



ENGLISH 392/AO1. Studies in a Major Figure

“J.M. Coetzee: Parables of Power in the (Post)Colony”

J.M. Coetzee is widely recognized as a major figure in the field of late twentieth and early twenty-first century literature. A postcolonial writer who grew up in South Africa, Coetzee’s fiction engages with “power” in all of its guises, but never in a straightforward way. This course is a rare opportunity to immerse ourselves in the work of a brilliant novelist who perhaps more than any living writer today implicates *fiction* in the violence of settler colonialism, white nationalisms, sexual and racial domination, states of emergency, the plight of refugees and the treatment of nonhuman animals. As we’ll see, Coetzee’s fiction also probes the role of literature in historical shifts to postcolonial truth and reconciliation, struggles for decolonial worlds, and posthuman kinship.

Proposed Texts:

Dusklands

Waiting For the Barbarians

The Life & Times of Michael K.

Disgrace

The Lives of Animals

(plus selected critical readings)

Proposed Assignments:

3 short response papers

Short essay

Final Essay