

HUM 2424 (SECT 02F0): AFRICAN CULTURES AND LITERATURES (FALL 2016)

Professor: Tunde Akinyemi
Office Location: 348 Pugh Hall
Office Hours: 12-1 (MWF).
Phone: (352) 392-7082.

Period: 3rd (9:35-10:25) MWF
Venue: MAT 0119
Credit: 3.
E-mail: akinyemi@ufl.edu

COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

This course provides an overview of images of Africa found in the continent's literary creative expressions. The first part of the course will look at the complexity of African continent, its problems, social organizations, pre-colonial political system, thoughts and religious belief systems, art, and popular culture. The larger part of the course will however be devoted to the various forms of literature on the continent. This section of the course will discuss 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 that society. We will also discuss the socio-political and cultural relevance of specific genres of African literatures such as the folktales, riddles, proverbs, praise poetry/panegyric, religious songs and poetry, topical and political songs, oratory and formal speaking, etc. The course will conclude with an assessment of the changing role of literature in contemporary Africa by examining selected works of contemporary African writers.

REQUIRED TEXTS: The following 5 books are *required* for this course:

1. Martin, Phyllis M. and O'Meara, Patrick (eds.) *Africa*. (3rd edition) Bloomington and Indianapolis / London: Indiana University Press and James Currey, 1995.
2. Isidore Okpewho (1992) *African Oral Literature: Background, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
3. Mariama Ba (1980) *So Long a Letter*. Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc. (2012 edition)
4. Diop Boubacar Boris (2006) *Murambi: The Book of Bones* (trans. Fiona McLaughlin) Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
5. Chinua Achebe (1959) *Things Fall Apart* New York: Anchor Books (1994 edition).

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

Bayo Ogunjimi & Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah (2005) *Introduction to African Oral Literature and Performance* Trenton: Africa World Press. Russell H. Kaschula Ed. (1998) *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts*. Claremont: New Africa Books. Ruth Finnegan (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

ATTENDANCE POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

You 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. Mark due dates on your calendars now so that you can plan ahead. Late papers will be assessed a penalty of one-half letter grade out of fairness to those who hand in their work on time.

COURSE EVALUATION

Your final grade in this course will be based on the following:

<i>Class attendance and participation</i>	15%
<i>Tests and quizzes (3)</i>	30%
<i>Assignments and homework (3)</i>	15%
<i>Oral presentation on an African country of your choice (in-class)</i>	10%
<i>5-page essay on country of interest presented in class (due on 10/07)</i>	10%
<i>Final written examination (to be on the required texts 3, 4, and 5)</i>	20%
Total:	100%

Oral Presentation of paper: Every Friday in October and November, 3-4 students will make oral presentation on African countries of their choice. Each student is free to select any African country and search the library, surf the web, read newspapers, or consult electronic media for information about on-going events in the country. The students presenting same day could meet a couple of times to discuss and decide on format to adopt for presentation. This is an opportunity for you to gain in-depth knowledge of a particular African country. Each student will have 10-12 minutes for presentation, while the last 14 minutes of class will be devoted to questions and discussion by all (**Presentations scheduled for Fridays from October 21 to November 18**).

Individual 5-page essay on an African country of choice: 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 on Friday, 10/07 as email attachment**)

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 (8/22-8/26)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Course introduction	<i>Students to choose an African country of interest for oral presentation and 5-page essay</i>
W	An overview of facts and figures of the continent	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O’Meara’s Africa 3rd Edition Chapter 2: The Contemporary Map of Arica
F	Africa’s problems and prospects	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O’Meara’s Africa 3 rd Edition

	Distribute oral presentation schedule to students	Chapter 1: Africa Problems and Perspectives
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Week II (8/29-9/2)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Watch the documentary "Africa: Who is to Blame"	"Africa: Who is to Blame" (DVD 2335)
W	Discuss the documentary "Africa: Who is to Blame"	
F	Political systems & governance	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara's <i>Africa</i> 3 rd Edition Chapter 4: Aspects of Early African History

Week III (9/5-9/9)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	No class on Monday, 9/5	Labor Day
W	Religion and systems of thoughts	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara's <i>Africa</i> 3 rd Edition Chapter 11: African Systems of Thought
F	*Test 1: 'Map test' Be able to identify African countries and capitals	

Week IV (9/12-9/16)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	African Literature: An Overview of its classification	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara's <i>Africa</i> 3 rd Edition Chapter 13: African Music Performed Chapter 15: African Literature <i>* Distribute Oral presentation schedule</i>
W F	African literary artistes and their society	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 2: The Oral Artist Chapter 5: Social Relevance

Week V (9/19-9/23)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Myths and Legends	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 7: Oral Narratives
W	Folktales	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 7: Oral Narratives
F	*Test 2 on facts and figures about Africa	

Week VI (9/26-9/30)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Analysis of samples of myths, legends, and folktales	Assignment 1: Each student to have 2 samples of African folktale, myth, and legend ready for class discussion.
W	Proverbs	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 8: Witticisms
F	Analysis of representative samples	Assignment 2: Each student to have a list of 20 proverbs from across African ethnic groups ready for class discussion

Week VII (10/3-10/7)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	No class: I'll be out of town for a conference in Africa	Write your 5-page essay on an African country of your choice
W	No class: I'll be out of town for a conference in Africa	Write your 5-page essay on an African country of your choice
F	No class: I'll be out of town for a conference in Africa	Submit your 5-page essay on an African country of your choice as email attachment

Week VIII (10/10-10/14)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Riddles	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 8: Witticisms
W	Analysis of representative samples	Assignment 3: Each student to have a list of 20 riddles from a particular African ethnic group ready for class discussion
F	No class on Friday, 10/14	Homecoming

Week IX (10/17-10/21)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Religious or ritual poetry	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 9: Musical and Dramatic Forms
W	Analysis of representative samples	
F	Oral presentation 1	

Week X (10/24-10/28)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Salutation or praise poetry: categories and functions	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 6: Songs and Chants
W	Analysis of samples	
F	Oral presentation 2	

Week XI (10/31-11/4)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Aesthetic transfer and preservation of African oral literature in modern literature and popular culture	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 10: Oral Literature and Modern African Literature
W	<i>Test 3 on varieties of oral literature covered in class</i>	
F	Oral presentation 3	

Week XII (11/7-11/11)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Rwanda: Historical background	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>
W	Oral Presentation 4	
F	No class on Friday, 11/11	<i>Veterans Day</i>

Week XIII (11/14-11/18)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Watch excerpt from the feature film <i>Hotel Rwanda</i>	<i>Hotel Rwanda</i>
W	Ethnic violence, war, and peace in Africa: Examples from <i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>
F	Oral presentation 5	

Week XIV (11/21-11/25)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Cultural elements in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	Mariama Ba's <i>So Long a Letters</i>
WF	No class 11/23 & 11/25	Thanksgiving

Week XV (11/28-12/2)

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Indigenous cultural practices in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
W	Cultural Practices after the contact with the West: <i>Things Fall Apart</i> as case study	Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
F	Wrap-up / Take-home final exam distribution	

Week XVI (12/5-12/7)

Days	Topic	
M	Write 1st take-home exam question & submit typed answer script as email attachment	Work from home
W	Write 2nd take-home exam question & submit typed answer script as email attachment	Work from home