

SST 4502 (Section 07F4): AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE
AFS 4935 (Section 19F5):

SPRING 2018

Professor: Tunde Akinyemi
Office Location: 348 Pugh Hall
Office Hours: 12-1 (MWF)
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Period: MWF 9:35-10:25 (3rd period)
Venue: LIT 239
Credit: 3
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COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course provides an overview of African oral literature, introduces some methodological and theoretical problems, and examines the socio-political and cultural relevance of the literature. It stresses the importance of the spoken word in Africa, the nature of African unwritten literature, the training of African oral artistes, and the place of the artistes in the society. It examines the problems raised by transcription and translation of African oral literature, and suggests some possible solutions to these problems. The course also discusses the socio-political and cultural relevance of specific genres of the literature such as the folktales, riddles, proverbs, praise poetry/panegyric, elegiac poetry, children's game songs and lullabies, religious songs and poetry, topical and political songs, oratory and formal speaking, etc. It concludes with an assessment of the changing role of oral literature in contemporary Africa.

REQUIRED TEXTS: *One* of the following 3 books is required for this course:

Bayo Ogunjimi & Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah *Introduction to African Oral Literature and Performance* Trenton: Africa World Press, 2005.

OR

Isidore Okpewho *African Oral Literature: Background, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.

OR

Ruth Finnegan *Oral Literature in Africa* Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1970.

All students are also expected to read Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* New York: Anchor Books edition, 1994 for class discussion in weeks 15 & 16.

SUPPLEMENTARY READING: In addition, the following works are relevant to the course and students are expected to be familiar with them during the semester:

Russell H. Kaschula Ed. *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts*. Claremont: New Africa Books, 1998.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly and participate actively in class discussion. You can only do this if you complete all assigned readings before class. You are, however, allowed 2 unexcused absences. Beyond that, each additional absence will require a written excuse verifying illness or family emergency in accordance with UF policy, failing which, your final grade will be lowered by a one letter grade. Assignments are to be handed in by the designated date. Late assignments will be assessed a penalty of one-half letter grade out of fairness to those who hand in their work on time. Mark test dates on your calendars now so that you can plan ahead.

COURSE EVALUATION

Your final grade in this course will be distributed as follows:

<i>Class attendance and participation</i>	10%
<i>Tests (2)</i>	30%
<i>5-page essay</i>	10%
<i>Mid semester Exam</i>	20%
<i>Oral presentation in class</i>	10%
<i>Final Exam</i>	20%
Total:	100%

Class Presentations: During Weeks XV and XVI 3 students will make oral presentations on assigned topics. Each student’s presentation and class discussion will last for 15 minutes. PowerPoint presentation is encouraged but not mandatory.

Individual 5-page essay on an assigned aspect of orality in the novel *Things Fall Apart*. The paper should be typed-written on font 12 and should be 5 full pages long and double-spaced with 1 inch margin. Stylistic requirement for this paper is APA or MLA. Typographical mistakes/errors, poor spellings, and grammatical faults will be penalized. **(Submission is in class on Friday, April 13).**

GRADE CORRESPONDENCE

93-100 =A	90-92 =A-	
87-89 =B+	83-86 =B	80-82 =B-
77-79 =C+	73-76 =C	70-72 =C-
67-69 =D+	63-66 =D	60-62 =D-
Below 60 =E		

General

Feel free to ask question in the class so that you will not be left behind. However, if there are issues that we cannot resolve in class, you are encouraged to use my office hours or send me an email. I look forward to a rewarding semester with you all.

WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF COURSE

Week I

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/8	Course introduction, an overview of the continent of Africa	
W: 1/10 F: 1/12	The nature of African unwritten literature	Ogunjimi & Na’Allah: Introduction “chapter 9” Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 1 Finnegan: Chapter 1

Week II

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/15	No Class	MLK Day
W: 1/17	Classification of African Literature	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 9 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 1 Finnegan: Chapter 2
F: 1/19	African oral artistes	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 2 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 2 Finnegan: Chapter 3

Week III

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/22	African oral artistes and their work in the society	Isidore Okpewho: Chapters 3 &5 Finnegan: Chapter 3
W: 1/24	Collection, transcription and translation of African oral literature: Problems and prospects.	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 2 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 12
F: 1/26	Test 1 (10%)	In class

Week IV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/29	Out of the country for a conference	Write your 5-page essay on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
W: 1/31	Out of the country for a conference	Write your 5-page essay on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
F: 2/2	Out of the country for a conference	Write your 5-page essay on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>

Week V

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/5	Out of the country for a conference	Complete your 5-page essay on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
W: 2/7	Folk narratives	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 5 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 7

		Finnegan: Chapters 12 & 13
F: 2/9	Folktales	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 6 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 7 Finnegan: Chapters 12 & 13

Week VI

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/12	Proverbs: functions	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 7 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 8 Finnegan: Chapter 14
W: 2/14	Analysis of samples	Same as above
F: 2/16	Test 2: On Folk narratives and proverbs (20%)	

Week VII

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/19	Riddles	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 8 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 8 Finnegan: Chapter 15
W: 2/21	Same as above	Same as above
F: 2/23	Analysis of samples	

Week VIII

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/26	African religious belief systems	
W: 2/28	Religious poetry	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 10 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 9 Finnegan: Chapter 7
F: 3/2	Analysis of samples	

Week IX: SPRING BREAK: March 3-10

Week X

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/12	Oracular poetry	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 12 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 6 Finnegan: Chapters 4 & 5
W: 3/14	Watch documentary on Santeria divination and discuss	<i>Santeria: Afro Cuban Religion</i> video BL 2532.S3 L83 1984 (Latin American Special collections)
F: 3/16	Analysis of samples	

Week XI

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/19	Salutation or praise poetry: categories and functions	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapter 12 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 6 Finnegan: Chapters 4 & 5
W: 3/21	Analysis of samples	
F: 3/23	Test 3: Mid-semester (20%)	

Week XII

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/26	Funeral Dirge: functions, stylistics, and nature of performance	Ogunjimi & Na'Allah: Chapters 12 & 13 Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 9 Finnegan: Chapter 6
W: 3/28	Out of the country for a conference	Prepare your slides for oral presentation on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
F: 3/30	Out of the country for a conference	Prepare your slides for oral presentation on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>

Week XIII

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/2	Out of the country for a conference	Prepare your slides for oral presentation on an aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
W: 4/4	Aesthetic transfer and preservation of African oral traditions in contemporary literature	Aesthetic transfer and preservation of African oral traditions in contemporary literature
F: 4/6	Analysis of sample texts	Analysis of sample texts

Week XIV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/9	Orality and globalization slavery, identity and the survival of African oral literature in the Diaspora	Russell H. Kaschula (Ed.) <i>African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts</i> "Introduction"
W: 4/11	African Folktales in the New World	
F: 4/13	African Folktales in the New World	Submit your 5-page essay on assigned aspect of orality in the novel <i>Things Fall Apart</i>

Week XV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/16	Orality in modern literature [Presentation: Group 1]	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
W: 4/18	Orality in modern literature [Presentation: Group 2]	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
F: 4/20	Orality in modern literature [Presentation: Group 3]	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

Week XVI

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/23	Orality in modern literature [Presentation: Group 4]	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
W: 4/25	Orality in modern literature [Presentation: Group 5]	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

Topics for Class Discussion and 5-page Essay on *Things Fall Apart*

Chinua Achebe and Igbo

1. family and household
2. songs
3. stories
4. proverbs
5. Names and Naming
6. religious beliefs, ritual, and festivals
7. forms of indigenous education
8. pre-colonial system of government
9. social status classification
10. traditional profession/occupation
11. traditional forms of entertainment
12. pre-colonial judicial system
13. marital system
14. cuisine