINGS

1. Some of the readings challenge, in dramatic ways, some views held by some students.
2. Some of the content may be offensive to the instructor and perhaps to some students because of cross-cultural differences. This in itself will be unacceptable as an excuse for not reading the materials.
3. Students are also expected to keep an open mind about the subject matter and avoid making unsubstantiated pejorative comments.
4. Members of the class will gain most from one another when we discuss issues with an open mind, but with academic rigor.

COURSE OUTLINE

WEEK 1 – JAN 17-21

TUES 18

Class discussion: The syllabus in detail, class policies, instructional materials, using the prescribed texts, teaching methods, assessment, and general orientation. Discussions on writing about literature

THURS 20

Class discussion: The Black presence in English Literature

Read before next class: Handouts distributed in class

WEEK 2 – JAN 24-28

TUES 25

Class discussion: Britishness and debates on notions of Black Britishness.

Read before next class: Handouts distributed in class.

Due in next class: Two class discussions (critical)

THURS 27

Class discussion: Class discussions & overview of core concepts in Black British literature.

Read before next class: Sam Sevlon The Lonely Londoners & articles distributed in class and on the course web site.

Due in next class: One class discussion (content)

WEEK 3 JAN 31-FEB 4

TUES 1

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on The Lonely Londoners

Read before next class: Articles distributed in class

Due in next class: One class discussion (critical work)

THURS 3

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on The Lonely Londoners

Read before next class: Articles distributed in class

Due in next class: One class discussion (critical work)

Examination 1 Due: February 17

WEEK 4 FEB 7-11

TUES 8

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on The Lonely Londoners

Read before next class: Buchi Emecheta In the Ditch & articles distributed in class and on the course web site

Due in next class: One class discussion (content)

THURS 10

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on In the Ditch

Read before next class: Continue reading In the Ditch and articles provided

Due in next class: One class discussion (content) and one class discussion (critical)

WEEK 5 FEB 14-18

TUES 15

Class discussion: Class discussions & lecture on In the Ditch

Read before next class: Diran Adebayo Some Kind of Black & articles distributed in class

Due in next class: Two class discussions (content)

THURS 17

Class discussion: Class discussions on Some Kind of Black and lecture

Read before next class: Articles distributed in class

Due in next class: One class discussion (critical)

Examination 1 Due: TODAY

WEEK 6 FEB 21-25

TUES 22

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on Some Kind of Black

Read before next class: Articles/notes distributed

Due next class: One class discussion (content)

THURS 24

Class discussion: Class discussion and lecture on Some Kind of Black

Read before next class: Zadie Smith White Teeth

Due next class: Two discussions (content)

WEEK 7 FEB 28-MAR 4

TUES 1

Feedback and Revision of Examination # 1

THURS 3

Class discussion: Class discussions White Teeth.

Read before next class: Articles distributed on Zadie Smith

Due in next class: One class discussion (content)

WEEK 8 MAR 7-10

TUES 8

Class discussion: class discussion on White Teeth

Read before next class: Article on Zadie Smith

Due in next class: One class discussion (critical)

THURS 10

Class discussion: Class discussion and lecture on Zadie Smith's White Teeth

Read before next class: Abdulrazak Gurnah By the Sea & articles distributed

Due by next class: One class discussion (content)

Examination 2 out Due March 29**MARCH 14-18 – NO CLASSES****WEEK 9 MAR 21-25**

TUES 22

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture on By the Sea

Read before next class: By the Sea & articles

Due next class: one class discussion (content) and one class discussion (critical)

THURS 24

Class discussion: Class discussions and lecture on By the Sea

Read before next class: Articles on By the Sea

Due next class: one class discussion (critical)

WEEK 10 MAR 28-APRIL 1

TUES 29

Class discussion: Class discussions and lecture on By the Sea

Read before next class: Articles on By the Sea

Due next class: one class discussion (critical)

THURS 31

Class discussion: Class discussion & lecture By the Sea

Read before next class: Articles about Caryl Phillips & A Distant Shore

Due in next class: one class discussion (critical)

WEEK 11 APR 4-8

TUES 5

Class discussion: Caryl Phillips (Class discussion)

Read before next class: A Distant Shore

Due by next class: one class discussion (content)

Class discussion: Class discussion (content) & lecture on A Distant Shore

Examination 2 Due April 19

THURS 7

NO CLASS – WORK ON ASSIGNMENTS

Due by next class: one class discussion (content)

WEEK 12 APR 11-15

TUES 12

Class discussion: Caryl Phillips (Class discussion)

Read before next class: A Distant Shore

Due by next class: one class discussion (content)

Topic and Working Bibliography DUE April 28

THURS 14

Class discussion: Caryl Phillips (Class discussion)

Read before next class: [A Distant Shore](#)

WEEK 13 APR 18-22

TUES 19

Discussion on Essay 2

THURS 21

Class discussion: Discuss topics

Due: Drafts of proposals

WEEK 14 APR 25-29

TUES 26

Discuss proposals

THURS 28

Proposals and Working Bibliography due TODAY

Read before next class: Focus on research paper

FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE: FRIDAY, MAY 6

WEEK 15 MAY 2-6

TUES 3

RE-DEFINED DAY: NO CLASS - FOCUS ON RESEARCH PAPER – DUE MAY 6

THURS 5

READING DAY: NO CLASSES – CONTINUE WORKING ON RESEARCH PAPER – DUE MAY 6

FRIDAY 6 – FINAL RESEARCH PAPER DUE