

LT132 - MIGRATION AND EXILE. JOURNEYS THROUGH IMPERIAL SPACE

Seminar Leader: Laura Scuriatti
Course Times: Mondays and Wednesdays, 10.45-12.15
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Office Hours: online by appointment

This course is being offered jointly with the OSUN Microcolleges for Connected Learning and will include students studying remotely from Kenya and/or Jordan.

Course Description

How is it possible to narrate the experiences of estrangement, disorientation and surprise born out of the encounter with a foreign place which is also supposed to feel like "home"? How does life go when you look or sound different to the majority of people in that space? And what kind of voice, what kind of form, can make this experience visible?

We look at three journeys taken by narrators who are connected to the imperial space they wander in: voices created by Jean Rhys, of Welsh, Scottish and Creole descent, born on the Caribbean island of Dominica and later resident in London, Paris, and Vienna; Sam Selvon, a West-Indian writer born in Trinidad who also lived in London, and finally the Nigerian-American author Teju Cole.

In considering the following works - Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark* (1934), Sam Selvon's *The Lonely Londoners* (1956), Teju Cole's *Open City* (2011) - we also look at how the narration of exile becomes an exposure of the dreams, projections, and delusions of the imperial "center" and its ordering of the world.

Requirements

Students are required to attend all classes, to come to class prepared and with the relevant materials and textbooks. Participation consists in contributing productively to class discussion in a respectful manner, and in demonstrating a sound knowledge of the texts assigned. Participation also includes contributing to the creation of online materials and to online discussions of texts, for example through posting comments and short pieces on padlets or other digital formats, as assigned by the instructor.

All assignments must be completed in order to pass the course.

Textbooks (to be purchased or borrowed from the library):

Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark* (Penguin). ISBN: 978-0141183954
Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners* (Penguin). ISBN: 978-0141188416
Teju Cole, *Open City* (Faber and Faber). ISBN: 978-0571279432

All other texts will be available in digital format on googledrive and/or on the reserve shelf in the library. Please contact the librarian for information on available copies of the required texts.

Attendance

Please note that attendance at ALL classes is expected. To account for minor circumstances, two absences (that is, two absences from classes of 90 minutes) do not affect the participation grade or require documentation. Absences in excess of two will affect the participation grade. After two absences students who need to be absent for serious reasons or in order to attend a conference should submit the relevant documentation to the instructor, in order for the absences to be excused. Bard College Berlin does not offer credit for any course in which a student has missed more than 30% of classes, regardless of the reasons for the absences, whether excused or unexcused.

The full Bard College Berlin attendance policy can be found in the Student Handbook, Section 2.8.

If students need to begin the semester remotely due to travel restrictions caused by the pandemic, they should contact Laura Scuriatti before the start of the semester in order to agree on alternative forms of attendance and participation.

The course may take place in presence or online, depending on the restrictions in place.

In case of in-presence classes:

- All students must refrain from in-person attendance if they are feeling ill.
- All students must wear masks in an orderly manner (covering both mouth and nose) at all times during class.

Should the class take place online, please note the following:

- **Have an adequate internet connection.** If your home has an adequate internet connection, you are welcome to attend class from home. If your home internet connection is inadequate for video conferencing, it is your responsibility to find another suitable location. If needed, you can contact the Registrar to reserve a room on campus from which to participate in the seminar.
- **Have a working camera and microphone.** Keep your camera on during seminar discussions. The camera should be directed so that your face is visible. Lighting should come from the front so that you are visible. (Avoid a set-up with a window behind you.) If needed, you can contact the Registrar to reserve a room on campus from which to participate in the seminar or to make arrangements to use BCB computing resources.
- **Have a physical copy of the reading with you for each seminar.**
- **Participate in online forums.** The participation grade includes assigned posts to a communal classroom resource such as a Google Doc or Padlet.

(Separate provisions will be made for students enrolled in the OSUN Microcolleges for Connected Learning program).

Assessment and Writing Assignments

Required assignments for the course are: ONE ESSAY of 2500 words, ONE PRESENTATION on a chosen text among the ones assigned, ONE WRITTEN EXAM and ONE RESPONSE PAPER of 1000 words.

Response papers are short pieces written in response to assigned texts and should be sent per email or handed in before the class in which the chosen text is discussed.

Students can choose the topic and date of presentation. Presentation notes should be handed in to Laura Scuriatti for assessment.

Should you need to discuss your draft or any matters concerning assignment, please do get in touch with Laura Scuriatti per email for an appointment.

Policy on Late Submission of Papers

Essays that are up to 24 hours late can be downgraded up to one full grade (from B+ to C+, for example). Instructors are not obliged to accept essays that are more than 24 hours late. Where an instructor agrees to accept a late essay, it must be submitted within four weeks of the deadline. Thereafter, the student will receive a failing grade for the assignment. Grades and comments will be returned to students in a timely fashion. Students are also entitled to make an appointment to discuss essay assignments and feedback during instructors' office hours.

Students receive mid- and end-of-semester grades for their seminar work. Students are entitled to make an appointment with an instructor to discuss seminar participation, or may be asked to meet with the instructor at any stage in the semester regarding class progress.

Academic Integrity

Bard College Berlin maintains the staunchest regard for academic integrity and expects good academic practice from students in their studies. Instances in which students fail to meet the expected standards of academic integrity will be dealt with under the Code of Student Conduct, Section 14.3 (Academic Misconduct) in the Student Handbook.

Grade Breakdown

Essay: 25 %
Presentation: 20 %
Response paper: 10 %
Exam: 25%
Participation: 20%

Course schedule

Week 1 – Introduction

Monday 1 February

Introduction to the course and discussion

Readings:

Stuart Hall, *Familiar Stranger. A Life Between Two Islands* (selection)

Catherine Hall, "What is a West-Indian"?

Wednesday 3 February

George Lamming, *The Pleasures of Exile* (selection)

Lorna Goodison, "The Caribbean Imaginary, for Ifeona Fulani" and "Daffodil-Bashing" from *Redemption Ground. Essays and Adventures*

Weeks 2-3 – Jean Rhys's *Voyage in the Dark*

Monday 8 February to Wednesday 17 February

Readings for the weeks:

Jean Rhys, *Voyage in the Dark*

Jean Rhys, *Letters, 1931-1966* (selection)

Weeks 4-5 – Caribbean Literature and Diaspora: issues and terminology

Monday 22 February

James Clifford, "Diasporas"

Wednesday 24 February

Readings:

Nancy Morejón, "Race and Nation"

Monday 1 March

Jean Bernabé, Patrick Chamoiseau and others, "In Praise of Creoleness"

Wednesday 3 March

Edouard Glissant, "Creolization in the Making of the Americas"

Week 6 – Violence and Language

Monday 8 March: NO CLASS – FEDERAL HOLIDAY

Wednesday 10 March

Franz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (selection)

Week 7 – Metropolitan Space: Perception, Aesthetics, Ideology

Monday 15 March

Raymond Williams, "Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism" in *The Politics of Modernism*

Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air* (selection)

Wednesday 17 March

Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life* (selection)

Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* (selection)

Week 8 – Migration, Metropolis and Empire

Monday 22 March: WRITTEN EXAM

Wednesday 24 March: ONLINE LECTURE (Caroline Patey, University of Milan)

Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Week 9: Spring Break

Weeks 10 - Migration, Metropolis and Empire

Wednesday 7 April

Sam Selvon, *The Lonely Londoners*

Week 11 – Migration, Metropolis and Empire

Monday 12 April

Film: Steve McQueen, *Small Axe*, Episode 2

Wednesday 14 April

Discussion on *Small Axe*

Week 12 – The Strangeness of Strangers

Monday 19 April

Zygmunt Bauman, *Strangers at Our Doors* (selection)

Wednesday 21 April

Linda Nochlin, “Art and the Condition of Exile”

Weeks 13 – 14 – Open City

Monday 26 April to Wednesday 5 May

Teju Cole, *Open City*

Week 15 – Exile and Memory

Monday 10 May

Readings for the session:

André Aciman, *False Papers. Essays on Exile and Memory* (selection)

Wednesday 12 May

Open session

COMPLETION WEEK: 17-21 MAY

20 MAY, 23:59 HRS: FINAL ESSAY DUE