

## YOR 4502: YORÙBÁ ORAL LITERATURE

2016 SPRING

**Instructor:** Akintunde Akinyemi  
**Office Location:** 348 Pugh Hall  
**Office Hours:** 1:00-2:00 PM (MWF).  
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**Period:** 4<sup>th</sup> (10:40-11:30) MWF  
**Venue:** CBD 216  
**Credit:** 3.  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course provides an overview of the various genres of Yorùbá oral literature. It stresses the importance of the spoken word in Yorùbá culture, the training of Yorùbá verbal artistes and their place in Yorùbá society, problems of transcription and translation of Yorùbá oral genres, etc. We will also examine the following specific genres in details: Folktales, Riddles, Proverbs, Praise poetry, funeral dirge and *Ifá* divination poetry. English translation of the various genres will be used for the class, but students who are able to work in the original Yorùbá language will be encouraged to do so.

### REQUIRED TEXTS

Olatunde O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry* Ibadan: University Press Ltd. 1984.  
Ruth Finnegan (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa*. Oxford: Clarendon Press.  
Russell H. Kaschula Ed. (1998) *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts*. Claremont: New Africa Books.  
Isidore Okpewho (1992) *African Oral Literature: Background, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

### WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF COURSE

Please find time to read text materials before class for meaningful participation:

#### Week I

Introduction: The oral nature of African unwritten literature (Read chapter 1 of Ruth Finnegan's *African Oral Literature* **Library Call no 398.0967 F5140**)

#### Week II

An overview and classification of Yorùbá Literature (Read A. Akinyemi 'Varieties of Yorùbá Literature' Chapter 14 in Ogunremi, Deji & Adediran, Biodun (ed) *Culture and Society in Yorubaland*. **Library Call no DT 515.45.Y67 c851 1998** and chapter 1 of O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: OUP, 1984. **Library call no PL 8823.5 Q24 1985**)

#### Week III

The Yoruba artistes, their work and society (Read O. Olatunji, O. 'The Yorùbá Oral Poet and His Society' *Research in African Literature*. 1979, 10:2:51-70; O.Olajubu 'The Yorùbá Oral Artists and their Work' in *Seminar Series* ed. Oyelaran, 1977 pp 384-418 and Akinyemi 'Yorùbá Royal Bards: Their Work and Relevance in the Society' in *Nordic Journal of African Studies*, 2001, Vol. 10 Number 1, pp 89-106.) **\*\*1<sup>st</sup> term paper due by Friday**

#### **Week IV**

Collection, transcription and translation of Yorùbá oral literature: Problems and prospects. (Read W. Abimbola in Afolayan (ed) *Yoruba Language and Literature* 1982, pp. 73-81 **Library call no PL 8821 .y6. 1982** and Ulli Beier 'Introduction: On Translating Yoruba poetry in *An Anthology of Traditional Poems* 1970, pp. 11-25 **Lib call no 896.3 B422 y**).

#### **Weeks V**

Folktales and Narratives (Read Chapter 13 of Ruth Finnegan *African Oral Literature* **Library Call no 398.0967 F5140**)

#### **Week VI**

Riddles (Read chapter 7 (ii) of O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: OUP, 1984 **Library call no PL 8823.5 Q24 1985**). **\*\*2<sup>nd</sup> term paper due by Friday.**

#### **Week VII**

Proverbs (Read chapter 7 (i) of O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: OUP, 1984. **Library call no PL 8823.5 Q24 1985**)

#### **Week VIII**

Praise poetry (Read chapter 4 of O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: OUP, 1984. **Library call no PL 8823.5 Q24 1985**)

#### **Week IX**

Yoruba royal poetry (reading materials will be supplied later) **\*\* 3<sup>rd</sup> term paper due by Wednesday**

#### **Week X**

Spring Semester break.

#### **Week XI**

Religious poetry (Read Badejo *Osun Segeesi* **Library call no BL 2480 Y6 B34 1996**)

#### **Week XII**

Yoruba hunters' poetry (read Babalola's *The Content and Form of Yoruba Ijala* **Library call no 896.4 B112c c.2**)

#### **Week XIII**

Yoruba hunters' funeral dirge (Read Ajuwon's *Funeral Dirges of Yoruba Hunters* **Library call no PL 8823.5.A38 1982**) **\*\*4<sup>th</sup> term paper due by Friday**

#### **Week XIV**

Yorùbá Divination Poetry: (Read chapter 5 of O. Olatunji *Features of Yoruba Oral Poetry*. Ibadan: OUP, 1984 **Library call no PL 8823.5 Q24 1985** and Abimbola's 'Ìwàpèlè: The Concept of Good Character in Ifa literary Corpus in his *Yoruba Oral Tradition* 1975, pp. 389-420 **Library call no PL 8823.5 .S451 1974** )

### **Week XV**

Yoruba Nuptial chant (Read Faniyi's 'Ekun Iyawo: Yoruba Traditional Nuptial chant' in Abimbola Yoruba Oral Tradition 1975, pp. 677-699. **Library call no Lib call no PL 8823.5 .S451 1974**)

### **Week XVI**

Conclusion. **\*\* Independent study due by Wednesday**

### **ATTENDANCE POLICY**

You are encouraged to attend classes regularly and participate actively in discussion. You are, however, allowed 2 absences. Beyond that, each additional absence will lower your final grade.

### **COURSE EVALUATION.**

There will not be a final examination in this course. Instead your grade will be based on 4 term papers of 3 pages each (to be submitted by Friday of weeks 3, 6, 9 & 13) and a 5 page report paper based on an independent study to be submitted by last week of class.

Find below a breakdown of workload for this course:

***Class attendance and participation: 15%***  
***4 reaction papers of 15% each: 60%***  
***1 report of an independent study: 25%***  
***Total: 100%***

### **Grade Correspondence:**

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