

Syllabus for ENG 210-99

Approaches to Literature

(Stacia Bensyl)

English 210-99 Approaches to Literature: Commonwealth Literature

MTWThF 8:30-12:00 MC 211

Department of English, Foreign Languages and Journalism

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Required Texts: Emecheta, Buchi. *In the Ditch*.

Lim, Geok-Lin and Norman A. Spencer. *One World of Literature*.

McCourt, Frank. *Angela's Ashes*.

Course Objectives:

Upon completion of English 210-99 you should be able to:

Identify and appreciate the qualities of Commonwealth Literature

Analyze Commonwealth Literature in terms of those qualities

Write about Commonwealth Literature and discuss it in class

Think critically about Commonwealth Literature

To reach these objectives you will:

1. Write a daily reading journal over the reading assignments for that day. It must be 1 to 2 word-processed, double-spaced pages, and it will be turned in to me at the beginning of the hour each day. Each journal assignment is worth 10 points.
2. Take daily quizzes over the reading assignments. Each quiz is worth 10 points and quizzes cannot be made up. If you are not in class to take the quiz, you simply lose the points for that assignment.
3. Take a final exam on Friday, May 26, 8:30-12:00. The final exam is worth 200 points.
4. Research on the Web the phenomenon of *Angela's Ashes*. 50 points.

Academic Honesty:

I abide by the standards for academic honesty outlined in the student handbook. If I suspect you are claiming another's work as your own, or cheating in any way, I will report you to the department chair and the dean.

Attendance:

I expect you to attend every class. Missing a class is the equivalent of missing an entire week of classes during a normal semester. The class content is very concentrated during intersession, and I trust that students who sign up for the class know about the time constraints we are up against. Quizzes cannot be made up. I realize, also, that emergencies come up now and again. I am willing to give ONE excused absence, per my approval, for such emergencies. Even one unapproved absence will result in your failing the class. I know that sounds Draconian, but we really need everyone here every day for the class

dynamics to work the way they ought, and for you to get as much out of the class as you possibly can.

Students with disabilities:

Any student in this course who has a disability that prevents the fullest expression of his/her abilities should contact me personally as soon as possible so that we can discuss class requirements.

Grading policy:

90-100% = A
80-89% = B
70-79% = C
60-69% = D
59-0% = F

What is Commonwealth Literature?

Many of you may be unsure about what Commonwealth Literature is. Very simply, it is the literature that has come from the countries Great Britain once colonized or held. The Commonwealth is comprised of former British colonies or territories. These countries are not possessions of Britain anymore. They all work together as a conference of independent nations who have former ties with the British Empire. We will be studying the literature of some of the following Commonwealth countries: Australia, New Zealand, India, and Trinidad. Ireland and South Africa seceded from the Commonwealth. Therefore, I guess you could say I'm taking liberties and using the term in its broadest possible context. Singapore and Egypt and Nigeria all have British ties, as does Israel. And there are others. Much of what you will "get" from this course is what you discover on your own. Maybe someday you'll be watching a National Geographic special and it will remind you of something you we discussed in class. Maybe someday you'll have a classmate or coworker or friend who comes from a Commonwealth country or a country with British ties. It might be in retrospect that you use what you'll learn in this class, but as the world shrinks and we become a much more global people, it's imperative that we know as much about each other as possible. A good way to learn about people is through their literature.

I'm sure you'll come to class with many questions. Expect to meet many differences in the literature we read. Sometimes it will challenge your comfort zone. Sometimes you'll barely be able to relate to what's happening in the text. What's important is that you allow yourself the opportunity to read the assignments with your eyes as wide open as you possibly can. You might be amazed at what you see.

Course schedule:

5-11 Introduction--Film on Commonwealth history, film on Hinduism
5-12 "Gateman's Gift" "Breast-Giver" "The Interview"
5-15 "A House of Flesh" "The Happy Man" "Another Evening at the Club"
5-16 "Nomad and Viper" "The Land of Sad Oranges"
5-17 *In the Ditch*
5-18 *The Swamp Dwellers*
5-19 "Civil Peace" "A Soldier's Embrace" "The Hajji"
5-22 "The Pyrotechnicist" "Shoemaker Arnold" photocopied Walcott poems
5-23 "The Cooboo" "Clothes Make the Man" "Mr. Parker's Valentine"
5-24 "His First Ball" "Skeleton of the Great Moa . . ." "Dancing Girls"
5-25 *Angela's Ashes* *Angela's Ashes* assignment due
5-26 FINAL