E372 Transnational Literatures:
Postcolonial Novels
Spring, 2007

Call #: 8464  Instructor: Bret Benjamin (bret@albany.edu)
TTH 11:45-1:05, FA 114  Office: Humanities 340 (442-4054)
Office Hours: TTH 1:15-2:15 (and by appointment)
http://www.albany.edu/faculty/bret/372/

Course Description
The *novel*—by which I mean both the literary genre and a conception of radical newness—underpins and undercuts the *postcolonial*. This course will examine novelistic writing from formerly colonized areas of Asia, Africa, Latin America, and the Caribbean in an effort to assess the novelities of the postcolonial both as an historical era beginning with the decolonization of the “Third World” in the aftermath of World War II, and as a body of critical and artistic production that collectively constitutes the academic discipline of postcolonial studies. Further, we will address the continued relevance of postcolonial studies in a contemporary historical moment, often referred to as “globalization,” which is marked not only by the legacies of colonialism, but also by what appear to be new and exacerbated forms of imperial intervention and exploitation.

The literary readings will be paired and supplemented with theoretical texts that help to define the field of postcolonial studies and that address some of its central themes including Nation and Culture, City and Country, Public and Private, Space and Movement, among others.

Required Texts
- Pramoedya Ananta Toer, *House of Glass* (Buru Quartet)
- Assia Djebar, *Children of the New World*
- Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*
- Amit Chaudhuri, *Freedom Song: Three Novels*
- Chris Abani, *Graceland*
- Jamaica Kincaid, *A Small Place*
- Patrick Chamoiseau, *Texaco*

*All books are available at Mary Jane’s Bookstore (215 Western Ave.)*

Breakdown of Grades
- Daily Reading Journals 15%
- Paper One 40%
- Paper Two 40%
- Participation 5%

Written Assignments
**Daily Reading Journals**
You will be expected to complete the assigned readings and post a brief (1-2 paragraphs) analytical response to the course website by 8:00 am on the day of each class. These can take the form of a new entry, or a substantive response to another student’s post. Over the entire semester, there are a total of twenty-three
class meetings for which you can post a journal entry. You get 3 “free passes” for days where you cannot post an entry in time. Otherwise you will be graded based on the number of entries you turn in with the following breakdown:

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<th>Entries</th>
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<td>17-23</td>
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<td>13-16</td>
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Two Essays
Handouts with specific details for each assignment will be passed out during the semester. Both papers will be roughly 5-7 pages in length. You will have the option to re-write the first paper if you choose.

Attendance Policy
Attendance is required. After three absences, I will lower your final class grade by one third of a letter for each additional class that you miss. I do not distinguish between excused and unexcused absences. You can miss three classes, and three classes only, before your grade begins to drop. If an extenuating situation arises such as a prolonged illness or a death in the family, you should contact me immediately and your absences may be excused as long as documentation from the Undergraduate Dean’s office is obtained. It is your responsibility to keep track of your own absences.

Lateness Policy
You are late to class if you arrive after I have finished calling roll. Two late arrivals will be the equivalent of one absence. If you do arrive late, see me after class to make sure I have marked you present for the class.

Plagiarism
Plagiarism is a very serious academic offense and, as such, instances of plagiarized materials will be dealt with harshly. Depending on the severity and the details of the case, I reserve the right to file formal disciplinary action with the University (a process that often results in suspension or expulsion) and the right to impose a grading penalty that may go so far as to issue a failing grade for the entire course. DO NOT PLAGIARIZE.

From the University Guidelines on Scholastic Integrity:

Presenting as one's own work the work of another person (for example, the words, ideas, information, data, evidence, organizing principles, or style of presentation of someone else). Plagiarism includes paraphrasing or summarizing without acknowledgment, submission of another student's work as one's own, the purchase of prepared research or completed papers or projects, and the unacknowledged use of research sources gathered by someone else. Failure to indicate accurately the extent and precise nature of one's reliance on other sources is also a form of plagiarism. The student is responsible for understanding the legitimate use of sources, the appropriate ways of acknowledging academic, scholarly, or creative indebtedness, and the consequences for violating University regulations.

Examples of plagiarism include: failure to acknowledge the source(s) of even a few phrases, sentences, or paragraphs; failure to acknowledge a quotation or paraphrase
of paragraph-length sections of a paper; failure to acknowledge the source(s) of a major idea or the source(s) for an ordering principle central to the paper’s or project’s structure; failure to acknowledge the source (quoted, paraphrased, or summarized) of major sections or passages in the paper or project; the unacknowledged use of several major ideas or extensive reliance on another person’s data, evidence, or critical method; submitting as one’s own work, work borrowed, stolen, or purchased from someone else.

Schedule of Readings

1/18  Introduct

1/23  Anderson, from Imagined Communities (E-RES)
      Balakrishnan, from Mapping the Nation (E-RES)
1/25  Appadurai, from Modernity at Large (E-RES)
1/30  Pramoedya, House of Glass
2/1   Pramoedya, House of Glass
2/6   Pramoedya, House of Glass
2/8   Pramoedya, House of Glass
2/13  Kincaid, A Small Place
2/15  Kincaid, A Small Place
      Life and Debt (video)
2/20  No Class
2/22  No Class
2/27  Fanon, “On National Culture” (E-RES)
      Djebar, Children of the New World
3/1   Djebar, Children of the New World
3/6   Djebar, Children of the New World
3/8   Amit Chaudhuri, Freedom Song (A Strange and Sublime Address)
      Writing Workshop
3/13  Paper One Due
3/15  Amit Chaudhuri, Freedom Song (A Strange and Sublime Address)
3/20  Hall, “When Was “The Post-Colonial”? (E-RES)
      Rushdie, Midnight’s Children
3/22  Rushdie, Midnight’s Children
3/27  Rushdie, Midnight’s Children
3/29  Rushdie, Midnight’s Children
4/3   No Class
4/5   No Class
4/10  Chamoiseau, Texaco
4/12  Chamoiseau, Texaco
4/17  Chamoiseau, *Texaco*
4/19  Davis, from *Planet of Slums* (E-RES)
      Triulzi, “African Cities, Historical Memory and Street Buzz” (E-RES)
4/24  Abani, *Graceland*
4/26  Abani, *Graceland*
5/1   Abani, *Graceland*
5/3   Writing Workshop
5/8   No Class—extended office hours
5/10  (Final Exam Date) **Paper Two Due**