

Fiction of the African/Americas

REL: 480

Fall 2008

M 3:00-5:30 Manly 210

Professor: Maha Marouan

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Office: Manly 205

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Hours: M 1:00- 3:00

Course Website: <http://www.as.ua.edu/rel/marouan.html>

Course Description

This course explores literature of the African Diaspora, including work of fiction from Africa, the Caribbean, Latin America and the U.S. The discussion and examination of colonialism, post-colonialism, politics of blackness, gender and race identities, questions of roots and origins are central to the course.

Learning Outcomes: Upon completion of this course, students will:

1. Articulate the complexities and interaction between the different themes discussed
2. Develop an understanding of the historical forces and literary influences shaping writers from the African Diaspora
3. Comment on authors and how effective you find their work
4. Note parallels between texts discussed
5. Extend a class discussion by formulating and presenting 1 arguments in in-class exercises

Course Requirements

Readings: You should complete the reading(s) listed for each session **before** that class meeting, so that you will have a context for the lecture presentation and discussion.

Papers: You are required to submit 3 4-6 page papers. Respecting the deadline is important. If you miss the date of your paper submission, you must contact the professor.

Participation & Attendance: participation will count toward 20% of your final grade. Because this course will involve substantial class discussion of the assigned material **preparation, attendance, and participation** will be essential to a successful semester. Hence, these factors all contribute substantially to your final grade.

Presentations: Each student will deliver a 15 to 20 minutes in-class presentation, focusing on a critical response to an assigned primary text. Students must incorporate secondary sources into presentations. At the time of presentation, students will submit an outline with a clear thesis. The presentations should promote class discussion and offer not so obvious approaches to interpreting the primary works.

Required Texts

Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart

Ama Ata Aido's Dilemma of A Ghost

Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North

Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory

Maryse Condé's L. Tituba, Black Witch of Salem

Toni Morrison's Paradise

Fatima Mernissi's Scheherazade Goes West

Grading

Your grades will be calculated approximately as follows:

Paper 1	20%
Paper 2	20%
Final paper	20%
Participation & in-class exercises	20%
Presentations	20%

Handouts:

You will also be provided with handouts at times, featuring different material and artifacts. They are usually posted on the course web site. Films and documentaries will also be shown.

General Comments:

1. Plagiarism is a serious scholarly offence and amounts to using the intellectual labor of another author without proper quotation, citation, and acknowledgment. If the instructor suspects that a student has copied the work of another author (whether that author is a peer, classmate, or published author), the case will immediately be referred to the Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences.

2. Students with documented physical and/or learning disabilities should contact the professor outside of class time (i.e., make an appointment to see him at his office), as soon as possible, to provide copies of their documentation and to discuss the reasonable accommodations which can be made to meet their needs. However, prior to contacting the professor, ensure that you contact the Office of Disability Services, which is located at 220 Research Drive, P.O. Box 870185 (two blocks east of the Ferguson Center, between Shelby Hall and Bryce Hospital) or call them at 348-4285.

Schedule for Lectures, Readings, and Assignments

Week 1

Aug 25: Syllabus & Introduction to African Diaspora Literature

Unit I: Africa

Week 2

No class : Labor Day

Week 3

M Sep 8: **“Civilizing Africa”: Colonialism, Tradition and Christianity:**
Chinua Achebe's Things Fall Apart

Week 4

M Sep 15 : Achebe (continued)

Week 5

M Sep 22: **African Women: Tradition Vs. Modernity:** Ama Ata Aido's Dilemma of a Ghost

Week 6

M Sept 29 Ama Ata Aido (continued)

Week 7

M Oct 2 **Colonialism Reversed:** Tayeb Salih's Season of Migration to the North
Paper 1 due

Week 8

M Oct 6 Tayeb Salih (continued)

Unit II: The Caribbean

Week 8

M Oct 13 **Migration & Transnationalism:** Edwidge Danticat's Breath, Eyes, Memory

Week 9

M Oct 20 Edwidge Danticat (continued)

Week 10

M Oct 27 **Reinvention of African Diaspora Identities:** Maryse Conde's I, Tituba, Black Witch of Salem
Paper 2 due

Week 11

M Nov 10 Maryse Condé (continued)

Unit III: The U.S

Week 12

M Nov 17 **Religious Transformation in the New World:** Toni Morrison's Paradise

Week 13

M Nov 24 Toni Morrison (continued)

Unit VIII: East & West

M Dec 1 **Gender Identities West & East:** Fatima Mernissi's Scheherazade Goes West
Discussion & Review for final papers

Exam Week: Final Papers due December 10th