

Fall 2004  
English 389  
TuTh, 11:00-12:15  
King 235

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Office Hours: TuTh 10-10:45  
& 12:30-1:15, & by appt.

**Selected Authors: J.M. Coetzee**

The substantive focus of this course is to read--closely, carefully, assiduously--novels and essays/critical exegeses/interviews by one of the most important contemporary “postcolonial” writers, J.M. Coetzee. This focus will include sustained attention to contexts--of historical moment, location (geographical and epistemological), ideological investments--through which his work becomes, and/or is made, meaningful.

**Texts** (available from Oberlin Bookstore):

J. M. Coetzee, *Dusklands*  
----, *In the Heart of the Country*  
----, *Waiting for the Barbarians*  
----, *Life and Times of Michael K*  
----, *Foe*  
----, *Age of Iron*  
----, *Boyhood: Scenes from Provincial Life*  
----, *Disgrace*  
----, *Youth: Scenes from Provincial Life II*

In addition to the texts above, I have put several essays and interviews by Coetzee on Electronic Reserve (ERES). Some familiarity with Daniel Defoe’s *Robinson Crusoe* will not go amiss so I encourage you to read it; there is even an edition available which has an introduction by Coetzee.

**Tentative Schedule:**

Sept. 2:	Introduction; details about course readings, papers, etc.
Sept. 7, 9, 14:	Interviews numbered 1-6; "Jerusalem Prize Speech" ; essays on Fugard, Breytenbach, Gordimer; "The Novel Today"; "What is a Classic? A Lecture"; and "Realism" (all on ERES)
Sept. 16:	“Introduction” and “Idleness in South Africa” from <i>White Writing</i> (on ERES)
Sept. 21, 23:	<i>Dusklands</i>
Sept. 28, 30, Oct. 5:	“Confession and Double Thoughts” (on ERES) and <i>In the Heart of the Country</i>
Oct. 7, 8:	Conferences for Paper 1
Oct. 12, 14:	<i>Age of Iron</i>
Oct. 15:	<b>Paper 1 due</b>
Oct. 16-24:	Fall Break
Oct. 26, 28:	Selections from Daniel Defoe’s <i>Robinson Crusoe</i> ; <i>Foe</i>

Nov. 2, 4:	<i>Waiting for the Barbarians</i>
Nov. 9, 11:	<i>Life and Times of Michael K</i>
Nov. 16, 18, 23:	<i>Disgrace</i>
Nov. 25- 28:	Thanksgiving Break
Nov. 30, Dec. 2, 7:	<i>Boyhood and Youth</i>
Dec. 9:	Wrap up, evaluations, etc.
Dec. 14, 15:	Conferences for Paper 2
Dec. 16:	<b>Paper 2 due</b>

### **Format:**

The course will be conducted through discussion, sometimes facilitated by me, but most of the time facilitated by small groups of students. On the first day of class, I will divide you into discussion and presentation groups made up of approximately 5-6 students; each group will lead the discussion for two (textual) units--setting up the issues to be discussed and/or raising questions that will help organize class discussion--one prior to the Fall break and one after. Each member of the group will write a short one-page paper elucidating the issue/question s/he initiated in the group. This paper will not be graded, but I will assign it a  $\sqrt{-}$ ,  $\sqrt{}$ , or  $\sqrt{+}$ . Though a small group will lead the discussion for a given unit, this does not exempt the rest of the class from 1) reading the assigned material, and 2) contributing their own thoughtful comments and/or questions to the discussion.

### **Course Requirements:**

It should go without saying that you are expected to do all the reading for the course on time. You are allowed 3 unexcused absences for this class. For every day you miss beyond that, your final grade will be reduced by 1/3 of a grade (e.g., if you have 4 absences your grade will go from B+ to B; if you have 5 absences, it will go from B+ to a B-, etc.)

### **Papers:**

In addition to 2 one-page papers on your presentations (which will not be graded), you will write 2 ten-twelve page papers (which will be graded). You are free to choose the topic for the paper and the approach or approaches through which you wish to frame it. However, in each paper, you must present a sustained, well-developed argument organized around a central, explicitly stated thesis. You should make your critical assumptions explicit as well, and, as far as possible, reflect on those assumptions in the course of your essay. You are encouraged (though not required) to show me early drafts of your paper for comments. You may also revise paper one after it is graded for a better grade.

### **Due dates for papers:**

**Paper One: October 15**  
**Paper Two: December 16**

Papers must be submitted on the dates they are due. You will be penalized a grade per day (e.g., lowered from B+ to B) for unexcused late submissions. You can ask for extensions, but only by contacting me before the date the paper is due.

**Grades:**

Papers 1 and 2 will count for 70% of the grade (35% each); your group presentations and class participation will count for the remaining 30%. You cannot pass the course unless you have completed all your written work.