

UNIVERSITY OF NEBRASKA-LINCOLN

ETHN 203 – INTRODUCTION TO AFRICA – FALL 2016

Dr. Alice Kang • Oldfather Hall 540 • 472-5642 (rare) • akang2@unl.edu (once a day)

Office hours: Tuesday 3:30pm-4:30pm, Thursday 11am-noon, and by appointment

Class: Tuesday and Thursday 2:00-3:15pm • Oldfather Hall 208

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE

This course introduces you to the remarkable continent of Africa. Approximately a billion people live in Africa, more than Canada, the United States, and Mexico combined. Diverse, dynamic, and in contact with the rest of the world, Africa has and continues to figure importantly in our global culture, economy, and history. Yet, many misconceptions prevail among journalists, policymakers, and ordinary people in the United States and abroad. In this class, we address some of these misconceptions and begin what will hopefully be a lifetime of learning about the continent. While not discounting the very real human rights violations that do occur in particular times and places, we see Africa not as a homogenous threatening place but one with countless complex stories. By the end of this course, you will be able to identify more than two dozen countries on a political map, describe specific food crops and dishes, and teach us about an artist or musician. Through your attention and time in and outside the class, you will gain a more informed appreciation of Africa's diversity, dynamism, and deep connections with the world.

STUDENT LEARNING OBJECTIVE

ACE (9) ETHN 203. Introduction to Africa (3cr) Lec 3. *Course offered letter grade only.*

Introduction to the geography, history, society, economy, politics, and arts of Africa. Explores connections between the United States and Africa.

SLO9: Exhibit global awareness or knowledge of human diversity through analysis of an issue.

REQUIRED READING

You will read, discuss, and be tested on the entirety of the following three books. You may buy the books at the University Bookstore in the City Campus Union, borrow them on reserve from Love Library, find deals online, or borrow books from your friends, but note that we read all of *Unbowed* in September. So please plan accordingly.

1. Véronique Tadjo. 2009. *Queen Pokou*. Ayebia Clarke Publishing/Lynne Rienner.
2. Wangari Maathai. 2006. *Unbowed*. Anchor.
3. Ousmane Sembene. 1997. *Xala*. Laurence Hill Books.

In addition to the books listed above, you will read, discuss, and be tested on a variety of magazine, news, and scholarly articles, which I will post on Blackboard.

ASSIGNMENTS

Midterm and Final Exams We have two exams (in class on October 6 and in class 1:00-3:00pm on December 15). You will be asked to answer multiple choice questions, matching questions, short essay questions, and one long essay question. The exams will assess your mastery of the lectures, discussions, course readings, presentations, films, you name it!

Response Papers To encourage productive class discussion, students will write five short response papers (aka reaction papers) in response to prompts provided in the Schedule

(starting on the next page). Response papers are due in hard copy at the beginning of class. No late response papers or emailed response papers will be accepted whatsoever; sorry.

- 1-3. Three response papers to *Unbowed*
4. One response paper to *Queen Pokou*
5. One response paper to *Xala*

Response Papers Dos and Don'ts

Do	Don't
Turn in a hard copy (handwritten is fine)	Email it (it will get lost in my inbox)
Turn it in on time	Turn it in late
Put your name and date at the top	Lose your response papers (keep them for extra credit)
Use proper nouns (country, city, place)	Refer to "Africa" (when you could say, for instance, "Kenya" or "Nairobi")
Use names (of the person, ethnic group)	Refer to "them/him/her/those people"
Embrace dates (year, decade, century)	Use "timeless" "always" (things change)
Use formal English (paragraphs)	Use texting lingo (no bullet points either)
Use less-hierarchical terms like "practices" "technology" "knowledge system" "world view"	Use colonialist terms like "primitive" "native" "backward"

Map Quiz For this in-class quiz (at the beginning of class on September 6), you will be given a political map of Africa. You will correctly identify 28 countries of your own choosing. Spelling counts. This assignment is pass/fail, and you must pass this assignment in order to pass the course. Seriously! I will allow one re-take, but the re-take must occur before the midterm.

Food Crops Project Before the midterm, you will present in small groups a brief history of one of six major food crops. You will also bring a dish made with your food crop to share with the class and submit a 5 page paper. The paper is due on October 4.

Art or Music Presentation To further appreciate Africa's diversity and contributions to world culture, you will teach us about one (1) artist, musician, or music genre. I will provide a list of potential artists, musicians, and music genres from which to choose, or you may find one on your own, but please ask me first so that we have good breadth across countries and genres. Presentations will take place in the last part of the semester.

Country Specialization and Participation Students will select an African country that they have never been to or do not know much about and will have opportunities to bring in information about their country of specialization.

I do give lectures in this course, but class discussion is also critical in our collective endeavor to learn about Africa. What you bring to class—your questions big and small, interpretations of the readings, and information about your country of specialization—is very important. Thus, you will earn points for respectful and deep participation. In the second half of the semester, I reserve the right to give reading quizzes to help encourage discussion. The reading quizzes will also count towards to your participation grade. There are no chances to make up missed class or reading quizzes no matter what the reason is for missing class. Sorry.

GRADING

Assignments	Points
Midterm Exam	100
Final Exam	100
Response Papers (must submit five , lowest grade dropped)	40
Map Quiz	20
Food Crops Project	50
Art or Music Presentation	30
Participation	60
Total	400

388-400 = A+, 372-387 = A, 360-371 = A-, 348-359 = B+, 332-347 = B, 320-331 = B-, 308-319 = C+, 292-307 = C, 280-291 = C-, 268-279 = D+, 252-267 = D, 240-251 = D-, 0-239 = F

Let's have a great semester!

SCHEDULE*

*Subject to change. [B] on Blackboard

Date	Topic	Reading	Due on or by the Date
T, 8/23	Our goals	Syllabus	
Th, 8/25	Our misconceptions	Please come to class on 8/25 having read: - Binyavanga Wainaina (2005), "How to Write about Africa" [B] or go to: http://www.granta.com/Magazine/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1 - Jan Nederveen Pieterse (1995), "Savages, Animals, Heathens, Races," [B]	Country specialist: select potential countries For discussion: What is story of Ham? How was it misinterpreted? During what period (centuries)?
I. Intro to Geography in Africa			
T, 8/30	Climate and biogeography	Jeffrey Neff (2007), "A Geographic Preface" [B]	Country specialist: Population size, country size, climate, vegetation
Th, 9/1	<i>No class</i>	<i>Professor will be attending the American Political Science Association meeting.</i> Try to attend Michelle Wright's free lecture at the Sheldon Museum of Art auditorium, "Many Thousands Still Coming: The Black and African Diasporas in the 21st Century".	For extra credit: What do you think was Wright's overall message? What did you learn from her lecture?
II. Intro to African History			
T, 9/6	Precolonial Africa to 1500	John Akare Aden and John Hanson (2007), "Legacies of the Past: Themes in African History," pp. 32-55 [B]	Map quiz at start of class Country specialist: identify precolonial polities
Th, 9/8	Atlantic slave trade	Omar ibn Said (1831), <i>The Autobiography of Omar ibn Said</i> [B] or go to http://nationalhumanitiescenter.org/pds/maai/community/text3/religionomaribnsaid.pdf	We will discuss: - where born, what schooling, religious nuances, how captured, what is his purpose(s).
T, 9/13	Colonialism	<i>Unbowed</i> , pp. 3-52 (Chapters 1-2)	Country specialist: which European power colonized your country, if relevant Response paper: How the coming of white settlers changed the way of life (4 specific examples).
Th, 9/15	Decolonization and independence	<i>Unbowed</i> , pp. 53-72 (Chapter 3); <i>Unbowed</i> , pp. 73-118 (Chapters 4-5)	Response paper: How Maathai comes to the U.S. and reacts to the presence of black Americans.
T, 9/20	Authoritarianism	<i>Unbowed</i> , pp. 119-229 (Chapters 6-10)	Country specialist: type of regime in the 1970s & 80s Response paper: What made the difficult years

			difficult?
Th, 9/22	Democratization	<i>Unbowed</i> , pp. 230-290 (Chapters 11-13)	Country specialist: type of regime in the 1990s & 2000s Response paper: Choose a passage from Ch. 11 to 13 that made an impression (note page #). Why?
T, 9/27	Women's movements	<i>Unbowed</i> , Epilogue and Afterward	
Th, 9/29	Food crops	Presentations	
T, 10/4	Food crops (cont.)	Presentations	Food crops paper due
Th, 10/6	** Midterm **		

III. Intro to Religions in Africa			
T, 10/11	Indigenous beliefs	- Ambrose Moyo (2007), "Religion in Africa," pp. 317-26 [B]	Country specialist: present a clip on an indigenous religion in your country.
Th, 10/13	Christianity and Islam	- Ambrose Moyo (2007), "Religion in Africa," pp. 327-46 [B] - Andrew Rice (2009), "Mission from Africa," <i>New York Times Magazine</i> [B] or go to: http://www.nytimes.com/2009/04/12/magazine/12churches-t.html?pagewanted=all	Country specialist: present a clip on Christianity or Islam in your country.
T, 10/18	<i>No class</i>	<i>Fall break. No reading for today</i>	
IV. Intro to the Arts in Africa			
Th, 10/20	African art (weather permitting, we will spend the last part of class outside at Shonibare's sculpture)	Okwui Enwezor (2003), "Yinka Shonibare: Of Hedonism, Masquerade, Carnavalesque, and Power" [B]	Nigeria specialist: tell us about the Sheldon acquisition of Shonibare's sculpture
T, 10/25	Diversity of music	Kofi Agawu (1995), "The Invention of 'African Rhythm'", READ ONLY pp. 380-7 [B]	
Th, 10/27	African fashions	Nina Sylvanus (2007), "The Fabric of Africanity: Tracing the Global Threads of Authenticity," READ ONLY the Introduction and pp. 206-12 [B] Start reading <i>Queen Pokou</i>	
T, 11/1	Diversity of literature	<i>Queen Pokou</i> , in entirety.	Required response paper: (1) Compare and contrast each retelling. (2) Why do you think Tadjo wanted to write multiple versions of the same myth (hint: "The

			Words of the Poet")? (3) What does Tadjó tell us about "border-crossing"?
Th, 11/3	Oral literature	Peruse Harold Scheub (2005), <i>African Tales</i> through UNL's library at libraries.unl.edu. Start reading <i>Xala</i> .	Country specialist: read a tale to us and pose a question.
T, 11/8	Written literature	<i>Xala</i> , in entirety.	Required response paper: What is Sembene trying to convey in <i>Xala</i> ?
Th, 11/10	Diversity of cinema	Watch selections of <i>Xala</i> Carmen McCain (2016), "An Evolution in Nollywood, Nigeria's New Wave: A Conversation with Chris Eneaji" [B] ***I will announce specific pages before class. We will also watch the following clip of <i>Baby Police</i> in class: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KMScGecaJZA&feature=related	
T, 11/15	Art	Presentations	Write down examples of contact, change/innovation
Th, 11/17	Art (cont.)	Presentations	diversity from these presentations
T, 11/22	Current events	TBD	
Th, 11/24		<i>Thanksgiving</i>	
T, 11/29	Music	Presentations	Keep taking notes
Th, 12/1	<i>No class</i>	<i>Professor will be attending the African Studies Association meeting.</i>	Make-up assignment forthcoming.
T, 12/6	Music (cont.)	Presentations	Keep taking notes
Th, 12/8	Conclusion		
Th, 12/15	** FINAL EXAM 1:00-3:00PM IN OUR CLASSROOM **		

Have a great winter break!

Course Policies Q & A

Q: What if I have a learning disability?

A: Please contact me for a confidential discussion of your individual needs for academic accommodation. It is the policy of the University of Nebraska-Lincoln to provide flexible and individualized accommodation to students with documented disabilities that may affect their ability to fully participate in course activities or to meet course requirements. To receive accommodation services, students must be registered with the Services for Students with Disabilities (SSD) office, 132 Canfield Administration, 472-3787 voice or TTY.

Q: Do you reschedule exams?

A: The short answer is NO. The reality is that once in a blue moon, a serious emergency arises and a student cannot make it to the class for the exam. If a serious emergency arises, I will ask you to provide a written excuse, contact name, and phone number for verification purposes.

Q: What if I want to contest a grade?

A: I believe in a cooling-off period but also in resolving your grading-related questions as quickly as possible. If you wish to contest a grade, please email me *no sooner than 24 hours and no later than 2 weeks after receiving your grade*. Note that I will re-examine your assignment in its entirety and may take off points for other omissions, weaknesses, or errors.

Q: What is your policy on plagiarism?

A: If you are found to be using another person's work without giving credit to the person, you will receive 0 points for the assignment and an "F" for the course.

Q: Can I record lectures?

A: Please do not record lectures or other meetings without the securing the instructor's permission first.

Q: What is the best way of getting in touch with you if I have a question or problem with the course?

A: When you do not really understand something, or have problems in the course, or would just like to talk about some issue or topic in more depth, I very much welcome you to come and see me in person. For brief questions, I generally reply to emails within 24 hours (unless it is on the weekend). For more complex questions, I hold regular office hours and am more than happy to make an appointment.