

ENG4361 Colonial and Postcolonial Literature: Assessment Guidelines S2023

Part I: Introduction

For the course content and learning outcomes, please see the course description here: [ENG4361 – Colonial and Postcolonial Literature – University of Oslo \(uio.no\)](https://www.uio.no/eng4361)

- Teaching is in the form of 10 double seminars.
- To be allowed to take the final exam, students must have had a 5-page essay approved on a topic chosen from a list provided by the course instructor.
- The student's grade is based 100% on a 9-11 page term paper. Students choose the topic for their term paper by themselves.
- Students have been encouraged to contact their teacher about their term paper topics via e-mail, in class, or one-on-one during a conference period set off for this purpose. More importantly, students are given the opportunity to submit a draft of their term paper by a given deadline and are given written feedback on both the form and content of their draft. Students are permitted to write their term paper on the same topic as in their qualifying essay or to submit a longer and revised version of it.

Part II: General assessment criteria

Length: We are looking for term papers of at least 9 pages and no longer than 11 pages in Times New Roman 12 point and 1½-spacing (not including the title page and works cited list).

Structure: The term papers are expected to have the form of an academic essay with a clear “introduction—body of argument—and conclusion” structure.

Language: Students are expected to write clearly, concisely, and in an appropriately academic style, i.e. avoiding slang and informal/unconventional English. Common language errors relate to subject-verb concord, verb tense, prepositions, comma usage, genitives, idioms, spelling, and incomplete sentences with no finite verb. You need to ask if these errors are so numerous and serious that they impair the student's ability to communicate. Language counts as part of a total assessment and is not given any specific percentage of the final grade.

Scholarly documentation: The citation of sources and the construction of the bibliography/works cited list is to be correct and consistent with an internationally recognized style of scholarly documentation, such as MLA or Chicago.

Secondary reading: Students are expected to engage with previous scholarship and criticism on the primary text(s) they have chosen.

Criteria relating to content (formulated as questions to ask in your assessment):

- Does the term paper have a topic with a viable scope and academic validity?
- Does the student have a clearly formulated thesis?

- Does the term paper contain interesting or original ideas and arguments supported by relevant examples from the primary text(s)?
- Does the student demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the primary text(s)?
- Are postcolonial perspectives well integrated in the ongoing discussion and literary analysis?
- Does the student demonstrate an understanding of postcolonial theory and the postcolonial concepts he or she is using and are they integral to the analysis he or she is conducting?
- If the student employs a methodology beyond close reading or comparison and contrast is the methodology relevant and productive in exploring the topic he or she has chosen

Essays will be marked holistically, with no specific percentage of marks for any one aspect. Instead, the marker will be making an overall judgement of the quality of the essay as a whole. Weaknesses in one area of the criteria may be compensated for by particular skill in another, and vice versa.

Excellent/Good

- 1 Work at the highest level will assert an argument, through the use of a thesis statement which is argumentative (i.e. it could also be disputed), specific (it is not overly general or vague), and substantiated (there is some evidence to support it).
- 2 The argument is delivered through the use of a clear, logical essay structure. The student considers the flow of the argument from paragraph to paragraph and sustains the argument throughout. The various points made are all relevant to the topic and argument under consideration in the essay, and that relevance is made explicitly clear.
- 3 The essay engages in detailed textual analysis, considering the literary strategies that can be discerned in the texts considered, and relating these strategies to the essay's overall argument. The essay demonstrates detailed awareness of postcolonial theory and the critical contexts of the texts considered.
- 4 The essay is written in formal, idiomatic English of a high standard, with virtually no mistakes of grammar or spelling. It adopts an objective, but persuasive academic tone which reinforces the argument that the student is making.
- 5 The essay references secondary literature in a correct and consistent format, with complete footnotes/in-text references and bibliography.

Average:

- 1 Includes an argument, which is for the most part sustained throughout.
- 2 The essay adopts a clear structure and the points made are relevant to the topic under consideration throughout.
- 3 The essay engages in detailed textual analysis and demonstrates some knowledge of postcolonial theory and the critical context of the texts(s) in question.
- 4 The essay is written for the most part in correct, idiomatic English, with only minor mistakes of grammar and spelling.
5. The references and bibliography are, for the most part, correctly formatted and sufficiently detailed.

Poor:

- 1 The student's argument is excessively general or lacks substantiating evidence.
- 2 The structure lacks logic, and the points made are occasionally irrelevant to the topic and argument under consideration.
- 3 The essay engages in some analysis, but has a slight tendency to simply repeat details of plot. The essay demonstrates some knowledge of postcolonial theory and the critical contexts, and makes only occasional use of secondary material.
- 4 There are errors in grammar and spelling, though these do not prevent understanding of the essay text. The language includes some unidiomatic expressions/sentences.
- 5 The references and bibliography are incorrectly formatted or lack essential information

Unacceptable:

- 1 The essay lacks argument.
- 2 The structure is illogical and confusing. The points made lack relevance to the topic under consideration.
- 3 The essay lacks analysis, simply retelling the story. The essay demonstrates no knowledge of postcolonial theory or the critical contexts.
- 4 The essay is poorly written with numerous errors of grammar and spelling. The language includes many unidiomatic expressions/sentences.
- 5 The bibliography and references are non-existent or incomplete.