

## HUM 2424 / AFS 4935: AFRICAN CULTURES AND LITERATURES (FALL 2021)

**Professor:** Tunde Akinyemi  
**Office Location:** 301 Pugh Hall  
**Office Hours:** 12-1 (M, F or by appointment)  
**Phone:** (352) 392-7082

**Period:** 3<sup>rd</sup> (9:35-10:25) MWF  
**Venue:** TUR 2333  
**Credit:** 3  
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### COURSE DESCRIPTION AND OBJECTIVES

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

**REQUIRED TEXTS:** The following 4 books are *required* for this course:

1. Isidore Okpewho (1992) *African Oral Literature: Background, Character, and Continuity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
2. Mariama Ba (1980) *So Long a Letter*. Long Grove: Waveland Press Inc. (2012 edition)
3. Diop Boubacar Boris (2006) *Murambi: The Book of Bones* (trans. Fiona McLaughlin) Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
4. Chinua Achebe (1959) *Things Fall Apart* New York: Anchor Books (1994 edition).

**SUPPLEMENTARY READING:** In addition, students may find the following texts useful as well. They are therefore encouraged to be familiar with them during the semester:

1. Martin, Phyllis M. and O'Meara, Patrick (eds.) *Africa*. (3<sup>rd</sup> or 4<sup>th</sup> edition) Bloomington and Indianapolis / London: Indiana University Press and James Currey, 1995 / 2014.
2. Bayo Ogunjimi & Abdul-Rasheed Na'Allah (2005) *Introduction to African Oral Literature and Performance* Trenton: Africa World Press.
3. Russell H. Kaschula Ed. (1998) *African Oral Literature: Functions in Contemporary Contexts*. Claremont: New Africa Books.
4. Ruth Finnegan (1970) *Oral Literature in Africa* Oxford: Clarendon Press.

### ATTENDANCE POLICY AND EXPECTATIONS

Students are encouraged to attend classes regularly and participate actively in class discussion. You can only do this if you complete all assigned readings before class. You are, however, allowed 2 unexcused absences. Beyond that, each additional absence will require a written excuse verifying illness or family emergency in accordance with UF policy, failing which, your final grade will be lowered by a one letter grade. Assignments are to be handed in by the designated date. Mark due dates on your calendars now so that you can plan ahead. Late papers will be assessed a penalty of one-half letter grade out of fairness to those who hand in their work on time.

**COURSE EVALUATION**

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

<i>Class attendance and participation</i>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Tests and quizzes (3)</i>	<b>30%</b>
<i>Assignments and homework (3)</i>	<b>15%</b>
<i>Oral presentation (in-class)</i>	<b>10%</b>
<i>5-page essay (due on 11/22)</i>	<b>10%</b>
<i>Final take-home exam (on the required texts 2, 3, and 4) 11/22-12/08</i>	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total:</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Individual 5-page essay on an African literature of choice:** The paper should be typed-written on font 12 and should be 5 full pages long and double-spaced with 1-inch margin. Stylistic requirement for this paper is APA or MLA. Typographical mistakes/errors, poor spellings, and grammatical faults will be penalized. (Submission is in class on Monday, 11/22).

**Oral Presentation of paper:** Between 11/22-12/8 a group of three students will make oral presentation on African literature of their choice. Each student is free to select any African literature and search the library, surf the web, read newspapers, or consult electronic media for information about the author and the text. Students presenting same day could meet a couple of times to discuss and decide on format to adopt for presentation. This is an opportunity for you to gain in-depth knowledge of a particular African author. Each student will have 15 minutes for presentation to be followed by a 5-minute discussion by others.

**GRADE CORRESPONDENCE**

93-100 =A	90-92 =A-	
87-89 =B+	83-86 =B	80-82 =B-
77-79 =C+	73-76 =C	70-72 =C-
67-69 =D+	63-66 =D	60-62 =D-
Below 60 =E		

**General**

Feel free to ask question in the class so that you will not be left behind. However, if there are issues that we cannot resolve in class, you are encouraged to use my office hours or send me an email. I look forward to a rewarding semester with you all.

**WEEKLY BREAKDOWN OF COURSE**

**Week I (8/23-8/27)**

Days	Topic	Reading
W	Course Introduction. An overview of facts and figures of the continent	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O’Meara’s <i>Africa</i> 3rd Edition Chapter 2: The Contemporary Map of Arica
F	Africa’s problems and prospects	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O’Meara’s <i>Africa</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition Chapter 1: Africa Problems and Perspectives

**Week II (8/30-9/03)**

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

**Week III (9/6-9/10)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	<b>No class on Monday, 9/6</b>	<b>Labor Day</b>
W	Religion and systems of thoughts	Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara's <i>Africa</i> 3 <sup>rd</sup> Edition Chapter 11: African Systems of Thought
F	<b>*Test 1: 'Map test' Know locations of African countries and their capitals</b>	<b>*Test 1: 'Map test' Know locations of African countries and their capitals</b>

**Week IV (9/13-9/17)**

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

**Week V (9/20-9/24)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Narratives (Myths, Legends, & folktales)	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 7: Oral Narratives
W	Narratives	(Myths, Legends, & folktales)

F	Analysis of samples of myths, legends, and folktales	<b>Assignment 1: Each student to have 3 samples of African folktale, myth, or legend ready for class discussion.</b>
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**Week VI (9/27-10/01)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Proverbs	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 8: Witticisms
W	Analysis of representative samples	<b>Assignment 2: Each student to have a list of 20 proverbs from across African groups ready for class discussion</b>
F	<i>Test 2 on facts and figures about Africa</i>	<i>Test 2 on facts and figures about Africa</i>

**Week VII (10/4-10/8)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Riddles	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 8: Witticisms
W	Riddles	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 8: Witticisms
F	<b>No Class</b>	<b>Homecoming</b>

**Week VIII (10/11-10/15)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Analysis of representative samples	<b>Assignment 3: Each student to have a list of 20 riddles from across Africa ready for class discussion</b>
W	Salutation or praise poetry: categories and functions	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 6: Songs and Chants
F	Analysis of samples	Material for discussion will be supplied in class

**Week IX (10/18-10/22)**

Days	Topic	Reading
M	Religious or ritual poetry	Isidore Okpewho's <i>African Oral Literature</i> Chapter 9: Musical and Dramatic Forms
W	Analysis of representative	Material for discussion will be supplied in class

	samples	
<b>F</b>	<i>Test 3 on varieties of oral literature covered in class</i>	<b>Distribute oral presentation schedule to students</b>

**Week X (10/25-10/29)**

Days	Topic	Reading
<b>M</b>	Rwanda: Historical background	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>
<b>W</b>	The Rwanda genocide	The film <i>Hotel Rwanda</i> (DVD 1044)
<b>F</b>	Ethnic violence, war, and peace in Africa: Examples from <i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>

**Week XI (11/01-11/05)**

Days	Topic	Reading
<b>M</b>	Ethnic violence, war, and peace in Africa: Examples from <i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>
<b>W</b>	Cultural elements in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	Mariama Ba's <i>So Long a Letters</i>
<b>F</b>	Cultural elements in <i>So Long a Letter</i>	Mariama Ba's <i>So Long a Letters</i>

**Week XII (11/08-11/12)**

Days	Topic	Reading
<b>M</b>	Rwanda: Historical background	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>
<b>W</b>	The Rwanda genocide	The film <i>Hotel Rwanda</i> (DVD 1044)
<b>F</b>	Ethnic violence, war, and peace in Africa: Examples from <i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>	<i>Murambi: The Book of Bones</i>

**Week XIII (11/15-11/19)**

Days	Topic	Reading
<b>M</b>	Indigenous cultural practices in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
<b>W</b>	Indigenous cultural practices in <i>Things Fall Apart</i>	Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>
<b>F</b>	Cultural Practices after the contact with the West: <i>Things</i>	Chinua Achebe's <i>Things Fall Apart</i>

	<i>Fall Apart</i> as case study	
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**Week XIV (11/22-11/26)**

Days		
M	<b>Oral presentation 1</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>5-page essay due today in class</i></li> <li>• <i>Distribute take-home final exam</i></li> </ul>
W	<b>No class -Thanksgiving</b>	<b>No class -Thanksgiving</b>
F	<b>No class -Thanksgiving</b>	<b>No class -Thanksgiving</b>

**Week XV (11/29-12/03)**

Days		
M	<b>Oral presentation 2</b>	
W	<b>Oral presentation 3</b>	
F	<b>Oral presentation 4</b>	

**Week XVI (12/6-12/8)**

Days		
M	<b>Oral presentation 5</b>	
W	<b>Oral presentation 6</b>	