

## Full Module Description, 2010/11

<b>Module Title:</b>	<b>Contemporary Literature in a Global Context 2 (Compulsory)</b>
<b>Module Short Name:</b>	<b>CLG</b>
<b>Module SITS ID (if known):</b>	<b>ELI2012</b>

<b>Module Provider (AOU):</b>	<b>English</b>	<b>Subject (3 letters):</b>	<b>ENG</b>
<b>Level:</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>Number of Credits:</b>	<b>15</b>
<b>Module Co-ordinator:</b>	<b>BP</b>		

<b>Module Availability:</b>	<b>Semester 2</b>
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### Assessment Pattern

<b><i>Unit(s) of Assessment</i></b>	<b><i>Weighting Towards Module Mark( %)</i></b>
<b>Comparative Essay (2000 words)</b>	<b>40%</b>
<b>Exam: (one critical response to an extract; one open-book essay question) 2 hours</b>	<b>60%</b>
<b>Qualifying Condition(s)</b> <b>None</b>	

### Pre-requisite/Co-requisites

<b>none</b>
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### Module Overview

This module sets out to look at how English literature is constructed in a Global context. It does not set out to describe the cultural productions of various countries or continents, but explores what it means to write today in a world-wide frame, how that globalised context affects the content and forms of writing, and how the process of reading is altered. As such, the module addresses prominent global issues and uses these key areas as a way of understanding how literature engages with the major factors in world society today.

It builds upon the level 1 module which allows for thematic linking of world writing via the 1960s, developing students' ability to think comparatively and creatively. The assessment for the module is designed to draw upon enquiry-based learning in order to reflect the currency of the topic and the way that these issues will change even as students research and write about them.

### Module Aims

The module aims to:

- deepen and widen students' knowledge of world literatures;
- increase knowledge and awareness of how literature engages with social and cultural issues;
- develop an understanding of contemporary literature in a global context;
- further students' skills in terms of IT competency, written communication and oral presentations;
- introduce students to self-reflexive Enquiry Based Learning;
- strengthen students' ability to undertake analysis and critical thinking;
- develop further skills in independent study and group work

the ability to work to deadlines via ULearn activities.

## Learning Outcomes

By the end of the module students will have achieved:

- a wide and relatively sophisticated understanding of world literatures;
- knowledge of and ability to analyse how literature engages with social and cultural issues;
- an understanding of how contemporary literature is contextualised in a global framework;
- an ability to use group networking resources in an e-learning environment;
- a good level of oral presentation and written communication skills;
- ability to undertake self-reflexive enquiry based work;
- a good level of skill in analysis and critical enquiry, as well as in independent study time management skills.

## Module Content

The module is based thematically on issues identified by the English Benchmark Statement as key to the understanding of English Literature. It then frames these in a global context. It is taught with a one-hour lecture and a one-hour seminar each week.

Theme: Nationhood

### Week 1

#### Lecture (BP)

This lecture expands the understanding of multiracial concerns by looking at material beyond the UK. The focus for this lecture is Yann Martel's novel *Life of Pi* (2001) and we will consider questions of transformation, survival and story-telling in a postcolonial and postmodern context.

#### Seminar

We will look at the different interpretations and 'meanings' of the text, the role of the reader in postcolonial fiction, and difficulties posed by an 'unreliable narrator'

### Week 2

#### Lecture: (MWD)

While this has been a much-disputed issue for centuries, the lecture will focus on the way the development of national identity in the latter part of the twentieth century has been questioned and challenged by twenty-first century authors. The theme has two strands: one which looks at the development of the Asian 'giants', in particular, China; and two the breakdown of the commonwealth, subsequent postcolonial writing and the challenges to that still imperial-centred approach demanded by today's global framework. The focus will be on Amy Tan's discovery of the 'real' China in *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (2001).

#### Seminar:

Discussions of nationhood and what it means today in a global context.

### Week 3

#### Lecture: (MWD)

This week the lecture turns to the changing understanding of commonwealth/postcolonial writing, questioning these categories within an Australian context. The lecture will discuss the 'Stolen Generations' through a reading of Doris Pilkington Garimara's *Follow the Rabbit-proof Fence* (1996) and the film adaptation, *Rabbit-Proof Fence* (2002); it will trace the way in which the policy of removing Aboriginal and mixed-race children from their families and relocating them in white environments has both fractured and interrogated Australian identity as well as highlighting key postcolonial changes in our understanding of nationhood and responsibility.

#### Seminar:

Discussions of nationhood and the role of children in constructions of national identity and cultural legacies.

### Week 4

#### Lecture (BP)

We will focus on *Woza Albert!*, a play collaboratively written by Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon to consider how literature (and particularly theatre) can be used to protest against abuses of power and to give voice to the marginalised.

Seminar:

Close reading and discussion exploring use of mimicry and physical performance and the relationship between religion and nationhood.

Theme: Faith

Week 5

Lecture (DA)

This lecture explores questions of atheism and the conflict between faith and secularism in American culture & society. The focus for discussion will be Alan Moore and Dave Gibbon's graphic novel, *Watchmen*.

Seminar:

We will discuss the ways in which different cultural forms respond to and reflect issues of faith and morality.

Week 6

Lecture (MWD)

Stresses that controversies over faith are not always the ones we expect. Looks at the history of Christianity in the UK and across the globe, dealing with conflicts and challenges. The focus will be on Philip Pullman's *Dark Materials Trilogy*.

Seminar

Looking at faith in a wider context and dealing with comparison of religions themselves and of national and global responses to the concerns the writers engaged with.

Week 7

Lecture (CE)

David Mitchell's ambitious *Cloud Atlas* (2004) will be the subject of this lecture. We will focus on the way that narrative form and style (time-shifts, sci-fi, fragments etc) are used to comment on the nature of humanity and systems of 'belief'

Seminar

Close reading of key stories from the text and discussion of the relationship between genre, style and substance in contemporary fiction

Theme: Writing the Post 9/11 World

Week 8:

Lecture: (GT)

The lecture will discuss Ian McEwan's novel, *Saturday* (2005) and its engagement with personal and political responses to global terrorism and the Invasion of Iraq.

Seminar:

Discussion on role of literature & culture in global and political protest

Week 9

Lecture (GT)

Mohsin Hamid's *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (2007). This lecture explores the novel's depiction of a complex and contradictory meeting of Islamic fundamentalism and American "freedoms" in Post 9/11 New York.

Seminar:

Group debate focused on the challenges of reading provocative, contextually specific writing

Week 10

Lecture: (AF)

In this lecture we will read Jonathan Safran Foer's *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (2005). We will return to see how the debates set up by Hamid's novel are articulated from a self-consciously American perspective.

Seminar:

Comparative analysis of *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* and *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close*. How convincing is the idea of Post 9/11 fiction as a generic category?

Week 11

Lecture (BP)

Overview of themes, texts and contexts explored on the module in preparation for final exam

Seminar

Discussion on status of contemporary fiction: how to begin identifying a contemporary canon. Revision preparation and practice questions.

Week 12 Revision

Week 13 Exams

Week 14 Exams

Week 15 Exams

Assessment deadlines

Comparative Essay: 30/03/2011

Exam tbc

Methods of Teaching/Learning

Teaching will be in a weekly one-hour lecture and a weekly one-hour seminar.

Selected Texts/Journals

Essential Reading

Jonathan Safran Foer, *Extremely Loud and Incredibly Close* (Penguin, 2006)

Doris Pilkington Garimara, *Follow the Rabbit-Proof Fence* (1996) available miramax books 2002

Alan Moore and Dave Gibbons, *Watchmen* (London: Titan Books, 1986)

Mohsin Hamid, *The Reluctant Fundamentalist* (Hamish Hamilton, 2007)

Yann Martel, *Life of Pi* (Edinburgh: Canongate, 2001)

Percy Mtwa, Mbongeni Ngema, and Barney Simon, *Woza Albert!* (1983) available (London: Methuen Drama Modern Classic, 2009)

Ian McEwan, *Saturday* (London: Vintage, 2006)

David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas* (Sceptre, 2004)

Philip Pullman, *His Dark Materials Trilogy* (London: Scholastic, 2007)

Amy Tan, *The Bonesetter's Daughter* (New York: Flamingo, 2001)

Recommended Reading

General

Acherson, James and Sarah Ross (eds), *The Contemporary British Novel since 1980* (London: Palgrave, 2006)

Bromley, Roger, *Narratives for a New Belonging: Diasporic Cultural Fictions (Tendencies: Identities, Texts, Cultures)* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 2000)

Currie, Mark, *Metafiction* (London: Longman, 1995)  
 Damrosh, David, *What is World Literature?* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton UP, 2003)  
 Edwards, Justin D., *Post-Colonial Literature* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2008)  
 Gandhi, Leela, *Postcolonial Theory: A Critical Introduction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh UP, 1998)  
**Head, Dominic, *The Cambridge Introduction to Modern British Fiction* (Cambridge: CUP, 2002)**  
 Hutcheon, Lina, *The Politics of Postmodernism* (London: Routledge, 2002)  
 - *A Poetics of Postmodernism: History, Theory, Fiction* (London: Routledge, 1988)  
 Walkowitz, Rebecca, 'The post-consensus novel: Minority culture, multiculturalism and transnational comparison in *The Cambridge Companion to the Twentieth-Century English Novel*, ed., Robert L. Caserio (Cambridge: CUP, 2009), pp. 223-237.  
 Walder, *Post-colonial Literatures in English: History, Language, Theory* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1998)  
 Waugh, Patricia, *Postmodernism: A Reader* (London: Hodder Arnold, 1992)  
 - *Metafiction: The Theory and Practice of Self-Conscious Fiction* (London and NY: Routledge, 1984, 2001)  
 Wisker, Gina, *Key Concepts in Postcolonial Literature* (London: Palgrave, 2006)

#### **Martel**

Armstrong, Philip, *What Animals Mean in the Fiction of Modernity* (London: Routledge, 2008)  
 Dwyer, June, 'Yann Martel's Life of Pi and the Evolution of the Shipwreck Narrative', *Modern Language Studies* Vol. 35, No. 2 (Fall, 2005), pp. 9-21  
 Sielke, Sabine "The Empathetic Imagination": An Interview with Yann Martel  
*Canadian literature*. no. 177, (2003): 12

#### **Tan**

**Adams, Bella, *Amy Tan* (Manchester UP, 2005)**  
 Adams, Bella, Martin Helliwell and Andy Mousley, *Asian American Literature* (Edinburgh UP, 2008)  
 Bloom, Harold. Ed, *Amy Tan: Modern Critical Views* (Chelsea House Publishers, 2008)  
**Huntley, E.D., *Amy Tan: A Critical Companion* (London: Greenwood, 1998)**  
 Wong, Cynthia Sau-ling, *Reading Asian-American Literature* (Princeton UP, 1993)

#### **Pilkington**

Brewster, Anne, "'The Stolen Generations': Doris Pilkington interviewed by Anne Brewster" *Journal of Commonwealth Literature* 42 (2007), 143-159.  
 Bringing them Home Project, <http://www.nla.gov.au/oh/bth>  
<http://www.eniar.org/pdf/Rabbit-proofFence.pdf>  
 Collins, Felicity and Therese Davis, *Australian Cinema after Mabo* (Cambridge: CUP, 2004)  
 Cranston, C.A. and Robert Zeller, ed., *The littoral Zone: Australian Context and their Writers* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2007)  
 Pilkington, Doris and Christine Olsen, *Rabbit-proof Fence: Screenplay* (Currency Press Pty Ltd, 2002)  
 Whitlock, Gillian, "From biography to autobiography" in *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Literature* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000) available from ebooks in the library.

Webby, Elizabeth, *The Cambridge Companion to Australian Fiction* (Cambridge: CUP, 2000)

**Mtwa, Ngema, Simon**

Banham, Martin and Jane Plastow, eds., *Contemporary African Plays* (London: Methuen, 1999) – an anthology containing *Woza Albert!* with an interesting introduction  
Crow, Brian and Chris Banfield, *An Introduction to Postcolonial Theatre* (Cambridge: CUP, 1999)

Kruger, Loren, *The Drama of South Africa: Plays, Pageants and Publics Since 1910* (London: Routledge, 1999)

Thiongo, Ngugi Wa, *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature* (Heinemann, 1986)

**Moore and Gibbons**

Klock, Geoff, *How to Read Super-Hero Comics and Why* (NY and London: Continuum, 2002)

Gibbons, Dave, Chip Kidd and Mike Essl, *Watching the Watchmen: The Definitive Companion to the Ultimate Graphic Novel* (Titan Books, 2008)

Van Ness, Sarah J, *Watchmen as Literature: A Critical Study of the Graphic Novel* (McFarland and Co., 2010)

**Pullman**

Lenz, Millicent and Carole Scott, eds., *"His Dark Materials" Illuminated: Critical Essays on Philip Pullman's Trilogy* (Wayne State UP, 2005)

Squires, Clare, *Philip Pullman, Master Storyteller: A Guide to the Worlds of His Dark Materials* (Continuum, 2007)

**Mitchell**

Dix, Hywel, *Postmodern Fiction and the Break Up of Britain* (NY and London: Continuum, 2010) – available as an e-book through the library

Haraway, Donna, "A Cyborg Manifesto: Science, Technology, and Socialist-Feminism in the Late Twentieth Century," in *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature* (New York: Routledge, 1991), pp.149-181. Also available online at <http://www.stanford.edu/dept/HPS/Haraway/CyborgManifesto.html>

**McEwan**

Childs, Peter, *The Fiction of Ian McEwan: Reader's Guides to Essential Criticism* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005)

Head, Dominic, *Ian McEwan: Contemporary British Novelists* (Manchester UP, 2007)

Groes, Sebastian, *Ian McEwan: Contemporary Critical Perspectives* (Continuum, 2009)

Knapp, Peggy A., 'Ian McEwan's Saturday and the Aesthetics of Prose', *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, Vol. 41, No. 1, Fortieth Anniversary Issue (Fall, 2007), pp. 121-143

Tew, Philip, *The Contemporary British Novel* (London: Continuum, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 2007)

Wells, Lynn, *Ian McEwan* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2009)

**Hamid**

Chomsky, Noam, *9/11* (NY: Seven Stories Press, 2001)

- ***Power and Terror: Post 9/11 Talks and Interviews* (NY: Seven Stories Press, 2004)**

Van der Veer, Peter and Shoma Munshi, eds., *Media, War, and Terrorism: Responses from the Middle East and Asia* (London: Routledge, 2004)

Žižek, Slavoj, *Welcome to the Desert of the Real!: Five Essays on September 11 and Related Dates* (London: Verso, 2002)

**Foer**

Amian, Katrin *Rethinking Postmodernism(s): Charles S. Peirce and the Pragmatist Negotiations of Thomas Pynchon, Toni Morrison, and Jonathan Safran Foer* (Amsterdam: Rodopi, 2008)