

**Carleton University
Fall 2019
Department of English**

ENGL 3972 A: *Studies in Postcolonial Literature*

Topic: Modern African Theatre

**Prerequisites: third-year standing
or permission of the department.**

Monday 2:35 pm – 5:25 pm

Location: *Please confirm location on Carleton Central*

Instructor: Adam Barrows

Email: adam.barrows@carleton.ca

Office: DT 1901

Phone: x4093

Office Hours: Monday 10-noon and 1-2pm, or by appt.

Course description: This course introduces students to the rich tradition of modern and contemporary African drama. We will situate works by playwrights across the African continent within their national contexts, exploring the ways in which African theatre has served as a medium to address the legacies of slavery and colonialism, recuperate pre-colonial histories and traditions, and dramatize ongoing battles for economic freedom and gender equality. In the first half of the course, we will read classic modern plays from the 1960s and 1970s. In the second half, we will read plays by African women written and staged within the last ten years. Primary texts include works by playwrights from Egypt, Ghana, Kenya, Nigeria, South Africa, Uganda, and Zimbabwe.

Learning Outcomes: In this course students will learn to: identify and discuss key themes and formal features of representative theatrical works by a range of African writers; independently research the work of one African playwright of their choice; place theatrical works by African writers within their respective national, cultural, political and historical contexts; conduct secondary research in the service of original literary analysis and argumentation.

Required Texts: (Available at Octopus Books, 116 Third Ave. Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1)

Modern African Drama (edited by Biodun Jeyifo), New York: W.W. Norton, 2002.

Contemporary Plays by African Women (edited by Yvette Hutchison & Amy Jephtha), London: Methuen, 2019.

Course Calendar (This schedule is subject to change at my discretion. All reading assignments must be completed before the date they are listed. Response papers are due at the beginning of class or else must be submitted electronically via CULearn before class).

- Sept 9** Course Introduction
- Sept 16** Aidoo, *The Dilemma of a Ghost*
Response Paper #1
- Sept 23** Al-Hakim, *Fate of a Cockroach*
Response Paper #2
- Sept 30** Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*
Response Paper #3
- Oct 7** Ngũgĩ, *I Will Marry When I Want*
Response Paper #4
- Oct 14** **Thanksgiving Break, no class**
- Oct 21** **Fall Break, no class**
- Oct 28** Adong, *Silent Voices*
Response Paper #5
- Nov 4** Moyo, *I Want to Fly*
Essay Proposal Due (by midnight on CULearn)
- Nov 11** Shaarawi, *Niqabi Ninja*
Response Paper #6
- Nov 18** Niala, *Unsettled*
Response Paper #7
- Nov 25** Putuma, *Mbuzeni*
Response Paper #8
- Dec 2** **Writing Workshop I**
- Dec 6** **Writing Workshop II**
Final Essay Due (by midnight on CULearn)

Evaluation:

Attendance: 10%

Response Papers: 40%

Essay Proposal: 10%

Final Essay: 40%

(Standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean).

Attendance: You are expected to attend every course on time and to bring a copy of the required text. Students attending without the required text for that day may be marked absent.

Response Papers: Topics will be distributed one week before the papers are due (in class and on CULearn). They will ask you for a short response to, or meditation on, a particular aspect of the week's reading (theme, character, plot, staging, context, etc). These should be treated as formal writing assignments; however, they require no outside research and need not be formatted like an essay (no title is required, no works cited, etc.). Please **DO** include page references for every citation from the plays, and make a note in the footer if you are using an edition that differs from the assigned versions of the texts. Some topics may ask you to take a position on a particular issue, but generally these will be exploratory not argumentative papers. Minimum length is 500 words, maximum 800 (please try not to exceed the maximum limit). Papers will be evaluated on the following criteria (in order of importance from most to least important): evidence of careful close reading, originality of thought, effective use of primary evidence, style, and mechanics. Papers must be handed in by the beginning of class. Electronic submission via CULearn is acceptable only if the paper is submitted **BEFORE** class begins. Given that the topic of course discussion will include the subject of the response papers, **NO LATE PAPERS** will be accepted.

Paper Proposal and Final Essay: You will submit one final essay of 3,000 to 4,000 words on the work(s) of one 20th or 21st century African playwright of your choice who is not already represented on the syllabus. You need not provide an exhaustive account of the playwright's work: one representative text is sufficient, although you may choose to discuss more than one work. Essays should introduce readers to the playwright and his or her work: its major themes, style, and any critical conversation that it has inspired (in academia, mass media, or social media). It should situate the author's work within its national, cultural, historical, and/or political contexts. It should make an argument as to how the playwright's work is similar to or different from one or more of the texts on the syllabus. For our purposes, an "African" playwright is a writer born in an African country (or colony, in the case of older writers) and whose work represents or is concerned with Africa and/or Africans. Essays will be evaluated on the following criteria (in order of importance from most to least important): evidence of effective research skills, originality of thought, effective use of primary evidence, effective use of secondary evidence, style, and mechanics. Late papers will be accepted with a deduction of one full letter grade for every 24 hours (or portion of 24 hours) that the paper is overdue. Four weeks before the essay due date, students will submit a 250 to 500 word proposal of the essay which explains why the student has chosen his or her particular author as well as the student's proposed

research methodology. These proposals will be evaluated based on the logic of the proposal and the appropriateness/feasibility of the research methodology.

PLAGIARISM

The University Senate defines plagiarism as “presenting, whether intentionally or not, the ideas, expression of ideas or work of others as one’s own.” This can include:

- reproducing or paraphrasing portions of someone else’s published or unpublished material, regardless of the source, and presenting these as one’s own without proper citation or reference to the original source;
- submitting a take-home examination, essay, laboratory report or other assignment written, in whole or in part, by someone else;
- using ideas or direct, verbatim quotations, or paraphrased material, concepts or ideas without appropriate acknowledgment in any academic assignment;
- using another’s data or research findings;
- failing to acknowledge sources through the use of proper citations when using another’s works and/or failing to use quotation marks;
- handing in substantially the same piece of work for academic credit more than once without prior written permission of the course instructor in which the submission occurs.

Plagiarism is a form of intellectual theft. It is a serious offence that cannot be resolved directly with the course’s instructor. The Associate Deans of the Faculty conduct a rigorous investigation, including an interview with the student, when an instructor suspects a piece of work has been plagiarized. Penalties are not trivial. They can include failure of the assignment, failure of the entire course, or suspension from a program. For more information please go to: <https://carleton.ca/registrar/academic-integrity/>

Requests for Academic Accommodation

You may need special arrangements to meet your academic obligations during the term. For an accommodation request, the processes are as follows:

Pregnancy obligation

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Religious obligation

Please contact your instructor 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, visit the Equity Services website: carleton.ca/equity/wp-content/uploads/Student-Guide-to-Academic-Accommodation.pdf

Academic Accommodations for Students with Disabilities

If you have a documented disability requiring academic accommodations in this course, please contact the Paul Menton Centre for Students with Disabilities (PMC) at 613-520-6608 or pmc@carleton.ca for a formal evaluation or contact your PMC coordinator to send your instructor your Letter of Accommodation at the beginning of the term. You must also contact the PMC no later than two weeks before the first in-class scheduled test or exam requiring accommodation (if applicable). After requesting accommodation from PMC, meet with your instructor as soon as possible to ensure accommodation arrangements are made.

carleton.ca/pmc

Survivors of Sexual Violence

As a community, Carleton University is committed to maintaining a positive learning, working and living environment where sexual violence will not be tolerated, and its survivors are supported through academic accommodations as per Carleton's Sexual Violence Policy. For more information about the services available at the university and to obtain information about sexual violence and/or support, visit: carleton.ca/sexual-violence-support

Accommodation for Student Activities

Carleton University recognizes the substantial benefits, both to the individual student and for the university, that result from a student participating in activities beyond the classroom experience. Reasonable accommodation must be provided to students who compete or perform at the national or international level. Please contact your instructor 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. <https://carleton.ca/senate/wp-content/uploads/Accommodation-for-Student-Activities-1.pdf>