Sop 108, PPCU, Autumn 2019

**Introduction to Postcolonial Writing**

BBLAN23100

Instructor: Mária Palla (mariabj.palla@gmail.com)

**Course content:** This lecture course aims to familiarize students with one particular trend in twentieth century English literature by introducing four major novels in the field to them. Changes in the approach to colonial times will be charted as the novels will be read closely, related historical and biographical details will be discussed and some key themes, concepts and terms of postcolonial criticism will be studied and applied to these works of fiction. Since its emergence in the 1980s, postcolonial studies has focussed on questions that deal with a number of historical and cultural conflicts that impact our present. While they spring from the colonialism of the previous centuries, they shed light on the globalization debates of today.

**Schedule of classes:**

Sep 14, 13:15-15:30. Introduction of key ideas in postcolonial studies.

 An émigré writer at the turn of the century: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Oct 12, 13:15 -14:45. Modernism, feminism, postcolonialism: liminality and displacement.

 Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*

Nov 16, 13:15-14:45. The colour bar in Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*

Dec 7, 13:15-15:30. Metafiction, metahistory, hybridity.

 Salman Rushdie, *Midnight’s Children*

**Required reading:**

The four novels listed above

**Recommended reading:**

Ashcroft, Bill, Gareth Griffiths and Helen Tiffin*. Post-Colonial Studies: The Key Concepts*. 2nd ed. Milton Park: Routledge, 2007.

Lazarus, Neil, ed. *The Cambridge Companion to Postcolonial Literary Studies*. Cambridge: CUP, 2004.

McLeod, John, ed. *The Routledge Companion to Postcolonial Studies*. Milton Park: Routledge, 2007.

**Assessment**: oral exam based on the required reading and the lecture notes. It consists of two parts:

1. the interpretation of quotations selected by the student from the novels and relevant to the postcolonial context of the course (30%)

2. the discussion of one of the topics listed below (70%)

1. The critique of empire in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*

2. The function of the narrative technique in Conrad’s *Heart of Darkness*

3. Liminality and displacement in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*

4. Narrators in Jean Rhys’s *Wide Sargasso Sea*

5. Types of oppression in Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*

6. “Marriage” in Doris Lessing’s *The Grass is Singing*

7. Hybridity in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*

8. Historiography in Salman Rushdie’s *Midnight’s Children*