

# *The Novel in Africa*

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**Dr. Eitan Bar-Yosef**

Fall semester, Thursdays 10-12

**Conference hours:** Mondays 14-15 (Room 519, Building 74)

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This course examines how historical, cultural, and social developments in Africa—from the European scramble for the “Dark Continent” in the late nineteenth century to postcolonialism and post-Apartheid—have been reflected in a range of novels. If earlier texts, mostly by European writers, have constructed “Africa” as a space for adventure and exploitation, later writers have attempted to appropriate, rewrite and reinvent this textual tradition. By exploring how African writers have been able to challenge those former colonial representations, the course will present the novel as a discursive arena in which different African visions and voices have been articulated.

## **Course Requirements**

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Attendance (3 absences allowed), participation, short responses	10%
Term paper (6 pages; at least 3 critical sources); <b>due 2/1, 12:00</b>	50%
Final exam	40%

## **Primary reading**

J. M. Coetzee, “The Novel in Africa” [<http://escholarship.org/uc/item/7j65v2h7>]

Henry Rider Haggard, *King Solomon’s Mines*

Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*

Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter*      [Highlearn]

J. M. Coetzee, *Disgrace*

**\* The course is taught in English; students outside the Department of Foreign Literatures and Linguistics may submit their written work in Hebrew.**

**\* Themes/questions for class discussion should be 1-2 paragraphs long.** You should be prepared to *read* your theme in class – as well as *submit* a hardcopy version at the end of that same session. Late submissions will not be accepted. If you miss a class (note: only three absences allowed!), be sure to email/hand in the text *in advance*. Each theme is worth 1 pt. in the final grade.

24/10	Introduction: <i>The Novel in Africa</i>
31/10	<i>King Solomon’s Mines</i> <b>Prepare &amp; submit (<u>hardcopy</u>) a theme/question for class discussion</b>
7/11	<i>King Solomon’s Mines</i> (cont.)
14/11	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> <b>Prepare &amp; submit a theme/question for class discussion</b>
21/11	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> (cont.) Achebe, Chinua. “An Image of Africa”, <i>Research in African Literatures</i> 9.1 (1978): 1-15. Hawkins, Hunt. “Heart of Darkness and Racism”, in Norton edition. [HL]
28/11	<i>Heart of Darkness</i> (cont.)
5/12	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> <b>Prepare &amp; submit (<u>hardcopy</u>) a theme/question for class discussion</b>

12/12	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> (cont.)
19/12	<i>So Long a Letter</i> <b>Prepare &amp; submit a theme/question for class discussion</b>
26/12	<i>So Long a Letter</i> (cont.)
2/1	<i>Disgrace</i> <b>Prepare &amp; submit a theme/question for class discussion</b> <b>Paper due</b>
9/1	<i>Disgrace</i> (cont.)
16/1	<i>Disgrace</i> (cont.) + Conclusion

### **Additional reading**

- Ajayi, Omofolabo. "Negritude, Feminism, and the Quest for Identity: Re-Reading Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*". *Women's Studies Quarterly* 25.3/4 (1997): 35-52.
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent", *Critical Inquiry* 12.1 (1985): 166-203.
- Chrisman, Laura. "The Imperial Unconscious? Representations of Imperial Discourse". *Critical Inquiry* 32.3 (1990): 38-58.
- Cooper, Pamela. "Metamorphosis and Sexuality: Reading the Strange Passions of *Disgrace*". *Research in African Literatures* 36.4 (2005): 22-39.
- DeKoven, Marianne. "Going to the Dogs in *Disgrace*." *ELH* 76.4 (2009): 847-875.
- Dseagu, S. Amanor. "The Influence of Folklore Techniques on the Form of the African Novel". *New Literary History* 23.3 (1992): 583-605.
- Gikandi, Simon. "Chinua Achebe and the Invention of African Culture". *Research in African Literatures* 32.3 (2001): 3-8.
- Hultgren, Neil E. "Haggard Criticism since 1980: Imperial Romance before and after the Postcolonial Turn". *Literature Compass* 8.9 (2011): 645-59.
- Irele, F. Abiola. "Introduction: Perspectives on the African Novel". *The Cambridge Companion to the African Novel*. Ed. F. Abiola Irele (Cambridge: Cambridge UP), 1-14.
- Mirmotahari, Emad. "History as Project and Source in Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". *Postcolonial Studies* 14.4 (2011): 373-385.
- O'Keefe, Charles. "Sinking One's Teeth into Mariama Bâ's *So Long a Letter*: Lessons of Cadmus". *Research in African Literatures* 40.2 (2009): 63-81.
- Okunoye, Oyeniya. "Half a Century of Reading Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*." *English Studies* 91.1 (2010): 42-57.
- Scheick, William J. "Adolescent Pornography and Imperialism in Haggard's *King Solomon's Mines*". *English Literature in Transition (1880-1920)* 34.1 (1991): 19-30.
- Sullivan, Joanna. "Redefining the Novel in Africa". *Research in African Literatures* 37.4 (2006): 177-188.
- Watts, Jarica Linn. "He Does Not Understand Our Customs": Narrating Orality and Empire in Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart*". *Journal of Postcolonial Writing* 46.1 (2010): 65-75.