Postcolonial literature refers to works written in the former European empire after the formal end of colonial rule. In English this primarily means Anglophone literature from Africa, the Caribbean, and India since about 1947 (Indian independence), though some works from before this period are relevant. Texts from North and South America, Australasia, the Middle East, and Europe may also be described as postcolonial when they address issues of imperialism and its aftermath, such as nation building, race relations, diaspora, emigration, and exile.

The WMU English department postcolonial literature core list was revised in 2009 to recognize the impact of globalization and the post-9/11 world order on postcolonial studies. Works in translation and works from the Middle East are included along with exemplary texts from the Anglophone tradition. The study of postcolonial literature inevitably includes postcolonial theory and criticism, and historical, cultural, and political knowledge of the various contexts in which postcolonial texts are written and circulate.

Students taking the Postcolonial Literature qualifying exam must be familiar with all literature and criticism on the Core List below. Each student must also be familiar with at least twenty additional texts, which should be chosen to reflect an area of interest to that student. Such areas of interest might include:

- Literature of a particular ethnic group, language, region, nation, or continent (African, Australian, Canadian, Irish, Indian, Latin American, Middle Eastern, Native American)
- British or European imperial literature (by authors like Kipling, Conrad, etc.)
- Translated postcolonial literature (in Arabic, French, Spanish, etc.)
- A thematic focus (like gender, diasporic identity, forced exile, adolescent literature)
- Postcolonial theory

Students are also encouraged to develop their own areas of interest and a list of corresponding texts in conjunction with appropriate English department faculty members (Drs. Steve Feffer, Todd Kuchta, Jil Larson, Mustafa Mirzeler, and Allen Webb).

A. Core Literature

Understanding postcolonial literature requires knowledge of the colonial literature to which it responds. Thus, students taking the exam should be familiar with at least three of the following British colonial texts: Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness* (1899); Daniel Defoe, *Robinson Crusoe* (1719); E. M. Forster, *A Passage to India* (1924); Rudyard Kipling, *Kim* (1901); and William Shakespeare, *The Tempest* (1610). In addition, students must be familiar with the following literary works:

9. Athol Fugard, *Blood Knot; Sizwe Bansi is Dead; Master Harold ... and the Boys* (South Africa)
18. Tayeb Salih, *Season of Migration to the North* (1966, Sudan)
19. Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King’s Horseman* (1975, Nigeria)

B. Core Theory and Criticism

To highlight some of the central issues in postcolonial studies, the secondary readings below are organized according to key concepts. Except for the books listed under 1 and 2, all sources are available from Dr. Kuchta for photocopying.


C. Recommended Supplemental Reading
Works listed below are not required for the exam. However, you may find these supplemental texts useful depending on your familiarity with imperial and postcolonial literature, theory, and history.

I. Theory and Criticism

II. History
Benedict Anderson. Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism (1983). This analysis of the nation as an imaginary construct has been crucial for postcolonial studies.