Overview of Literary Study II:
Representative Selections in World Literature

ENGL 2121, Spring 2026
Tuesdays & Thursdays, 6:30-7:45pm, Zoom

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Office hours: by appointment (over Zoom)



Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775–1851)
The Harbor of Dieppe: Changement de Domicile, exhibited 1825, but subsequently dated 1826
Oil on canvas
The Frick Collection, New York, NY

Description: This course examines literature and culture from nineteenth-century Romanticism to the modernist and postmodernist movements. It is the second half of a two-course general overview with three principal focuses: 1) the major literary and intellectual movements of world literature, in historical perspective; 2) the close reading of texts across genres; and 3) literature as viewed through the various lenses of contemporary theory and critical discourses. We will approach these matters by traveling widely across literary time and geography, from early nineteenth-century England, to mid-nineteenth-century New England and the Pacific, to early twentieth-century Detroit, and finally to mid twentieth-century Sudan and the Caribbean. We will study Romanticism, Realism, Modernism, Postmodernism, and Postcolonialism; we will read some poetry, but our primary focus will be on literary narrative, including novels, a short story, and a novella. The literature we will read will not always be easy going: some of the writing may be difficult or confusing; some of the central themes include challenging, potentially unsettling topics, such as racism and slavery, class and hierarchy, imperialism, and gender and sexuality, but also liberation, freedom, revolution, and the joy of living. We will be looking to determine what literature can tell us about the world we inhabit, including how the world's material and ideological forms are structured. We will be reading to confront some of the hard aspects of global society, but also for pleasure and beauty, for what literature can show us about the power of art in a world dominated by violence and oppression.

Course objectives

1) To introduce you to major literary and intellectual movements in historical perspective
2) To familiarize yourself with the language of literary analysis and the close reading of texts
3) To understand literature through the various lenses of contemporary theory and critical discourses

Requirements, Assignments, and Procedures

Participation: This course requires substantial reading and writing and is organized around student discussion. As a result, your participation is vital, both for yourself and for the class as whole. I hope and expect that every student will contribute actively and consistently to the ongoing class dialogue, and I realize that participation can take a variety of forms. *Indeed, the best way to do well in this class is to engage as fully as you can with all of your intelligence*. Please come to every class session having completed the assigned reading carefully and thoughtfully. In addition, please *bring to every class at least one passage from the day's reading* that you feel is especially significant and that you are prepared to share with the class. You should select a passage and write one 150-word response to the passage, "unpacking" what you think are its central ideas. These will be due in Google Drive at the beginning of each class session.

Attendance: Do your best to attend every class meeting. You are permitted two absences before your grade is affected; *five absences constitute grounds for failing the course*. Please notify me in advance if you have to be absent from class and contact a classmate to find out what you missed. Even though the class is on Zoom, arriving late to class still can disrupt your classmates' learning as well as your own, so repeated tardiness will also negatively affect your grade. Again, *the biggest factor in your grade is quite simply your effort and participation!* Come on time to class, contribute actively by sharing your ideas on the Zoom call, and put forward your best thinking and your best work at all times. If things get in the way of your doing this, please let me know so we can discuss your situation. I am always available by email at amalinowski@gradcenter.cuny.edu.

If you need to miss a class due to religious observance, kindly let me know well in advance, so I can make accommodations, as explained in New York State Education Law (Title I, Article 5, Section 224-a) and the college bulletin.

Most weeks, you will be responsible for two activities. **First,** you will read the assigned readings. **Second**, (as stated above) you will bring to every class at least one passage from the day's reading that you feel is especially significant and that you are prepared to share with the class. You should select a passage and write one 150-word response to the passage, "unpacking" what you think are its central ideas. Please pose one question about the passage or that day's reading you have at the end of your response. These will be due in Google Drive at the beginning of each class session.

Formal assignments: There will be one final term paper at the end of the semester. The paper will be 8 pages long and will be a comparative analysis of two of the texts we read this semester, applying the theories we discussed in class to the text. More detailed instructions for this paper will be available towards the end of the semester. I will give you ample time to write and also workshop your papers with your peers in order to produce the highest quality writing you are capable of.

Grading: Your grade for the semester will be determined by the following: your attendance and participation in class (33%); your reading responses (33%); your final essay (33%).

Academic integrity: Academic dishonesty is prohibited in The City University of New York. Penalties for academic dishonesty include academic sanctions, such as failing or otherwise reduced grades, and/or disciplinary sanctions, including suspension or expulsion. Academic integrity is at the core of a college or university education. Faculty assign essays, exams, quizzes, projects, and so on both to extend the learning done in the classroom and as a means of assessing that learning. When students violate the academic integrity policy (i.e., "cheat"), they are committing an act of theft that can cause real harm to themselves and others including, but not limited to, their classmates, their faculty, and the caregivers who may be funding their education. Academic dishonesty confers an unfair advantage over others, which undermines educational equity and fairness. Students who cheat place their college's accreditation and their own future prospects in jeopardy.

1. Definitions and Examples of Academic Dishonesty.

    1. **Cheating** is the unauthorized use or attempted use of material, information, notes, study aids, devices, artificial intelligence (AI) systems, or communication during an academic exercise. Example of cheating include:
        - Copying from another person or from a generative AI system or allowing others to copy work submitted for credit or a grade. This includes uploading work or submitting class assignments or exams to third party platforms and websites beyond those assigned for the class, such as commercial homework aggregators, without the proper authorization of a professor. Any use of generative AI tools must be in line with the usage policy for specific assignments as defined in the course of the syllabus and/or communicated by the course instructor.
        - Using artificial intelligence tools to generate content for assignments or exams, including but not limited to language models or code generators, without written authorization from the instructor.
        - Unauthorized collaboration on assignments or examinations.
        - Taking an examination or completing an assignment for another person or asking or allowing someone else to take an examination or complete an assignment for you, including exams taken on a home computer.
        - Submitting content generated by another person or an AI tool or any other source as solely your own work as your own, including, but not limited to, material obtained in whole or in part from commercial study or homework help websites, or content generated or altered by AI or digital paraphrasing tools without proper citation.
        - Fabricating and/or falsifying data (in whole or in part).
        - Giving assistance to acts of academic misconduct/dishonesty.
        - Altering a response on a previously graded exam or assignment and then attempting to return it for more credit or a higher grade without permission from the instructor.
        - Submitting substantial portions of a paper or assignment to more than one course for credit without permission from each instructor.
        - Unauthorized use during an examination of notes, prepared answers, or any electronic devices such as cell phones, computers, smart watches, or other technologies to copy, retrieve, generate or send information.

    2. **Plagiarism** is the act of presenting ideas, research or writing that is not your own as your own. Examples of plagiarism include:
        - Copying another person's or an AI tool's actual words or images without the use of quotation marks and citations attributing the words to their source.

- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source.
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework and laboratory assignments.
- Internet plagiarism, including submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, or "cutting & pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.
- Unauthorized use of AI-generated content; or use of AI-generated content, whether in whole or in part, even when paraphrased, without citing the AI as the source.

The BC Learning Center: The Learning Center provides free tutoring in courses across the curriculum. Students can get help at any stage of the writing process, from brainstorming to outlining, to composing, to proofreading. I highly recommend a visit to the Learning Center, and may encourage it in this class. For more information, go to http://lc.brooklyn.cuny.edu, call 718-951-5821, or email LC@brooklyn.cuny.edu.

Student Disability Services: To receive disability-related academic accommodations, students must register with the Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS). The Center for Student Disability Services (CSDS) is currently working remotely. Students who have a documented disability or suspect they may have a disability are invited to schedule an interview by calling (718) 951-5538 or emailing testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu. If you have already registered with CSDS, email Josephine.Patterson@brooklyn.cuny.edu or testingcsds@brooklyn.cuny.edu to ensure the accommodation email is sent to your professor. I am happy to work with you on the accommodations you may need.

As an educator, I support the rights of undocumented students to an education. If you have any concerns in that regard, feel free to discuss them with me, and I will respect your wishes concerning confidentiality. For resources and support, please check out Brooklyn College's Immigrant Student Support Office, website: Immigrant Student Success Office.

In addition, the College has a range of other student support services, including: a Personal Counseling service (0203 James Hall: 718-951-5363), a *free* Health Clinic (114 Roosevelt Hall: 718-951-5580), an office of Veterans Services (1407 James Hall: 718-951-5105), a Black and Latino Male Initiative office (3309A James Hall: 718.951.5766), a Women's Center (227 Ingersoll Hall: 718-951-5777), an LGBTQ Resource Center (Student Center 219-221; 718-951-5739), a Food Pantry (524 Student Center: 718-951-5059), and the Carrol and Milton Petrie Student Emergency Grant Fund "for the purpose of providing quick-response emergency grants to students in good standing with short-term financial emergencies." The BC Women's Center has a range of terrific services and activities, including peer counseling and mentoring, open office hours, yoga and meditation sessions, and more.

Brooklyn College is committed to fostering a safe, equitable, and productive learning environment. Students experiencing any form of discrimination or harassment on or off campus can find information about the reporting process, their rights, specific details about confidentiality, and reporting obligations of Brooklyn College employees on the Office of Diversity and Equity Programs website:
https://www.brooklyn.cuny.edu/web/about/offices/diversity.php

If you have a name and/or use pronouns that differ from your official CUNY record, please let me know (feel free to speak with me or email me) so I can address you properly and correct my own records. If there are other things you want me to know that may shape your participation in the class, please reach out to me, and I will respect your wishes concerning confidentiality.

Required Course Texts

New, used, or borrowed (from a library, from a friend) copies of the texts below are fine. For this class, paper copies are required except under certain circumstances (please discuss with me if you cannot obtain paper copies of the books) since that allows for a material engagement with the text (including writing in the margins). You should be able to find these books in a wide range of locations: new and used book stores, on-line book sellers, libraries, the book shelves of friends or relatives. New and used copies can readily be found online.
**If purchasing a paper copy of a book is not possible for you in some way, you are free to use a PDF copy from the web. The first two texts, in particular, are in the public domain (no longer protected by copyright) and can be readily found online. If you choose to read a digital version of the text for accessibility reasons, I still ask that you markup the document digitally or take notes in a separate notebook by hand or in a text document, as active and engaged reading is really important. When referencing the text in class, please use the ctrl+f (find) function (on Windows) or cmd+f (on Mac) to locate the passages we are discussing by searching for keywords (since page numbers will not sync up with the paper copies).
If you are on a smartphone, there is typically a "find" feature built into most mobile browsers (there is one in Safari on the iPhone for instance).

- Charlotte Bronte, *Jane Eyre* (Penguin Classics Deluxe edition recommended)
**if you are unable to purchase this book, any free PDF you can find online is okay
- Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (any edition)
**paper recommended, but if inaccessible to you, a any free PDF you can find online is okay
- Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (Vintage edition)
**this I recommend you purchase a paper copy of, since it is not yet in the public domain, though there is a PDF online available here
- Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Norton edition)
**again, I will always recommend the paper copy, but there is a PDF here
- Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (New York Review of Books edition)
**once more, a paper copy is recommended, but just in case, there is a PDF here

Schedule

Tues (1/27): Introductions, syllabus review, read William Wordsworth "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" (1807) and analyze William Turner's *The Harbor of Dieppe*

Thurs (1/29): Read in class Percy Shelley's "Ozymandias", "England in 1819", and "Ode to the West Wind"
***Resource: The Introduction to British Romanticism at the Poetry Foundation

Tues (2/3): Read for class: Terry Eagleton, "What is Literature?" and begin Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (first 100 pages)

Thurs (2/5): Cont. discussion of *Jane Eyre* first 100 pages

Tues (2/10): *Jane Eyre* cont. (pages 100-200) plus read Robert Dale Parker *How to Interpret Literature* (chapter on Feminism) (PDF will be provided)

Thurs (2/12): No Class: college closed

Tues (2/17): No Class: no classes scheduled at BC this day

Thurs (2/19): Finish *Jane Eyre* (pages 200-400) and read Terry Eagleton *Myths of Power* (chapter on *Jane Eyre*) (full PDF will be provided)

Tues (2/24): Read for class Introduction to Herman Melville and "Bartleby, The Scrivener" (1853)

Thurs (2/26): Continue discussion of Bartleby and the theme of refusal; in class writing prompt: "I prefer not to"

Tues (3/3): Read for class: excerpts from Melville's *Moby Dick* ("Etymology", "Extracts", Chapters 1-19, Chapters 32 "Cetology", Chapter 42 "The Whiteness of the Whale", Chapter 119 "The Candles", Chapters 132-135, "Epilogue")

Thurs (3/5): Continue discussion of *Moby Dick*

Tues (3/10): Read for class: Toni Morrison "Unspeakable Things Unspoken: The Afro-American Presence in American Literature" (part II only), Michael Rogin "Melville and the American 1848" (PDF will be provided), and *How to Interpret Literature* (chapter on Marxism) (PDF will be provided)

Thurs (3/12): Read for class: Charles Olson *Call Me Ishmael* (pages 1-25 only) and continue discussion of secondary literature on *Moby Dick*

Tues (3/17): Read for class: Edward Said *Orientalism* (introduction) and Robert Dale Parker *How to Interpret Literature* (chapter 10 on Postcolonialism) (PDF will be provided)

Thurs (3/19): Read for class: first half of *Season of Migration to the North*

Tues (3/24): Read for class: second half of *Season of Migration to the North*

Thurs (3/26): Continue discussion of *Season of Migration to the North*

Tues (3/31): Read for class: first half of Jean Rhys *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1966)

<<SPRING BREAK 4/1—4/9>>

Tues (4/14): Read for class: second half of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and Stuart Hall "Cultural Identity and Diaspora"

Thurs (4/16): Wrap up discussion of *Wide Sargasso Sea* and postcolonialism

Tues (4/21): Toni Morrison *Song of Solomon* (first third), secondary literature TBD

Thurs (4/23): No Class: Tuesday class followed a Thursday schedule

Tues (4/28): *Song of Solomon* (second third)

Thurs (4/30): Finish *Song of Solomon*

Tues (5/5): Assign final paper

Thurs (5/7): Workshop paper outlines

Tues (5/12): Workshop paper quarter drafts

Thurs (5/14): Continue to workshop paper half drafts and wrap up semester

Final papers due 5/24 by 11:59pm