

ENG350 (Section 001) – Readings in African Literature “Perspectives on Urbanization”

Instructor: Philip U. Effiong, PhD

Meeting Times & Room: Tu Th 3:00 – 4:20 p.m. (A332 Wells Hall)

Office: Theater Building (Auditorium) 225

Office Hours: Tu Th 11:00 – 12:30 p.m.

Contact: effiong@msu.edu

Introduction: Beginning in the early through late 20th century, African countries began to agitate for and gain independence from their European colonizers. New nations emerged and were partly defined by growing urban centers with accompanying lifestyles that digressed from, and sometimes clashed with, the more traditional worldview of rural settings. Urban settings also attracted an elite class that typically controlled power and further influenced the creation of other social groups based on professional and political status. Race, gender and ethnicity, in some instances, would also determine ownership of power.

Focusing on works of fiction, short stories and drama, we will analyze selected texts based on the extent to which they address urbanization trends in colonial and postcolonial African societies. Some of these trends include, but are not limited to, the intersecting of traditional and Western values, the emergence of new industrial systems, racial and ethnic conflict, evolving gender relations, religious transformations and the creation of an urban youth.

All texts used in this class are written by Africans from different regions of the continent, except *Ruined*, a play. Though it is set in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Lynn Nottage, the author, is African American.

Course Goals

- Identify themes of cultural, gender-based and generational conflict
- Identify themes of identity and self-determination
- Recognize the complexity and implications of survival in postcolonial settings
- Examine the extent to which a balance can be established between the rural and the urban
- Examine the extent to which African writers have succeeded or failed to utilize a foreign method of expression (language and medium)
- Examine the extent to which societal problems are generated by external and internal forces
- Analyze the significance of change, whether forced or chosen
- Analyze literary styles adopted in recommended texts
- Explore videos that highlight texts and/or authors studied in the class

Student Input

- Submit written work on time
- Attend lectures and contribute to discussions
- Do one class presentation based on material covered in class (details will be provided on D2L)
- Choose a presentation topic no later than February 28

Novels and Plays

- Athol Fugard, *Master Harold and the Boys*, Vintage, 1982
- Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*, Anchor Books, 1966 (Penguin, 2016)

- Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*, Algonquin, 2005
- Lynn Nottage, *Ruined*, Theater Communications Group, 2009
- Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol*, 1966, 1967 (Waveland, 2013)
- Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to our Hillbrow*, Ohio University Press, 2011
- Sefi Atta, *A Bit of Difference*, Interlink, 2013
- Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*, 1972 (Norton, 2002)

Short Stories

- Alex La Guma, "Slipper Satin," <http://www.shortstoryguide.com>
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, "New Husband," *The Iowa Review* 33.1 (2003): 53-66
- China Keitetsi, "Excerpt from Child Soldier: Fighting for my Life," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Chinua Achebe, "Dead Men's Path," <http://www.shortstoryguide.com>
- Chinua Achebe, "Vengeful Creditor," <http://www.socialiststories.com>
- Ellen Mulenga Banda-Aaku, "Ngomwa," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- J. Tsitsi Mutiti, "The Old Woman," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Kuukua Dzigbordi Yomekpe, "Musings of an African Woman: Excerpts from a Memoir in Progress," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Mamle Kabu, "Story of Faith," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Wedding at the Cross," <http://www.socialiststories.com>
- Patricia Chogugudza, "The Good Woman," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Richard Rive, "Resurrection," <http://www.socialiststories.com>
- Sefi Atta, "Hailstones on Zamfara," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Susan Akono, "Letter to Clara," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010
- Touria Khannous, "A Moroccan Woman in the Glocal Village: Reflections on Islam, Identity, and Cultural Legacies," *African Women Writing Resistance*, University of Wisconsin Press, 2010

Other Resources

- Videos to be watched in class and recommended for viewing outside class
- "Beyond Nativism: An Interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o," Angela Lamas Rodrigues, *Research in African Literatures*, Volume 35, Number 3, Fall 2004, pp. 161-167

Reading, Discussion and Assignment Schedule

Jan. 9: Introduction to course

Jan. 11: Introduction to African Literature (PowerPoint)

Jan. 16: Okot p'Bitek, *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol*

Jan. 18: *Song of Lawino, Song of Ocol*

Jan. 23: Ngugi wa Thiong'o, "Wedding at the Cross" (short story), Recommended: "Beyond Nativism: An Interview with Ngugi wa Thiong'o" by Angela Lamas Rodrigues

Jan. 25: Wole Soyinka, *Death and the King's Horseman*

- Art House: Performance of Wole Soyinka's Death & The King's Horsemen Pt 1 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MaTOXpnnQFQ>)
- Art House: Performance of Wole Soyinka's Death & The King's Horsemen Pt 2 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4MmgKxNLAp0>)

Jan. 30: *Death and the King's Horseman*

Feb. 1: J. Tsitsi Mutiti, "The Old Woman," (short story), Chinua Achebe, "Dead Men's Path" (short story)

Feb. 6: Athol Fugard, *Master Harold and the Boys*

- Watch video: *Master Harold and the Boys*

Feb. 8: *Master Harold and the Boys*

- Apartheid Explained: Global History Review (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WoURvGIF_qI)
- Sharpeville Massacre in South Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GTYjrT50bTA>)

Feb. 13: *Master Harold and the Boys*

Feb. 15: First discussion forum on D2L

Feb. 19: Analytical essay due

Feb. 20: Richard Rive, "Resurrection" (short story), Alex La Guma, "Slipper Satin" (short story)

Feb. 22: Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to our Hillbrow*

- Failed Reconciliation in Post-Apartheid South Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NnCY7WRYE-8>)
- Africa 54: Focus on Xenophobic Attacks in South Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/embed/3XQz6S-7qt8?start=189>)

Feb. 27: Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to our Hillbrow*

Mar. 1: Chinua Achebe, *A Man of the People*

- Challenges in Post-Colonial Africa (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Lp44H5wCCWY>)

March 2: Midterm Essay due

March 5-9: Midterm Break

Mar. 13: *A Man of the People*

Mar. 15: Chinua Achebe, "Vengeful Creditor" (short story), Mamle Kabu, "Story of Faith" (short story)

Mar. 20: Second discussion forum on D2L

Mar. 22: Lynn Nottage, *Ruined*

- Lynn Nottage discusses bringing *Ruined* to Arena Stage (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zmWlrTOLUi8>)
- Lynn Nottage and Saidah Arrika Ekulona on *Ruined* (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxnccqXCC-A>)
- Play *Ruined* in Washington, D.C. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yJuAs5Ad5U&index=9&list=PLwAAXweQS0Ai7ejpVzYTkcnBvpRNxhIEj>)

Mar. 27: *Ruined*

Mar. 29: China Keitetsi, "Excerpt from Child Soldier: Fighting for my Life" (short story),
Patricia Chogugudza, "The Good Woman" (short story)

Apr. 3: Touria Khannous, "A Moroccan Woman in the Glocal Village" (short story), Sefi Atta,
"Hailstones on Zamfara" (short story)

Apr. 5: Third discussion forum on D2L

Apr. 10: Laila Lalami, *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

- Laila Lalami: *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits* (<https://www.youtube.com/embed/c5xcS4xK90w?start=347>)
- BBC News Spain sees surge of migrants by sea from Morocco (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VRSuXtA9qqQ>)

Apr. 12: *Hope and Other Dangerous Pursuits*

Apr. 17: Kuukua Dzigbordi Yomekpe, "Musings of an African Woman: Excerpts from a
Memoir in Progress" (short story), Susan Akono, "Letter to Clara" (short story)

Apr. 19: Sefi Atta, *A Bit of Difference*

Apr. 24: *A Bit of Difference*

Apr. 26: Chimamanda Adichie, "New Husband" (short story), Ellen Mulenga Banda-Aaku,
"Ngomwa" (short story)

Dec. 12: Final project due on Thursday, May 3 at 10:00 p.m.

Attendance Policy: You are required to attend and participate in every class meeting. One unexcused absence will be allowed; otherwise, you will need to provide proof and/or documentation for unavoidable absences. The latter would be the result of unusual and extreme circumstances like illness, court appearance, job interview, death, religious holiday, birth of a baby and so forth. Where an absence is anticipated, arrangements will need to be made in advance to make up missed work. Besides the one allowed unexcused absence, each additional absence will result in a deduction of 0.5 points from your final score.

Assignments and Quizzes

- Final exam (30 points)
- Midterm exam (20 points)
- Three D2L discussion conferences (20 points)

- One analytical essay (15 points)
- Class presentation (15 points)

Grade Scale

- 90—100% 4.0
- 85—89% 3.5
- 80—84% 3.0
- 75—79% 2.5
- 70—74% 2.0
- 65—69% 1.5
- 60—64% 1.0
- 00—59% 0.0

Course assignments will be graded on MSU's 4.0 grade scale as indicated above. Final course grades will be rounded to the nearest half grade, except that at least a 1.0 must be earned to receive a 1.0 final course grade. For example, a 2.74 could round to a 2.5 course grade; a 2.75 could round to a 3.0 course grade, and so on. Any final course grade below a 1.0, however, earns a 0.0; thus, a 0.75 would not round to a 1.0, but rather would earn a 0.0 (failure in the course).

Classroom Conduct: Students will interact respectfully with fellow students and the class instructor. The instructor will equally treat all class members with respect. This means that there will be no room for cursing, using foul language, making bigoted statements, interrupting a speaker, being loud or displaying any other form of rude and disruptive conduct. In addition, students should avoid using technological devices, including cell phones and laptops that are distractive and disruptive to the learning environment.

Resources for Students

- For assistance with writing research and other class papers, students may consult *The Writing Center*. This includes consultation on digital writing projects as well as a Grammar Hotline. *The Writing Center* is in 300 Bessey Hall. For further information, go to: <http://writing.msu.edu>.
- International students are encouraged to take advantage of the *ESL Writing Lab*, which assists with course readings, writing assignments, proofreading and revising papers. For more information on the *Lab*, visit: <http://elc.msu.edu/esl-lab>.
- Located in 202 Bessey Hall, *The Learning Resource Center* offers a range academic support services to students. These include seminars and workshops on skills enhancement, learning methods and effective time management. The *Center* also provides one-on-one tutoring on critical reading and related academic concerns. Further details on the *Center's* services can be accessed at <http://lrc.msu.edu>.

Students with Disabilities: Michigan State University does not discriminate against students with documented mental or physical disabilities. If you have a disability that requires accommodations in this or any other course, contact your instructor immediately as well as the *Resource Center for Persons with Disabilities* located in 120 Bessey Hall. To meet with a counselor, call 353-9642 (voice) or 355-1293 (TTY).

Academic Integrity: MSU prescribes specific guidelines to ensure that students maintain high standards of academic honesty and discipline. These are outlined under its policies on "Protection of Scholarship and Grades" and "Integrity of Scholarship and Grades," which charge students to refrain from any form of academic dishonesty, including cheating on tests or plagiarizing on written assignments. This means that papers submitted by students will not

have been copied from the Internet or other source, and will not be a replication of the works of other students. This also means that while students are expected to consult external sources during research, such sources are to be properly acknowledged using an acceptable form of citation. MSU policy cautions that the consequence for academic dishonesty and/or plagiarism is a failing grade on an assignment or course. In addition, failure resulting from dishonesty will be brought to the attention of the appropriate academic dean. More information on cheating and dishonesty can be accessed at the Office of the University Ombudsperson webpage: <https://msu.edu/~ombud/academic-integrity/index.html>.

Online SIRS evaluation policy: Michigan State University takes seriously the opinion of students in the evaluation of the effectiveness of instruction and has implemented the Student Instructional Rating System (SIRS) to gather student feedback (<https://sirsonline.msu.edu>). This course utilizes the online SIRS system, and you will receive an email during the last two weeks of class asking you to fill out the SIRS web form at your convenience. In addition, participation in the online SIRS system involves grade sequestration, which means that the final grade for this course will not be accessible on STUINFO during the week following the submission of grades for this course unless the SIRS online form has been completed. Alternatively, you have the option on the SIRS website to decline to participate in the evaluation of the course. We hope, however, that you will be willing to give us your frank and constructive feedback so that we may instruct students even better in the future. If you access the online SIRS website and complete the online SIRS form or decline to participate, you will receive the final grade in this course as usual once final grades are submitted.

Relationship Violence and Sexual Misconduct: Michigan State University is committed to fostering a culture of caring and respect that is free of relationship violence and sexual misconduct, and to ensuring that all affected individuals have access to services. For information on reporting options, confidential advocacy and support resources, university policies and procedures, or how to make a difference on campus, visit the Title IX website at www.titleix.msu.edu.

Limits to Confidentiality: Essays, journals, and other materials submitted for this class are generally considered confidential pursuant to the University's student record policies. However, students should be aware that University employees, including instructors, may not be able to maintain confidentiality when it conflicts with their responsibility to report certain issues based on external legal obligations or that relate to the health and safety of MSU community members and others. As the instructor, I must report the following information to other University offices if you share it with me:

- Suspected child abuse/neglect, even if this maltreatment happened when you were a child,
- Allegations of sexual assault or sexual harassment when they involve MSU students, faculty, or staff, and
- Credible threats of harm to oneself or to others.

These reports may trigger contact from a campus official who will want to talk with you about the incident that you have shared. In almost all cases, it will be your decision whether you wish to speak with that individual. If you would like to talk about these events in a more confidential setting, you are encouraged to make an appointment with the MSU Counseling Center.

Possible Course Amendments: Should the need arise; the Course Content may be changed or amended during the semester. Students will be notified of such changes.