



ENGL326.040

Class Time: M 6:00 – 8:40 PM; Room B2021

Instructor: Dr. Augustine Okereke

Office Phone: 718-270-5135; Office: B1015Z

E-mail: augokereke@mec.cuny.edu

Office Hours: Mon – Wed 1 – 3 PM; 4:30 – 5:30 PM. Thurs by appointment

Course Description

This course examines the literature of the African continent. The course will select readings from the vast diversity of African voices from its early orature to its major modern figures. We will examine some of the historical, political, social and ideological forces that have helped shape African literature. Students will also be exposed to methods of interpreting these texts from an African perspective.

Course Goals and Objectives

- Students will demonstrate understanding and appreciation of African literature.
- They will be familiarized with the events that help shape the African continent and how these events are reflected in the literature. In addition
- Students will be writing scholarly, research papers that will reflect any of the experiences of the African people in their march toward social emancipation and freedom.
- They will be able to analyze the texts as creative works of art using the literary techniques taught in class.

Required Textbooks

Sundiata. *Epic of Mali*. Essex: Longman, 1965. Print.

Chinua Achebe. *Arrow of God*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1958. Print.

Ngugi Wa Thiong’O. *Weep Not, Child*. New York: Penguin Group, 1967. Print.

Tsitsi Dangarembga. *Nervous Condition*. London: Clarke, Ayebia, 2004. Print.

Mariama Ba. *So Long a Letter*. Oxford: Heinemann, 1989. Print.

Ishmael beah. *A Long Way Gone*. New York: Sarah Crichton, 2007. Print.

Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy*. London: Heinemann, 1991.

Ama Ata Aido. *Dilemma of a Ghost and Anowa*. Modern African Drama. Ed. Biodon Jeyifo. London: W.W. Norton, 2002. Print.

Gerald Moore & Ulli Beier (eds.) *Modern African Poetry*. London: Penguin, 1998. Print.

Sembene Ousmane (To watch any of his films)

Recommended Texts:

Chinua Achebe, *Essays on Criticism or Hopes and Impediments*. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 1990.

Frantz Fanon. *The Wretched of the Earth*. New York: Grove Press, 2004. Print.



Course Requirements

Web Resources: Blackboard Course Management System:

This course will employ the use of Blackboard as part of instruction. You are required to register for a CUNY Portal account at www.cuny.edu. There you will access Blackboard, a course management system where some of the resources for the course will be online. You are to check the system for handouts, assignments, information, announcements, etc. We will continue our classroom discussions on the Blackboard.

Policies and Guidelines:

Students are expected to write three assignments including a research paper. In addition, there will be regular in-class writing assignments that may require students to react to the readings. Choice of topic for the research paper is the students' prerogative. The paper must be comparative in nature, research oriented and demonstrates students' ability to think and analyze critically.

It is important that students do all the reading, all the assignments, and attend classes regularly. Any student who misses more than four classes will be penalized. If you have any emergency, please inform me immediately. Lateness will not be tolerated. Quizzes on the readings will be given in the first fifteen minutes of class.

This class is expected to be a discussion-oriented class; therefore, students should endeavor to come to class very prepared with ideas to share. It should be understood that there is no "the interpretation" of the literary text. Every literary work lends itself to several interpretations.

Sample for turning in papers and essays:

Guidelines for submitting Formal Writing Assignments. MLA Style Documentation.

These submissions guidelines are meant to make responding to your work easier for me and for your classmates so read them carefully.

1. All submissions must be typed. Use Times New Roman font styles and 12 point font size, nothing smaller or larger. **Do not use italics or bold print styles.**
2. Each line must be **double-paced**. Each page must have one-inch margins on the right and left sides, and top and bottom.
3. Carefully proofread your submission before you hand it in. Do not rely on spell check alone. Give yourself sufficient lead-time for your assignments. Do not wait until the day before an assignment is due to begin working on it.
4. Include the following heading in the left-hand corner on the first page of your submission. This information must be **single-spaced**. Do not provide a cover sheet or plastic cover.

Your name

English 326-Section 001 – African Literature

Professor's Full Name

Month, Date, Year Submission is Due, i.e. February 20, 2010

5. Staple your submission in the upper left-hand corner only.
6. New paragraphs must be indented five spaces from the left-hand margin.
7. Your submission must adhere to the **minimum** number of pages required. If the minimum number of pages is two (2), a submission of 1 ½ pages will not satisfy the requirement.
8. If your submission is a revision, please identify it as such, i.e., "Literary Autobiography – Revision." Also, include the new submission date. The original essay must be handed in with the revised essay.
9. Each essay submission must be **organized and include an introduction, with a clearly stated thesis, body paragraphs that support the thesis and a conclusion.**
10. **All formal assignments must be submitted on class on the due date. Email submissions will not be accepted.**

Criteria for Evaluation

Grade Distribution

- Two short essays: 30%
- Quizzes, in-class essays: 10%
- Class/Blackboard discussions 20%
- Research paper: 40%

Portfolio: Keep all your written work, including every corrected draft, in a portfolio organized by date.

STATEMENT ON ACADEMIC DISHONESTY

Academic dishonesty of any type, including cheating and plagiarism, is unacceptable at Medgar Evers College. Cheating is any misrepresentation in academic work. Plagiarism is the representation of another person's work, words, or ideas as your own. Students should consult the Medgar Evers College Academic Dishonesty Policy and Procedure Handbook for specific regulations and procedures related to academic integrity. Academic dishonesty is punishable by failure of the test, examination, term paper, or other assignment on which cheating occurred. In addition, disciplinary proceedings in cases of academic dishonesty may result in penalties of admonition, warning, censure, disciplinary probation, restitution, suspension, expulsion, complaint to civil authorities, or ejection. - MEC College Catalog

SCHEDULE

1/28: Introduction to the course, review of syllabus, class requirements and course objectives. Personal introduction. Assign readings on African Literary Criticism: Read Achebe, "An Image of Africa" and "African Literature and the Language Question", Solomon Iyasere. "Oral Tradition in the Criticism of African Literature". *The Journal of Modern African Studies*. Volume 13, Issue 1 (March 1975) 107-119.

African literature: Historical and Cultural Perspectives. Colonial Impact, Language in African literature. (Read this link for some insight into Achebe's *Arrow of God*. <http://www.wmich.edu/dialogues/texts/arrowofgod.html>)

- 2/4: Introduction to African oral literary forms. Influences of African oral/traditional literature on Modern African literature. (**Read, “Continuity and Tradition in African Literature.”**) In-class writing. Brief discussion of the epic in Africa. Introduce Achebe, *Arrow of God*. Culture Conflict. The African novel and the novel about Africa. Achebe and Joyce: Conrad: a comparative analysis.
- 2/11: Achebe, *Arrow of God*. Culture Conflict. The African novel and the novel about Africa. “Achebe and Joyce: Conrad: a comparative analysis. Language and Techniques in African Literature.” **Assign short paper #1** “In *Arrow of God*, Achebe portrays the disrupting effect an externally imposed power has on African tradition and customs and also highlights the internal conflict in the hero, Ezeulu. Discuss how these two conflicts result in the disintegration of the Igbo culture and the demise of the hero.” Support your answer with specific examples from the text, including quotes.
- 2/18: **College Closed – President’s Day**
- 2/20: The Process of Assimilation: French Colonial Impact on Africa. Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy* (**Classes follow a Monday schedule**)
- 3/4: Ferdinand Oyono, *Houseboy*. Sembene Ousmane: Film and discussion
- 3/11: Drama and the African World view. African Drama – adaptation; Ama Ata Aidoo. *Dilemma of a Ghost*. In-class writing
- 3/18: Ngugi Wa Thiong’o *Weep Not, Child*. Uhuru: the struggle for independence.
- 3/25 – 4/2: **Spring Recess**
- 4/8: Ngugi Wa Thiong’o *Weep Not, Child*.
- 4/15: African Poetry. Discuss Negritude. Negritude Poems. Leopold Senghor and Aime Cesaire
- 4/22: Maraima Ba *So Long a Letter*. Women in African Literature **Assign short paper #2**. Mariama Ba’s *So Long a Letter* is “a novel of betrayal, self-definition and hope”. Do you agree? Your discussion will include your opinion on Ba’s portrayal of women in the novel. Support your answer with



specific examples from the text, including quotes. Comment on the effectiveness of Ba's letter writing technique in conveying her message

4/29: Tsi Tsi Dangaremba. *Nervous Condition*. Apartheid in African Literature. Discuss the research paper.

5/6: Tsi Tsi Dangaremba. *Nervous Condition*. Women in African Literature.

5/13: Contemporary African Literature: Ishmael beah. *a long way gone*. Critical reflection essay. Volume 13, Issue 1 (March 1975) 107-119

Final Exams to be announced. Research Paper due. **RESEARCH PAPER DUE**