



Abrahams-Curiel Department of Foreign Literatures & Linguistics

Academic year 2022-23 (תשפ"ג)

Course title (English): African Literatures in English: Texts, Contexts, History

Course title (Hebrew): ספרויות אפריקאיות באנגלית: טקסטים, הקשרים והיסטוריה

Course number: 132.2.0233+132.2.0243

Course slot (semester/s, weekday/s, hours): Semester A+B, Mondays 16:00-18:00

Lecturer: Dr. Ruth Wenske

Lecturer's conference hour and contact details: noruthie@gmail.com (to be updated)

Course description & objectives:

This course will give an introduction to creative African literatures in English as they have developed over the past century, with a focus on the diversity of genres and traditions that are embedded into Anglophone literatures. Contextualizing creative works within their political, historical, and cultural contexts, we will use literature as a lens through which to explore the specificities of Southern, Western, Eastern, and Northern African traditions. Taking fiction, poetry, and drama as primary texts, the course will introduce key theoretical approaches for analyzing literary works. With a theoretical grounding in Global South epistemologies, we will examine several key themes through which the idea of “Africanness” is negotiated and constructed: orality and orature, communalism (Ubuntu), colonialism and postcolonialism, independence and post-independence, gender, religion and enchantment (animism and Christianity/Islam), as well as formal and informal education. Through this, we will problematize—while also developing methods for—reading literature as an engagement with social and political concerns.

Course requirements:

Mandatory attendance (with up to three unexcused absences during the semester).

Participation and writing assignments on Moodle	10%
Midterm paper (5-6 pages)	25%
Annotated bibliography	Not graded
Presentation in class	10%
Final paper (9-10 pages)	55%
Total	100%

Topics & bibliography

Course schedule and primary texts

Fall Semester

Introduction: What is Anglophone African literature?

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa"; Chimamanda Adichie, "The Danger of the Single Story" TED talk (both combined: class 1) | 24.10

J. M. Coetzee, "The Novel in Africa" | 31.10

Section one: The novel

J. E. Casely Hayford, excerpts from *Ethiopia Unbound: Studies in Race Emancipation* (1911) | 7.11

Amos Tutuola, excerpts from *The Palm Wine Drinkard* (1952) | 14.11

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) | 21.11

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) | 28.11

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (1958) | 5.12

Section two: Short fiction

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "The Headstrong Historian" | 12.12

Mansoura Ez Eldin, "Faeries of the Nile" | 19.12

Uhambo Lodelo and Ngozi Lukakhazimla, "Khazimla's Adventures" (graphic short story) | 26.12

Section three: Drama

Wole Soyinka, "Death and the King's Horseman" | 2.1

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Kayobi Peter, "No Speaking Vernacular" (theatre performance + poem) | 16.1

Midterm paper due 5.3

Spring semester

No class (Purim) 6.3

Introduction: Reading history through literature

Mukoma Wa Ngũgĩ, introduction from *The Rise of the African Novel: Politics of Language, Identity, and Ownership* | 13.3

Leila Lalami, *The Moor's Account* | 20.3

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Section one: Poetry and oral literature:

Okot p'Bitek, excerpts from *Song of Lawino* and *Song of Ocol* | 3.4

No Class, Passover | 10.4

St. J. Page Yako, "Pineapples"; Keorapetse Kgositsile, "No Serenity Here"; Dennis Brutus, "Here of the things I mark" | 17.4

Koleka Putuma, "Water" and other poems from *Collective Amnesia* | 24.4

East African riddles (from database of the Rift Valley Network) | 1.5

Section two: 21st century diasporic literature

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi, "Memoirs of Namaaso," in *Lets' Tell This Story Properly* (2019) | 8.5

Yaa Gyasi, *Homegoing* | 15.5

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Safia Elhillo, "Alien Suite" | 29.5

Section three: Speculative fiction

Ben Okri, from *The Famished Road* | 5.6

Noel Cherutu, "We Broke Nairobi" | 12.6

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, excerpts from *Wizard of the Crow* | 19.6

The last classes will also include student presentations.

Final paper due 1.8.2023

Select secondary texts:

Kwame Anthony Appiah, "Is the Post- in Postmodernism the Post- in Postcolonial?"

Hamish Dalley, "Postcolonialism and the Historical Novel: Epistemologies of Contemporary Realism."

Harry Garuba, "Explorations in Animist Materialism: Notes on Reading/Writing African Literature, Culture, and Society."

F. Abiloa Irele, from *The African Imagination: Literature in Africa and the Black Diaspora*.

Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing."

Daniela Merolla, "Introduction: Orality and Technauriture of African Literatures."

Emmanuel Obiechina, "Narrative Proverbs in the African Novel."

Ato Quayson, "Obverse Denominations: Africa?"

Nirvana Tanoukhi, "African Roads."