

# ENGL 2926A: African Literatures 1

(Fall 2016)

**Provisional**

**Instructor:** Professor Pius Adesanmi  
**Office:** 1916 Dunton Tower  
**Office Hours:** Tuesday 3 pm – 5 pm (or by appointment)  
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**Meeting Time:** Tuesdays 6:05 pm – 8:55 pm  
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**Prerequisite(s):** second-year standing or permission of the instructor

## Overview

Welcome! 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 —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 ideas and themes: colonialism and cultural imperialism; cultural nationalism and the independent nation-state; gender and sexuality; and African cultures and traditions in their evolving contexts.

## Expectations and Course Goals

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.

## 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. The course shall be delivered in such a way that your continuous involvement shall be necessary at every stage. Attendance will be taken at the beginning of each class period. Reasonable circumstances sometimes force people to be late. By all means do come to class if you're late and be sure to explain things to me after class. Absence will be excused only for certifiable medical reasons and religious observances. **One point** will be subtracted for every unexcused absence.

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, 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.

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.

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.

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 or instructors 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 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 to 48 hours for me to reply**. Students are welcome to send me emails regarding any issue they like to discuss about the course; (2) students can see me at my office or give me a phone call during office hours, or leave a message on my answering machine.

## **Examination and Assignments**

Attendance: 5 points

Group work (in class): 5 points

Quiz: 10 points

Mid Term: 30 points (grammar and syntax @10 points; ideas & presentation @ 20 points)

Final exam: 50 points (grammar and syntax @ 10 points; ideas & presentation @ 40 points)

\* This course places a lot of emphasis on good writing and independent critical reasoning. Your tests and essay questions will 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. In other words, this is a writing attentive course. Please bear in mind the English Department's definition of writing attentive:

- Students will write at least one examination.
- Students will write a minimum of two graded writing assignments per term, in which they are expected to do the following:
  - i. develop an argumentative thesis across an essay
  - ii. develop complex ideas using correct and effective expression according to academic English practice
  - iii. use and cite evidence from primary texts appropriately

- iv. develop literary skills through close critical analysis of texts from a variety of genres
- iv. develop fluency in genre-specific literary terms of analysis
- Students will be introduced to issues in secondary research (such as critical evaluation of and citation of secondary materials)
- A portion of class time will be devoted to developing and improving essay writing skills.

### **Grade Distribution**

A+	90-100
A	85-89
A-	80-84
B+	77-79
B	73-76
B-	70-72
C+	67-69
C	63-66
C-	60-62
D+	57-59
D	53-56
D-	50-52
F	0-49

### **Required Texts**

**(Our designated book store is Octopus Books 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1, 613-233-2589. Ask for ENGL 2926)**

Novels

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*

Poetry - The required poems will be uploaded on CULEARN

\*Supplementary readings (essays, urls, etc) will be posted on CULEARN/ARES as necessary.

### **Course Outline**

Sept 13 Defining Modern African Literatures: Scope and Contexts 1

Readings:

Pius Adesanmi, “West African Imagination” (CULEARN)

Class Exercise: Literary Map of Modern Africa (for this class exercise you will need Google. You will sign up for group work during this segment of class)

20 Defining Modern African Literatures: Scope and Contexts 2

Readings:

Pius Adesanmi, “West African Imagination” (Conclusion)

Biographical discussion of writers on the literary map and their works (Group work presentation)

27 Myth and Ritual in African Literatures

Poetry Readings:

J.P Clark’s “Abiku”

Wole Soyinka’s “Abiku”

Oct 4 Animism in African Literatures:

Birago Diop’s “Breath”

Birago Diop’s “Viaticum”

Senghor’s “Totem”

11 Mid-Term Examination

18 Chinua Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart* (Introduction and background to the novel)

Nov 1 *Things Fall Apart* (Plot, themes, characterization) (Short quiz essay on the novel)

8 *Things Fall Apart* (Contemporary resonances of the novel and conclusion) (submission of quiz essay)

15 Tsitsi Dangarembga’s *Nervous Conditions* (Introduction and background to the novel)

22 *Nervous Conditions* (Plot, themes, characterization)

29 *Nervous Conditions* ((Contemporary resonances of the novel and conclusion)

Dec 6 Revision