

HONORS (ENGLISH 491)

AFRICAN (AMERICAN) AND OCEANIAN LITERATURES: INFLUENCES AND AFFINITIES (1970-1990)

This course will begin by developing a “post-colonial” framework—drawing on Albert Wendt’s definition of post-coloniality as not just “after” colonialism, so much as “around, through, out of, alongside, and against” it—within which to think about and appreciate African (American) and Oceanian works of literature (in English) in relationship to or alongside of each other. It approaches works of art as “acts” that are at once personal, communal, and participatory within the broad and mobile project of decolonization, and/or within local, regional, and national movements. Toward the end of appreciating what and how the chosen texts perform, the course will, 1. review post-colonial and literary theory relevant for both the study of African American and Pacific literatures, and including discussions of the idea of regional or transnational approaches to African American literature as “post-colonial” (the “black Atlantic” and the “Brown Pacific”), 2. consider historical moments and arenas when Africanist/post-colonial critiques are taken up by African American and Pacific literary/political/social movements (such as anti-colonial literature in PNG, Polynesian Panthers in Aotearoa), 3. discuss the influence of Africanist/post-colonial critique on several Pacific authors (Haunani-Kay Trask’s Fanonism, Albert Wendt’s post-coloniality), 4. read works of African American literatures alongside works of Pacific literature in order to appreciate influences and affinities among them, 5. discuss varieties of registers in which African (American) arts have influenced or have affinities with Pacific cultures. Students will do daily in-class writing, one five paper, oral reports on terms and artistic moments and movements, and a semester project. While the emphasis of the reading is on “literary” texts, students may choose to work on other areas of expressive culture, including connections between African American and Pacific dance and music.

PRIMARY TEXTS: Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors*; Sia Figiel, *Where ‘We’ Once Belonged*; Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye* & *Tar Baby*; Albert Wendt, *Leaves of the Banyan Tree*, Richard Wright, *Native Son* (or *Corregidora*, Gayle Jones)

SECONDARY TEXTS might include excerpts from Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* & *The Wretched of the Earth*; Paul Gilroy’s *The Black Atlantic*; Haunani-Kay Trask’s *From a Native Daughter* (perhaps alongside Baldwin’s

"Notes from a Native Son"); along with essays such as Albert Wendt's, "Toward a New Oceania" and Toni Morrison's, "The Writer as Ancestor."

TENTATIVE SYLLABUS

WEEK ONE: Ngugi Wa Thiango, from *Decolonizing the Mind*
Albert Wendt, "Toward a New Oceania" & introduction to *Nuanua*
From Derrick Walcott and Robert Sullivan
Joe Balaz, "Junior is One Rasta" and Bobby Holcombe
Toni Morrison, "The Writer as Ancestor"
John Pule, "Clouds and Water"

WEEK TWO: Hegel, from *The Phenomenology of Spirit* (Lord and Bondsman)
Frantz Fanon, from *White Skins, Black Masks*
Audre Lourde, "The Transformation of Silence into Action"
James Baldwin, "Sonny's Blues"
Poems from Langston Hughes and Steven Winduo

WEEK THREE: W. E. B. Dubois, from *The Souls of Black Folks*
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*
Ulli Beier, ed. from *Voices of Independence*

WEEK FOUR: Albert Wendt, "Inside Us the Dead"
Albert Wendt, *Leaves of the Banyan Tree*

WEEK FIVE: Albert Wendt, *Leaves of the Banyan Tree*
Homi Bhabba, "Of Mimicry and Man"

WEEK SIX: Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

WEEK SEVEN: Paul Gilroy, from *The Black Atlantic*
Epeli Hau'ofa, "Our Sea of Islands"
Toni Morrison, *The Bluest Eye*

WEEK EIGHT: Damon Salesa, "The Brown Pacific"
Teresia Teaiwa, from *Searching for Nima'anoa*
Caroline Sinaviana, from *Alchemies of Distance*
Sia Figiel, "A Writer's Notes" & *Where 'We' Once Belonged*

WEEK NINE: Craig Santos Perez, from *Saina*
Sia Figiel, *Where We Once Belonged*

WEEK TEN: Richard Wright, *Native Son*

WEEK ELEVEN: Richard Wright, *Native Son*
James Baldwin, "Notes from a Native Son"
Haunani-Kay Trask, from *From a Native Daughter*
Haunani-Kay Trask, "Decolonizing Hawaiian Literature"

WEEK TWELVE: Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors*

WEEK THIRTEEN: Alan Duff, *Once Were Warriors*
Cristina Thompson, "In Whose Face" (on Duff controversy)

WEEK FOURTEEN: Ngugi Wa Thiango, from *Globalectics*

WEEK FIFTEEN: class reports

WEEK SIXTEEN: class reports