

ENGL 2927A: African Literatures II

(Fall 2017)

Instructor: Professor Pius Adesanmi
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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. **Two points** 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: You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Religious obligation: write to me with any requests for academic accommodation during the first two weeks of class, or as soon as possible after the need for accommodation is known to exist. For more details see the [Student Guide](#).

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities: The Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) provides services to students with Learning Disabilities (LD), psychiatric/mental health disabilities, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD), Autism Spectrum Disorders (ASD), chronic medical conditions, and impairments in mobility, hearing,

and vision. If you have a disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact PMC at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation. If you are already registered with the PMC, contact your PMC coordinator to send me your **Letter of Accommodation** at the beginning of the term, and no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (*if applicable*). **Requests made within two weeks will be reviewed on a case-by-case basis.** After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with me to ensure accommodation arrangements are made. Please consult the PMC website (www.carleton.ca/pmc) for the deadline to request accommodations for the formally-scheduled exam (*if applicable*).

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

Women's Writing Essay: 20 points

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

Final exam (take-home essay): 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 one 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)

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*

Mariama Ba, *So Long a Letter*

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 12 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)

19 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)

26 Tradition, Myth and Ritual in African Literatures

Poetry Readings:

J.P Clark's "Abiku"

Wole Soyinka's "Abiku"

Oct 3 Contact and Culture Clash in African Literatures:

David Rubadiri's "Stanley Meets Mutesa"

Gabriel Okara's "Piano and Drums"

Senghor's "Totem"

David Diop's "The Renegade"

10 Race, Love, & Cultural Issues

Wole Soyinka's "Telephone Conversation"

		Joseph Kariuki's "Come Away My Love"
	17	Mid-Term Examination (in-class)
	31	Colonization in African Prose Fiction
		Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
		(Background & introduction to the novel)
Nov	7	<i>Things Fall Apart</i>
		(Plot, themes, characterization)
	14	African Women's Writing
		Tsitsi Dangarembga's <i>Nervous Conditions</i>
	21	<i>Nervous Conditions</i>
	28	Mariama Ba's <i>So Long a Letter</i>
Dec	5	<i>So Long a Letter</i>
		Wrap Up