

Winter 2018

ENGL 5008W

Black Internationalism

Instructor: Professor Pius Adesanmi
Office Hours: Tuesday: 1:00pm -2:30pm
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Classes: Tuesday 6:05 pm - 8: 55 pm
Location: PA 129

Course Description

Welcome! This seminar will examine the rise of 20th and 21st-century black internationalism as a theoretical proposition on the one hand and a political and cultural praxis of agency on the other hand. From being initially equated with and reduced to the geography of “black Africa,” the 20th century (and after) witnessed the mobilization of blackness across global borders and spaces and its ideological deployment as resistance to and engagement with certain structures of power: Eurocentrism, modernity, colonialism, the postcolonial, globalization. In literature, theory, and other areas of political and cultural expression, discourses such as pan-Africanism, the Black Atlantic, Negritude, and newer discursive manifestations such as Migrantism, Afropolitanism, and Afropeanism emerged as transnational modes of interrogating power, culture, and identity from the standpoint of constantly shifting accounts and understandings of blackness and Africanness. We shall examine these discourses using texts from multiple genres.

Required Texts

(Buy your books at Octopus Books, 116 Third Avenue, Ottawa, ON K1S 2K1, 613-233-2589)

Chinua Achebe, *Arrow of God*

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Something Torn and New*

Dinaw Mengestu, *All our Names*

Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers*

Evaluation

Participation: 10 points

Research Presentation: 30 points

Final Research Essay: 60 points

Participation

Weekly meetings will consist of discussion. A graduate seminar is a forum within which to examine and discuss ideas and interpretations of assigned weekly readings. The success of a seminar depends entirely on student preparation and participation. Students should arrive in class having read all assigned texts and prepared to discuss them. Participation grade will be based upon attendance and the quality of your contribution to class discussion.

Research Presentation

Whereas I will be the principal discussant of the assigned texts and authors for every meeting, two of the authors have been designated for research presentations. These presentations will be made by groups of two or three students depending on what our final enrolment number turns out to be. Stemming from issues discussed in class, the presenters will be expected to draw up a bibliography of not less than four essays on the selected author. This bibliography must be sent to the class ahead of their presentation. They will make the presentation like a regular conference panel. It is their responsibility to provide a theme for their presentation. Their bibliography may not feature articles already in the syllabus.

Research Essay

The final research essay should be a critical examination of a topic that is part of current conversations in Black internationalism and its theoretical extensions into cosmopolitanism, Afropolitanism, reinterpretations of Negritude, diaspora and postcolonial theory. Your essay must be broad enough to engage issues discussed in the seminar and go beyond them. The essay must be at least 20 pages (excluding works cited), demonstrate substantial research on a thesis or a set of submissions, critically assess research sources in a coherent analysis, and be well written and formally referenced in the MLA format. Ability to use a mix of creative and critical texts, various genres, as primary sources will be an added advantage. As early as possible in the term, students are encouraged to start pitching topics and essay ideas with me. The earlier you start the better.

*The final research essay will be due for submission on the last day of exams for the winter 2018 term. It must be double spaced, Times New Roman, Font 12 and typed on one side of the paper.

Grade Distribution

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

Requirements and Procedures

Requirement: read and reflect on each text well ahead of the date we begin to study 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 percentage points will be deducted 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, going on social media, 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 rude and discourteous 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. I insist on hard copies and electronic versions of your essays. I grade the hard copy and use the electronic copy to determine your word count.

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 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 48 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 give me a phone call during office hours, or leave a message on my answering machine. I'll return calls as necessary.

Class and Reading Schedule

Jan 9 Black Internationalism: Discourses, Scope, Spaces

Readings:

- 1) Abiola Irele, "Dimensions of African Discourse" *College Literature* 19/20.3/1(1992-1993): 45-59 (CULEARN)
- 2) Omafume Onoge. "The Crisis of Consciousness in Modern African Literature: A Survey." *Canadian Journal of African Studies / Revue Canadienne des Études Africaines* 8. 2 (1974): 385-410 (CULEARN)
- 3) Enrique Dussel. "Eurocentrism and Modernity" *Boundary 2* 20.3(1993): 65-76 (CULEARN)

Highly recommended but not compulsory:

- 1) Crossing the Pond: Jazz, Race and Gender in Interwar Paris" (CULEARN. Read the introduction)
- 2) Black Internationalism and African and Caribbean Intellectuals in London, 1919-1950 (CULEARN. Read the introduction)

16 Chinua Achebe

Arrow of God (Interrogating Metanarratives)

23 Chinua Achebe

(Guest Lecture: Dr. Moses Galadima)

Arrow of God (Problematizing Modernity)

30 Chinua Achebe

Research Presentation

(Presenter/s will determine the readings)

Feb 6 Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Something Torn and New (Chapters 1 & 2)

13 Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Something Torn & New (Chapters 3 & 4)

27 Ngugi wa Thiong'o

Research Presentation

(Presenter/s will determine the readings)

March 6 Black Paris: From Negritude to Migritude

Readings:

- 1) Abiola Irele. "Negritude: Literature and Ideology." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 3.4 (1965):499-526 (CULEARN)
- 2) Abiola Irele. "Negritude or Black Cultural nationalism." *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. 3.3 (1965): 321-348 (CULEARN)
- 3) Pius Adesanmi. "Redefining Paris: Trans-Modernity and Francophone African Migritude Fiction." *Modern Fiction Studies*. 51.4, (2005): 958-975 (CULEARN)

13 Negritude Poetry

Readings: (all poems are on CULEARN)

- 1) Leopold Sedar Senghor

"Black Woman"
"Paris in the Snow"
"To New York"

- 2) David Diop

"Africa"
"The Vultures"
"To a Black Child"

- 3) Leon Damas

"They Came that Night"
"Hiccups"
"Sale"
"Limbe"
"Whitewashed"
"Et Cetera"

- 20 What is Africa to Me?
- 1) Caryl Phillips, "What Is Africa to Me Now?" *Research in African Literatures* 46.4 (Winter 2015): 10-14 (CULEARN)
 - 2) Karen King Aribisala, Karen King-Aribisala, "What Is Africa to Me Now?" *Research in African Literatures* 46.4(Winter 2015):15-25 (CULEARN)
 - 3) Alice Walker. "Coming to See You Since I was Five Years Old: An American Poet's Connection to the South African Soul" 11th annual Steve Biko Memorial Lecture. (CULEARN)
- 27 Afropolitanism, Afropeanism
- (Guest Lecture by Hicham Gorguem)
- Readings:
- 1) Taiye Selasie, "Bye Bye Babar" (CULEARN)
 - 2) Emma Dabiri, "Why I'm Not an Afropolitan" (CULEARN)
 - 3) Salah Hassan, Rethinking Cosmopolitanism: Is 'Afropolitan the Answer?" CULEARN
 - 4) Chielozona Eze. "We, Afropolitans." (CULEARN)
- Apr 3 Dinaw Mengestu
- All our Names*
- 10 Imbolo Mbue
- Behold the Dreamers*