Description: This module will help students understand the fluid nature of literary theory by introducing ways contemporary theorists question post-colonial definitions and interpretations. Students get an introduction to the role of language in post-colonial theory in the last section of British Literature II through authors like Brian Friel, Kamau Braithwaite, Wole Soyinka, Tony Harrison, Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, and Salman Rushdie.

This module will highlight the tension that occurs when post-colonial thought meets China, particularly in Hong Kong, and how binary categories like East/West, colonizer/colonized and chronological terms like post-colonial are problematized. Students will come to realize that neither literature nor literary theory is a chronological nor evolutionary “march of progress” with one era replacing and erasing another. China is a particularly interesting lens to highlight the flaws of post-colonial theory because it was never fully colonized, functions as a colonizing country itself (currently in African countries), and has yet to fully undergo modernization.

Hong Kong holds a unique position as a British colony (Anglo-China it was sometimes called) because it was considered a “successful” model of colonization until the handover of sovereignty to the PRC in 1997. During a 16 week semester, this module could be completed in 1 week (3 hour period).

Objectives: Upon completing this module, students will (1) be introduced to the “messy” nature of contemporary theory (2) understand how nations and societies influence each other even within asymmetrical power relations (3) begin to develop higher-level critical thinking skills that reflect the instability of terms and chronological divisions (4) explore how cultural productions reflect and respond to the complicated context of their origins (5) develop a more global understanding of “British” literature.

Lecture/Discussions: Lectures can provide students with background information and the general history of Hong Kong, as well as how theorists have understood and defined this city at different points in time. Group and class discussions will help students see how this history troubles ideas of British colonialism and the work of Edward Said’s *Orientalism* introduced earlier in the semester.

Readings: Articles will help students fill in their knowledge of Hong Kong’s history. The University of Hong Kong has a database rich with primary materials and news clippings about the drafting process.

AV: Both the BBC and CCTV have travel series on Hong Kong, touching on historical moments. Viewing both of these introductions to Hong Kong allows for a discussion of the way
many histories can simultaneously exist in one place. Films provide a rich way to call upon student’s existing knowledge of Hong Kong, as the city has a long history of cinema. Students are likely already familiar with John Woo and Jackie Chan as both have made Hollywood films and films like Woo’s The Killers have influenced American music and movies in apparent ways.

**Assignments**
- (1) Essay- Have the students view the John Woo film of their choice and provide a literature survey of analyses of the film.
- (2) Essay Test Question- Briefly discuss how Hong Kong’s literature and/or history question two definitions crucial to post-colonial theory.
- (3) Essay Test Question- Compare and contrast the portrayals of violence in WH Auden’s *Journey to a War* and John Woo’s *Killer.*

**Resources**

**Readings**
Hong Kong Basic Law Drafting History and Coverage- [http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/blhdo/home.action](http://sunzi1.lib.hku.hk/blhdo/home.action)
John Mark Carroll’s *A Concise History of Hong Kong* provides a general overview for the instructor and individual chapters can help students understand the colonial history of Hong Kong.
*Time* magazine’s international edition often features contemporary news on Hong Kong.

**AV**
*The Killer: Cult Film and Transcultural (Mis)reading*” by Jinsoo Ann appears in *At Full Speed: Hong Kong Cinema in a Borderless World* and can give students and instructor a political reading of the film.
Hong Kong 10 Years On (audio) [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/documentary_archive/6291046.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/programmes/documentary_archive/6291046.stm)

**General**
*The Painted Vail* W. Somerset Maugham
“Hongkong” W. H. Auden
*The Unwalled City* Xu Xi
*Hong Kong In Chinese History* Jung-Fang Tsai
*The Colonizer and the Colonized* Albert Memmi
*Anglo-China: Chinese People and British Rule in Hong Kong, 1841-1880* Christopher Munn
*Reading Orientalism: Said and the Unsaid* Daniel Martin Varisco