

Postmodern Fiction, Summer 2010
Eng 66991/76991

Introduction:

This course will focus on the works of major American postmodernist authors and our interaction with these texts as informed by the latest theoretical explanations of the postmodern condition. Thus, we will attempt to understand both the literary texts as well as the theoretical debates about postmodernism itself and the role of postmodernist fiction in the world of high capitalism, globalization, and with reference to the resurgence of the state during the current global financial meltdown.

Required Texts

Hutcheon, Linda. *A Poetics of Postmodernism*

Postmodern Fiction: A Norton Anthology. New York: W. W Norton, 1998.

[Pynchon, Thomas](#). *The Crying of Lot 49*.

[Vonnegut, Kurt](#). *Slaughterhouse Five*.

[Reed, Ishmael](#). *Mumbo Jumbo*.

[Delilo, Don](#). *Libra*.

[Butler Octavia](#). *Parable of the Talents*.

Handouts

[Postmodernism: An Introduction](#).

Ihab Hassan--[Toward a Concept of Postmodernism](#).

Terry Eagleton--[The Contradictions of Postmodernism](#).

Regarding Postmodernism--[A Conversation with Fredric Jameson](#).

J Habermas--[Modernity: An Unfinished Project](#).

Suggested Texts

McHale, Brian. *Postmodernist Fiction*.

Liotard--[The Postmodern Condition](#).

Course Policies and Requirements:

You are expected to come prepared for class: This involves reading the assigned texts, listening carefully to your peers, and contributing your views in a collegiate and stimulating way.

Attendance is mandatory.

Distribution of Points:

Presentation 200 Points

Mid-Term 200 Points

Online Journal responses 200 Points.

Participation 100 Points

Term Paper 300 Points

Total 1000 Points

YOU MUST FINISH ALL MAJOR ASSIGNMENTS TO PASS THE COURSE

Response Journals:

Every week you will post your response to the readings on the discussion thread provided on the course website. To be able to do this you must create a user name on the website (<http://postcolonial.net>); you will share this user name with me for me to be able to keep a record of your postings. Your response must at least be 500 words.

Presentation:

During the first week you will choose a particular novel for your presentation. Your presentation will then fall in the week in which your chosen novel is scheduled for class discussion. I expect a 30-40 minutes **FORMAL PRESENTATION** using the insights provided by the secondary readings. You must also turn in a 3-5 page written brief of your presentation with a detailed list of your scholarly sources. Following are some, but not all, questions you may consider:

- What does the text say about gender, race, ethnicity, class, nation, or power and what are your views about it?
- Did you agree or disagree with the text's politics? why?
- What is the text critiquing?
- How can we relate this text to contemporary realities?
- Does this text raise the question of justice? If so, how and for whom?
- Does the text provide a politics for a better future?

Mid-Term Exam:

The Mid-term will be an in-class essay exam administered in the third week.

Class Participation:

As this is a seminar based on a discussion format, your thoughtful participation is essential to the success of the class. I encourage collegiate, open, and thought-provoking class discussions. Remember, we are all here to learn, so let us share our ideas and knowledge to make this class into a dynamic learning experience.

Term Paper:

The final term paper will be due on the last day of class. The paper should be 15-20 pages, with a clearly defined thesis and a coherent argument. I would encourage you to choose your topic early and do extensive research. I will be available to assist during all stages of your research and composition process.

Attendance:

You are expected to attend the class regularly. You will be in the danger of failing the course if you miss more than THREE class sessions.

Cheating and Plagiarism:

(Excerpt from the University's Administrative policy and procedures regarding student cheating and plagiarism. Excerpted from University Policy Register #3342-3-07)

ADA

University Policy 3342-3-01.3 requires that students with disabilities be provided reasonable accommodations to ensure their equal access to course content. If you have a documented disability and require accommodations, please contact the instructor at the beginning of the semester to make arrangements for necessary classroom adjustments. Please note, you must first verify your eligibility for these through Student Accessibility Services (contact 330-672-3391 or visit www.kent.edu/sas for more information on registration procedures).

Grading Scale:

A 950-1000
A- 900-949
B+ 860-899
B 830-859
B- 800-829
C+ 760-799
C 739-759
C- 700-729
D+ 660-699
D 630-659
D- 600-629
F Less than 600 Points

Weekly Schedule:

(Note this is a tentative schedule and the instructor retains the right to change it as and when necessary)

Week 1

Introduction to the course
Presentation Assignments
Text: Hutcheon

Week 2

Norton--Introduction
Norton--[Burroughs \(Crab Nebula\)](#) & [Barthelme \(Sentence\)](#); [Gass \(In the heart of . . .\)](#) O'Brien, Anzaldua, Coover (A night at the Movies) and Morrison.

Week 3

Mid Term on TR.

Norton: [Doctorow](#), [Barth](#) (Dunyazadia)

Delilo--*Libra*

Week 4

Vonnegut--Slaughter House Five
Reed, Mumbo Jumbo

Week 5

Pynchon, Crying of Lot 49.
Butler, Parable of the Talents
Final papers due on TR.