

**ENGLISH HONOURS**

**COURSE GUIDE**

**2019**

**Department of Literary Studies in English**

**Course Coordinator: Dr Deborah Seddon**

**WELCOME TO HONOURS**

We trust you will have a challenging and fulfilling year.

This course guide is to help you with every aspect of the Honours course and to assist you in making the adjustment to post-graduate life, its expectations and privileges.

We hope it will prove useful to you as you enjoy this once-in-a-lifetime experience. You will need to work hard and manage your reading, writing, and your time in a mature fashion in order to keep pace with the demands of the course.

Please contact the Office Administrator, Ms Siphokazi Khanyile, or the Course Coordinator, Dr Deborah Seddon, if you have any questions or problems. Please keep this document for reference throughout the year.

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1. **Postgraduate studies in English**

Postgraduate studies in English are designed to meet individual student needs and interests. The Honours course covers a range of literary periods and genres, from nineteenth-century America to contemporary South Africa, from poetry and short stories to literary theory.

The Honours degree is taken over one year of full-time study or two years of part-time study, and it can be combined with papers from other departments. Students choose *five* papers in total from several possible fields of study, one of which may be a long essay.

The Honours degree is a requirement for entry into a Master’s degree in English. It is also recommended for entry into the Master’s degree in Creative Writing. Students who wish to proceed to a Master’s degree are strongly advised to choose at least two papers in the field in which they intend to specialise, and to apply for the option of writing a long essay.

The Master’s degree by supervision is taken over two years of full-time study or three years of part-time study. The Doctoral degree is normally taken over three years of full-time study or five years of part-time study.

There is a strong research culture in the Department, especially in the field of Southern African literature, which is supported by the proximity of the Institute for the Study of Englishes of Africa (ISEA) and the National English Literary Museum (NELM). NELM is very useful for research into Southern African literature – they have a range of manuscripts, theses, books and articles available.

1. **Paper DESCRIPTIONS AND PRESCRIBED WORKS**

**(N.B. ThE Information PROVIDED IN BRACKETS REFERS TO RECOMMENDED EDITIONS)**

An English Honours student may choose up to a total of five papers. The papers listed below may be combined with papers in other disciplines or with a research or long essay (which counts as a full paper).

All the papers are offered throughout the year. This means there will be a seminar of one to one-and-a-half hours for each paper each week throughout the teaching year.

Students who obtained 70% or higher as a final mark for English III may choose to do a research or long essay, on a topic of their choice, in place of one of these papers, pending the approval of their long essay proposal. The long essay proposal is to be submitted via email to the Honours course coordinator Dr Deborah Seddon (d.seddon@ru.ac.za). See guidelines for the long essay proposal below.

**Students taking Honours are strongly advised to do as much of the set reading for their chosen papers during the summer vacation as they can manage**. You will fall behind immediately if you do not do preparatory reading over the summer vacation.

**Paper 1: Literary Theory (Coordinator: Mike Marais)**

**Paper 3: American Literature (Coordinator: Aretha Phiri)**

**Paper 4: Global Modernisms (Coordinator: Jamie McGregor)**

**Paper 5: Africa in the World (Coordinator: Sam Naidu/Lynda Gichanda Spencer)**

**Paper 6: Imaginings of Place in South African Literature (Coordinator: Dirk Klopper)**

**Paper 1: Literary Theory (Coordinator: Mike Marais)**

(Mike Marais, Sue Marais)

The first semester of this paper focuses on the instalment of the rational subject of the European Enlightenment as the centre of knowledge, and the subsequent decentring of this subject. Some of the theorists that will be dealt with in this section include Kant, Saussure, Lacan, Derrida, Blanchot, Adorno, Marx and Althusser. In the second semester, the focus shifts to the body, which was marginalised by the humanist privileging of reason. The theorists covered in this section include Foucault, Bordo, Butler, Fanon, Kristeva, and Haraway.

Students will be provided with the necessary theoretical readings.

**Paper 3: American Literature (Coordinator: Aretha Phiri)**

(Aretha Phiri, Sam Naidu, Deborah Seddon)

This paper ranges from some of the classic nineteenth-century texts of American literature to the twenty-first century. In the first term, students will engage with and interrogate the formative, democratic ideologies and ideals of the American nation pre- and post-Civil War (1861-1865). The autobiographical *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave, Written by Himself* (1845) highlights slavery as a fundamental impediment to the attainment of individual and familial life for African Americans, and attests to the incommensurable and exclusory character of the American ideal. By contrast, Walt Whitman’s poetry in *Leaves of Grass* (1855-1892) shares with contemporaneous transcendental thought an open and inclusive vision of the relationship between self and world, an expansive view projected in a poetic sprawling free verse form. Mark Twain’s *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (1885) presents a bold critique of American democracy, while also intimating its potential. The novel represents the relationship between a young white boy, Huck Finn, and a runaway slave, Jim, on their journey across the Mississippi River.

In the second term, students focus on the poetry of Emily Dickinson (1830-1866), widely considered to be one of America’s greatest poets. Labelled a Transcendentalist, a late Romantic, a pre-Modernist, and a feminist by scholars, Dickinson was an unconventional and unique individual and poet. Her poetic style and form are idiosyncratic, setting her apart from other poets of her time and since then. This component of the paper will consider Dickinson’s portrayal of American life, including her responses to the American Civil War, and will then zoom out to reflect on some of the universal themes of her poetry, including her tragic sense of the brutalities which life imposes on the individual and her philosophical uncertainties about a world which struck her as a place of mystery, ambiguity and obscure horrors.

In the third term, students will examine some seminal texts of the twentieth-century that interrogate the American Dream. Reflecting the anxieties and injustices of post-World War II and anticipating the universally turbulent civil rights movements of the 1960s and 1970s, Ralph Ellison’s experimental modernist form, in *The Invisible Man* (1952), and Allen Ginsberg’s performative Whitmanesque poetry explore the mechanisms of America’s marginalised subjectivities and existences. Raymond Carver’s collection of short stories, *Where I’m Calling From* (1988), extends the theme of disenchantment by focusing on the mundane lives of blue-collar, working-class Americans. Carver’s stories are fittingly expressed in a minimalist narrative style.

In the fourth term, students encounter ‘queer women writing’ by examining the lives, poetry, and prose of five of America’s finest women writers: Elizabeth Bishop, Adrienne Rich, Audre Lorde, Alice Walker, and Nicky Finney. All five women may be identified as queer, but each has a distinctive way of understanding and articulating the intersection of her personal life with her poetry. Widely regarded as one of the most important poets of the twentieth century, Bishop did not wish to be defined as either “woman” or “lesbian,” while Rich defiantly identified herself in deliberate contradistinction to patriarchal norms and to what she described, in an important essay, as the “compulsory heterosexuality” demanded by American culture. In her essay collection, *In Search of Our Mothers' Gardens: Womanist Prose* (1983), Walker articulates a feminism more attuned to the lives and experiences of black women, and Lorde famously identified herself as “black, lesbian, mother, warrior, poet,” exhibiting an openness about her own personal life that eased the way for younger queer black women writers coming after her. One of these women writers, Finney, won the National Book Award for Poetry in 2011 for poems that reveal a keen attention to the history of African Americans, from the slave past, through the struggle for Civil Rights, to racialised government responses to contemporary human disasters such as Hurricane Katrina.

**Semester 1**

Term 1:

Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. (Norton 9780393969665)

Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass and Other Writings* (Norton 9780393974966)

Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* (Norton 9780393966404)

Term 2:

Emily Dickinson, *Collected Poems of Emily Dickinson*

**Semester 2**

Term 3:

Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man* (Penguin 9780140287578)

Allen Ginsberg, *Howl, Kaddish and Other Poems* (Penguin 9780141190167)

Raymond Carver, *Where I’m Calling From: Selected Stories* (Vintage 9780679722311)

Term 4:

Prose and poetry readings to be provided.

**Paper 4: Global Modernisms (Coordinator: Jamie McGregor)**(Kamil Naicker, Jamie McGregor)  
  
This paper covers a varied range of literary responses to modernity from around the globe throughout the twentieth century. The first term explores modernist texts with a variety of settings. We begin with Joseph Conrad’s *Under Western Eyes*, which takes place in Russia and Geneva and depicts burgeoning revolution through a lens of unreliability and psychological projection. Following this will be E.M Forster’s *A Passage to India*, which both reinforces and undermines the discourse of British Imperialism with its ‘strange-ified’ images of India and its interplay with the human psyche. The last novel will be Jean Rhys’s *Good Morning, Midnight*, a stream-of-consciousness work set in Paris during the interwar period. Selected short stories will also be provided in class. Class discussion will focus on the relationship between the inner and outer worlds in these texts, and the way in which familiar generic forms (the espionage novel, the imperial adventure and the travel diary) are ‘made new’ by each of these writers.

The second semester begins with the quintessentially modernist poem, T.S. Eliot’s *The Waste Land*, continues with Virginia Woolf’s most ambitious fictional experiment, the lyrical and evocative novel *The Waves*, and ends with Mervyn Peake’s eponymous series of weird gothic fantasies, *Gormenghast*, which reflects both his childhood in China’s Jiangxi province and his insular retirement to Sark. The fourth term is reserved for the diurnal urban Hibernian odyssey of James Joyce’s sprawling mock-epic *Ulysses*, both parody of Homer and affirmatory human comedy.

**Semester 1**

*Under Western Eyes* Joseph Conrad

*A Passage to India* E.M Forster

*Good Morning, Midnight* Jean Rhys

Selected short stories (texts to be provided)

**Semester 2**

TS Eliot, *The Waste Land*  
Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*   
Mervyn Peake, *Gormenghast*

James Joyce, *Ulysses*

**Paper 5: Africa in the World (Coordinator: Sam Naidu/Lynda Gichanda Spencer)**

(Sam Naidu, Thando Njovane, Deborah Seddon, Lynda Spencer)

***Term 1: 21st Century African Diasporas* (SN)**

This component of the paper will focus on literature which represents contemporary African diasporic experiences. Of particular interest are the different modes of representation, the relationship between Africa/Africans and the world (the diasporic homes), and the impact of increasing transnationalism or globalisation on so-called African identities and cultures. To begin we will look at Jonny Steinberg’s *Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York*. This text, a hybrid of history, reportage and personal biographies, describes the Liberian diasporic community which exists in the Park Hill neighbourhood of Staten Island, New York. Steinberg’s multi-faceted story is a poignant comment on war-torn Liberia, the migrants who are forced to flee its brutal civil war, and the troubled relationship between America and West Africa. We then move onto Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie’s latest novel, *Americanah*, which is a humorous, transnational, intergenerational epic tale about the experiences of Nigerian immigrants in America and the UK, and the exigencies of their return to the homeland. In addition to reading and discussing the prescribed texts, you will be expected to familiarise yourself with relevant theories and present research papers in seminars.

**Primary Texts**

Jonny Steinberg, *Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York*

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*

***Term 2: The Contemporary African Novel* (TN)**

In this component of the paper, we examine a variety of contemporary African novels in relation to issues of form. While the African novel has tended to be predominently realist, however, recent novels have taken a more experimental approach, ranging from variations on the epic tradition to meditations on a postapocalyptic Africa. As a result, this module traces the trajectory of these experimental forms in relation to their intertexts and the traditions in which each of the selected novels is steeped. We begin by reading Peter Kimani’s *Dance of the Jakaranda* as a historical novel which not only gestures towards its colonial predecessor, Joseph Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*, but also opens up a conversation about the possibilities of writing which may be regarded as African epics. This is followed by a reading of A.Igoni Barret’s *Blackass* and Alain Mabanckou’s *African Psycho*, both of which borrow from Bret Easton Ellis’ *American Psycho* and Franz Kafka’s “The Metamorphosis”, respectively. These intertexts therefore grant us a point of entry into the entanglements between the African novel and world literature. We conclude the component with Nnedi Okorafor’s futuristic novel, *Who Fears Death*, to help us think through postapocalyptic futures and the emergence of the fantasy genre in Africa.

**Primary Texts**

Peter Kimani, *Dance of the Jakaranda*

### A. Igoni Barrett, *Blackass*

Alain Mabanckou, *African Psycho*

### Nnedi Okorafor, *Who Fears Death*

***Term 3: Irates of the Caribbean* (DS)**

The Caribbean was one of the earliest sites of European colonialism and slavery. The focus of this course will be on how literature and ideas generated from, or about, the Caribbean, function in the global imaginary. We will begin with three texts by a giant of Afro-Caribbean literature, Aimé Césaire: first, *Cahier d'un Retour au Pays Natal* (*Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*) (1939), written as Césaire determined to leave Europe for his native Martinique. As Césaire attempts to forge a new poetic language adequate to his own experience, his poem gives voice to his influential notion of “Negritude”: a philosophy and aesthetic that continues to have resonance and wide-ranging influence on African and African-American conceptions of identity and literature. We will read *Notebook* alongside Cesaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* (1955), which contains the key ideas of Cesaire’s political thought, some of which later inspired the writing of Frantz Fanon, who was Cesairé’s pupil in Martinique. As the African-American historian Robin Kelley suggests, *Discourse on Colonialism* is rather like “a historical prose poem” and articulates “a poetics of anticolonialism.” We will then turn to an English translation of *Une Tempête* (1969), Césaire’s French language reworking of Shakespeare’s *The Tempest,* as a starting point to examine the connections between Shakespeare’s play and the many rewritings and responses it has generated. *The Tempest* has long been claimed by postcolonial thinkers as a canonical work that enables them to confront their entangled history. It is recognized as early modernity’s most extensive engagement with the vexing issues of colonialism – race, dispossession, language, displacement, occupation, and European disregard for other cultures. Lastly, we will explore Toni Morrison’s novel *Tar Bab*y (1981), which is a complex engagement with Shakespeare’s *The Tempest* as well as the African-American folktale of the tar baby appropriated by Joel Chandler Harris in his Uncle Remus stories. Into the isolated setting of a fictional Caribbean island, Morrison brings together a cast of characters who represent a microcosm of the gendered and racial stratifications of contemporary American society. Setting her novel in the Caribbean, however, allows Morrison to take into full account how such disparities of power function on a global level, particularly between the global south and the world’s overdeveloped nations.

**Primary Texts**

Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*. Translated by Mireille Rosello with Ann Pritchard, Tarset: Bloodaxe Books, 1995. (9781852241845)

Aimé Césaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*. Translated by Joan Pinkham, New York: Monthly Review Press, 2000. (9781583670255)

Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*. Translated by Richard Miller, New York: TCG Translations, 2002. (9781559362108)

William Shakespeare, *The Tempest*. Edited byVirginia Mason Vaughan and Alden T. Vaughan, London: Arden, 2000. (9781903436073)

Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby*. London: Vintage, 1981. (9780099760214)

***Term 4: Contemporary Eastern African Women Writers* (LS)**

This component looks at three novels by contemporary Eastern Africa women writers who in very different ways explore the experience of families and individuals living under conditions of war and displacement. All three writers inhabit two worlds, Leila Aboulela (Sudan/Scotland/Qatar), Maaza Mengiste (Ethiopia/ USA) and Nadifa Mohamed (Somalia/ Britain). This provides them with a unique perspective on the sometimes traumatic intersection of history and everyday experience, the impact of tradition and modernity on the body, the contradictions, tensions and ambivalences of the gendered experience. As part of the Africa in the World paper, the aim of this section is to introduce students to contemporary African women’s writing, and women’s narratives of war and Eastern Africa imaginaries. Drawing on historical, postcolonial theories, African and transnational feminisms, to understand theories of the everyday, experiences of war and repressive regimes.

**Primary Texts**

Leila Aboulela, *Lyrics Alley* by

Maaza Mengiste, *Beneath the Lion’s Gaze*

Nadifa Mohamed, *The Orchard of Lost Souls*

**Paper 6: Imaginings of Place in South African Literature (Coordinator: Dirk Klopper)**

(Sue Marais, Dirk Klopper)

This paper concerns itself with modes of dwelling in the South African literary imaginary.

***Semester 1: Home and Dislocation (SM)***

Home and dislocation. [. . .] Home and exile. Building and demolition. Roots and rootlessness. No wonder we are given to extremes of behaviour. In between is a void. They have a long history, these extremes of behaviour. Is a country of so much dislocation a home? Winnie, there were many who hoped that the sight of you and Nelson walking hand-in-hand down the street would represent the beginning of the reconciliation of extremes; the end of dislocation.

– Marara Joyce Baloyi (*The Cry of Winnie Mandela* 68)

The first semester of the paper attempts to address the question “Is a country of so much dislocation a home?”, by focusing on a number of post-apartheid texts which feature characters who confront various experiences of ‘unhomedness’: characters who are travellers, migrants, expatriates, returnees and fugitives. We shall examine the extent to which these texts interrogate the notion of a “reconciliation of extremes” and an “end [to] dislocation” in the ‘disenchanted democracy’ that is South Africa today, and what they have to offer in terms of prognoses for the future.

**Primary Texts**

Njabulo Ndebele, *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*

Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

Ivan Vladislavić, *Double Negative*

Ishtiyaq Shukri, *The Silent Minaret*

Zoë Wicomb, *The One that Got Away*

Thando Mgqolozana*, Unimportance*

***Semester 2: A Poetics of Place (DK)***

This section of the paper starts with two iconic works that offer divergent perspectives on rural life: Pauline Smith's *The Little Karoo*, a collection of interconnected stories which depict an enclave of Boer farmers in the Little Karoo, and Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*, which deals with colonialism and race on the African farm. The section concludes with J.M. Coetzee’s *In the Heart of the Country*, which offers a metanarrative of the farm novel, exploring the multiple significances of the trope of the farm in South African fiction. Set in a former ‘homeland,’ Damon Galgut’s *The Good Doctor* portrays a post-apartheid present haunted by an apartheid past. Zakes Mda’s *The Heart of Redness* uses the setting of the Xhosa cattle killing prophecies of the mid-19th century to reimagine the relationship between past and present, tradition and modernity, human and nature. Zoë Wicomb’s *October* takes up the theme of a return to the rural setting of childhood to explore the meaning of home and displacement, the local south and the global north, and the nature of loss, memory and representation.

**Primary Texts**

Pauline Smith, *The Little Karoo* (copies to be supplied)

Doris Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*

J.M. Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country*

Damon Galgut, *The Good Doctor*

Zakes Mda, *The Heart of Redness*

Zoë Wicomb, *October*

1. **seminar Schedule**

**Paper 1: Literary Theory**

***Semester 1: The Mind* (MM)**

Term 1

Week 1: Introduction

Week 2: Kant and Enlightenment

Week 3: Adorno and Horkheimer’s critique of Enlightenment

Weeks 4: Saussure

Weeks 5-7: Derrida

Term 2

Week 8: Marx/Althusser and questions of power

Week 9: Foucault and discipline

Week 10: Barthes and Foucault on the author

Week 11: Blanchot on the author

Week 12: Lyotard and the aesthetic of the sublime

Week 13: Adorno and the “twofold essence” of art

***Semester 2: THE BODY/BODIES IN THEORY (MM)***

Term 3

Week 1: Intro: Feminism, Western Culture and the Body

Week 2: The Fact of Blackness – Fanon, Gordon, Mbembe

Week 3: The Unbearable Whiteness of Being – Steyn etc

Week 4: The Female Body – Rich

Week 5: The Male Body – Bordo

Week 6: Heteronormativity – Foucault (MM)

Term 4

Week 7: Non-Binary/Queer Bodies – Fausto-Sterling, Halberstam

Week 8: Vulnerable Bodies/Precarious Lives – Butler

Week 9: Monstrous, Grotesque and Abject Bodies – Kristeva etc

Week 10: Trauma and the Body – Scarry, Luckhurst, etc

Week 11: The Body in Sickness and in Health – Sontag

Week 12: The World as a Body

Week 13: Prosthetic and Posthuman Bodies - Haraway

**Paper 3: American Literature**

***Semester 1***

Term 1: Classic Nineteenth-Century Texts (AP)

Weeks 1-2: Frederick Douglass, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Week 3-4: Walt Whitman, *Leaves of Grass*

Week 5-7: Mark Twain, *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Term 2: Emily Dickinson (SN)

Weeks 8-13

***Semester 2***

Term 3: The American Dream (AP)

Week 1-2: Ralph Ellison, *Invisible Man*

Week 3-4: Allen Ginsberg, *Howl, Kaddish and Other Poems*

Week 5-6: Raymond Carver, *Where I’m Calling From: Selected Stories*

Term 4: Queer Women Writing (DS)

Week 7: Intro: Rich, Lorde, & Walker at the National Book Award

Week 8: Elizabeth Bishop

Week 9: Rich and Lorde

Week 10: Rich

Week 11: Lorde

Week 12: Walker

Week 13: Finney

**Paper 4: Global Modernisms**

***Semester 1: Strange New Worlds (KN)***

Term 1:

Week 1-4: *Under Western* Eyes, Joseph Conrad

Week 5-7: *A Passage to* India, E.M Forster

Term 2: Strange New Worlds (KN)

Week 8-10 *Good Morning,* Midnight, Jean Rhys

Week 11-13: Selected short stories (texts to be provided)

***Semester 2: (JM)***

Term 3: Eliot, Woolf and Peake (JM)

Week 1-2: T.S. Eliot, *The Waste Land*

Week 3-4: Virginia Woolf, *The Waves*

Week 5-6: Mervyn Peake, *Gormenghast*

Term 4: An Urban Odyssey (JM)

Week 8-13: James Joyce, *Ulysses*

**Paper 5: Africa in the World**

***Semester 1***

Term 1: Twenty-First Century African Diasporas (SN)

Week 1-3: Jonny Steinberg, *Little Liberia: An African Odyssey in New York*

Week 4-7: Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah*

Term 2: The Contemporary African Novel (TN)

Week 8: Kimani

Week 9: Barrett

Week 10: Mabanckou

Week 11: Okorafor

Week 12-13: Will be decided in discussions

Term 3: Irates of the Caribbean (DS)

Week 1-2: Aimé Césaire, *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*

Week 3-4: William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* and Aimé Césaire, *A Tempest*

Week 5-6: Toni Morrison, *Tar Baby*

Term 4: Contemporary Eastern African Women Writers (LS)

Week 7-8: Leila Aboulela, *Lyrics Alley*

Week 9-10: Maaza Mengiste, *Beneath the Lion’s Gaze*

Week 11-13: Nadifa Mohamed, *The Orchards of Lost Souls*

**Paper 6: Imaginings of Place in SA Literature**

***Semester 1: Home and Dislocation (SM)***

Term 1:

Week 1: Intro

Week 2-3: Ndebele, *The Cry of Winnie Mandela*

Week 4-5: Mpe, *Welcome to Our Hillbrow*

Week 6-7: Vladislavić, *Double Negative*

Term 2:

Week 8-9: Shukri, *The Silent Minaret*

Week 10-11 Wicomb, *The One that Got Away*

Week 12-13: Mgqolozana*, Unimportance*

***Semester 2: A Poetics of Place (DK)***

Term 3:

Week 1: Intro

Week 2: Smith, *The Little Karoo* (copies to be supplied)

Week 3-4: Lessing, *The Grass is Singing*

Week 5-6: Coetzee, *In the Heart of the Country*

Term 4:

Week 7-8: Galgut, *The Good Doctor*

Week 9-10: Mda, *The Heart of Redness*

Week 11-13: Wicomb, *October*

1. **Assessment requirements**

PLEASE NOTE: Students are not allowed to repeat any material in essays. You may NOT write on the same text/author or for the same lecturer, (unless s/he covers a huge section of the course) more than once. **For exam essays you may NOT use material already included in your term essays, nor write on texts on which you have already prepared essays during term time.** We keep copies of all your essays: essays that repeat material will be disqualified and given 0%.

Unlike our practice in the undergraduate years, in Honours we weight the Class Record at 60% and the Exam Mark at 40%.

**Paper 1: Literary Theory**

Coursework: 2 ESSAYS, ONE PER SEMESTER.

Examination: A 'take-home' examination essay during the exam period in November: students are provided with ONE question and are given a set number of days in which to prepare AND write a response. On the day of the examination, they submit their written response.

**Paper 3: American Literature**

Coursework: 2 ESSAYS, ONE PER SEMESTER

Examination: Two 'take-home' examination essays, one submitted during the exam period in June, and the other during the exam period in November. During each exam period, students will be required to answer ONE question from a range of questions provided in advance. In each case, students will be required to write an examination essay on the components of the course that they did not cover for individual term essays. On the set date of the examination, they submit their written response.

**Paper 4: Global Modernisms**

Coursework: 2 ESSAYS, ONE PER SEMESTER.

Examination: Two 'take-home' examination essays, one submitted during the exam period in June, and the other during the exam period in November. During each exam period, students will be required to answer ONE question from a range of questions provided in advance. In each case, students will be required to write an examination essay on the components of the course that they did not cover for individual term essays. On the set date of the examination, they submit their written response.

**Paper 5: Africa in the World**

Coursework: 2 ESSAYS, ONE PER SEMESTER

Examination: Two 'take-home' examination essays, one submitted during the exam period in June, and the other during the exam period in November. During each exam period, students will be required to answer ONE question from a range of questions provided in advance. In each case, students will be required to write an examination essay on the components of the course that they did not cover for individual term essays. On the set date of the examination, they submit their written response.

**Paper 6: Imaginings of Place in SA Literature**

Coursework: 2 ESSAYS, ONE PER SEMESTER

Examination: Two 'take-home' examination essays, one submitted during the exam period in June, and the other during the exam period in November. During each exam period, students will be required to answer ONE question from a range of questions provided in advance. In each case, students will be required to write an examination essay on the components of the course that they did not cover for individual term essays. On the set date of the examination, they submit their written response.

1. **CLASS attendance**

We regard Honours students as junior colleagues, extending to them such privileges as pigeon holes in Room 3 and tea. In return, we expect a mature degree of professionalism and regular attendance at research group meetings which are held on Wednesdays at 14h15. 100% attendance at seminars is a requirement of the course. If you are going to be absent from a seminar you need to apply for an LOA in advance (See p.23). Records will be kept of all students’ attendance of seminars and their participation in seminars by means of individual or group presentations

# COURSEWORK Essays

**7.1 Submission of essays**

The schedule for the due dates of proposals and essays is available in Section 10 of the course guide.

**All essays must be submitted electronically and in person**, to the office administrator, Ms Siphokazi Khanyile, by 4pm on the Mondays when the essays are due. You are to submit your essay electronically to [eng@ru.ac.za](mailto:eng@ru.ac.za) for administrative purposes so we have a record of each submission, and also submit TWO hard copies each time; one hardcopy is kept for the external examiner. Before submitting the essay must be submitted via RUConnected to Turnitin and a hardcopy of the report must be attached to the hardcopy of the essay.

Lecturers may NOT grant essay extensions nor Leave of Absences (LOAs) to students. If you cannot make an essay deadline please contact the Office Administrator to arrange for an LOA and an extension. Under normal circumstances an extension will only be granted till the Wednesday of the week in which the essay is due. Essays not handed in after an extension date will be required for DP purposes but will receive 0%.

**PLEASE NOTE: If there are any outstanding first-semester essays AFTER the end of June exam period, the student will have their DP removed.**

**7.2 Essay topics**

Suggestions for essay topics may be provided by members of staff in charge of a course section. In every instance, these will be on texts prescribed for the course: you are NOT free to write on any text that takes your fancy. Other staff members may prefer students themselves to identify a topic, which must be approved by the member of staff marking the essay before you begin writing the essay. Sometimes class presentations can be developed into essays, or finished essays can be offered as presentations in class. In all cases, the lecturer’s approval must be obtained and confirmed.

Essays should be a minimum of 2500 words and should not exceed 3500 words.

**Every essay topic must be confirmed in writing by means of an essay proposal (For the deadlines for all proposals and essays please see the schedule on page 27). No exceptions will be permitted. The process of finalizing an essay topic may take place by e-mail or in face to face discussion with the lecturer marking the work.**

Essay proposals should be set out as described below, and must include your proposed topic, a 250-300 word abstract and a working bibliography. Essay proposals follow a strict schedule of due dates and must be submitted before or on the day that the essay proposal is due. All essay proposals **must be emailed to** [**eng@ru.ac.za**](mailto:eng@ru.ac.za) **for administrative records, AND to the lecturer who will be marking the essay, and who will provide feedback on the proposal.**

Lecturers reserve the right not to mark essays they receive for which no proposal has been submitted in advance. In that case the essay will receive 0%.

**7.4 Essay proposals**

The proposal must include the following. If it is does not it is not an essay proposal.

1. Working title of the essay

2. A brief outline of the main argument or focus. This may include a draft introduction or an outline of 3 main points to be covered. This section should comprise 250-300 words.

3. A working bibliography (this is a proposal – a working bibliography will demonstrate the research you have done around your chosen topic, and thus should include a list of all the books and articles you have already read and those that you intend to read in order to complete the essay).

The purpose of the essay proposal is twofold:to clarify your own thinking about your topic and form a point of reference to use as you write the essay, and to serve as a means of convincing your lecturer that you have a project that is do-able within 2500-3500 words and in the time required.

NB: This is a topic *proposal*. It is not the argument of the essay but an outline of the ideas and materials on which your argument will be based. It sets out the parameters of the problem or issue you intend to explore; it does not necessarily come to definitive conclusions about the issue, though it may suggest a possible conclusion or hypothesis. Your lecturer should provide you with detailed, clear, and preferably written feedback on your proposal to help you formulate your topic and delimit it. You need his/her written approval before you begin to write the essay. Lecturers have the right to refuse to mark essays for which they have received no proposal.

Submission of both the proposal and the essay (two copies) will be recorded. Failure to submit the full quota of essays by the final dates in each semester may result in DP withdrawal and exclusion from the course.

Only the HoD has the prerogative to waive or change any of these rules or to grant extensions.

1. **Duly Performed (DP) requirements**

**8.1 DP requirements**

The term “Duly Performed” or “DP” indicates that you have completed sufficient work to allow the English Honours credit to be awarded. The Department has three DP requirements for English Honours:

* 100% attendance of seminars. If you miss any seminars, you are required to apply for leave of absence (LOA) with our office administrator Siphokazi Khanyile in Room 9.
* submission of all essays;
* writing the June and November examinations.

**8.2 Leave of absence (LOA) applications**

If, on medical, compassionate or other valid grounds, you are unable to attend a seminar, or are unable to submit an essay proposal, or an assignment by the due date, a Leave of Absence (LOA) form must be obtained from the Office Administrator, completed (supported by relevant documentation e.g. doctor’s certificate, letter from counsellor/parent/ warden, notification from sports body), and returned to her. She will then inform you whether your LOA has been granted. No LOAs will be approved without valid supporting documents.

N.B. Failure to submit LOA applications will result in the loss of your DP, and you will not be permitted to continue the course or to write the examinations.

**8.3 LOAs and missed seminars**

Normally an LOA application will only be considered if it is submitted before the scheduled seminar. Under exceptional circumstances, however, an LOA application submitted after the seminar has taken place will be considered, provided this application is received within ONE WEEK of the missed seminar.

N.B. It is YOUR responsibility to contact the Office Administrator to inform her that you are/were unable to attend a seminar: LOAs submitted retroactively (i.e. after seven days) will not be accepted.

At the end of each term, an email will be sent to students who have failed to attend the required seminars and have not submitted LOA applications. The email will indicate that they have lost their DPs, and have one week in which to appeal against this ruling by submitting a DP Appeal form (available from the Office Administrator). This will be forwarded to the HOD, who will then inform students about the outcome of their appeals.

**8.4 LOAs and extensions for assignments**

Normally an LOA application will be considered if it is submitted before the due date of the relevant assignment. **Extensions and LOAs should be applied for in advance of the due date for an essay.** Under exceptional circumstances, however, an LOA application submitted after the due date will be considered, provided this application is received within one week of the due date. An application for an LOA does not automatically grant a student an extension for a written assignment**. Extensions are for emergencies only and will only be granted on medical grounds or other valid reasons. Your lecturer is not empowered to grant you an extension, only the Office Administrator, Siphokazi Khanyile in Room 9.**

Should you fail to submit an assignment on the due date without having applied for an LOA, you will receive an email from the Office Administrator stating that the relevant assignment must be submitted within seven days to be considered for DP purposes, and that the assignment will receive a score of “0”. You will also be informed that you may, within seven days, and under exceptional circumstances only, apply for an LOA. If you apply for an LOA and it is granted, the assignment must be submitted within seven days of the submission of the LOA application.

Students who do not submit essays will lose their DPs at the end of the term. They have one week in which to appeal against this ruling by completing and submitting the relevant DP Appeal form (available from the Office Administrator), who will then inform them of the outcome of their appeals

# LONG ESSAYS

**9.1 Independent research**

The long essay option will appeal to students whose literary interests extend beyond the coursework options or who have a passion to develop a given topic. The option is intended to promote independent research and is recommended for students who intend to proceed to a Master’s degree.

Students considering the option of writing a long essay need to send a proposal to the course coordinator, Dr Deborah Seddon. Once a proposal has been approved, a supervisor will be appointed, and the focus of the project will be agreed upon no later than the end of the first term.

The following timetable must be STRICTLY adhered to:

Long Essay Proposal Due Friday 15 February

Long Essay Project Finalised Monday 11 March

Long Essay Final Draft Due Monday 15 July

Long Essay Draft Returned with Feedback Monday 29 July

Final Long Essay Submitted Monday 9 September

The Long Essay MAY NOT exceed 10 000 WORDS.

Students doing a long essay will need to devote at least two weeks of the June/July vacation to completing their draft.

**9.2 Format of long essay proposals**

The long essay proposal should not be longer than 2 A4 pages and should include the following:

* Name and student number.
* Date.
* Working title of long essay.
* Brief description of the essay if the title is not self-explanatory.
* The context of the essay, briefly making clear why the topic is worth addressing; also, the theoretical framework within which the essay will be written. You should describe the area of research into which you intend to insert your study and outline the general issue/ problem and field, in a way that allows you to position yourself within the latter.
* Question/s to be addressed by the essay may be included, as well as a preliminary plan for the titles and contents of the chapters or sections.
* A working bibliography indicating what primary texts will be studied, together with the reference, critical, and theoretical texts which are to determine the shape of the essay. This is a map of territory to be explored (books and articles you intend to read in the course of the research): it is not a statement of material read already but what you intend to read for your research.

1. **ESSAY PROPOSAL AND SUBMISSION DATES**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Mon 11 Feb | ***Start Term 1*** |
| Friday 15 Feb | Submit Long Essay Proposal |
| Tues 26 Feb | Submit Essay 1 Proposal |
| Mon 11 March | Long Essay Proposal Finalised |
| Mon 18 March | Submit Essay 1 |
| Tues 26 March | Submit Essay 2 Proposal |
| Mon 15 April | ***Start Term 2***: Submit Essay 2 |
| Tues 16 April | Submit Essay 3 Proposal |
| Mon 29 April | Submit Essay 3 |
| Tues 30 April | Submit Essay 4 Proposal |
| Mon 13 May | Submit Essay 4 |
| Tues 14 May | Submit Essay 5 Proposal |
| Mon 20 May | Collect take-home Exam Questions |
| Mon 27 May | ***Swot week***: Submit Essay 5 |
| **SEMESTER 2** | |
| Mon 15 July | ***Start Term 3***: Submit Long Essay Draft |
| Tues 23 July | Submit Essay 6 Proposal |
| Mon 29 July | Long Essay Draft Feedback returned by supervisors |
| Mon 5 Aug | Submit Essay 6 |
| Tues 6 Aug | Submit Essay 7 Proposal |
| Mon 19 Aug | Submit Essay 7 |
| Tues 20 Aug | Submit Essay 8 Proposal |
| Mon 2 Sept | ***Start Term 4:*** Submit Essay 8 |
| Mon 9 Sept | Submit Long Essay Final |
| Tues 10 Sept | Submit Essay 9 Proposal |
| Mon 23 Sept | Submit Essay 9 |
| Mon 7 Oct | Collect take-home Exam questions |
| Tues 8 Oct | Submit Essay 10 Proposal |
| Mon 21 Oct | ***Swot week***: Submit Essay 10 |

1. **WRITTEN ASSIGNMENTS AND EVALUATION**

**11.1 Departmental marking notch system**

Your essays will be marked according to the following scheme, which the Department uses to ensure that the standard of marking is consistent, despite students having different markers. On your scripts, markers will allocate ONLY the percentages listed in the right-hand column below; for example, an essay assessed at 2.2- is always allocated 62%, and so on. However, although only certain percentages are used (and not the full range), your final percentage for the year will most likely fall somewhere within the entire range from 0 – 100, and it is on this basis that you will be confirmed as, for example, an upper second on your official academic record for the year.

**DEPARTMENTAL MARKING NOTCH SYSTEM**

**Symbol Equivalent**

1 100

95

92

88

82

1.1 78

(The range for the first class is 75-100%)

2.1 72

2.2+ 68

2.2- 62

(The range for the second class is 70-74% for an upper second

and 60-69% for a lower second)

3+ 58

3- 52

(The range for the third class is 50-59%)

F 45

40

35

30

25

15

0

(Anything below 50% is a failure)

The following gives an indication of what the Department expects of an essay graded according to these categories:

**1** 82-100

Highly original thought; critical attitude towards text and secondary reading; evidence of independent reading; comprehensive and focused answer to the question; virtually flawless expression, organisation and presentation. One can scarcely imagine a better answer at its level; it teaches and surprises the marker.

**1-** 78

Unusually competent if not entirely original; strong evidence of secondary reading; evidence of a critical, thought-provoking and independent argument; accurate referencing; excellent command of detail of text; high level of conceptualisation; very polished if not entirely flawless expression and organisation.

**2.1** 72

Very competent; not necessarily original, but well-marshalled argument; accurate knowledge of, and attention paid to, details of the text; possibly but not necessarily (depending on year of study) some treatment of secondary works; strong conceptualisation; lucid expression and organisation containing only a sprinkling of errors; strongly nuanced vocabulary.

**2.2** 62-68

Solid, but not particularly exciting, with little originality; good knowledge of and attention paid to text; some argumentative assertions viable, but possibly arguable or bordering on inaccurate; relatively little use of (or over-dependence on) secondary works; expression and organisation generally lucid, containing some errors but not such as to destroy sense.

**3** 52-58

Passable; shows basic knowledge of text, despite a few misreadings or factual errors; shows some effort at argument and remaining relevant to the question, though not entirely successfully; naive; almost no originality of thought; expression and organisation regularly flawed but almost always

intelligible.

**F** 45

Almost passable, but too flawed by lack of adequate knowledge of the basics of the text; does not address the topic; lacks coherent argument; does not go beyond pointing out the obvious; expression and organisation regularly flawed to the extent of obscuring sense; little evidence of familiarity with literary terminology.

35 etc.

Seriously lacks basic knowledge of the mechanics of the text and shows little/no evidence that primary text/s has/have been read; factual errors; sense consistently lost in errors of language and expression; no argument; fundamentally flawed expression.

**11.2 Plagiarism**

The English Department is committed to welcoming students into the academy generally, and the discipline of literary studies specifically. For this reason, we endeavour to teach all our students how to use and cite secondary material correctly so as to avoid plagiarism. Through the course of your studies, we will guide you regarding the nature of plagiarism and its consequences.

Rhodes University defines plagiarism, in an academic sense, as “taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another, from any textual or internet-based source, as if they were one’s own.” Accordingly, learning to cite secondary material correctly is absolutely key to avoiding allegations of plagiarism, and to becoming a scholar. Plagiarism is not only a form of theft: it also short-circuits the development of precisely those skills of reading, analysing, writing and evaluating that constitute our discipline. By relying on the work of others, you fail to practise your own judgement. Rather make your own mistakes, and learn from them, than merely repeat the mistakes of others.

The English Department employs Turn-it-in and other methods to determine plagiarism. Further, the Department has constituted a Plagiarism Committee to deal with individual cases of plagiarism on an ad hoc basis. We also demand that every student sign a Plagiarism Declaration when submitting any essay. This document asserts that you know what plagiarism is, have referenced all secondary material, and that all other work is original.

You can access the full Rhodes University “Common Faculty Policy and Procedures on Plagiarism” document at the following link: <https://www.ru.ac.za/media/rhodesuniversity/content/law/documents/10-students/plagiarism_policy.pdf>

This document is useful not only because it provides definitions and examples of plagiarism, but also because it explains the procedures that are undertaken when a student is accused of plagiarism. You should familiarise yourself with this document as it outlines your rights in cases where the Department alleges plagiarism. As this document details, there are various forms of plagiarism, some worse than others, but none is acceptable. For this reason, you should note that all forms of plagiarism can elicit penalties that may severely harm your university studies.

Please understand that it is not the English Department’s primary objective to catch and punish plagiarists. Rather, we hope that you will familiarise yourself with proper academic conventions and produce well-researched, original academic work.

Students should also consult the following useful guide on the Library website: [www.ru.ac.za/library/infolit](http://www.ru.ac.za/library/infolit)

1. **USING THE LIBRARY**

Aside from relevant knowledge and skills imparted in lectures and tutorials, an obvious resource for the completion of assignments and the writing of examinations is the library. The library website is available via the *RU Library* link on the Rhodes website. *Search All* (via the *Search* box in the middle of the homepage) is a discovery platform where users can search across all print and electronic resources available through the library. If you are working off campus, remember to *Login to your Library account* in order to be recognized as a Rhodes user and have full access to all the electronic resources. Print material that you might wish to consult is found on the open shelves, in the Reference section, and at the Short Loan desk.

Even though you may be directed by a lecturer to specific critical works, you are advised to concentrate on getting to know and understand your set texts really well. There is no substitute for such knowledge. Useful approaches to the set works are suggested in seminars. What is looked for in discussions and essays, however, is your own response to the text in the light of this guidance, not a summary of critical opinions derived from other readers and commentators.

**12.1 Open shelves**

Books on the open shelves are arranged according to the Dewey Decimal classification system. The classification numbers most relevant to you are:

800-809 General literary theory

810-819 American literature

820-829 English literature

828.909-828.939 South African literature

828.99 African literature

**12.2 Reference section**

Books in the reference section on Level 4 (north-west corner) include dictionaries, encyclopaedias, and general bibliographies. The most important bibliographies are now available online, including the MLA [Modern Language Association] International Bibliography, which can be accessed via the *Search* box.

Dictionaries and encyclopaedias of literature and literary criticism are useful sources of information about literary terms and concepts, authors, literary movements, and individual literary works and their critical reception.

Major works include the following:

*Cassell’s Encyclopaedia of World Literature* R803 CAS

*Dictionary of World Literary Terms* R803 DIC

*Longman Companion to Twentieth-Century Literature* R803 LON

*Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics* R803.1 PRI

*Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism* R809.04 NIN

*Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism* R809.04 TWE

*Contemporary Literary Criticism* R809.04 CON

*Oxford Companion to American Literature* R810.9 OXF

*British Writers* R820.9 BRI

*Cambridge Guide to English Literature* R820.9 CAM

*Oxford Companion to English Literature* R820.9 OXF

*Encyclopaedia of Post-Colonial Literature in English* R820.991712 ENC

**12.3 Periodicals section**

Most journals are now available online, so always check for the title and location via the *Search* box on the library homepage. Online journal articles can also be accessed via databases such as JSTOR, EBSCOhost and Gale Literary Sources. Those journals devoted to English studies which are still available in print are to be found in the Periodicals stacks on the top floor of the library. The periodicals section is a rewarding place to browse, and you are expected to consult journal articles in order to prepare for essays and examinations. Always consult lists of recommended reading prepared by lecturers. You may not always be required to seek out journal material yourself as links to individual online articles will be placed on the English courses on RUConnected and on the English subject guide (see below) for your use.

**12.4 Short loan**

Copies of recommended readings on texts with which students are currently engaged are placed on Short Loan in the library (the loan period is one hour at a time). When lectures on the text have been completed, the material will be shifted to 48-hour loan. To find out which materials have been placed on Short Loan for a specific course, or by any particular lecturer, consult the *Short Loan* link on the library’s homepage.

**12.5 English Subject Guide and Faculty Librarians**

The English Subject Guide, which is located under *Quick Links* on the left hand side of the library website (*Subject Guides*), contains a wealth of useful and interesting information such as links to relevant online resources, a referencing tab with examples of MLA style references and links to Library workshop handouts.

If you need help with finding books or retrieving online information, please approach the Faculty Librarians on Level 4 of the library. Ms Linda Cartwright can be found in the office and Ms Anelisa Mente and Ms Molly Chikafa are based at the hub.

## EMAILS AND Pigeon holes

Each Honours student has a pigeon hole in the office administrators’ office. Please check your pigeon hole, and the Honours noticeboard beside it, on a regular basis. Please also check your email regularly. The Department may communicate with you via email, phone, or by messages in your pigeon hole. **Please ensure that the office administrator, Siphokazi Khanyile, has the correct and up to date contact details for you, especially if your phone number or email address changes during the year.** Please also provide contact details which will ensure that we can communicate with you easily, i.e. provide the email address you check most frequently.

1. **Common Room and Honours Room**

Free tea and coffee is available for Honours students in the Kitchen.

During departmental working hours (7:30-4pm) Honours students may use the Honours Room as a working space but only if it is not already being used for seminars or for departmental meetings, presentations, etc. Please keep the room tidy and clean up after yourselves. This is a shared working space. Remember to close all the windows and lock the door before leaving the room. Smoking on the balconies is NOT PERMITTED.

**15. SEMINAR TIMETABLE**

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **9** | **8** | **7** | **6** | **5** | **4** | **3** | **2** | **1** |  | **ENGLISH HONOURS**  **SEMINAR TIMETABLE** |
| **4:05-4:50** | **3:10-3:55** | **2:15-3:00** | **12:20-1:05** | **11:25-12:10** | **10:30-11:15** | **9:35-10:20** | **8:40-9:25** | **7:45-8:30** | **TIME** |
|  | IMAGININGS OF PLACE IN SA LIT | | *STAFF MEETING* | | | *Tutors’ Meeting* |  |  | **MONDAY** |
|  | AMERICANLIT | | Africa in the world | |  |  | |  | **TUESDAY** |
|  | *RESEARCH SEMINAR* | |  | |  |  | |  | **WED** |
|  |  | | LIT THEORY | |  |  | |  | **THURSDAY** |
|  |  | |  | |  | Global MODERNISmS | |  | **FRIDAY** |