HUMANITIES INSTITUTE

AFRICAN LITERATURE

Course Description

Students will analyze primary texts covering the genres of poetry, drama, fiction, and nonfiction, and will discuss them from different critical stances including historical, feminist, postcolonial, and Marxist. They will demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the works by responding to questions focusing on the works, movements, authors, themes, and motifs. In addition, they will discuss the historical, cultural, social, political, or biographical contexts of the works' production. This course is intended for students who would like to develop interdisciplinary perspectives that integrate their prior knowledge and experience with the primary texts. The course also brings into perspective the socio-cultural contexts in which literature functions in Africa and draws parallels between its manifestation there and in other continents particularly Europe and America, and examines the impact of changes forced upon it as a result of international dependence and improved communications across continents and cultures.

About the Professor

This course was developed by Tanure Ojaide, Ph.D., Professor of Africana Studies, at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte

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The course will take sixteen weeks. There will be three written assignments: a 1000-word paper in each of Units I and II, and a 3,000-word paper in Week 16 in Unit III. Any of the discussion questions, which follow each week's introductory material, can serve as material for the papers to be written. The discussion questions may simply be there to promote thinking about the content of the week's required text. It is recommended that you start early in the course plotting out the topics you will use for your three papers. You will note that in the first ten weeks, which comprise Units I and II, each unit's paper must be completed at the end of the fifth and tenth weeks respectively. Week 16 is devoted to a final or term paper and a subject that encompasses all the work done in the course will be recommended. For instance, a student can choose a specific genre and discuss the

development from the traditional to the most recent publications in it. A student could also take a subject that cuts across genres for the final essay. It is emphasized that the written work is very important in assessing the student's performance in the course. That written work will be the place where you display your research concerns, your originality, and your personal thoughts. The bibliography following the required text for the week should provide background material for the text itself and adequate scholarly work to draw from in the short and long papers. Students are also advised to keep a diary of their reflections on the course.

Texts: Apart from Weeks 1 and 15, each of the other thirteen class weeks has a required text. There is no single required text for the introductory week and the last week before the final paper week but there are readings that the student should endeavor to read in order to have a good general knowledge. In the other weeks with required texts, there are still readings meant to reinforce the introductory materials of the week. Students are not expected to read all the other books listed but could visit a research library to fill the gaps.

Week One: Introduction / An Overview of African Literature

African literature did not start with the coming of Europeans to Africa because a people's literature is as old as the people themselves. Africans had an indigenous literature before Europeans came to colonize the continent and the tradition continues to thrive to this moment. The indigenous literature was (and still is) oral because of the non-literate nature of the traditional culture and society. African oral literature manifests in the following forms: folktales, folksongs, specific types of songs and chants, myths, legends, epics, proverbs, riddles, and tongue-twisters. There is no clear-cut division of genres of narratives, poetry, and drama as in modern Western literature. It is very integrative in the sense that a good narrative involves poetic songs and chants, with the minstrel wearing a mask and a special costume and performing to the accompaniment of music supplied by drums or other musical instruments. Oral literature, as practiced by Africans, can be described as a multi-media event.

This oral/traditional literature is committed to memory and is passed by word of mouth from generation to generation. The reliance on memory makes this literature to continue to evolve with time and so an oral "text" changes with every performance because of factors that include the mood of the performer or minstrel, the place, and time of its performance. As a result of its orality, there is much improvisation and spontaneity in the performance because each rendition is a "text" of its own or a variant.

African oral literature was and still is integrated into the daily lives of the people. It was in the songs that men and women sang at home or to farms, fishing, hunting, or while traveling on lonely roads. A woman sang as she weeded her yam or cassava farm; she also sang while pounding her millet, as she lulled her baby to sleep with poetic lullabies. At the same time, a man clearing a farm, planting, or preparing palm oil in the palm oil press sang songs to revive his energy. Unlike modern Western literature that demands leisure and formal education, traditional African literature is a people's literature woven into the different stages of the people's lives with specific songs for birth, naming ceremonies, initiation into different age grades, marriage, and death, among others. The people's festivals and social gatherings also had literature performed to the accompaniment of drums or other musical instruments.

African oral literature is a very functional literature which catered to the needs of the traditional society. In the communalistic society, literature in various forms helped to maintain a healthy social ethos that bound people together. One of the advantages of traditional African literature is that it is cohesive in bringing people together to share verbal imaginative expressions in the forms of poetry/songs/chants, narratives, and performances in a very live atmosphere. It is a literature which has its own aesthetics. Traditional Africa had no schools as modern Africa has (after interaction with the West). However, there were avenues for teaching young ones about ethics, morality, life, society, the environment, and language and literary skills, which the oral tradition brought about. Usually, at the end of the day's work, parents and elders gathered their young ones by the fireside to tell them stories. Such sessions were a part of the growing process of young boys and girls and they looked forward to these informal fireside "schools" with enthusiasm. They were not only entertained but also learned lessons and how to tell such stories and sing the songs themselves.

Written or modern African literature is relatively young compared to Western literary traditions which date to hundreds of years back. While some forms of writing existed in traditional Africa, writing as we know it today started in the colonial period when colonialists and missionaries built schools to advance their colonial administration and Christianity. The products of those schools became the writers of modern African literature. While aware of Juan Latino, the only black Latinist, scholar, and writer at Granada, Spain, and also of Saint Augustine, Olaudah Equiano, and Phillis Wheatley, this course on African literature will focus on modern African literature since colonization. In other words, the course deals with African literature as a postcolonial literature. This is so in the sense of a modern literature that blends together both borrowed Western literary and indigenous African oral traditions. While also aware of Arab literature by Africans and related Swahili literature in Africa, we will be dealing with literary works by Africans that started to emerge in Africa from the 1950s.

Modern African literature is conditioned by four major factors: traditional oral literature, African history, the African environment, and the influence of Western languages and literary conventions. Oral traditions give modern African literature a cultural identity. Modern African literature adopts many oral traditional forms and tropes. Many writers (poets, novelists, and dramatists) use indigenous folklore such as folktales, myths, legends, epics, folksongs, and proverbs, among so many others. In the literary works to be studied, Chinua Achebe uses the folktale of the greedy tortoise in *Things Fall Apart*. There are proverbs in the epic *Sunjata*, the novels, plays, and poems. The writers also adopt oral techniques in the poetry, fiction, and plays. Many poems are modeled on satiric abuse songs, dirges, and praise chants. Ngugi wa Thiongo, among others, uses a traditional minstrel, the Gicaandi player, to tell the tale in *Devil on the Cross*, and dramatists, including Femi Osofisan, use the traditional storyteller to present the drama. In fact, Abiola Irele has described modern African literature as "a written oral literature" (16).

Many critics, including Irele, Jaheinz Jahn, and Emmanuel Obiechina, have emphasized the point of African literature responding to the continent's history. As Irele puts it, the "historical experience serves as a constant reference for the African imagination" because of colonialism and Europe presenting Africa as the "other" to enforce its "self-affirmation as the unique source of human and spiritual values." Even later, African writers will respond to the post-Independence experience in their respective nations and societies. The imperative of history in modern African literature is affirmed by the fact that in many African nations such as Egypt, Nigeria, and South Africa, the writers are divided into generations or periods. In Egypt, there are poets of the 70s, 80s, and 90s. In Nigeria, there

are Pioneer Poets as well as poets of the Second, Third, and Fourth generations. South Africa has apartheid and post-apartheid writings.

The African environment also influences the literature. As will be expected, the fauna and flora assume symbolic significance in the literary works. Plants such as the iroko, and creatures such as the tortoise, hyena, and eagle are often evoked in the literature for symbolic meaning. One can see the African worldview and sensibility as also products of the environment reflected in the literature.

The use of a foreign language is important in modern African literature whether it is English, French, or Portuguese. There has been a debate going back to the early part of the 20th century to the present among writers and scholars, including Benedict Wallet Vilakazi of South Africa, Obi Wali of Nigeria, and Ngugi wa Thiongo of Kenya, as to whether a people's literature could be written in a language other than their own. African writers have made choices and many write in the adopted European languages of their respective countries. Many, like Chinua Achebe and Wole Soyinka, domesticate or rather Africanize the English they use to reflect their respective Igbo and Yoruba cultural backgrounds and the worldviews they represent. Ngugi abandoned writing his fiction in English mid-career in the early 1980s to write in Gikuyu or KiSwahili and later have his work translated into English. What is important is that the English used by the African writer is informed by his or her indigenous culture, society, environment, and individual experience.

Since literature is a cultural production, it is dynamic and so always evolving. Thus, African literature continues to change according to the times. This factor of change leads to two important observations about contemporary African literature: the place of women and the influence of globalization and migration. Men had a head-start in Western education and that translated to more male writers in the past. For a long time, the men expressed the African experience. However, in recent times women now present their own experiences and can be heard. There are so many female writers now across the continent and have established themselves as major voices of contemporary Africa. While no specific female writer will be singled out in this Introduction, it is significant to know how different they express the woman's condition in the predominantly patriarchal continent. At the same time, female writings complement male writings to affirm the African humanity.

Migration and globalization are having a great influence on African literature. There is a situation at present in which many African writers of note are living in North America and Europe and not in the African continent. There is the argument as to whether those African writers living abroad can represent the African experience or condition. The writers living in the West tend to have more freedom to write about contentious African issues relating to sexuality and politics that the relatively freer Western nations and societies provide them. Also, the African writers living in the West have ample publicity and amenities when compared to their fellow writers at home. While time will tell on what becomes of the African literature produced outside Africa, the phenomenon shows the diversity and the openness to change that the literature has always been subjected to in its postcolonial nature.

African literature is ever-growing and getting more diversified in formal, thematic, and technical explorations. There is much experimentation in forms and techniques across the genres but the contemporary African writer however exposed is still rooted in an Africanity that blends borrowed with indigenous traditions for something uniquely African in a changing world. There is much diversity of themes as writers get bolder in their treatment of subjects. For instance, in more recent African literature there is treatment of sexuality,

homosexuality, and other themes that used to be taboo. At the same time, there are explorations of ecological and environmental subjects as never before. As a dynamic medium, African literature will continue to evolve, carrying along the complexities that make the African reality.

There is no single required text for this week. Students are encouraged to read as much as possible about African oral traditions, culture, history, and the interface of orality and literacy in literatures in general and African literature in particular.

Readings:

Balogun, Odun. *Ngugi and African Postcolonial Narrative: The Novel as Oral narrative in Multigenre Performance*. Quebec: World Heritage Press, 1997.

Chinweizu, Madubuike and Jemie. *Towards the Decolonization of African Literature*. New York/Lagos: NOK, 1980.

Ezenwa-Ohaeto. *Contemporary Nigerian Poetry and the Poetics of Orality.* Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies 45, 1998.

Jahn, Janheinz. *Neo-African Literature: A History of Black Writing*. New York: Grove, 1961.

Irele, Abiola. *The African Experience in Ideology and Literature*. 1981.

---. *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*. New York. Oxford University Press. 2001.

Mutiso, Gideon-Cyrus Makau. *Socio-Political Thought in African Literature*. New York: Barnes and Noble, 1974.

Ngugi, wa Thiong'o. *Decolonizing the Mind*. London: James Curry Ltd., 1986.

Nkosi, Lewis. *Tasks and Masks*. London: Longman, 1984.

Obiechina, Emmanuel. *Culture, Tradition and Society in the West African Novel*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1975.

Ojaide, Tanure. *Poetic Imagination in Black Africa*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1996.

---. *Culture, Society, and Politics in Modern African Literature: Texts and Contexts*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2002.

Taiwo, Oladele. *Culture and the Nigerian Novel*. London: Macmillan 1982.

Discussion Questions: What factors make African literature unique when compared to Western (specifically English or American) literature? Issues of functionality and art for art's sake should be examined in the two respective literatures. How is modern African literature

indebted to the indigenous oral tradition? A student can choose any of these discussion questions, like in the subsequent weeks, as the subject of the unit's paper.

UNIT I: EARLY MODERN AFRICAN LITERATURE (FOUNDING WRITERS)

Week Two: African Oral Literature

The origins of modern African literature lie in the indigenous oral traditions of Africa and Western literary traditions brought through colonization. Long before Europeans came to Africa and colonized the continent, African ethnic groups always had a vibrant literature of their own. The Europeans would introduce Western schools to train mainly boys to help them in their colonial administration, and the products of such schools would take to writing modern African literature. However, from the beginning of time, Africans have always had a literature which is informed by the non-literate and oral nature of their society. Because traditional African society placed premium on passing information by word of mouth from one person to another and from one generation to another, the literature was (and still is) oral.

The oral tradition of African literature points to the fact that every literature does not need to have one single identity, as the written form does, since the African indigenous type evolved from traditional folk forms which are still easily noticeable in the written tradition. A close reading of African literature today will demonstrate a very close affinity with the oral tradition in the symbols and expressions from the indigenous languages which bear idiomatic meanings and are often retained in their original forms. Thus, one must come to terms with the fact that the two forms complement each other.

The oral art forms in African literature include: proverbs, folktales, epics, and satiric and panegyric songs and chants. It is vital to note that in oral literature there is no single brain at work, but there is a collective memory, which points to the fact that there is neither an authentic version of a tale or no one single individual can claim ownership of these oral traditional literary forms, especially the folktales and folksongs. Since traditional literature relies on memory to be preserved, and because the human memory is not perfect, there are many variants of many tales. A story teller can forget some parts of a story and improvise or be so carried away as to be spontaneous. The "oral" text therefore changes according to the mood of the storyteller, the time of the telling, the place it is told, the environment in which it is told, and many other factors that make oral literature an evolving text. *Sunjata*, the required text for this week's study, is a typical example of an African oral text and has many variants. There are thus many versions that are performed by the singer of tales, called griot ("griotte" for female) in the Senegambian, Guinean, and Malian areas of West Africa. In traditional African society, the epic is often performed during a festival to re-enact the heroism, peace, and abundance of the past in a theatrical manner to remind the present generation of its proud heritage and to guide it towards heroic deeds of its own. As Isidore Okpewho puts it, the epic hero represents the highest ideal to which society can aspire. In *Sunjata*, the reader should take note of the hero's features and qualities as well as the role of his sister in his success.

Required Text:

Bamba Suso and Banna Kanute. *Sunjata*. NY: Penguin, 1999.

Other Readings:

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

Chinweizu, et al. *Toward the De-colonization of African Literature*. Enugu: Fourth Dimension Publishers, 1984.

Ezenwa–Ohaeto. *Contemporary Nigerian Poetry and the Poetics of Orality*. Bayreuth

African Studies 45: Bayreuth, 1998.

Nwachukwu–Agada, J.O.J. "Nigerian Literature and Oral Tradition," in *Goatskin Bags*

and Wisdom, ed. Ernest Emenyonu (Trenton NJ: Africa World Press, 2000).

Okpewho, Isidore. *The Epic in Africa*. New York: Columbia University Press, 1979.

Discussion and reflection questions: What are the functions of African oral literature? What part do the female characters in *Sunjata* play in the life of the hero? Reading *Sunjata* as a traditional African epic, what are the main features and qualities of the epic hero?

Week Three: The Early African Novel and Defense of African Culture

The novel is the most dominant and most pervasive literary genre in Africa today, and correspondingly the most popular. Early African novelists mostly began writing in dialogue with themes of conflict between tradition and modernity. The subject of the African novel then was socially conditioned, the need to assert that Africa was an existing geopolitical entity before the advent of the West, and insist that Africa was sent reeling from its delicate balance by the colonial incursion. Hence the major ideological position taken then was that of cultural nationalism, a scheme geared towards reestablishing the African identity which was gradually fading because of the overbearing force of colonialism. The novelists then used the novel to arouse in the reader a true sense of himself, thereby evoking his past and connecting it to the present. This unequivocally distinguished between an African and a European writing about Africa.

This point makes the African novel different from the western variant on the question of the exploration of the African identity. In this regard the African novel will be better understood when appraised from its historical context in terms of reality that has shaped the consciousness of the writers and their responses in the novels they write. This reality is therefore not static, but changes all the time. The rise of the novel in Africa tallies with the upsurge of great political activity and consciousness. Thus, one will easily notice that Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* echoes the past in order to re-interrogate that past to make the

present meaningful. Invariably, the theme of cultural nationalism contours the African novel of the late 1950s and 60s.

A close reading of the early African novel will indicate that the novelists give expression to African societies in transition. This is geared towards articulating how the West has politically altered the course of history of the African people and the themes of these novels reflected these alterations especially at the level of culture. Therefore one of the dominant themes of the early novel is that of culture conflict.

Required Text:

Chinua Achebe. *Things Fall Apart*. London: Heinemann, 1958.

Other Readings:

Chinua Achebe. *Arrow of God.* New York, Anchor Books Edition, 1969.

Adrian Roscoe, *Mother is Gold.* Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1777.

Chinua Achebe. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*, London, Heinemann, 1975.

Emmanuel Ngara. *Art and Ideology in the African Novel*, London, Heinemann, 1985.

Oladele Taiwo. *Culture and the Nigerian Novel*. London. Macmilan, 1982.

Discussion Questions: How relevant is colonialism to the emergence of the African novel? How apt is the novel genre in expressing the 1950s and 1960s as a period of transition in Africa? In what ways does Chinua Achebe in *Things Fall Apart* succeed in telling the reader that Africans had a culture before the coming of the Europeans?

Week Four: The Early Modern African Drama

This week the course introduces the student to African drama—traditional and modern. Indigenous dramatic traditions of Africa will be evoked to provide a context for examining the emergence of modern drama. What is the function of drama in society? It is intended to undertake a systematic survey of these forms and to provide students with the critical tools to both evaluate and appreciate this important art form. Room shall be created for students to have the opportunity to observe and participate in theatrical manifestations such as plays and festivals. We shall examine further the literary and performance aspects of modern African drama. The study begins by locating African drama in the context of oral performance and then examines how the genre has been impacted by the infusion of European literary traditions while retaining indigenous forms. We will examine the theory of African drama and the various theatrical practices that operate in the continent, including the rise of the popular traveling tradition of drama.

Like the other two genres of literature (fiction and poetry), early modern drama in Africa explored subject matters which give expression to Africa's socio-cultural life before the incursion of Europeans. Early modern African drama deployed folk/traditional forms to explore this subject. Although most of the subjects of the plays are derived from history, they equally draw attention to the popular

subject of the period—cultural conflict. The relevance of itinerant/travel theatre tradition should equally be considered in the evolution of modern drama in Africa. These early plays, like the novel, gave expression to the beauty of the African culture in order to demonstrate that Africa had cultural standards before her encounter with Europe. Playwrights drew more from indigenous traditions such as folklore, myth, and other oral art forms to accentuate the claim of Africa having a distinct worldview and organized cultural codes before Africa's contact with Europe. Most of the plays are based on traditional wars which celebrated the exploits of some African warriors. These kinds of themes are usually noticed in the itinerant theatre tradition and the very early scribal tradition of drama in Africa.

Early African drama explored issues bordering on the colonial distortion of African history and communal relations among African communities before the Western incursion into Africa. Invariably, most of early modern African drama dramatized the process of transition of African traditional societies into modern ones.

Required Text:

Wole Soyinka. *The Lion and the Jewel*, London: OUP, 1963.

Other Readings:

Olaniyan, Tejumola. *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance: The Invention of Cultural Identities in African, African American and Caribbean Drama*. New York: Oxford

UP, 1995.

Quayson, Ato. *Aesthetic Nervousness: Disability and the Crisis of Representation*. New York:

Columbia University Press, 2007.

Ojaide, Tanure. "Teaching Wole Soyinka's *Death and the King's Horseman to American* College Students," *College Literature* 19-20.3-1 (Double issue), 1992 Oct-1993

Feb; 210-14.

Chris Dunton. *Make Man Talk True: Nigerian Drama in English Since 1970*. London: Hans Zell, 1992.

Graham-White, Anthony. The Drama of Black Africa. New York: Samuel French, 1974.

Biodun Jeyifo. *The Truthful Lie: Essays in the Sociology of African Drama*. London: New Beacon Books, 1985.

Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*. New York: Norton, 2002.

Ngugi Wa Thiong'o and Micere Mugo. *The Trial of Dedan Kimathi*. Nairobi: Heinemann, 1981.

Athol Fugard. *Sizwe Bansi is Dead*, 1972.

Discussion Questions: How does early modern African drama re-create African history? "No matter how modern African playwrights try to Africanize Western drama, modern African drama will always remain a product of dual heritage." Discuss this statement with reference to the text required for this week. Taking Baroka and Lakunle as symbolic characters, how does Wole Soyinka in *The Lion and the Jewel* show that the trusted old ways are better than the untried new ways in a period of transition?

Week Five: Early Modern African Poetry

Like the novel and drama already studied, modern African poetry combines two literary traditions: the traditional oral African and the modern written Western. In our study of modern African poetry, we will deal with the two first generations often described as pioneers and euro-modernists respectively. Emphasis should be placed on how history and African poetry are related in order to demonstrate the fact that the poet is conditioned by the burden of history. In each of these two generations, like in the latter ones, there is a historical consciousness which affects the thematic preoccupations. It is worthy of note that the degree of artistic awareness of the poets affects the aesthetic considerations as in the poetic form.

The pioneer poets include Dennis Osadebay of Nigeria; Michael Dei Anang, Gladys Casely-Hayford, and R.E.G. Armattoe of Ghana; and H.I.E. Dhlomo and Benedict Wallet Vilakazi of South Africa. Jaheinz Jahn describes them as writing "apprentice literature" because they generally lacked a sense of poetic craft. They were influenced by missionary hymn books, Biblical references, Greco-Roman allusions, and Victorian diction. Attention should be paid to the ambivalence easily noticed in the poetry of the era. Writing in colonial times, these poets approved of colonialism without reservation as in Osadebay's "Young Africa's Thanks." They generally ignored loss of indigenous culture, forced labor of "natives," unfair taxes, siphoning away Africa's natural resources, and suppression of local freedom. They dealt with themes of race, Christianity, and heroism.

The Second Generation of modern African poets came of age at the end of colonialism in the late 1950s and the 1960s. Educated, they were very much aware of literature as an art form with many of them taught by European teachers in African universities affiliated to British institutions, as in Legon (Ghana), Ibadan (Nigeria), and Makerere (Uganda). These poets had their models from Europe and the United States: T.S. Eliot, Gerald Manley Hopkins, W.B. Yeats, Ezra Pound, and the French Symbolists. For this reason, there is copious use in their poetry of paradox, irony, allusiveness, and difficulty of diction. They expressed their individuality as well as the universal with Leopold Sedar Senghor, Lenrie Peters, Kofi Awoonor, Christopher Okigbo, Wole Soyinka, and J.P. Clark as examples. With the historical grievance of slavery and colonialism, these poets condemned colonialism and expressed their African identity in a racial/cultural conflict paradigm of African versus European. The Francophone poets used the ideology of Negritude and the Anglophone ones posited African Personality to affirm their blackness or Africanity. Negritude is a movement of African and Caribbean poets that started by black intellectuals, including Leopold Sedar Senghor of Senegal, Leon Damas of French Guyana, and Aime Cesaire of Martinique, to advocate black culture as a means of fighting European denigration of Africans and their culture. They dealt not only with issues bordering on culture conflict but also the confusion the Western incursion brought upon the African identity as expressed in Gabriel Okara's "Piano and Drums." It is ironical that this generation of African poets used Western modernist techniques while advocating African culture. It is generally said that

these poets paid more attention to form than content; more poetic style than making meaning.

Required Text:

Gerald Moore and Ulli Beier, eds. *The Penguin Book of Modern African Poetry*, 1967.

Other Readings:

Ngara, Emmanuel. *Ideology and Form in African Poetry: Implications for Communication.*

Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990.

Discussion Questions: With reference to early African poetry, examine how colonialism altered the African identity. In what ways do these poets express themselves in a period of transition? What techniques characterized early modern African poetry? Students should use these questions as sources of reflection in their diaries or selected paper for this unit.

UNIT II: THE 1970S TO THE END OF THE 20TH CENTURY

Week Six: The Novel and Politics in Africa

The late 1950s and 1960s marked the beginning of a new epoch in the socio-political history of Africa. Independence came and the African people expressed euphoria over the new tradition. However, the excitement was short-lived as most of the emergent leaders derailed the progressive course on which the continent was navigating. The leaders became dictators with insatiable greed and wielding power so ruthlessly that the masses were completely marginalized. This betrayal became a very important subject in the African novel from the late 1960s. The novel has become a socio-cultural space where writers from time to time engage African governments on pressing postcolonial concerns. The novel remains the platform where the existential problems of being African are recreated and reflected upon. As the living conditions of Africa continue to remain dire, the novelists continue to engage the governments on their failure to provide the ruled with their desires. The writers deploy numerous rhetorical devices to narrativize the burden of nationhood. The required novel for this course will no doubt introduce students to the various currents and themes and techniques in the modern African novel and how this genre in Africa occupies a very important space in African politics. The novel should be studied in relation to the background of the social history and the life of the writer and his time. The heavy socio-cultural base of the modern African novel, as it engages politics in the continent, is obvious. This is, however, motivated by the vision of the writer who usually regards himself/herself as a teacher. If one considers this point critically, the constant engagement of the novelist with the conditions of the ruled and the direction of politics in the continent explains why the novel will remain a genre where the everyday experience of the African person is articulated.

Attention should be paid to the cynicism of the title of the required text. The African novel gives expression to how independence failed to produce the desired socio-economic

bliss which the euphoria of independence indicated at the early period of self-rule. Thus the major theme of the novel remains that of corruption and the disillusionment that accompanies the idea of an African Identity.

Required Text:

Ayi Kwei Armah. *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. London: Heinemann, 1968.

Other Readings:

Ngate, Jonathan. *Francophone African Fiction: Reading a Literary Tradition.* Trenton, NJ:

Africa World Press, 1988.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Decolonising the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*.

London: James Currey, 1986.

Ngugi wa Thiong'. *Writers in Politics*. Oxford: James Currey, 1997.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. *Penpoints, Gunpoints, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts*. Oxford: OUP, 1998.

Lewis Nkosi, *Tasks* and *Masks: Themes and Styles in African Literature*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981.

Olaniyan, Tejumola. *Scars of Conquest/Masks of Resistance: The Invention of Cultural Identities in African, African American and Caribbean Drama*. New York: Oxford UP, 1995.

Discussion Questions: Observe the title of the novel, *The Beautyful Ones Are Not Yet Born*. Discuss how the writer shows cynicism about the state of Africa at the time. How does the novel reflect the failure of Africa's political independence?

Week: Seven: Modern African Drama

Modern African drama exhibits an easily discernible ideological commitment which makes it differ from the preceding generation. Modern African drama deals urgently with subjects that are not only contemporary but also border more on social problems in Africa

with the aim of raising mass awareness of a positive revolutionary alternative to the prevailing decadence. Modern African drama deals with subjects as topical as the phenomenon of armed robbery, students' rampage, class struggle, and corruption, among many others. The playwrights, through different dramatic strategies, advocate social revolution as the most pragmatic way out of the tangle. In addition to reenacting the politics of history, modern African drama recreates the social and epistemic tensions one notices in the continent especially in the relationship between Africans and their leaders. Drama in Africa appears to be very sardonic and satirical since its major function is to dramatize everyday existence with politics occupying a very important space.

What we intend to examine this week is a whole ensemble of social, economic, and political conditions in which modern drama comes into production, is consumed and interpreted and assimilated into African the worldview or belief systems. While traditional drama speaks for the community as a whole expressing traditional and communal beliefs hinged on certain religious practices, modern African drama has become the ideological projection of the social and economic problems brought upon the African people by bad governments. Invariably, modern African drama explores topical issues which border on the asymmetrical or lop-sided relationship between the rulers and their followers on the one hand and bureaucratic failures of government.

Required Text:

Ngugi wa Thiongo and Ngugi wa Miri. *I Will Marry When I Want*. Oxford, UK: Heinemann, 1977.

Other Readings:

Tasks and *Masks: Themes and Styles in African Literature*. Harlow, Essex: Longman, 1981

Olu Obafemi. *Contemporary Nigerian Theatre: Cultural Heritage and Social Vision*. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies.

Discussion Questions: What does the title of the required drama text say of the Kenyan society? How does modern African drama address pressing postcolonial concerns in Africa?

Week Eight: African Women's Writings

This week we focus on the place of women in the literary tradition; an issue that is very current in the discourse on the literature of Africa and its Diaspora. Women writers have emerged at the forefront of the movement to restore African women to their proper place in the study of African history, society, and culture. In this process, the need to recognize the women as literary artists in the oral mode has also been highlighted. Furthermore, the work of women writers is gaining increasing significance and deserves to be examined within the context of canon formation—authors and texts focusing on such topics as the heritage of women's literature, images of women in the works of male writers; women in traditional and contemporary society; women and the African family in the literary tradition; literature as a tool for self-definition and self-liberation; African women writers;

female expressions of cultural nationalism in the continent; female novelists of the African continent; Black women dramatists; the poetry of African women.

From close observation of texts one will notice that African female writers continue to deploy literature as a vehicle to redefine gender roles in African society. Female writings address the issue of the marriage institution and how tradition keeps the woman on a leash within the domestic sphere of a dominant patriarchal system. The dominant theme of female writings is that of female subjugation. Such writings explore the socio-cultural inhibitions which impede the development of the woman both at public and domestic spheres in African patriarchal societies.

A study of this week's required text, *So Long a Letter*, will not be complete without discussion of its feminist orientation. It must be clarified that feminism is an umbrella ideology that deals with the condition of women and the need for their empowerment especially politically and economically in predominantly patriarchal societies across the world. While it originated from the Western world and has influenced many African women's writings, feminism has intersections and variants that are dependent on class, race, culture, and societal values. Most African female writers of the first generation like Mariama Ba express a "womanist" form of feminism which advocates women's empowerment as well as complementarity between men and women because of the communal nature of traditional African societies. It is worthy of note that the novel's protagonist, Ramatoulaye, does not mind sharing her husband with another woman and only wants the man to treat both of them equally and she be recognized as the first or senior wife but she is left with empty hands, as she puts it, because she is totally neglected and her husband violates all the codes of Islam and traditional African society that govern polygamy. It is in this sense that *So Long a Letter* is "womanist" in the feminist tradition.

Required Text:

Mariama Ba. *So Long a Letter*. London: Heinemann, 1981.

Other Readings:

Aidoo, Ama Ata. *The Girl Who Can and Other Stories.* Johannesburg, South Africa:

Heinemann, 2002.

Zulu Sofola, *Wedlock of the Gods*. Ibadan: Evans, 1972.

Stella and Frank Chipasula (Eds.). *African Women's Poetry*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1995.

Jones, Eldred D. *Women in African Literature Today*. *African Literature Today* 15, 1987.

Amadume, Ifi. *Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society*.

London: Zed Press, 1987.

Salome C. Nnoromele, “Representing the African Woman: Subjectivity and Self in The Joys of Motherhood,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction* 43.2) (Winter 2002): 178-90.

Sarr, Ndiawar. “The Female Protagonist as Part of A Transitional Generation in *The Joys of Motherhood*,” *Bridges: an African Journal of English Studies/Revue Africaine D'Etudes Anglaises*. 5.2 (1993): 25-33.

Nfah-Abbenyi, Juliana. *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, & Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

Discussion Questions: If African and Black theorists and scholars emphasize the uniqueness of African feminism in “motherism” and “womanism,” to what extent is Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter* a “womanist” novel? How does the African female writer re-address the politics of gender in African literature?

Week Nine: The New African Poetry

These poets are generally highly educated and exposed (many Ph.D. holders) and studied their literary elders, some of whom taught them; unlike the earlier generations that had no formal education in African literature. They include those who came of age from the mid-1970s, a period characterized by declining economies due to the declining economies and have witnessed civil wars, military coups, apartheid, military/civilian dictatorships, and other forms of social, economic, and political instability. The new African poetry continues to be inward-looking especially because it is a reflection of the dire economic predicament of most African countries which has exposed more than before the intolerable gap between the rich and the poor, the haves and the have-nots. The poets indulge in self-criticism, especially the political corruption, and see Africans as mainly responsible for their own problems and not Europeans. Left of center, they play down the place of material culture in their communities for socio-economic issues. Their poetry equally foregrounds how the poets preoccupy themselves with mundane, real socio-economic problems of society and using traditional poetic techniques to express the contemporary condition. In fact, many of the poets, including Kofi Anyidoho, Jack Mapanje, and Tanure Ojaide studied their respective ethnic literatures, which they absorb into their poetry.

The new African poetry attaches much importance to communicating a message and so uses simple language. In their poetry, form is not rated above content as in the preceding generation. The poets use almost the syntax of prose as in the oral tradition. In the attempt to “decolonize” African poetry by shedding Modernist and other Western influences, they are often criticized for ignoring craft at the expense of urgent meaning.

Generally, the poets are more daring in thematic explorations with many female poets expressing what would have been taboo in earlier generations. Themes of love, ecological and environmental issues, and global issues are addressed in the new poetry.

There is a growing radicalism in themes and style as younger poets in the continent or living in the West seek alternative ways of making poetry relevant and fresh. African poetry is without doubt conditioned by the historical strains of the continent and the new African poetry gives expression to the pressing postcolonial concerns, especially issues relating to the failure of government in its ability to formulate people-oriented policies that will sustain the hope of independence.

Required Text:

Tanure Ojaide and Tijan M. Sallah. *The New African Poetry: An Anthology* (Boulder, CO: Lynne Rienner, 1999).

Other Readings:

Ngara, Emmanuel. *Ideology and Form in African Poetry: Implications for Communication.* Portsmouth, N.H.: Heinemann, 1990.

Tanure Ojaide. *Poetic Imagination in Black Africa: Essays on Modern African Poetry*. Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 1996.

Bodunde, Charles. (2001). *Oral Tradition and Aesthetic Transfer: Creativity and Social Vision in Contemporary Black Poetry*. Bayreuth: Bayreuth African Studies.

Discussion Questions: Discuss the socio-economic issues and their implications as well as the use of oral poetic techniques in the new African poetry? In what ways are contemporary African poets making their writing relevant and interesting?

Week Ten: The African Nonfiction/Memoir Tradition

Critics continue to struggle with defining what constitutes autobiography, the form that James Olney calls "the most elusive of literary documents" (*Autobiography* 3). One of the primary sources of this elusiveness is the blurring of distinctions between autobiography and fiction. Using some nonfictional narratives by Africans, we shall therefore attempt to study how private stories become national ones.

This week we will consider a range of texts from the African continent that can be categorized under the broad label of 'life-writing': all those linked and complex genres that seek to represent actual lives, from 'definitive' biographies of public figures to intensely private modes like correspondence or the diary. We will be asking questions like: how can we approach a work like Nelson Mandela's *Long Walk to Freedom* as a literary text (and not just a historical document)? Why does J. M. Coetzee write his (not quite) memoirs in the third person? What does it mean to read the literary-critical (or political) essay as a mode of autobiography? Can a life just be life, without becoming a national allegory for a

Western audience? How do writers represent childhood and nostalgia in troubled times? What are the ethics of telling other people's stories across social, cultural and linguistic divides? And what exactly is literary about (so-called) 'literary non-fiction'?

Primary text:

Wole Soyinka, *Aké: The Years of Childhood*. New York: Vantage, 1981.

Other Readings:

Peter Abrahams, *Tell Freedom* (1954).

Ivan Vladislavić*, Portrait with Keys* (2006).

Jacob Dlamini, *Native Nostalgia* (2009).

Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (1995).

J. M. Coetzee, *Boyhood* (1997).

Chinua Achebe, *There Was a Country* (2012).

Ken Saro-Wiwa, *A Month and A Day* (1995) and *On A Darkling Plane* (1989).

McAdams, D.P., Josselson, R. & Lieblich, A. *Identity and Story: Creating Self in Narrative*. Washington, DC : American Psychological Association, 2006.

Nicolson, Harold, *The Development of English Biography,* The Hogarth Press, 1928. \\\\\\

Nuttall, Sarah. 'Autobiographical Acts', in Senses of Culture, ed. Sarah Nuttall and Cheryl-Ann Michael. Oxford University Press, 2000.

Discussion Questions: How does the memoirist's growth reflect an individual as well as a societal coming of age? What are the lasting impressions of Wole as a child in a society in transition?

Unit III: CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN LITERATURE—THE 21ST CENTURY

Week Eleven: African Conflicts and the Novel

The failure of most African emergent nations' leaders to sustain the hope of independence celebrated in the 1960s created a sense of disenchantment for the people. This disenchantment gradually transformed into resistance of different kinds. However, most of the crises in Africa have ethnic pigmentation. The attempt to resist government bureaucratic failures led to civil wars of different dimensions. The novel artistically narrativizes these conflicts to reiterate the fact that most of the conflicts stem from the failure of governments to uphold the social contract. Some of the most vulnerable groups during civil strife are women and children. Most African nations returned to democratic rule over the last three decades but the government appears to still celebrate some dictatorial tendencies which continue to create a permanent mood of depression in the psyche of Africans. The novel in Africa has always remained the imaginative space where writers interrogate the direction and relevance of leadership and governance in the continent. Consequently, the novel in Africa continues to advocate socio-political justice and economic emancipation as the cardinal ingredients for the sustenance of a healthy democracy that is people oriented. A keen assessment of contemporary African novel will demonstrate how the writers deploy different rhetorical devices to reappraise politics in Africa and the conflicts these political actions have engendered. Most of these contemporary novels beam their searchlight on the African child who is historically implicated in these conflicts and how these children lose their innocence. The child figure is becoming a very important calibrating index for measuring growth and development of the African continent, especially as the child remains the signification of the future of any nation. Invariably, emphasis shall be placed on the child and the choices he/she makes to survive some of these conflicts in the continent.

Required Text:

Emmanuel Dongala. *Johnny Mad Dog* (New York: Picador, 2005).

Other Readings:

Eustace Palmer. *Of War and Women, Oppression and Optimism: New Essays on the African Novel*. Trenton, NJ: African World Press

Mamdani Mahmood. When Victims Become Killers: Colonialism, Nativism and the Genocide in Rwanda. Princeton: Princeton UP, 2001.

Research in African Literatures. 36.2, 2006.

African Literature Today. No. 26, 2008.

Discussion Questions: The African novel essentially explores how literature of violence succeeds or fails as art. The novelist equally articulates the consequences of war on the African continent and her peoples and demonstrates the symbiotic relationship between

history and literature as the writer becomes a witness. How do we read the representation of violence in the African novel? Discuss *Jonny Mad Dog* as a bildungsroman, a novel in which a child loses innocence and grows up.

Week Twelve: The Contemporary African Female Writer

Contemporary female African writers continue to deploy literature as a pragmatic means to negotiate the lopsided gender calculus in Africa. The writers demonstrate how women negotiate their way between tradition and modernity. Beside the gender tensions both at the domestic and public spheres, the female writers give expression to other responsibilities beyond motherhood and wifehood that the modern African woman is saddled with.

Since the publication of Flora Nwapa's *Efuru* in 1966, modern African women's writings have come a long way and gone through several stages of metamorphosis. In Week 8 we read and discussed Mariama Ba's *So Long a Letter* that posthumously won the Noma Prize for African writing in 1981 and publicized the works of African female writers. From their concerns with giving voice to the silenced by telling their own stories and revamping their images as against earlier portrayals by male writers, African contemporary female writers have shifted focus from the plight of women within domesticity to assess their participation and contributions in the public domain. These writers now create female characters that are equipped with appropriate resources such as education, economic autonomy, resilience, and rational/intellectual thinking that help them negotiate their identities and freedom from patriarchal dogmas and societal restrictions. This type of character delineation relocates women from the margins to the center. Contemporary African women's writings are replete with fictional representations of various efforts by women to join the mainstream and be acknowledged as capable of developing the individual selfhood and the nation within and outside domestic spheres. Their works reflect a balanced portrayal of women in realistic terms as they not only present women in contrastive positions of suffering victimhood but also exercising their agency.

Ifeoma in this week's required text, Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Purple Hibiscus* is such a female character. She is a university lecturer, a single parent because of widowhood, who does not depend on her rich brother but takes care of her family and even father well. It is telling that she does not want her elders to pray for her to have more children but to be promoted in her workplace, the academy.

Required Text:

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie. *Purple Hibiscus*. New York: Algonquin Books, 2003.

Other Readings:

Nfah-Abbenyi, Juliana. *Gender in African Women's Writing: Identity, Sexuality, & Difference*. Bloomington: Indiana UP, 1997.

Discussion Question: How does the woman negotiate her way between tradition and modernity in contemporary African literature? As individuals who negotiate their identity around marginal spaces, the female writers use literature to demonstrate how female characters negotiate liberation from tradition in order to articulate the fact that women can use their resources in other spheres beyond the domestic space.

Week Thirteen: Post-Apartheid Fiction

As a society just emerging from the throes of apartheid, the post-apartheid South African fiction continues to deal with issues bordering on suspicion and the search for identity. One of the major issues post-apartheid South Africa explores is the challenge of reconciliation and forgiveness. Emphasis should be placed on the transition from apartheid to post-apartheid South Africa. The novel fuses African responses to modernity deriving from an oral culture with European responses to modernity based on written genres.

A major dilemma that will continue to confront researchers studying the post-apartheid fiction in English is how to house white and black writers under the same roof, given that previous scholarship has often distinguished South African fiction on the black/white binaries, or the so-called realist/modernist genres. Furthermore, the many debates that had provoked the post-apartheid liberal order had attempted to highlight areas to be privileged without making room for equal regard to the experiences of pain meted out on the population through the course of history. It is probably for this reason that a number of white scholars have persistently insisted on the defacement of history in the discourse of the new fiction. However, other scholars have retained the persuasion that literary scholarship should remain a search for social justice. This week shall consider the emergence of a new tradition of writing in South Africa after apartheid. Emphasis will be placed on the fact that post-apartheid South Africa is still a state in transition; that is a nation undergoing enormous transformation not only in the political arena, but also in practically every facet of its social imaginary. Invariably, the fiction after apartheid will function as a map for reading the new dimensions the social relation has taken decades after the fall of apartheid.

Required Text:

Zakes Mda. *Ways of Dying*. New York: Picador, 2002.

Other Readings:

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

Attridge, Derek. *J. M. Coetzee and the Ethics of Reading*. Chicago: U of Chicago P, 2004.

Attwell, David. *J. M. Coetzee: South Africa and the Politics of Writing*. Berkeley: U of California P, 1993.

Chapman, Michael, Colin Gardner, and Es'kia Mphahlele, eds. *Perspectives on South African Literature*. Johannesburg: A D. Donker, 1992.

Sanders, Mark. “Ambiguities of Mourning: Law, Custom, and Testimony of Women before South Africa’s Truth and Reconciliation Commission.” Ed. David Eng and Kazanjian. *Loss: The Politics of Mourning*. Berkeley: U of California P, 2003. 77-109.

---. “Truth, Telling, Questioning: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission, Antjie Krog’s *Country of My Skull*, and Literature after Apartheid.” *Modern Fiction Studies* 46 (2000): 13-41.

Discussion Questions: We will reflect on how fictional narratives challenge the dualisms of Western thinking, whether between the past and the present, the human and the non-human, the rural and the urban, the living and the dead. How does the fiction reconfigure history in post-apartheid South African fiction? In what ways does the writer’s imagination create new forms of personal and political identity?

Week Fourteen: The Contemporary African Short Story

The short story for long has not been a popular form in African literature compared to poetry, fiction, and drama. This is despite the fact that, in form, it is closest to the folktale of the oral tradition that is indigenous to Africa. Although the African short story remains unpopular relative to other forms of narrative if one considers the issue of literary criticism, it is none the less alive and well. Written in indigenous or European languages, the short story is published in the popular press or in elite literary journals, in collections of narratives or anthologies of African literature. The short story continues to thrive because of its litheness compared to the more wieldy novel or play when it comes to publishing. Among its best known practitioners are Chinua Achebe, Ama Ata Aidoo, Barbara Kimenye, Alex LaGuma, Ben Okri, Sembene Ousmane, and Tanure Ojaide.

The short story form equally articulates and gives expression to the African experience in both colonial and postcolonial societies. One can say that African short stories use diverse narrative modes to express the African condition. Writers use modes ranging from irony as in Achebe’s stories and fantasy as in Ben Okri to the surrealism in Kojo Laing’s stories. In these writers and newer short story writers’ works, there is constant blending of the highly realistic with the supernatural to express the human experience of modern Africans still deeply affected by traditional beliefs or postmodern concerns.

In recent times, the short story has generated interest through the Caine Prize for African Writing specifically meant for the short story. As has been happening, many writers known for their novels, poetry, and drama are writing short stories on a more popular scale. Dike Okoro-edited *Speaking for the Generations: Contemporary Short Stories from Africa* is one of the most recent anthologies and includes some well-known writers such as Benjamin Kwakye, Odun Balogun, and Tanure Ojaide and younger ones as Ayobami Adebayo, Prince Mensah, and Khadija El Younossi. The stories capture different vignettes of the contemporary life from all corners of the continent. Helon Habila also has put together a

wide range of short stories in *The Granta Book of the African Short Story* that includes old and late writes like the South African Alex La Guma and the Zimbabwean Dambudzo Marechera and living writers such as the Nigerian Uwem Akpan. It is interesting to note that many of the younger writers live in the West and many of their stories too are set in the West and not in Africa. Those living in the West or have their stories set in the West include Aminatta Forna, Uwem Akpan, and E.C. Osondu. These short story writers are not concerned about the nation but about individuals and society, pushing to the background political and national issues.

Required Text:

Dike Okoro, ed. *Speaking for the Generations: Contemporary Short Stories from Africa*.

Other Readings:

Achebe, Chinua. *Heinemann Book of Contemporary African Short Stories*. Oxford,UK: Heinemann, 1987.

Achebe, Chinua and C.l. Innes, eds. African Short Stories. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1985.

Akpan, Uwem. *Say You're One of Them*.

Habila, Helon, ed. *The Granta Book of the African Short Story*. New York: Granta, 2011.

Larson Charles. ed. *African Short Stories*. New York: Collier, 1970.

Discussion Questions: What is the relationship between the short story and the traditional story telling tradition in Africa? The short story in Africa is often simple; its brevity appeals to readers. It is a flexible, unpretentious, and sound literary form which reflects the discontinuous and disconcerting realities of African life. One of the major issues we shall consider this week is to examine the natural response of the reader to the proliferation of short stories and their considerable success; this will in turn help us establish their origin and development in the search for the source of their power and appeal. Therefore, the questions and objectives raised above for this week will serve as preliminary study of several fundamental aspects of tales and short stories, their difference and similarity in narrative structure, characterization, and intention. What distinguishes the short story from the novel is the magnitude or scope. By this we mean coverage. This will be another fundamental issue we shall assess.

Week Fifteen: The State of African Literature Today

The assignment this week is to look at African literature today in the contexts of Postcolonial and World literatures. What new directions are there in very recent literary publications by Africans at home and outside? What influence has globalization had for good or bad on contemporary African literature? Two areas to which literature is being deployed today in Africa are the areas of the environment and sexual orientation. Writers such as Niyi Osundare in his poetry, Tanure Ojaide in his poetry and fiction, and Zakes Mda in his fiction have addressed ecological and environmental concerns. At the same time, more writers are

dealing with issues of sex and sexuality in a more open and bolder manner than ever before. This is more so as gays are still generally at the fringes of African societies with laws in countries as Uganda and Zimbabwe persecuting them and perhaps only South Africa a little more tolerant while for the most part they are forced to be in the closet in other African countries. Recent works as of Lola Shoneyin's *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives* (2010) as well as sneak references in Uzodinma Iweala's *Beasts of No Nation* (2005) and Tess Onwueme's *Tell It To Women* (1995), among others, show how contemporary African writers, male and female, are dealing with this contentious cultural and social issue in their writings.

As far as globalization is concerned, one should look at how new writings in Africa are influenced by the Internet, blogging, face book, and other forms of popular media. How is the language of texting, emailing, and others affecting new writings? One can say that there is an Internet-based literature in Africa with publications of mainly poems and short stories online or in online literary magazines such as *The New African Literature*. There is thus a publication market online. There is little yet of hypertext as in the West but this could become current at any time. It appears that Internet publishing is challenging the traditional mode of publishing, especially as genres are concerned with hybrid works. All these developments are taking place in the face of self-publishing because of the dearth of professional publishers in Africa and the low rate of the reading culture in most countries.

The assignment this week is really a review of the multiple ways that the new realities in Africa, including the ramifications for the media of globalization, are impacting on younger writers. Thus, new forms are being used to express new realities. Students are advised to go online to read as much as possible on the state of African literature today.

This week's schedule has no specific required text. The following readings are among works that touch on one or more aspects of the issues raised for the week.

Readings

Iweala, Uzodinma. *Beasts of No Nation*. New York: Picador, 2005.

Mda, Zakes. *The Heart of Redness*. New York: Picador, 2002.

Ojaide, Tanure. *The Activisit*. Lagos: Malthouse, 2006.

---. *The Tale of the Harmattan*. Cape Town: Kwela Books, 2009.

Onwueme, Tess. *Tell It To Women: An Epic Drama*. Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1995.

Osundare, Niyi. *The Eye of the Earth*. Ibadan: Heinemann, 1986.

Shoneyin, Lola. *The Secret Lives of Baba Segi's Wives*. Abuja: Cassava Republic, 2010.

Discussion Questions: How is modern African literature being impacted by the phenomenon of globalization? How African can modern African literature remain with the effects of globalization and the new media?

Week Sixteen: 3000-word final paper.

As stated earlier, the final paper could come out of Unit III's materials but preferably a topic that encompasses the entire course. The student must show full grasp of the development of modern African literature and the theoretical underpinnings.

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1.1. Discuss the different authors, trends and forms that form the subject of the course.
1.2. Identify distinguishing features of the literature in the course topic.
1.3. Analyze the relationship between literary texts and the particular historical, cultural, social, political, and biographical contexts of their production.
1.4. Research and critically evaluate historical, social, cultural, or biographical criticism relevant to the analysis of specific literary texts.
1.5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating one or two literary texts to particular historical, cultural, social, political, or biographical contexts of their production.
1.6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.
1.7. Write coherent literary arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

Course Objectives:

1.1. Provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to African literature and the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.
1.2. Provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse literary traditions of the course and to express the deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.
1.3. Provide an overview of literary analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essays examinations, and a critical essay.
1.4. Identify major themes of African literature.
1.5. Read widely and critically in a variety of literary forms found in different genre studies and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.
1.6. Do a library research on a particular work of literature, an individual writer, or an issue in the area of genre studies and to write am critical essay which incorporates this research.

Course Content:

1.1. Literary works that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.
1.2. Discussion of the historical, social, cultural and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.
1.3. Literary movements in various periods.

1.4. Discussion of the theoretical issues and questions related to the historical, social, cultural, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.
1.5. Figurative, archetypes, and stylistic considerations.
1.6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in literature.
1.7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary global issues.
1.8. Critical analysis and interpretation.
1.9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

Course Outline:

For the detailed course outline, please see the calendar.

Course Readings:

For a list of course readings, please see the Reading page on the course website.

Course Preparedness:

This course is a literature course. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in world literature and does not address remedial writing issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. This course focuses on literary texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

Course Workload:

For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework. If students are taking the course in an accelerated 8-week mode, they can expect to devote a minimum of 12 hours per week of study.

Assessment Strategy:

Learners will demonstrate their knowledge of the subject and their ability to engage in critical thinking and problem solving activities.

- *Journal Entries/Discussion Questions*. Designed to help students to identity authors, their works, literary terms, and concepts. Students will also analyze texts, connect the authors and texts, and critical concepts. Students should also look at texts from multiple perspectives in order to evaluate their own thought processes.
- *Synchronous Online Activities*. Designed to help learners apply the concepts in the course to texts, and to share their insights.
- *Essays/Research Paper*. Designed to help students write scholarly papers and engage in literary analysis. Students will develop a clear thesis which they support with literary citations, a close reading of the text, application of critical theories and perspectives.

Students will focus on developing multiple interpretations of a single text, or will look at multiple texts within the genre.

Activities:

1—READING

Please read the textbook assignments in your reading lists.

2—REVIEW

Students will review Study Guide questions to develop a deeper understanding of the text and the concepts. Keeping careful notes or a journal will help them write the esays.

3—WRITING

Students are required to write a total of two (2) unit essays and a final essay. The unit essays will be at least 1000 words in length, and will be turned in at the end of each unit. Each essay will be 25% per unit. The final essay will be at least 3,000 words in length and will be turned in at the end of the course. The final essay will be 50% of grade points.

The essays are comprehensive literary analyses and should contain the following elements:

Clear thesis statement

Analysis of the text, with supporting textual evidence

Insights and interpretations

Clear conclusion

Works Cited (use MLA style: http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/557/01/)

Definition of Grades:

Graduate Courses

A Outstanding Achievement

B Commendable Achievement

C Unsatisfactory*

F Failing*

*Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

I Incomplete The "I" grade is given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the students in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

W **Withdrawal** Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. **Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses.** Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty:
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

Civility:

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations.
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

Students with Disabilities:

Students seeking special accommodations due to a disability must submit an application with supporting documentation, as explained under this subject heading in the General Catalog. Instructors are required to provide such accommodations if they receive written notification from the University.

Writing Across the Curriculum:

Students are expected to demonstrate writing skills in describing, analyzing and evaluating ideas and experiences. Written reports and research papers must follow specific standards regarding citations of an author's work within the text and references at the end of the paper. Students are encouraged to use the services of the University's Writing Center when preparing materials.

The following website provides information on APA, MLA, and other writing and citation styles that may be required for term papers. http://www.bibme.org

Syllabus

Learning Outcomes:

By the end of this course, students should be able to do the following:

1. Discuss the meanings and manifestations of culture found in the subject of the course.

2. Identify unique theoretical underpinnings and influential thinkers in the course topic.

3. Analyze the relationship between the various aspects of cultural texts and the particular social, cultural, and biographical contexts of their production.

4. Research and critically evaluate cultural productions.

5. Use secondary sources and close reading skills to produce a substantive critical essay relating one or more specific cultural productions to the economic, social, cultural, or biographical contexts of its production.

6. Demonstrate a balanced perspective and a deepened understanding of the cultures, times, people, and situations that produce these works.

7. Write coherent historical arguments that explore the relationships of various concepts and texts, and which provide a clear synthesis.

Course Goals:

1. To provide students with a broad perspective of approaches to world culture and an understanding of the various ways in which they manifest themselves and to assess students' ability to express their perspectives through exams and essays.

2. To provide students with a deeper understanding of diverse cultural and interdisciplinary traditions the course focus and to express this deepened understanding in written tests and a critical essay.

3. To provide an overview of cultural analysis and interpretation methods and help students apply these skills in writing essay examinations and a critical essay.

4. To read widely and critically in a variety of cultural texts in order to explore potential meanings and to demonstrate the depth and breadth of this reading in essay examinations and a critical essay.

5. To do library research on a particular trend, event, concept, an individual theorist, or an issue in the area of comparative culture and to write a critical essay which incorporates this research.

Course Content:

1. Cultural developments and texts that have been designated as being produced within the category of the course topic.

2. Discussion of the theoretical, social, philosophical and biographical contexts in which those works were produced.

3. Historical movements in various periods.

4. Discussion of the cultural issues and questions related to theoretical, social, philosophical, and biographical approaches to the study of the course topic.

5. Key ideas about how to evaluate and interpret cultural events, texts, and approaches.

6. Criticism and reflection upon political and economic systems as reflected in culture.

7. Discussion of the relevance of course readings to the understanding of contemporary cultural issues.

8. Critical analysis and interpretation of culture.

9. Conducting scholarly research on and off-line.

Course Outline:

For the detailed course outline, please see the study guide.

Course Readings:

The course readings for this course will be available through the Online Library, which will provide students access to selected journal articles, book chapters, and reference materials.

Course Preparedness:

This course is a history course which requires analysis, research, and writing. It assumes the mastery of prerequisite college-level skills in spelling, grammar, punctuation, paragraphing, and essay writing. It also assumes the ability to read and analyze literary texts. This course provides instruction in history and does not address remedial writing

issues at the sentence, paragraph, or essay level. The California Department of Education "English-Language Arts Content Standards for California Public Schools" offers context for understanding the standard for writing at the college level. Students who do not meet the standards outlined in the "English-Language Arts Content Standards" will not pass this course.

In short, this course assumes that students already "write with a command of standard English conventions, write coherent and focused texts that convey a well-defined perspective and tightly reasoned argument, and use clear research questions and creative and critical research strategies" (California Standards, Grades Nine and Ten). This course focuses on texts and analysis and requires college-level writing skills that exceed those required at the secondary level.

Course Workload:

In accordance with accreditation standards, requires approximately two hours of outside work for every contact hour. For a 3-hour course, there are 48 contact hours, plus a minimum of 96 hours outside work. For a sixteen-week course, students can expect to devote a minimum of 6 hours of independent study per week in order to complete the coursework.

Grading Factors:

Discussion Board (20%)

The Discussion Board provides the learner a place to respond to questions on the topic and to exchange ideas, reactions and analyses of the texts. Discussion questions concentrate on ideas, themes, and characters in literary works. There will be one question per week. Discussion Board questions will be responded to by all learners in the course and will be evaluated by the instructor. The Discussion Board is not available for OCW courses.

Journal (20%)

Your journal consists of your responses to questions in the Study Guide. These questions require you to reflect on the material and to write a one to two-paragraph response. At the end of the course, you will gather together all of your Study Guide responses and will turn

them in as a final portfolio.

Essay (20%)

You will write an essay on one of the topics provided to you by your instructor in which you apply a critical paradigm from theorists or issues raised by the Study Guide questions. You should start your paper with a succinct thesis statement, describe the critical paradigm and the text(s) being analyzed. Be sure to cite critical passages to demonstrate support for your argument.

Length: 1,000—1,500 words. Essay topics will be assigned by the instructor and will reflect material covered in the Study Guide and the readings.

Exam (40%)

Students must complete the assignments, submit them, and take the proctored exam.

Definition of Grades:

Graduate Courses

A Outstanding Achievement

B Commendable Achievement

C Marginal Achievement

D Unsatisfactory *

F Failing *

* Students receiving this grade in a course that is required for his/her degree program must repeat the course.

I **Incomplete** A grade given at the discretion of the instructor when a student who has completed **at least two-thirds of the course class sessions** and is unable

to complete the requirements of the course because of uncontrollable and unforeseen circumstances. The student must convey these circumstances (preferably in writing) to the instructor prior to the final day of the course. If an instructor decides that an "Incomplete" is warranted, the instructor must convey the conditions for removal of the "Incomplete" to the student in writing. A copy must also be placed on file with the Office of the Registrar until the "Incomplete" is removed or the time limit for removal has passed. An "Incomplete" is not assigned when the only way the student could make up the work would be to attend a major portion of the class when next offered.

An "I" that is not removed within the stipulated time becomes an "F." No grade points are assigned. The "F" is calculated in the grade point average.

W **Withdrawal** Signifies that a student has withdrawn from a course after beginning the third class session. **Students who wish to withdraw must notify their admissions advisor before the beginning of the sixth class session in the case of graduate courses, or before the seventh class session in the case of undergraduate courses.** Instructors are not authorized to issue a "W" grade.

Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the presentation of someone else's ideas or work as one's own. Students must give credit for any information that is not either the result of original research or common knowledge. If a student borrows ideas or information from another author, he/she must acknowledge the author in the body of the text and on the reference page. Students found plagiarizing are subject to the penalties outlined in the Policies and Procedures section of the Catalog, which may include a failing grade for the work in question or for the entire course. The following is one of many websites that provide helpful information concerning plagiarism for both students and faculty:
http://www.indiana.edu/~wts/pamphlets/plagiarism.shtml

Ethics:

Ethical behavior in the classroom is required of every student. The course will identify ethical policies and practices relevant to course topics.

Technology:

Students are expected to be competent in using current technology appropriate for this discipline. Such technology may include word processing, spreadsheet, and presentation software. Use of the internet and e-mail may also be required.

Diversity:

Learning to work with and value diversity is essential in every class. Students are expected to exhibit an appreciation for multinational and gender diversity in the classroom.

Civility:

As a diverse community of learners, students must strive to work together in a setting of civility, tolerance, and respect for each other and for the instructor. Rules of classroom behavior (which apply to online as well as onsite courses) include but are not limited to the following:

- Conflicting opinions among members of a class are to be respected and responded to in a professional manner.
- Side conversations or other distracting behaviors are not to be engaged in during lectures, class discussions or presentations
- There are to be no offensive comments, language, or gestures

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Online Library:

Our Online Library supports academic rigor and student academic success by providing access to scholarly books and journals electronically.