ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

GENERAL STUDIES PROGRAM COURSE PROPOSAL COVER FORM

Courses submitted to the GSC between 2/1 and 4/30 if approved, will be effective the following Spring.
Courses submitted between 5/1 and 1/31 if approved, will be effective the following Fall.
(SUBMISSION VIA ADOBE.PDF FILES IS PREFERRED)

DATE  October 19, 2010

1. ACADEMIC UNIT: African and African American Studies

2. COURSE PROPOSED:
   AFH 459  Studies in African American/Caribbean Lit  3
   (prefix) (number) (title) (semester hours)

3. CONTACT PERSON:
   Name: Amanda Smith  Phone: 53897
   Mail Code: 4902  E-Mail: amanda.a.smith@asu.edu

4. ELIGIBILITY: New courses must be approved by the Tempe Campus Curriculum Subcommittee and must have a regular course number. For the rules governing approval of omnibus courses, contact the General Studies Program Office at 965-0739.

5. AREA(S) PROPOSED COURSE WILL SERVE. A single course may be proposed for more than one core or awareness area. A course may satisfy a core area requirement and more than one awareness area requirements concurrently, but may not satisfy requirements in two core areas simultaneously, even if approved for those areas. With departmental consent, an approved General Studies course may be counted toward both the General Studies requirement and the major program of study. (Please submit one designation per proposal)

   Core Areas
   Literacy and Critical Inquiry—L
   Mathematical Studies—MA  CS
   Humanities, Fine Arts and Design—HU
   Social and Behavioral Sciences—SB
   Natural Sciences—SQ  SG

   Awareness Areas
   Global Awareness—G
   Historical Awareness—H
   Cultural Diversity in the United States—C

6. DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED.
   (1) Course Description
   (2) Course Syllabus
   (3) Criteria Checklist for the area
   (4) Table of Contents from the textbook used, if available

7. In the space provided below (or on a separate sheet), please also provide a description of how the course meets the specific criteria in the area for which the course is being proposed.

   CROSS-LISTED COURSES: ☐ No  ☑ Yes; Please identify courses: ENG 459
   Is this an multisection course?: ☐ No  ☑ Yes; Is it governed by a common syllabus? ______

   Stanlie M. James
   Chair/Director  (Print or Type)  [Signature]

Rev. 1/94, 4/95, 7/98, 4/00, 1/02, 10/08
Rationale and Objectives

The contemporary "culture" of the United States involves the complex interplay of many different cultures that exist side by side in various states of harmony and conflict. The history of the United States involves the experiences not only of different groups of European immigrants and their descendants but also of diverse groups of American Indians, Hispanic Americans, African Americans, and Asian Americans—all of whom played significant roles in the development of contemporary culture and together shape the future of the United States. At the same time, the recognition that gender, class, and religious differences cut across all distinctions of race and ethnicity offers an even richer variety of perspectives from which to view ourselves. Awareness of our cultural diversity and its multiple sources can illuminate our collective past, present, and future and can help us to achieve greater mutual understanding and respect.

The objective of the Cultural Diversity requirement is to promote awareness and appreciation of cultural diversity within the contemporary United States through the study of the cultural, social, or scientific contributions of women and minority groups, examination of their experiences in the U.S., or exploration of successful or unsuccessful interactions between and among cultural groups.
Proposer: Please complete the following section and attach appropriate documentation.

### ASU--[C] CRITERIA

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YES</th>
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<th>Identify Documentation Submitted</th>
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<tr>
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<td><strong>CULTURAL DIVERSITY IN THE UNITED STATES</strong></td>
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1. A Cultural Diversity course must meet the following general criteria:

- **YES**: The course must contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity in contemporary U.S. Society.
- **NO**: Syllabus: Course goals and examples of text provided.

2. A Cultural Diversity course must then meet at least one of the following specific criteria:

a. The course is an in-depth study of culture-specific elements, cultural experiences, or cultural contributions (in areas such as education, history, language, literature, art, music, science, politics, work, religion, and philosophy) of gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States.

- **YES**: Syllabus: course description, course goals and weekly schedule (pg. 6).
- **NO**

b. The course is primarily a comparative study of the diverse cultural contributions, experiences, or world views of two or more gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States.

- **NO**

c. The course is primarily a study of the social, economic, political, or psychological dimensions of relations between and among gender*, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups** within the United States.

*Gender groups would encompass categories such as the following: women, men, lesbians, gays, bisexuals, transgender individuals, etc.

**Cultural, racial, ethnic, and/or linguistic minority groups in the U.S. would include categories such as the following: Hispanics, African Americans, Native Americans/First Peoples, Asian Americans, Jewish Americans, Muslim Americans, members of the deaf community, etc.
Explain in detail which student activities correspond to the specific designation criteria. Please use the following organizer to explain how the criteria are being met.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria (from checksheet)</th>
<th>How course meets spirit (contextualize specific examples in next column)</th>
<th>Please provide detailed evidence of how course meets criteria (i.e., where in syllabus)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example—See 2b. Compares 2 U.S. cultures</td>
<td>Example—Compares Latino &amp; African American Music</td>
<td>Example—See Syllabus Pg. 5</td>
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<tr>
<td>1. Course must contribute to an understanding of cultural diversity in contemporary U.S. society.</td>
<td>Primary course goals are to discover how fiction adds to meaningful dimensions to social transformation. The course focuses on discovering how personal ideas and feelings about human concerns add to an understanding and interpretation of the writer’s ideas and beliefs. The course text that best demonstrate this criteria are: Brown Girl. Brownstones as well as select chapters from Mothering Across Cultures</td>
<td>Syllabus: Course goals and examples of text provided.</td>
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<tr>
<td>2a. The course is an in-depth study of culture-specific elements, cultural experiences, or cultural contributions of gender, racial, ethnic and/or linguistic minority groups within the United States.</td>
<td>The course explores themes of race, class, gender, culture and ethnicity in creative fiction of writers of African descent in the United States, the Caribbean and Africa. A primary course goal is to enhance ability to use literature as an experience which helps reader understanding of different world views and cultures. Course topics and assigned readings in the following weeks address this criteria: week 7, 9, 10, 11 and 12.</td>
<td>Syllabus: course description, course goals and weekly schedule (pg. 6).</td>
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Course Description and Objectives

Welcome to the course Studies in African American/Caribbean Literature. This upper division course will explore themes of race, class, gender, culture and ethnicity in the creative fiction of writers of different Diasporas in the United States and the Caribbean that are linked to Africa in the cultural historical context. We will explore how themes such as migration, postcoloniality, discrimination, history, gender and family issues, intersect and highlight African American and Caribbean cultures across literary and historical periods. Non-fiction may also be included to help contextualize the literary texts.

Our goals are to:

- discover how personal ideas and feelings about human concerns add to an understanding and interpretation of the writer's ideas and beliefs
- become familiar with African American and Caribbean cultures
- increase the ability to express critical responses to literary studies through written and oral discussions
- increase awareness of factors in literature and film which affect personal responses
- enhance the ability to use literature as an experience which helps reader understanding of different world views and cultures
- discuss and note various responses to interpretations of the readings
- discover how fiction adds a meaningful dimension to social transformation

Students are expected to actively participate in class discussions, to be responsible for the active learning process (student responsibility for learning), and to attend class regularly. Attendance will be taken at each class session. Regularly missed class sessions are considered a violation of ABOR and university guidelines regarding disruptive class behavior. I suggest that you take this course at another time if you are not able to have regular attendance. More than 2 unexcused absences throughout the semester will result in an automatic grade reduction penalty of 10%.
REQUIRED TEXTS


*The Farming of Bones.* Edwidge Danticat. paperbk.


*Kindred.* Octavia Butler

Introduction and select chapters from *Mothering Across Cultures.* Angelita Reyes (on reserve in Hayden)

Excerpts from the works of Langston Hughes, Claude Mckay and Zora Neale Hurston will be posted on Blackboard.

VIEWING OF FILM EXCERPTS

RECOMMENDED

*The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*  


BRING THE REQUIRED BOOK OR READING TO EVERY CLASS SESSION!

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADING CRITERIA

There will be a Midterm exam and Blackboard postings. Each week there will be a Blackboard Forum which you must access to present wholesome comments on the week’s assigned readings. No more than a page length; your exploration, analysis of the readings for the week; comments on related analyses. You will read all the class postings and download your own to bring to class. Postings are considered to be critiques and explorations. Your postings will improve each week! (10% of the grade.) We’ll decide the cut-off time during the first meeting of class. If you have a facilitation scheduled, you will not have to post that week.

The class facilitation assignment is explained below. The final essay (term paper) will be 10-12 pages with a minimum of 3 bibliographic sources that must not be random internet sources. You will read the bibliographic sources and address these sources in the essay. You have a choice of creating your own essay topic or having one assigned. The essay will adhere to MLA style and format, or APA, or Chicago Style. Graduate student paper: 20-25 pages. Full bibliography.

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BlackBoard: There will be a shell for this course on Blackboard. Please make sure that you know how to access this classroom tool. The syllabus will also be located here. (If you loose the hard copy that you will get the first day, you can print it out from blackboard.) There will be announcements on Blackboard as well. When it's up and working, I will let you know.

**Students are encouraged to announce any events, speakers or lectures related to the course. The readings are selected on the basis of diverse ideas and approaches to reading autobiography, essays and fiction and aspects of challenging issues in the context of the remarkable and, indeed, surging interests in the context of black women cross culturally.**

**Scholastic Dishonesty and Plagiarism:** Scholastic dishonesty includes cheating on assignments or examinations; plagiarizing, misrepresenting as your own work any part of work done by another or taken from internet free/pay essay websites (such as termpapers.com, etc); submitting another student's paper as your own, or submitting the same paper to meet the requirements of more than one course without the approval and consent of all instructors concerned. Since all instructors are obligated to report instances of scholastic dishonesty, please save me from doing so. Remember that all written work not derived directly from your own mind and integrity must be acknowledged as such; refer to the MLA Style Guide or a similar reference work.

**Student Support**

- Disability Services ([http://www.asu.edu/drs](http://www.asu.edu/drs))
- AAAS's Homepage ([http://www.asu.edu/clas/aframstu](http://www.asu.edu/clas/aframstu))
- Writing Center ([http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/](http://www.asu.edu/duas/wcenter/))
- Counseling Center ([http://www.asu.edu/vpsa/counseling](http://www.asu.edu/vpsa/counseling))

The final essay exam will be 10 pages with a minimum of 3 bibliographic sources that you will read and include in your discussion in the essay. The essay will adhere to MLA, APA, or Chicago Style style and format. You will get a topic for both the short essay and the take-home final exam essay. Graduate students: 20-25 pages.

**Objectives of the Team Facilitation:**

- to discuss and analyze the major issues/ideas/points of view of the readings
- to consider the historical and cultural context of the readings
- to provide questions/statements/relevant quotes for the class from the students' point of view
- to enable successful public presentations and speaking

Note on Planning Ahead: I can make some copies that you may need for the facilitation if you submit to me at least by the Wednesday prior to your presentation. You may also consider break-out groups for discussion/activity/relevant to your Team Assignment. On writing good questions you should think of questions/quotes/statements as an opportunity to guide the discussion toward
the readings and/or specific passages you find to be most interesting or those that highlight critical issues of the readings.

**ADDITIONAL GUIDELINES**

1. Cell phones, pagers, etc. Out of respect for me and your classmates, please turn them off during class session.

2. Extra Credit: No extra credit assignments in this course.

3. In class activities and projects cannot be made up.

4. Courtesy and Respect: Be aware that this class will be composed of diverse members; it is your responsibility to use appropriate and respectful language in class and in writing and to respect the opinion and culture of the professor and of other students, per university guidelines. At the same time, please don’t assume that you may know all the dynamics of the material that is presented here because you may be of a certain cultural background. I hope that you are here to learn more and add to your knowledge. I don’t assume to know everything, and am pleased when students ask questions, and can offer new insights (that are not merely anecdotal) and additional intellectual information to guide our readings and critical explorations. Foremost, this is a course for intellectual and academic achievement.

5. If you must leave class early or arrive late please let me know in advance by email or a telephone call. If you are chronically late to class or regularly leave early, or if you are not prepared to participate in the discussions because you haven’t completed the readings, you will loose credit in the area of attendance and class participation. Please do not arrive late in this class.

More values and stipulations:

- Please remember to respect the opinions of others, especially when they disagree with your own. Learn to listen—be careful not to monopolize discussions. Everyone should feel comfortable in speaking and joining discussions in this class.

- Bring your honest efforts to the course. Your commitment to the course and to each other will make the class time vibrant, pleasurable, and successful for you and for me.

- I encourage you to make use of my office hours; I am very good about responding to your email questions in a timely manner.

- Again about Plagiarizing: Plagiarizing will result in an “XE”—failure— for the course. If you don’t understand what plagiarizing is, consult the web site above or ask me. http://www.asu.edu/clas/english/writingprograms/teacherresources/wpguide/questions.htm#10

- **Academic Freedom and Sensitive Course Content**
  Teaching/learning is an organic, dynamic process that includes a range of creative techniques designed to engage students’ thinking and to promote evidence-based, data-driven understanding. Whatever the field or interdisciplinary approaches, teaching
methods occur in many forms that are meant to raise awareness of other perspectives. The process requires free, open, civil respectful and safe inquiry whether in the humanities, sciences, social sciences or any other field. The course readings may address potentially sensitive subject matter in the context of the dynamic and interrelated process of teaching, facilitating and learning.

**WEEKLY SCHEDULE**

**Week 1:**
8/25 Introduction
Themes: the immigrant story; slavery, cross-cultural perspectives: African American, Creole, East Indian, African, European; mothering across cultures, postcolonial, diasporas, Francophone, Anglophone, Hispanophone regions

**Week 2:**
9/01 Cross-cultural perspectives: Mapping the Caribbean and Diasporas
   India, Africa, Europe, the United States. Reading: "Defining and Studying the Modern African Diaspora" (class hand out)

**Week 3**
9/08 English-speaking Caribbean, colonialism and slavery, mothering
   *Wide Sargasso Sea*
   Film Clip: "Wide Sargasso Sea"

**Reminder:**
**Essay # 1 Due on 9/29; Essay Topic**

Select any aspect of the topics we’ve discussed and/or read thus far. Discuss the topic in terms of its relevance in contemporary African American and Caribbean cultures. You may use references from popular culture, media, communications, music (Bob Marley?) other known artists and/or other writers. 5-7 pages. Double space; 1 inch margins. 12 point font. Spell check. Number the pages. The topic you choose must be related to the theme of studies in Caribbean and African American cultures.

**Week 4: English-speaking Caribbean, con’t**
9/15 *Wide Sargasso Sea*

**Week 5: V. S. Naipaul and East Indians in the Caribbean**
9/22 *The Mystic Masseur*
Week 6: V. S. Naipaul and East Indians in the Caribbean
9/29 The Mystic Masseur: Essay Due
Film Clip: "The Mystic Masseur"

Week 7: French-speaking Caribbean & Negritude, Harlem Renaissance
10/6 Select poems by various African American & Caribbean Writers

Week 8: Midterm Week
10/13 Midterm: TBA

Week 9: Women, Gender, the Coming of Age & the Immigrant’s Story
10/20 Brown Girl, Brownstones

Week 10: Women, Gender and the Coming of Age, con’t
10/27 Brown Girl, Brownstones

Week 11: Resistance, Creole Identities, Haiti and American Occupation
11/03 The Farming of Bones

Week 12: Resistance, Creole Identities, Haiti, con’t
11/10 The Farming of Bones

Week 13 The African Diaspora
11/17 TBA

Week 14:
11/24-26 Thanksgiving Break

Week 15
12/01 Review, Synthesis and Class potluck!

Term Paper Due

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<tr>
<th>December 13, 2010</th>
<th>3:30 PM - 4:45 PM</th>
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<tr>
<td>159 Wilson Hall</td>
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No late paper will be accepted and no email submission
You may arrange with me to turn in your paper earlier
EDWIDGE DANTICAT
author of BREATH, EYES, MEMORY, and KRIK? KRAK!

The Farming of Bones

ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR
It is 1937, a dangerous year in the Dominican Republic, where Haitian laborers are useful, rather than welcome; tolerated, but not trusted. Amabelle, a young Haitian woman orphaned at the age of eight, is a faithful servant to the young wife of an army colonel, living in the household where the two women grew up together. Amabelle’s lover Sebastien is an itinerant sugarcane cutter, a handsome man despite the scars on his face, the callouses on his hands.

There are rumors that in other towns Haitians are being persecuted, even killed, but there are always rumors. Amabelle longs to become Sebastien’s wife, to return with him to Haiti at the end of the cane season and begin a new life. Instead, the nationalist madness erupts, and terror engulfs them.

A devastating and beautiful novel, The Farming of Bones is about love, dignity, pain, and memory, and about that most basic of hopes when all other hope is lost: to endure.

"Danticat writes in wonderful, evocative prose, and she is especially adept at treading the path between oppression and grace. At times, it's a particularly painful path, but, always, a compelling one."

— The Boston Sunday Globe

"It's a testament to her talent that the novel, while almost unbearably sad, is still a joy to read."

— Newsweek
V. S. Naipaul

Winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature

The Mystic Masseur

A novel
WINNER OF THE NOBEL PRIZE IN LITERATURE

"Naipaul’s writing is clean and beautiful, and he has a great eye for nuance."
—THE ATLANTIC MONTHLY

In this slyly funny and lavishly inventive novel—his first—V. S. Naipaul traces the unlikely career of Ganesh Ramsunair, a failed schoolteacher and impecunious village masseur who in time becomes a revered mystic, a thriving entrepreneur, and the most beloved politician in Trinidad. To understand a little better, one has to realize that in the 1940s masseurs were the island’s medical practitioners of choice. As one character observes, “I know the sort of doctors they have in Trinidad. They think nothing of killing two, three people before breakfast.”

Ganesh’s ascent is variously aided and impeded by a Dickensian cast of rogues and eccentrics. There’s his skeptical wife, Leela, whose schooling has made her excessively fond of punctuation: marks!; and Leela’s father, Ramlogan, a man of startling mood changes and an ever-ready cutlass. There’s the aunt known as The Great Belcher. There are patients pursued by malign clouds or afflicted with an amorous fascination with bicycles. Witty, tender, filled with the sights, sounds, and smells of Trinidad’s dusty Indian villages. The Mystic Masseur is Naipaul at his most expansive and evocative.

“No one else around today... seems able to employ prose fiction so deeply as the very voice of exile.”
—THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS

$12.00
 www.vintagebooks.com

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Cover design: Kieran
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[vii]
Jean Rhys
Wide Sargasso Sea
A reader’s guide to essential criticism
Edited by Carl Plasa
A reader's guide

Jean Rhys
Wide Sargasso Sea

Published in 1966, Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea rewrites Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre (1847) from the perspective of Bertha Mason, the white Creole woman who becomes Rochester's mad first wife. With its complex narrative strategies and haunting prose, Rhys's novel both captures and disorients its readers, taking them into the realm of sexual and racial paranoia, shadowed by the half-acknowledged memory of British colonial slavery in the Caribbean.

In this Readers' Guide, Carl Plasa provides a comprehensive survey and analysis of the most stimulating critical responses to Wide Sargasso Sea. The opening chapter outlines initial reactions to the novel from English and Caribbean critics, charting the differences between them. Chapter Two explores Wide Sargasso Sea's dialogue with Jane Eyre and the theoretical questions it raised. Chapter Three examines how critics have assessed the racial politics of Rhys's text, while Chapter Four features discussion of the novel's African Caribbean cultural legacy. In Chapter Five, the focus is historical, as critics read Wide Sargasso Sea both in terms of its moment of production and the early Victorian period in which it is set. Throughout, Carl Plasa contextualizes and clarifies the critical exchanges which this daring and dramatic novel has provoked.

Carl Plasa is a Senior Lecturer in English Literature at Cardiff University.

Readers' Guides explore the key critical material relating to major works of world literature. A clear, informative narrative links the extracts and examines their context and importance. From contemporary reviews to postmodern readings, the Guides offer readers a full account of the ways in which the works have been received by academics, critics and the public.
Contents

INTRODUCTION

This begins with an overview of Jean Rhys's life and work, and goes on to provide brief outlines of the main critical and theoretical concerns informing the five chapters to come. It concludes with the suggestion that the play of narrative voices in Wide Sargasso Sea itself prefigures the many-sided critical debates that have grown up in the wake of the novel's publication.

CHAPTER ONE.

'A Considerable Tour de Force by Any Standard': Reviews and Early Criticism

This chapter is divided into two sections. The first charts the immediate critical impact of Wide Sargasso Sea in Britain and America, with reviews by Francis Hope, an anonymous author in The Times Literary Supplement and Walter Allen, all of which privilege issues of literary style and the exploitation of women by men. The second section focuses on three of the most significant early Caribbean critical assessments of Rhys's novel (produced during the late 1960s and early 1970s), for which questions of race and colonialism are, by contrast, paramount. Extracts from Wally Look Lai and Kenneth Ramchand are given here, as well as a short polemical piece by Edward Kamau Brathwaite, challenging Look Lai's appropriation of the text for a nascent Caribbean literary canon.

CHAPTER TWO

'The Creole is of Course the Important One': Rewriting Jane Eyre

This chapter examines critical analyses of the intertextual dialogue between Wide Sargasso Sea and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre as they evolved between the mid 1970s and late 1980s. Particular emphasis is
placed on feminist and postcolonial approaches, as well as the theoretical debates about the politics of narrative which Rhys’s novel has stimulated. The work of four critics is covered, with extracts from Dennis Porter, Elizabeth R. Baer, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak and Benita Parry.

CHAPTER THREE

‘Like Goes to Like’: Race and the Politics of Identification

This chapter includes extracts from articles written by Helen Tiffin, Lee Erwin and Maria Olausen between the late 1970s and early 1990s. Each of these critics offers a different assessment of Wide Sargasso Sea’s racial politics, with particular reference to the controversial patterns of white/black identification by which the novel is traversed. Tiffin’s early celebration of these patterns is modified by Erwin, who sees them as a source of ambivalence in Rhys’s text. In a more sceptical reading, Olausen shows how the black women with whom the novel’s white Creole heroine identifies herself are figured in terms of racial stereotypes that render Rhys’s project politically retrograde.

CHAPTER FOUR

‘There is Always the Other Side’: African Caribbean Perspectives

This chapter spans the period from the mid 1980s to mid 1990s and explores the ways in which critics have addressed the specifically African Caribbean dimensions of Rhys’s novel. The first three extracts come from Teresa F. O’Connor, Alan Richardson and Regina Barreca and are united by a concern with Rhys’s fictional representation of the black ritual practice of obeah. The fourth piece, taking up the second half of the chapter, is from Judie Newman. Here the critical focus switches from obeah to the liminal figure of the zombie, which Newman persuasively reads as a powerful trope for forms of colonial, sexual and literary domination.

CHAPTER FIVE

‘Not Even Much Record’: The Place of History

This chapter shows how three critics, writing between the early and late 1990s, have sought to historicize Wide Sargasso Sea. It begins with a brief extract from Maggie Humm, which reads Rhys’s novel against the grain of the images of blackness circulating in Britain during the 1950s and
1960s, the time of *Wide Sargasso Sea*'s composition. This extract is
followed by two much longer readings from Peter Hulme and Laura E.
Ciolkowski, both of which locate the text firmly within the Caribbean of
the 1830s and 1840s. For Hulme, *Wide Sargasso Sea* reworks incidents
from its author's own colonial family history, while, for Ciolkowski, it
provides a subtle commentary on nineteenth-century discourses of race
and sexuality and the intersections between them.

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A NOTE ON REFERENCES AND QUOTATIONS

Throughout this Guide, the 1997 Penguin edition of *Wide Sargasso Sea*
(edited by Angela Smith and abbreviated as *WSS*) and the 1998 Oxford
World's Classics edition of *Jane Eyre* (edited by Margaret Smith and
abbreviated as *JE*) have been used for all references and quotations.
Mothering Across Cultures

Postcolonial Representations

Angelita Reyes
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"In Kindred and a balm for the thorny ills of everything else. The literature of science fiction can be." — Walter Mosley
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