

21L.488 Literature and Development
MIT Spring 2008
Professor Sarah Brouillette

Final Essay

Choose a topic and write a concise, persuasive, compelling essay that features a strong thesis statement, evidence of close reading and analytical rigor, and abundant textual detail. You needn't consult secondary sources, but can if you wish.

1. Contemporary writers are often conflicted about the distance between the peoples and regions they depict and the readers who consume those depictions. Explore how this conflict informs two or more of our texts.
2. Compare how *A Fine Balance* and *Petals of Blood* treat the relationship between individual lives and economics.
3. The literature of development is pulled between hope that real knowledge is both possible and powerful, and cynicism about faith in human agency, social progress, and our ability to know "the truth." Discuss in relation to two or more of our texts.
4. Is it possible to be anti-development? Answer this question with an argument about three or more of our texts.
5. Key to development discourse is the idea of progress – movement toward social, cultural, economic, and political betterment. Explore how two or more of our texts treat the notion that progress can and/or does occur.
6. Are "narrative" and "development" analogous? Explore this question through analysis of two or more of our texts.
7. Make an argument about the representation of humanitarianism in *The Constant Gardener* and *Cause Celeb*.
8. While remaining attentive to the difference between the speaker/narrator and the author, discuss the way two or more of our works treat the idea that writers have a responsibility to attempt to better the world (or not).
9. Write a paper surveying the majority of our texts and defining what you take to be the major thematic and/or aesthetic concerns relevant to the emerging field of study of literature and development.

Notes

- Guidelines outlining best practices for literature papers are available on our website.
- Your paper must be 10-12 double-spaced pages, in a 12 pt. font.
- The citation system is MLA.
- The paper is due in class on 05.15.