

**San José State University**  
**English & Comparative Literature**  
**Engl 123B: African Literature, Spring 2013 (GE Area V)**

<b>Instructor:</b>	Persis Karim
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<b>Office Hours:</b>	Tu/Thurs. 1:30-2:30 pm
<b>Class Days/Time:</b>	Tu/Thurs. 10:30-11:45 am
<b>Classroom:</b>	Sweeney Hall 413
<b>Prerequisites:</b>	Completion of core GE; satisfactory completion of WST; completion of concurrent enrollment in 100W course.

### **Course Description**

This course surveys contemporary literature written in Africa during the late colonial and postcolonial periods, focusing on novels originally written in English, but also including some novels and short stories translated from other languages.

### **Course Goals and Student Learning Objectives**

1) to train students in reading, discussing, analyzing, and writing about literature, with emphasis as much on form as on content; 2) to expose students to wealth of contemporary African literature; 3) to enhance students' understanding of the history, demography, geography, and cultural background of Africa and its peoples.

### **GE/SJSU Studies Learning Outcomes (Area V)**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

1. compare systematically the ideas, values, images, cultural artifacts, economic structures, technological developments, and/or attitudes of people from more than one culture outside the U.S.

2. identify the historical context of ideas and cultural traditions outside the U.S. and how they have influenced American culture. Our novels are all set in the last hundred years or so, from the rise of European colonialism in Africa (as portrayed in *Things Fall Apart*), through the movements for independence (in *The Joys of Motherhood* and *Nervous Conditions*), and into the sort of contemporary themes involving identity and society that we might also expect in American fiction, such as class (in *Season of Migration to the North*), gender (*Joys of Motherhood* and *Nervous Condition*), ethnicity, and social change.

While many of these issues have had a direct impact on American culture, from colonialism to our involvement in the failed state of Sudan, Somalia, those influences travel in both

directions, and we should not be surprised to find echoes of American culture in African fiction.

3. explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external pressures. All cultures undergo constant change due to such pressures. We will be particularly interested in discussing the changes connected with or resulting from colonialism, independence, and contemporary social and political conflicts.

### **Course Content Learning Outcomes**

Upon successful completion of this course, students will:

1. learn to value individual experiences and perspectives, develop skills to work both individually and together in a cooperative manner; as they are grappling with very difficult material, emotionally; and come to appreciate differing viewpoints and ways of knowing.
2. understand some of the history, demography, geography, and culture of modern Africa and its colonial past, so as to appreciate the achievements of those societies and the obstacles that they face, and, in particular, to recognize these writers' contributions to the public dialogue about their societies' past, present, and future.
3. appreciate and analyze the literary texts, and be able to discuss them logically, with insight and creativity. Students will apply their comprehension and thinking skills in working with research materials to help them reach a level of understanding that leads to clarity, conciseness and coherence in writing.

### **Student Learning Objectives**

Upon successful completion of this course, students:

1. will have attained sufficient background in the literature of Africa to pursue more advanced studies in this area, as well as to appreciate the contributions and influences of traditional, colonial and postcolonial culture on African writers and their works;
2. will be able to transfer that knowledge of the African experience to the literatures of other nations, from those which endured a colonial experience similar to that of Africa, to those, especially in North America and Europe, which, despite their involvement in colonialism or neocolonialism, may still be affected by that experience through literature;
3. and will have demonstrated an understanding of the literary, historical, and cultural elements contained in these works, as well as expressed that understanding, logically and with insight, through their own analysis and arguments in their writing about the texts.
4. develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
5. articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts.

### **Required Texts/Readings**

#### **Textbook**

- Things Fall Apart* by Chinua Achebe (Nigeria)  
*Season of Migration to the North* by Tayib Salih (Sudan)  
*Nervous Conditions* by Tsitsi Dangaremba (Zimbabwe)  
*Joys of Motherhood* by Buchi Amicheta (Nigeria)

*Xala* by Ousmane Sembene (Senegal)

*Dog Eat Dog* by Niq Mhlongo (South Africa) –Please order this yourself!

### **Other Readings**

Purchase a course packet for this course from Maple Press **the second week of class.**

### **Library Liaison**

Contact Toby Matoush via email: Toby.Matoush@sjsu.edu, or phone: (408) 808-2096 if you have library research questions that have not been answered in class.

### **Classroom Protocol**

**Preparation and Participation:** Students should come to class having read the day's assignment and prepared to discuss it. Opportunities for such contributions may take the form of small group or full class discussions; in either situation, individual students may be called upon by the instructor to answer a question, interpret a passage, or express an opinion or response.

**Quizzes:** The best way to measure how carefully you are reading the texts, and how much of that reading you retain is with short quizzes at the beginning of the class period. The quizzes will only cover significant information from that day's reading assignment, though that information may not be the sort readily available to you in plot summaries, outlines, or any other manner other than personally experiencing the text yourself. If you read well ahead of the assigned schedule, be sure to review your notes and come to class with a fresh and detailed impression of the works. A pattern of doing poorly on these quizzes should be taken as an indication that you are not doing the reading, or not reading attentively enough, or not reading with the care and analysis necessary to be successful in the class or as an English major.

**Classroom Conduct:** Please do not read non-course related materials during class and refrain from conversations or inappropriate comments while the instructor or your classmates are speaking. Unless you periodically need to take notes with your laptop, please keep those put away as well; the keyboard noise can be disruptive. **Turn off your cell phones! Anyway caught texting in class will be asked to leave immediately.**

### **Presentations and Discussion**

A significant portion of your grade will be determined on your participation. Outside of general discussion, I'll ask each of you to do a presentation (with at least one other person). Your presentation will involve discussing a theme, character, significant historical development such as colonialism, religion, gender, alienation, etc. I will sign you up for presentations early in the semester. It is your responsibility to note when you present and with whom—I expect you to do some advanced preparation ahead of time with your peers. You can also come and meet with me to discuss your ideas. Your presentation should be a total of 10-15 minutes (depending on the size of your group). You will each speak and you're expected to provide a written report of your presentation (no more than two typed pages).

**Written Work:** There will be two essays, both about 1500 words and count for 25% of the final grade each; a final exam will count for 25%. There will also be frequent quizzes; these along with your participation will determine 25% of your grade. The first essay will require research beyond the class texts themselves. Grading will be on a 100-point scale for each assignment. For the final grade, 100-97 will be an A+; 96-94 an A; 93-90 an A-; 89-87 a B+; 86-84 B; 83-80 a B-; 79-77 a C+; 76-74 a C; 73-70 a C-, and so on.

**Submission of Written Work:** The two essays must be typed, double-spaced (and without a cover page) with one-inch margins; you must follow standard MLA format. Papers must be turned in the day of class (I do not accept emailed papers). Because this is an upper division English class, you're expected to put significant attention into the presentation of your ideas. Your papers must reflect attention to organization, use of examples and quotes, citation, grammar, proofreading, and intelligent analysis of the texts and ideas that have been discussed in class.

### **Adding and Dropping**

Students are responsible for understanding the policies and procedures about add/drops, academic renewal, etc. [Information on add/drops are available at http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html](http://info.sjsu.edu/web-dbgen/narr/soc-fall/rec-324.html) . [Information about late drop is available at http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/](http://www.sjsu.edu/sac/advising/latedrops/policy/) . Students should be aware of the current deadlines and penalties for adding and dropping classes.

### **Assignments and Grading Policy**

Paper #1	3-4 page paper with research	25%
Paper #2	5-7 paper with research	25%
Presentation		10%
Final Exam		15%
Participation, Quizzes, in-class assignments		25%

In English Department courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. Grades issued will represent a full range of student performance and will adhere to the following SJSU academic standards of assessment: The "A" essay will be well organized and well developed, demonstrating a clear understanding and fulfillment of the assignment. It will show the student's ability to use language effectively and construct sentences distinguished by syntactic complexity and variety. Such essays will be essentially free of grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors.

The "B" essay will demonstrate competence in the same categories as the "A" essay. The chief difference is that the "B" essay will show some descriptably slight weaknesses in one of those categories. It may slight one of the assigned tasks, show less facility of expression, or contain some minor grammatical, mechanical, or usage flaws.

The "C" essay will complete all tasks set by the assignment, but show weakness in fundamentals (usually development), with barely enough specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. The sentence construction may be less mature, and the use of language less effective and correct than the "B" essay.

The “**D**” essay will neglect one of the assigned tasks and be noticeably superficial in its treatment of the assignment—that is, too simplistic or short. The essay may reveal some problems in development, with insufficient specific information to illustrate the experience or support generalizations. It will contain grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The “**F**” essay will demonstrate a striking underdevelopment of ideas and insufficient or unfocused organization. It will contain serious grammatical, mechanical, and usage errors that render some sentences incomprehensible.

The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog (“The Grading System”). Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance: A= excellent; B= above average; C= average; D= below average; F= failure. Courses graded according to the A, B, C, No Credit system shall follow the same pattern, except that NC shall replace D or F. In such cases, NC shall also substitute for W (or Withdrawal) because neither grade (NC or W) affects students’ GPA.

## **University Policies**

### **Academic integrity**

Students should know that the University’s [Academic Integrity Policy is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial\\_affairs/Academic\\_Integrity\\_Policy\\_S07-2.pdf](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/download/judicial_affairs/Academic_Integrity_Policy_S07-2.pdf). Your own commitment to learning, as evidenced by your enrollment at San Jose State University and the University’s integrity policy, require you to be honest in all your academic course work. Faculty members are required to report all infractions to the office of Student Conduct and Ethical Development. The website for [Student Conduct and Ethical Development is available at http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial\\_affairs/index.html](http://www.sa.sjsu.edu/judicial_affairs/index.html).

Instances of academic dishonesty will not be tolerated. Cheating on exams or plagiarism (presenting the work of another as your own, or the use of another person’s ideas without giving proper credit) will result in a failing grade and sanctions by the University. For this class, all assignments are to be completed by the individual student unless otherwise specified. If you would like to include in your assignment any material you have submitted, or plan to submit for another class, please note that SJSU’s Academic Policy F06-1 requires approval of instructors.

### **Campus Policy in Compliance with the American Disabilities Act**

If you need course adaptations or accommodations because of a disability, or if you need to make special arrangements in case the building must be evacuated, please make an appointment with me as soon as possible, or see me during office hours. Presidential Directive 97-03 requires that students with disabilities requesting accommodations must register with the DRC (Disability Resource Center) to establish a record of their disability.

## **Student Technology Resources**

Computer labs for student use are available in the Academic Success Center located on the 1<sup>st</sup> floor of Clark Hall and on the 2<sup>nd</sup> floor of the Student Union. Additional computer labs may be available in your department/college. Computers are also available in the Martin Luther King Library. A wide variety of audio-visual equipment is available for student checkout from Media Services located in IRC 112. These items include digital and VHS camcorders, VHS and Beta video players, 16 mm, slide, overhead, DVD, CD, and audiotape players, sound systems, wireless microphones, projection screens and monitors.

## **Peer Connections**

The Learning Assistance Resource Center (LARC) and the Peer Mentor Program have merged to become Peer Connections. Peer Connections is the new campus-wide resource for mentoring and tutoring. Our staff is here to inspire students to develop their potential as independent learners while they learn to successfully navigate through their university experience. Students are encouraged to take advantage of our services which include course-content based tutoring, enhanced study and time management skills, more effective critical thinking strategies, decision making and problem-solving abilities, and campus resource referrals. PEER CONNECTIONS is located in Room 600 in the Student Services Center. It is designed to assist students in the development of their full academic potential and to motivate them to become self-directed learners. The center provides support services, such as skills assessment, individual or group tutorials, subject advising, learning assistance, summer academic preparation and basic skills development. <http://peerconnections.sjsu.edu/>

## **SJSU Writing Center**

The SJSU Writing Center is located in Room 126 in Clark Hall. It is staffed by professional instructors and upper-division or graduate-level writing specialists from each of the seven SJSU colleges. Our writing specialists have met a rigorous GPA requirement, and they are well trained to assist all students at all levels within all disciplines to become better writers. [The Writing Center website is located at http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/](http://www.sjsu.edu/writingcenter/about/staff/)

## ENGLISH 123B: African Literature, Spring 2013

### Course Schedule

*This schedule is subject to modification. If you miss class, please check for changes to the class schedule by contacting me directly or asking one of your peers who you know was in class.*

#### Course Schedule

Day	Date	Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines
Th	1/24	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , ch. 1-7 *including intro.
Tu	1/29	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , ch. 8-11
Th	1/31	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , ch. 12-18
Tu	2/5	<i>Things Fall Apart</i> , ch. 19-25
Th	2/7	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i>
Tu	2/12	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i>
Th	2/14	<i>Season of Migration to the North</i>
Tu	2/19	“The Watch” in course packet
Th	2/21	“The Watch” in course packet
Tu	2/26	<i>Joys of Motherhood</i> ch. 1-5
Th	2/28	<i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , ch. 6-9
Tu	3/5	<i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , ch. 10-14
Th	3/7	<b>NO CLASS-</b> <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , ch. 15-18 Library research day
Tu	3/12	Short Stories from South Africa (course packet)

<b>Day</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Topics, Readings, Assignments, Deadlines</b>
Th	3/14	Film screening of “Mapantsula”
Tu	3/19	Film screening of “Mapantsula”
Th	3/21	Discussion of apartheid South Africa and other topics Paper #1 due
		<b>SPRING RECESS no class 3/25-3/29</b>
Tu	4/2	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Intro-chap. 3
Th	4/4	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , ch.4-5
Tu	4/9	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , ch. 6-7
Th	4/11	<i>Nervous Conditions</i> , ch. 8-10
Tu	4/16	Xala
Th	4/18	Xala
Tu	4/23	Xala
Th	4/25	Film screening of “Xala”
Tu	4/30	Dog Eat Dog
Th	5/2	Dog Eat Dog
Tu	5/7	Dog Eat Dog
Th	5/9	Dog Eat Dog
Final Exam	5/21	9:45-noon (regular class location); please bring a green book to class.
		Final Paper due same day as the final