

ENGL 2927A: African Literatures 1

(Winter 2019)

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 African women's writing. We shall look at three generations of female writers in the context of the major and diverse literary traditions of the continent. We will study the historical and cultural contexts of women's writing, publication, and reception or consumption of the literature.

We will pay attention to the different forms and techniques with which African women writers convey their ideas and explore in detail some of the most interesting of those ideas and themes. We will look at their struggles in relation to male literary traditions and ideological strictures as well as the tensions between them and Western feminist currents.

Expectations and Course Goals

This course has the following objectives: (1) to introduce the student to literatures from Africa, (2) to read female writers in order to understand more clearly the impact of colonialism, race, class, ethnicity, culture, and patriarchy on gender relations in Africa, (3) to see how African literatures have evolved in the 20th and 21st centuries to be inclusive of gender dynamics in response to female/feminist struggles. Students will be further expected to develop competence in (4) comparative literary analysis, (5) cultural analysis (6) 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: 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 serious offence that cannot be resolved directly by the course's instructor. The Associate Dean of the Faculty conducts 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 a final grade of "F" for the course.

The policy can be found at: <https://carleton.ca/secretariat/wp-content/uploads/Academic-Integrity-Policy.pdf>

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

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>

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: No attendance points. However, attendance will be taken for every class and **2 points will be deducted from your overall marks** for every unauthorized absence.

Group presentation (in class): 10 points

Mid Term exam (in class): 40 points (grammar and syntax @10 points; ideas & presentation @ 30 points)

Final exam (**take-home research essay**): 50 points (grammar and syntax @ 10 points; ideas & presentation @ 40 points)

Please note that standing in a course is determined by the course instructor subject to the approval of the Faculty Dean. This means that grades submitted by the instructor may be subject to revision. No grades are final until they have been approved by the Dean.

* 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 mid-term exam, 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 may 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 2927)

Novels

Mariama Ba, *So Long a Letter*

Chika Unigwe, *On Black Sisters Street*

Lola Shoneyin, *The Secret Lives of the four Wives*

Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers*

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

Course Outline

- Jan 8 Introduction: Modern African Literatures: Scope and Contexts
The emergence of a male canon: Negritude & Cultural Nationalism
- 15 Introduction: African Women's Writing: Scope and Contexts 2
Readings:
Carole Boyce Davies, "Introduction: Feminist Consciousness & African Literary Criticism". *Ngambika: Studies of Women in African Literature*. (2 Hour Course Reserve in the library).
Mary Modupe Kolawole, "Chapter One: The Context of African Women's Struggle". *Womanism and African Consciousness*. (2 Hour Course Reserve in the library).
- 22 Mariama Ba, *So Long a Letter*
- 29 *So Long a Letter*
- Feb 5 Class Presentation (Two Groups)
Womanism, Stiwanism, Negofeminism & other African feminist theories
- 12 Mid-Term Examination (in-class)
- 19 Winter Break No Classes
- 26 Lola Shoneyin, *The Secret Lives*
- Mar 5 *The Secret Lives*
- 12 Chika Unigwe, *On Black Sisters Street*
- 19 *On Black Sisters Street*
- 26 Class Presentation (Two Groups)
Afropolitanism – the female/feminist element
- Apr 2 Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers*
- 9 *Behold the Dreamers*