

Carleton University
 Winter 2014
 Department of English

ENGL 2927A : Introduction to African Literatures in English and Post-Colonial Literature

Time: Wed/Fri 8:30 - 10:00 a.m.

Location: 240 TB (*Please confirm on Carleton Central*)

Instructor: Aliessa Hosein

Office Hours: Tuesday /Thursday 4:45pm -6:45pm.

(I have a very full schedule but will be pleased to meet by appointment also, as needed)

Office: DT 1923

E- mail: alieshahosein@gmail.com

Expectations and Course Objectives

This course provides an adventure through Africa.

The course is a detailed introduction to the major writers and diverse literary traditions of the continent. We will select texts from different genres—prose fiction, poetry, drama—and regions.

We will study the historical and cultural contexts of the writing, publication, and reception or consumption of the literature.

We will pay particular attention to the different forms and techniques with which the writers convey their ideas, and explore in detail some of the most interesting of those composite ideas and themes: colonialism and cultural imperialism; the possibility of an “African” literature in non-African but Europhone languages; cultural nationalism and the independent nation-state; and gender, sexuality and African cultural traditions.

This course has the following objectives: (1) to introduce the student to different literary genres from Africa, (2) to read both male and female writers in order to understand more clearly the impact of colonialism, race, class, ethnicity and gender, (3) to see how African literatures enable readers to reframe African cultures within the context of world cultures, and (4) to frame African literatures in English within the context of post –colonial Literatures in English. Students will be further expected to develop competence in (5) comparative literary analysis, (6) cultural analysis (7) and writing.

READING LIST:

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Chimamanda Adichie, *Purple Hibiscus*

Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*

Gordimer, *The House Gun*

Sembene, *Xala*

Poetry available on ARES and CU Learn

•The novels are available at Octopus Books- 116 Third Ave, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1 - (613) 233-2589

Course Requirements and Procedures

Requirement: read and reflect on each text well ahead of the date we begin to analyze it in class.

Attendance: as this course strongly requires students' active participation, regular attendance is imperative. **40% of your evaluation will be done in class.** The course shall be delivered in such a way that your continuous involvement shall be necessary at every stage. Reasonable circumstances sometimes force people to be late. By all means do come to class if you are late and be sure to explain things to me after class. Absence will be excused only for certifiable medical reasons and religious observances.

Conduct: we will strive to create a convivial class atmosphere in which you will be at ease to express your opinions and participate fully in the learning process. Any disruptive conduct will, however, not be tolerated. You are required to avoid habitual lateness, reading newspapers during class, listening to music with earbuds/ headphones on, working hurriedly on an assignment due for submission in your next class, sleeping during class, leaving the classroom before the end of the class period, chatting with others on issues not related to the ongoing class discussion, or any other behaviour that interferes with the learning process and distracts everybody else.

As for use of computers, laptops, I-phones, I-pads and other electronic gadgetry. You are all adults. An important part of being an adult is courtesy and respect for others. If you are using your computer for schoolwork - fine. But, if your other activities are distracting, annoying or disrespectful and violates another person's right to enjoy, be comfortable in, or feel secure in the classroom environment, then, we as a class may have to discuss this further.

Assignments: it is required that students do all assigned tests and examinations according to the instructor's specifications. Except in cases where necessary permission is granted or a student is able to present evidence of illness or any form of incapacitation, any student who fails to submit assignments on schedule will lose a determined percentage of his/her final grade point.

Note: If one of your assignments is lost, misplaced, or not received by the instructor, you are responsible for having a backup copy that can be submitted immediately upon request.

Academic integrity: academic dishonesty will be dealt with according to University Policies. See the statement on Instructional Offences in the Undergraduate Calendar.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is defined in the Student Handbook as “quoting, paraphrasing or summarizing portions of another's work from a published, unpublished or electronic source without acknowledging that source.” In short, it means representing another's written work as your own. It can take different forms, including submitting a paper someone else wrote with your name on it; including someone else's exact words in your paper without giving credit for them; including someone else's ideas in your paper without giving credit; and letting someone else do so much work on your paper it's as if they wrote it, or part of it.

In this culture plagiarism is a form of theft. It is the most serious crime you can commit in an academic setting. Plagiarism will result in a zero for the assignment. Extensive plagiarism is grounds for failing the course and can get you kicked out of school.

Most of the time people plagiarize for one reason: panic. They feel unable to do the assignment, do not ask for help, grab something that looks good and hand it in. Stop this problem before it starts. If you are having troubles see me. I will do everything I can to help you complete the assignment successfully. But I cannot help if you do not talk to me.

Access statement: Students with disabilities requiring academic accommodations in this course must contact a coordinator at the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities to complete the necessary Letters of Accommodation. After registering with the PMC, make an appointment to meet and discuss your needs with me in order to make the necessary arrangements as early in the term as possible.

Documented disabilities could include but are not limited to mobility/physical impairments, specific Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/psychological disabilities, sensory disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), and chronic medical conditions. Registered PMC students are required to contact the PMC, 613-520-6608, every term to ensure that I receive your Letter of Accommodation, no later than two weeks before the first assignment is due or the first in-class test/midterm requiring accommodations. If you only require accommodations for your formally scheduled exam(s) in this course, please submit your request

for accommodations to PMC by the last official day to withdraw from classes in each term. For more details visit the PMC website: http://www.carleton.ca/pmc/students/acad_accom.html

Students requiring academic accommodation on the basis of a religious observance should make a formal, written request to the instructor for an alternate date and/or means of satisfying academic requirements. Such requests should be made during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist but no later than two weeks before the compulsory academic event. Accommodation is to be worked out directly and on an individual basis between the student and the instructor(s) involved. Instructors will make accommodations in a way that avoids academic disadvantage to the student.

Students who have questions or want to confirm accommodation eligibility of a religious event or practice may refer to the Equity Services website for a list of holy days and Carleton's Academic Accommodation policies, or may contact an Equity Services Advisor in the Equity Services Department for assistance.

Pregnant students requiring academic accommodations are encouraged to contact an Equity Advisor in Equity Services to complete a letter of accommodation. The student must then make an appointment to discuss her needs with the instructor at least two weeks prior to the first academic event in which it is anticipated the accommodation will be required.

Registration policy: during the drop/add period at the beginning of the semester, the Department of English encourages students to visit this and other courses in order to make informed judgments about which courses to take. After the last day for course changes, however, only students registered in the course may remain; no student may late-add (or restore a dropped registration) after the deadlines without petitioning the, instructor, the Department of English, and the Registrar's office.

Communication: we shall use several lines of communication to ensure a vibrant rapport throughout the course. They include: (1) email to the instructor – please allow a window of 24 hours for me to reply. Students are welcome to send me emails regarding any issue they like to discuss about the course. Sometimes this facility may be used to submit assignments with my permission; (2) students can see me at my office or make an appointment that is mutually convenient.

Diversity

This class is built on the assumption that diverse perspectives are fundamental to learning. It is only when we are challenged by knowledge and viewpoints different from our own that we can learn and grow. We'll be dealing with topics that can sometimes look different depending on where you stand—topics that can become somewhat controversial as well. This is just the sort of situation where we benefit most from experience and perspectives different from our own. The course is structured to make the most of our differences by giving you many opportunities to

interact with all of your classmates. But for this to work we must all be willing to listen to each other respectfully. A few basic guidelines can make a big difference here:

- Treat each other with respect.
- Question the quality of the argument, not personal beliefs.
- Speak from experience.
- Avoid generalizing about groups of people.
- Share air time.
- Listen respectfully to different perspectives.
- Don't blame or scapegoat.
- Focus on learning, not on winning arguments.

Evaluation/ Examination/ Assignments:

40%- you will be required to write in class a response or a short answer response, or a multiple choice test based on lectures and texts. The length is not more than a page single-spaced. There will be no re-do or make up exam. This will comprise of 4-8 small in class assignments.

Formula: total in six assignments (each marked out of 10) divided by 60, then multiplied by 40.

Research Paper: 20%

Final Exam: 40%

This course places a lot of emphasis on good writing and independent critical reasoning. Your tests and essay questions shall be structured in a way that encourages sustained critical reasoning. Consequently, elements such as grammar, level of language, presentation/quality of ideas will form a key part of the grading process. Attendance is critical to your making a good grade in this course. I normally generate my test and exam questions from class discussions and debates. **I will not be posting my notes online. The onus is on you to come to class, participate and generate your own notes.**

Grade Distribution

A+ 90-100	B 73-76	C- 60-62
An 85-89	B- 70-72	D+ 57-59
A- 80-84	C+ 67-69	D 53-56
B+ 77-79	C 63-66	D- 50-52

Course Outline: A very tight, compact, exciting schedule awaits:

Wed Jan 08, 2014: Introduction: Contexts and Contents of African Literatures in English; What is African Literature?

Friday Jan 10, 2014. Myth and Ritual in African Literatures in English; Poem J.P. Clark's "Abiku"

Wed Jan 15, 2014. Wole Soyinka's "Abiku" and Birago Diop's "Viaticum"

Friday Jan 17, 2014. 1st in class assignment. 45 minutes exactly

Movements in African Literatures in English which include Negritude

Wed Jan 22, 2014. David Diop's "Africa", Birago Diop's "Breath", Senghor's "Prayer for Peace"

Friday Jan 24, 2014. 2nd in class assignment -45 minutes exactly

Culture Clash in African Literature; Gabriel Okara's "Piano and Drums"

Wed Jan 29, 2014. Issues of Race –Soyinka's "Telephone Conversation" and "Come Away My Love" by Joseph Kariuki

Friday Jan 31, 2014. – 3rd in class assignment -45 minutes exactly

Introduction to Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*

Wed Feb 05, 2014. *Things Fall Apart*

Friday Feb 07, 2014. *Things Fall Apart*

Wed Feb 12, 2014. *Things Fall Apart*

Friday Feb 14, 2014. 4th in class assignment- 45 minutes exactly

Introduction to Soyinka

Wed Feb, 19, 2014. WINTER BREAK- NO CLASS

Friday Feb 21, 2014. WINTER BREAK –NO CLASS

Wed Feb 26, 2014. *Death and the King's Horseman*

Friday Feb 28, 2014. *Death and the King's Horseman*

Wed March 05, 2014. 5th in class assignment- 45 minutes exactly

Distribution of Final Essay Topics - Introduction to Nadine Gordimer

Friday March 07, 2014. *The House Gun*

Wed March 12, 2014. *The House Gun*

Fri March 14, 2014. 6th in class assignment. Essay writing strategies

Wed Mar 19, 2014- Lecture on some key issues not yet covered

Friday Mar 21, 2014. *Xala*

Wed Mar 26, 2014. *Xala*

Friday Mar 28, 2014. *Purple Hibiscus*

Wed Apr 02, 2014. *Purple Hibiscus*

Friday Apr 04, 2014 Revision

Your final essay paper (10-12 pages, MLA style) can only be based on *Xala* and *Purple Hibiscus* since all other texts would have already been evaluated.

However, for the final exam, all issues and texts would be evaluated.

Final paper due on Wednesday Apr 09, 2014 by 4pm. Please deliver to drop box in the English Department, DT 1812.

Any essays (without my express written consent) received after this date will be considered late and you will be deducted- 2% out of the class total 100% per day late.

Please see <http://calendar.carleton.ca/undergrad/undergraduniversity/academicyear/> for other important dates.

A Final Note

Reading literature is interesting, fun, exciting. Reading the literature of Africa can open up realms of experience quite new for most of us. My hope is that you will leave this class having found a way to deepen and enrich your life experience. The work we do should help you toward that goal. If you are finding it overwhelming, please talk to me ASAP so I can help you manage it and find a way to make it work for you.