

**SST 4502 / AFS 4935: AFRICAN ORAL LITERATURE****SPRING 2020**

**Professor:** Tunde Akinyemi  
**Office Location:** 301 Pugh Hall  
**Office Hours:** 12-1 (MWF)  
**Phone:** 392-7082

**Period:** MWF 9:35-10:25 (3<sup>rd</sup> period)  
**Venue:** TUR 2333  
**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:** The following 2 books are required for this course:

1. Isidore Okpewho *African Oral Literature: Background, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1992.
2. Chinua Achebe's novel *Things Fall Apart* New York: Anchor Books edition, 1994.

**ALTERNATIVE REQUIRED TEXTS (Only if required text 1 is not available)**

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

**OR**

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

**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>	<i>15%</i>
<i>Tests (2)</i>	<i>40%</i>
<i>Mid semester Exam</i>	<i>25%</i>
<i>Final Exam</i>	<i>20%</i>
<i>Total:</i>	<i>100%</i>

## 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: 1/6	Course introduction and Overview of facts and figures of Africa	
W: 1/8	Africa's problems and prospects	
F: 1/10	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Out of town for a meeting in Atlanta, GA.</b>

### Week II

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/13	The nature of African unwritten literature	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 1
W: 1/15 F: 1/17	The nature of African unwritten literature	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 1

### Week III

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/20	<b>No Class</b>	<b>MLK Day</b>

W: 1/22	Classification of African Literature	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 1
F: 1/24	African oral artistes	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 2

#### Week IV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 1/27	African oral artistes and their work in the society	Isidore Okpewho: Chapters 3 &5
W: 1/29	Collection, transcription and translation of African oral literature: Problems and prospects.	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 12
F: 1/31	<b>Test 1: Map quiz, facts and figures of Africa (20%)</b>	In class

#### Week V

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/3	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Overseas in Ghana and Senegal</b>
W: 2/5	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Overseas in Ghana and Senegal</b>
F: 2/7	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Overseas in Ghana and Senegal</b>

#### Week VI

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/10	Folk narratives: Types	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 7
W: 2/12	Sample analysis	Samples provided in class
<b>F: 2/14</b>	Sample analysis	Discussion of students' collection

#### Week VII

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/17	Proverbs: functions	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 8
W: 2/19	Sample analysis	Discussion of students' collection
F: 2/21	<b>Test 2: On folk narratives and proverbs (20%)</b>	In class

**Week VIII**

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 2/24	Riddles	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 8
W: 2/26	Same as above	Same as above
F: 2/28	Sample analysis	Discussion of students' collection

**Week IX: SPRING BREAK: March 2-6**

**Week X**

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/9	African religious belief systems	
W: 3/11	Religious poetry	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 9
F: 3/13	<b>Test 3: Mid-semester (25%)</b>	

**Week XI**

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/16	Salutation or praise poetry: categories and functions	Isidore Okpewho: Chapter 6
W: 3/18	Analysis of samples	
F: 3/20	Analysis of samples	

**Week XII**

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/23	Aesthetic transfer and preservation of African oral traditions in contemporary literature	Aesthetic transfer and preservation of African oral traditions in contemporary literature
W: 3/25	Analysis of sample texts	Analysis of sample texts
F: 3/27	Analysis of sample texts	Analysis of sample texts

**Week XIII**

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 3/30	Proverbs in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

W: 4/1	Proverbs in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
F: 4/3	Folk narratives in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

#### Week XIV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/6	Religious beliefs, rituals, and festivals in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
W: 4/8	Precolonial governance in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
F: 4/10	Precolonial judicial system in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

#### Week XV

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/13	Cuisine in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
W: 4/15	Names and Naming in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
F: 4/17	Names and Naming in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe

#### Week XVI

Days	Topic	Reading
M: 4/20	Family and household in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> by Chinua Achebe
W: 4/22	In-class final Exam	<b>Final exam in class.</b>