Universidad de Costa Rica

Escuela de Lenguas Modernas

Bachillerato en Inglés

Sección de Literatura Inglesa

Course Program

Name: Commonwealth Literature	**Requisites**: LM -1471, LM-1472
Course Code LM-0364	**Co-requisites:** None
Credits: 3	Cycle: VIII
Schedule: 9 hours In-class work: 3 Out-of-class work: 6	**Type**: Course of study for the B.A. degree in English
Level: IV year	**Course Delivery Mode:** 100% Virtual

I. Description

LM-0364 surveys Commonwealth literature, a type of literature tied to territories which were once part of the British Empire by means of settlement, conquest or concession. This course is designed to give students a comprehensive view of English literature from countries other than the United States and England: Canada, the Republic of Ireland, the Indian subcontinent, the Caribbean, and other English-speaking regions with Non-Western, multicultural backgrounds. This course leans on communicative, constructivist, cognitive, and task-centered approaches to instruct students on historical, biographical, and geopolitical contexts of this specific type of literature. The contents of the course are varied, encompassing the three main literary genres studied in the major: narrative, drama, and poetry. The study of these texts aims at acquainting students with Commonwealth history and culture and stimulating them to engage critically and creatively with the literary productions in order to provide analyses and interpretations. This course also seeks to develop the student's fluency and proficiency in English through reading and discussion.

Since this course is 100% online, multimedia complementary materials will be uploaded for each class. UCR's *Mediación Virtual* will be the course virtual classroom where all the content and extra material will be posted, sent, and collected.

II. Specific Objectives

By the end of the semester students will be able to:

1. Identify established periods and authors of Commonwealth literature.

2. Analyze literary productions based on their historical, biographical and cultural frameworks.

3. Trace the development of the British Empire and related literature.

4. Distinguish historical and cultural attitudes and concerns presented in the literature of the Commonwealth.

5. Think critically, empathically and respectfully about the values, norms, ideas, and opinions of other individuals and societies.

6. Explain and defend interpretations based on textual support of given works in clear English.

III. Contents

1. The development of migration within the British Empire.

2. Migratory movements within the United Kingdom, the Republic of Ireland, Europe, the Caribbean, Africa, Asia, and the Pacific.

3. Authors and literary texts representative of regions and periods.

4. Relations between Britain and its former colonies and dominions.

5. The historical development, adaptation, and reformulation of the Commonwealth and its literature.

6. Culture in relation to post-imperial Britishness.

7. The postmodern perspective of the relations Britain has with its former colonies and dominions

IV. Methodology

During the course, the instructor will lecture and guide the students through the historical and geopolitical contexts of the literature studied. As a complement, multimedia materials will be shown in class. In addition, this course will include group and/or individual discussions to analyze the reading assignments critically. From time to time, students will prepare, ahead of time, panels, debates or group presentations on some works, locations, or authors. Asynchronous work includes completing the assigned readings before each class, watching videos provided by the instructor, looking for the meaning of unfamiliar terms, making sure that team work is equitable and that labor division is fair, and producing the written and audio-visual materials required by assignment. Students will employ their theoretical knowledge related to culture, literature and the conventions of literary studies to produce creative writing, academic

essays, and any other assignment. They will also employ their knowledge of the conventions of public speaking (panel, debate, speech) they have acquired throughout the major to deliver their oral presentations.

Every weekly lesson will begin with a synchronous session via *Zoom*, unless otherwise indicated by the professor. These sessions are not going to be recorded. In contrast, synchronous evaluations will be recorded and students must keep their cameras on. Students are not allowed to record or share any digital material generated during synchronous sessions.

Since this course is 100% online, multimedia complementary materials will be uploaded for each class. UCR's *Mediación Virtual* will be the course virtual classroom where all the content and extra material will be posted, sent, and collected. This platform will also be used to upload exams and graded class activities. Therefore, enrolling and participating in *Mediación Virtual* is mandatory for all students.

V. Evaluation:

The final grade will be based on the following:

Essay Tests (3)	**60%**
Research Task (Annotated Bibliography and Pitch)	**25%**
Group Presentation: Introduction to Place	**15%**

Additional Notes:

1. The guidelines for each evaluation will be given through *Mediación Virtual*, not in the course program.

2. Make up evaluations are not going to be given unless in cases contemplated in the *Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil* (art. 24). Online evaluations are programmed and non-negotiable. It is the responsibility of students to take them during the time span in which the evaluations are available.

3. **No late work will be accepted**. Assignments must be submitted within the allowed time window. Writing efforts failing to follow MLA standards thoroughly (font size, margins, spacing, headings, grammar, punctuation, or any other MLA 9th edition specification) will be graded with a ZERO.

4. All evaluated writing must be original pieces. No writing produced by A.I. technologies (for example, ChatGPT) can be used as the basis of writing assignments. Submissions failing to adhere to this requirement will not be

accepted. Submissions or resubmissions passed deadlines will receive lateness penalties.

5. Plagiarism will not be tolerated as this constitutes a serious academic offense. Plagiarized work will be processed according to *Reglamento Académico Estudiantil*.
6. The professor does not have the obligation to send material covered during class to students, either by e-mail or by any other electronic means.
7. Papers will be graded and returned according to the *Reglamento de Régimen Académico Estudiantil*.

Todo estudiante en todo curso queda sujeto a los reglamentos de evaluación de la Universidad de Costa Rica.

VI. Bibliografía

Achebe, Chinua. "English Language and The African Writer." *Transition*, no. 75/76, 1997, pp. 342-349.

---. *Things Fall Apart*. Penguin Books, 1994.

Ashcroft, Bill, et al. *The Empire Writes Back: Theory and Practice in Post-Colonial Literatures*. Routledge, 2002.

Doring, Tobias. *Postcolonial Literatures in English*. Klett Lernen un Wissen, 2008.

Friel, Brian. Translations. Faber and Faber, 1995.

Ihimaera, Witi. *Pounamu Pounamu.* Peguin, 2022.

Ihimaera, Witi and Whiti Hereaka, editors. *Purakau: Maori Myths Retold By Maori Writers.* Vintage, 2019.

Kincaid, Jamaica. *A Small Place*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2000.

Morris, Rosalind, editor. *Can the Subaltern Speak? Reflections on the History of an Idea*. Columbia University Press, 2010.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. Zimbabew Publishing House, 1994.

Parker, Robert Dale. *How to Interpret Literature*. Oxford University Press, 2019.

Philip, M. NourbeSe, "Discourse on the Logic of Language", *She Tries Her Tongue, Her Silence Softly Breaks.* Wesleyan University Press, 2014.

Rushdie, Salman. "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist." *Imaginary Homelands*. Penguin, 1992.

---. *East, West: Stories.* Vintage International, 1995.

VII. Tentative Schedule[1]

Week 1 Aug. 14	Introduction to Empire and Postcolonial Studies: Main Terms and Major critics
Week 2 Aug. 21	Sections on Fanon and Said from (Doring pp. 51-55) *How to Interpret Literature*, "Postcolonial and Race Studies" (Parker 298-322)
Week 3 Aug. 28	Rudyard Kipling: "The Man who Would Be King" **Introduction to Place 1: Asia**
Week 4 Sep. 4	"Focus on African Literature" Ngugi Wa Thiong'o: *Decolonizing the Mind* Abeche: "English Language and The African Writer" **Introduction to Place 2: Africa**
Week 5 Sep. 11	Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (chapters 1-8) **Introduction to Place 3: Africa**
Week 6 Sep. 18	Chinua Achebe: *Things Fall Apart* (chapters 9-16)
Week 7 Sep. 25	Chinua Achebe : *Things Fall Apart* (chapters 17-24) **Essay Test 1**
Week 8 Oct. 2	"Focus on Caribbean Literature" Kincaid: *A Small Place* **Introduction to Place 4: Caribbean**
Week 9 Oct. 9	"Focus on Indian Literature" Salman Rushdie: "Commonwealth Literature Does Not Exist" From *Imaginary Homelands* **Introduction to Place 5: Americas**
Week 10 Oct. 16	Salman Rushdie: Fiction from *East, West: Stories* **Essay Test 2**
Week 11 Oct. 23	"Focus on Australian Literature" *Purakau: Maori Myths Retold By Maori Writers* **Introduction to Place 6: Pacific**
Week 12 Oct. 30	Witi Ihimaera: "The Whale" and "The Other Side of the Fence" Film analysis: *Whale Rider*

[1] This chronogram is tentative and subject to changes as deemed appropriate by the instructor

Week 13 Nov. 6	Focus on Irish Literature Brian Friel: *Translations* **Introduction to Place 7: Europe**
Week 14 Nov.13	*Translations* discussion **Annotated Bibliography Pitch**
Week 15 Nov. 20	**Essay Test 3**
Week 16 Nov. 27	**Annotated Bibliography Pitch**

***Ampliación* exam: December 11th at 8:00 am.**