

**AXL4201F - Debates in African Studies**  
**Intellectuals of the African Liberation**  
**First Semester, 2018**  
**Tuesday 10-12pm**  
**Room 3.01 CAS**

**Course Convenor and Lecturer:**

A/Prof. Harry Garuba  
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**Lecturer:**

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This course focuses on the writings of a range of Africa's liberation intellectuals, from nationalist leaders and social scientists to cultural activists, theorists and writers. The main objective of the course is, first, to highlight the main issues that have preoccupied these intellectuals and to examine their ideas in relation to the contexts in which they were produced. And the second is to conduct a close reading of their key texts in the light of contemporary theoretical approaches to questions of colonialism, postcolonialism, cultural identity and modernity.

The course will cover topics such as Pan-Africanism, Negritude and race, the politics and truth value of autobiographies, nationalism and national consciousness. Key authors such as Leopold Sedar Senghor, Chinua Achebe, Ngugi Wa Thiongo, Steve Biko will be studied alongside Frantz Fanon, Amílcar Cabral, Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah.

**Course Requirements**

- *Two Essays of about 2500 words each making 50% of the overall mark*
- *One take-home exam essay of about 5000 words making up the other 50%.*

**Hand in dates:**

**Each essay is due one week after the end of the particular block of seminars. This means that essays on questions # 1, 2, and 3 are due at 4 pm, weeks 5, 12 and Consolidation /exam week respectively. Remember that you only have to submit two essays on two of these dates and reserve the third for the examination. One electronic copy must be uploaded on Vula and a hard copy MUST BE HANDED IN TO THE RECEPTION DESK AT AFRICAN STUDIES.**

**The take-home exam is due at 4pm on Tuesday, 12 June. One electronic copy must be uploaded on Vula and a hard copy MUST BE HANDED IN TO THE RECEPTION DESK AT AFRICAN STUDIES.**

Please note that your two essays should come from any two different blocks of the course. The topic of your long paper – i.e. the exam paper - should be taken from the third block. This means that you need to decide quite early in the course which section you want to focus on for your exam since this can only be from a section on which you have not already submitted an essay.

NB ALL WORK IS DUE ON THE DATES OUTLINED ABOVE. THE POLICY OF THE AFRICAN STUDIES SECTION OF AXL IS NOT TO ACCEPT LATE ESSAYS WITHOUT A DOCTOR'S CERTIFICATE. In the interests of fairness to all students it is the policy not to grant extensions. The Academic Committee may choose to penalise late work, or to refuse to submit it for grading, in which case a mark of zero will be given. The penalty is: 5% off for the first day late; 10% off day 2 until the end of the first week late; 20% off for the second week late; and 0 for no hand-in.

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### **Block # 1**

#### **African Self-Representations: Challenging the Paradigms/Changing the Discourse**

**Week 1: February 20 –  
(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**  
Introduction

**Week 2: February 27 -  
(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**  
Negritude and the Re-Valuation of Racial Hierarchies

#### **Reading:**

- Senghor, Leopold Sedar. "Negritude: A Humanism of the Twentieth Century." In Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (eds.) *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory: A Reader*. Harvester Wheatsheaf, 1993: 27-35.
- Senghor, Leopold Sedar. *Prose and Poetry*. Selected and Translated by John Reed and Clive Wake. Oxford UP, 1965: pp 29-35, 71-2.
- Irele, Abiola. "What is Negritude?" *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology*. Heinemann: 67-88.

**Week 3: March 6**

**(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**

**Colonial Narratives, Language and the Agenda of “Re-Storying” Peoples**

**Reading:**

- Achebe, Chinua. "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*" *Hope and Impediments: Selected Essays*. New York: Doubleday, 1989: 1-20.
- Achebe, Chinua. "The Novelist as Teacher." *Hopes and Impediments*: 40-46.
- Ngugi wa Thiongo. "Language, Culture and Politics in Kenya" *Writers in Politics: A Re-Engagement with Issues of Literature and Society*. London: James Currey, 1997: 53-64.

**Week 4: March 13**

**(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**

**Africa-Europe Relations: A political Economy Perspective (1)**

**Readings:**

- Samir Amin(1972). "Underdevelopment and Dependence in Black Africa: Historical Origin." *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 9, No.2.
- Samir Amin (2011[1990]). *Maldevelopment: Anatomy of A Global Failure* (any edition). Chapter 4 ("Complexities of International Relations: Africa's Vulnerability and External Interventions")

**Week 5: March 20**

**(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**

**Africa-Europe Relations: A political Economy Perspective (2)**

**Readings**

- Walter Rodney(1972). *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* Chapters V.
- Herbst, Jeffrey(2000). *States and Power in Africa*. Princeton: Princeton University Press. Chapter 3

**Essay Question #1: - Due 27 March 2018**

**Either**

(1a)

“The most striking aspect of African discourse is of course its character as a movement of contestation...[and] The point that emerges from this aspect of African discourse is its strongly articulated sense of historical grievance.” Abiola Irele, “Dimensions of African Discourse” 68-69.

Focusing on either Leopold Sedar Senghor, Chinua Achebe, or Ngugi wa Thiongo *describe* and *critique* the polemical significance of one of these author’s works in his relation to the European paradigm and his articulation of an alternative discourse.

**OR**

(1b)

Drawing from Samir Amin and Walter Rodney's articles/chapters discussed in class, assess the assertion that "The overwhelming motivation for European colonialism in Africa was economic" (Herbst, 2000: 60).

## **Block # 2**

### **Week 6 : March 27**

**(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**

Pan-Africanism: Ideal and Instrumentalisation

#### **Reading:**

- Nkrumah, Kwame. *Revolutionary Path*. London: Panaf Books, 1973: 205-248.

## **Mid-Term Break**

### **Week 7: April 10**

**(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**

Culture, Tradition and the Modern (African) State

#### **Reading:**

- Nyerere, Julius. "Ujamaa – The Basis of African Socialism" and "Socialism and Rural Development." In *Ujamaa – Essays on Socialism*. Dar es Salaam: Oxford UP, 1968: 1-12, 106-144.

### **Week 8: April 17**

**(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**

Race and the Colonial Condition (1)

#### **Reading:**

- Fanon, Frantz. 1986 "The Fact of Blackness", in *Black Skin, White Masks*. London: Pluto Press, pp. 109-140.
- Bhabha, Homi. 1986 "Remembering Fanon: Self, Psyche and the Colonial Condition", Foreword to Frantz Fanon *Black Skin, White Masks*, London: Pluto Press, pp. vii-xxvi.

### **Week 9: April 24**

**(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**

Race and the Colonial Condition (2)

#### **Reading:**

- Biko, Steve. 1996 *I Write What I Like; a selection of his writings*, Randburg: Ravan.  
"Black Souls in White Masks?", pp. 19-26  
"We Blacks", pp. 27-32  
"The Definition of Black Consciousness", pp. 48-53

## **1<sup>st</sup> May Public Holiday**

**Week 10: May 8**

**(Dr June Bam-Hutchison)**

**Theorising Colonised Cultures and Anti-Colonial Resistance (1)**

**Reading:**

- Fanon, Frantz. 2001 “On National Culture”, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin Classics, pp: 166-199.
- Cabral, Amilcar. 1973 “National Liberation and Culture”, in *Return to the Source; Selected speeches of Amilcar Cabral*. New York: Monthly Review Press, pp: 39-56.

**Week 11: May 15 ((insert before Essay Question)**

**(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**

**Theorising Colonised Cultures and Anti-Colonial Resistance (2)**

**Reading:**

- Fanon, Frantz. 2001 “The Pitfalls of National Consciousness”, in *The Wretched of the Earth*, London: Penguin Classics, pp: 119-165.

**Week 12: May 22**

**(A/Prof Harry Garuba)**

**The Politics of Autobiography: Postcolonial Life Stories**

Postcolonial Subjects, Gendered Subjects and Autobiography Theorised

**Reading:**

- Watson, Julia & Smith, Sidonie, 1992, “De/Colonization and the Politics of Discourse in Women’s Autobiographical Practices”, in Smith, Sidonie & Watson, Julia (eds.) *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women’s Autobiography*, University of Minnesota Press, p. xiii – xxxi.
- Boyce Davies, Carole, 1992, “Collaboration and the Ordering Imperative in Life Story Production”, in Smith, Sidonie & Watson, Julia (eds.) *De/Colonizing the Subject: The Politics of Gender in Women’s Autobiography*, University of Minnesota Press, p. 3 – 19.
- Moore-Gilbert, Bart, 2009, *Postcolonial Life-Writing*. London & New York: pp. xi-xxvi, 1-16.

**Essay Question #2 – Due 22 May 2018**

**Either**

(2a)

Looking closely at Fanon’s essay “The Fact of Blackness” and extracts from Biko’s *I Write What I Like*, compare and contrast the politics of race put forward by these two thinkers.

**Or**

(2b) National Liberation and Culture

What, according to Fanon and Cabral, is the role of national culture in anti-colonial resistance and liberation? How do their arguments look from the vantage point of the present?

**Or**

(2c)

(1b)

From your reading in this course, two broad paths to African postcolonial political modernity are presented and specific claims about Africa's past and visions of its future underlie each. Critically evaluate any one of these visions in terms of the ideals advocated and the problems and contradictions encountered in trying to implement it.

### **Block # 3**

For this block of seminars you have to come with an autobiography, memoir, etc. of your own. In discussing your choice of text, we expect you to tell us if it confirms or contests the positions advanced in the theoretical readings.

We may have to arrange an extra class to accommodate these discussions.

### **Essay Question #3: - Due 12 June 2018**

#### **EITHER:**

(3)

Quote A

Black women's texts often contest established boundaries, offer alternative interpretations, create new public discourses, challenge hegemonic definitions of discourse. There is, necessarily as well for black women an oppositional relationship to those in power. (Carole Boyce Davies, p. 17)

Quote B

Close examination reveals ... stories that expose while they camouflage, stories that negotiate public and private space, challenge and retreat, open up some issues and silence others. Gaps and spaces in narration, we know, point to texts in process.

(Carole Boyce Davies, p. 17)

Critical discuss any of one of these quotes in the light of the autobiography or piece of life-writing you have chosen. Remember to focus on the specific features of postcolonial and gendered life-writing they highlight and relate these to your chosen text.

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