

## ANG 1002 READING FICTION FICTION AND THE IDEA OF EMPIRE

INSTRUCTOR: TAIWO ADETUNJI OSINUBI

TIME: MONDAY 4-7 PM

VENUE: PAV. JEAN-BRILLANT B4240

OFFICE HOURS: MONDAY 11-14.00 & WEDNESDAY 14.-16.30 OFFICE: C8120

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All who have meditated on the art of governing mankind have been convinced that the fate of empires depends on the education of youth.

--Aristotle

To plunder, to slaughter, to steal, these things they misname empire; and where they make a wilderness, they call it peace.

--Publius Cornelius Tacitus

Empire is materializing before our very eyes.

--Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri

In this course, students will learn how to analyze and write about fiction. Through close readings and contextualizations of selected texts, we will develop interpretations in which we pay attention to elements such as plot, setting, characterization, point of view, and language. We will also explore the connections between the pleasures of reading and how we write about fiction. The novels and short stories selected for this class come out of different experiences of empire. For our purposes, empire will mean the forceful extension and exercise of political power over hitherto independent countries or groups of people. We will identify the narrative forms authors use to capture or interrogate political power, bureaucratic machinery, cultural chauvinism and colonial violence. We will pay equal attention to the recuperative strategies of authors who write about hope, healing and dissident political subjectivities.

### Reading List

Michelle Cliff, *Abeng*.

Marina Lewycka, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine*.

Tonu Onnepalu, *Border State*.

Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*.

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*.

Joseph Conrad (et al), *Heart of Darkness, The Who Would Be King, and Other Works of Empire*.

Amnesty International USA, *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

### Requirements and Assessment:

Your grade will be based on participation (10%); one mid-term (20), and one final exam (30%); two short papers (40%).

### Schedule

#### Week 1 January 9 INTRODUCTION

Jean-Luc Paquette, *La face cachée de l'empire Wal-Mart* [enregistrement vidéo].

#### Week 2 January 16

Tônu Onnepalu, *Border State*.

#### Week 3 January 23

Rudyard Kipling, *Kim*

Paper #1 assigned in class.

#### Week 4 January 30

Joseph Conrad (et al), *Heart of Darkness, The Who Would Be King, and Other Works of Empire*.

#### Week 5 February 6

Joseph Conrad (et al), *Heart of Darkness, The Who Would Be King, and Other Works of Empire*.

**Paper #1 due at the beginning of class.**

#### Week 6 February 13

Michelle Cliff, *Abeng*.

#### Week 7 February 20 Mid-term Exam

**Week 8 February 27**

Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*.

**Week 9 March 12**

Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*. [Cont'd.]

Marina Lewycka, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine*. [Introduction of the novel]

**Paper #2 assigned.****Week 10 March 19**

Marina Lewycka, *A Short History of Tractors in Ukraine*. [Cont'd.]

**Week 11 March 26**

Amnesty International USA, *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

**Paper #2 due at the beginning of class.****Week 12 April 2**

Amnesty International USA, *Freedom: Stories Celebrating the Universal Declaration of Human Rights*.

**Week 13 April 16 Final Exam****Course requirements**

This course requires student participation; we will spend at least a sizeable part of each meeting in small groups that report to the class. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings. We may be concentrating on specific aspects of our reading list as the term proceeds. Such decisions will be taken during class discussions. The mid-term exam will address topics we covered in class up to that date. The final exam will mainly focus the second half of the term, but the questions will require knowledge of the critical terms we have acquired over the course of the whole term. The take-home essays will give students the choice of writing a 4-5 page answer to one of two questions. The essay will be graded on the basis of 1) the quality of the argument, 2) the attention to textual analysis, 3) the use of critical concepts we would have used in the course, and 4) the organisation of the essay.

**Conduct**

All students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an effective learning environment and according to university rules and regulations on classroom behaviour.

**Academic integrity/Plagiarism**

The unacknowledged use of another author's work will not be tolerated. Academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to department and university regulations.

Students are advised to familiarise themselves with the policies of the Faculté des Arts et des Sciences:

[www.fas.umontreal.ca/plagiat](http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/plagiat).

**Communication**

We shall use several lines of communication to ensure a vibrant rapport throughout the course. You may send me emails regarding any course related issues you may like to discuss, but please allow a window of at least 24 hours—excluding Saturdays and Sundays—for me to respond to your emails. Students are also welcome to meet or call me during my office hours. I will be sending all email communications concerning the course to the Université de Montréal (umontreal.ca) addresses that I receive from the department. It is the duty of each student to reroute emails to other internet addresses—if they do not use their UdeM addresses.

**Evaluation policies**

Assignments must be submitted in class on the due date unless students request (and receive) an extension.

Requests for extensions must be made in writing **before** the due date. Late submissions will be penalized—I deduct 5% for each late day including Saturdays and Sundays.

**Please do not email or fax assignments to me.**

Assignments that cannot be handed in to me personally should be submitted in the English department main office (C8132-Pavillon Lionel-Groulx).