

ENGL 226.001
Spring 2015
TR 11:30-12:45
CKH-D 320
E-mail: kopokuag@mix.wvu.edu

Kwabena Opoku-Agyemang
Office: G20 Colson Hall
Office Hours: TR 1:30-2:30
(and by appointment)
Mailbox: 107 Colson Hall

ENGL 226: Non-Western World Literature

The recurring principle for this course is the ideal of all literature: the paradox housed in the humanities which claims that we understand ourselves better when we learn about others; that our individual identities are challenged, and our own cultures more fully illuminated in examining issues from the perspectives of others.

English 226 examines a selection of imaginative literature labeled “Non-Western.” This course is thematically and stylistically predicated on the ways in which perception, particularly in a time of globalization, interrogates access in both competing and complementary ways. As the theoretical space between countries narrows, it is important to understand the logic that informs geo-political labels while analyzing these implications on socio-cultural life. This class will therefore explore perceptions of the “Non-West” in the context of Western/Non-Western relations. We will do this by sampling works –literature including prose, poetry, non-fiction, the graphic novel and drama –from Africa, Latin America, Asia and the Middle East.

Course Aims/Goals

The course aims to inspire in students the confidence to critically engage literary texts and genres through close reading and writing exercises, as well as via extensive discussions. The single most important currency in this class is what the student thinks, and the open-ness to test it.

Required Texts – Available at the WVU Bookstore and the Book Exchange

- *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- *Interpreter of Maladies* by Jhumpa Lahiri
- *Modern African Drama* edited by Biodun Jeyifo
- *Tales from the Thousand and One Nights* translated by N. J. Dawood
- *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi

Required Texts – Available Online

- Poetry from South America, Asia, and Africa
- “The Danger of a Single Story” by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
- “How to Write About Africa” by Binyavanga Wainaina
- Excerpt from *Orientalism* by Edward Said

Course Requirements

- **Participation in class discussion (15%)** – Your participation grade will be based in part on the thoughtfulness of your responses (written and/or oral), respect for others' submissions (even if you don't agree with them), group work, and your **overall engagement in class activities**. Respectful, engaged participation in class discussion will boost your final grade, while a lack of positive participation may lower it. Please read the assigned texts **BEFORE** a particular class. Everyone will be expected to contribute to proceedings in class; your opinion counts!
Note that more than five absences will definitely result in an "F" for attendance and participation, which will make this portion of your grade, at best, 5 out of the possible 15 points
- **Multiple quizzes (15% total)** – These will be unannounced short-answer/multiple-choice questions that focus on textual details and close reading, typically with a specific question.
- **First Word (5%)** – At the beginning of each class starting January 15, at least one student will give a brief presentation (averaging 5 minutes) about the text/author/period for the day. In your presentation, you can say a few words about the author, time-period, text, a contemporary to the author, and/or why you think the author/text should be (or not be) included in the syllabus. (Almost) anything goes!
- **"How I would teach..." (10%)** – In small groups, you will present (for less than 10 minutes) to the class your preferred method of teaching a particular text or genre, considering questions such as context, audience, and purpose. Alternatively, you can render a portion of the text in a different genre (e.g. turn a scene from a novel into a short story, a play into a poem, etc.) Again, (almost) anything goes!
- **Midterm exam (25%)** – You will have a midterm exam encompassing material covered in class up until midterms. You will have strong input concerning what constitutes this exam, after which a study guide will be provided.
- **Final exam (30%)** – This exam will end the semester and, similar to the midterm, will involve your suggestions. A study guide will be provided.
- **Grading Scale**
 - A (91-100)
 - B+ (81-90)
 - C+ (71-80)
 - D+ (61-70)
 - F (0-60)

Course Policies

- **Attendance:** This is a participatory class. **You may miss two classes without penalty. Missing more could diminish your class participation grade by as much as a full grade. If you miss more than six classes, you risk an F for the entire course.** Lateness is rude and disrupts discussion and small group work. If you are more than 10 minutes late, your lateness will

count as half of an absence (two times being late = one absence). **The only excused absences are for University-sponsored activities (e.g. class fieldtrips and sports related events).**

- **Texts in Class:** Bring the required reading material to class in either electronic or print formats in order to cite directly from the works and to find references easily. Be sure to complete the assigned reading before class.
- **Late Coursework:** There are no make-up opportunities for missed quizzes. I will, however, allow you to drop your lowest quiz grade from your total grade for the quizzes. A missed midterm exam may be taken later, provided Student Affairs writes you a note for certain emergencies. If it passes by them, then we can reschedule. Missed final exams may not be taken later. Exams missed and not made up will result in failure of the class.
- **Inclusivity Statement:** The West Virginia University community is committed to creating and fostering a positive learning and working environment based on open communication, mutual respect, and inclusion. If you are a person with a disability and anticipate needing any type of accommodation in order to participate in this class, please advise me and make appropriate arrangements with the Office of Accessibility Services (293-6700). For more information on West Virginia University's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion initiatives, please check <http://diversity.wvu.edu>
- **Plagiarism:** WVU's policy regarding plagiarized work can be found online at: <http://studentlife.wvu.edu/studentconductcode.html> (see Section B of Article III). We will discuss plagiarism in class, but it is your responsibility to be familiar with the WVU policy.
- **Conduct:** I expect all members of the class to be respectful of each other and me, regardless of religious, social, or political differences. I will not condone discriminatory remarks regarding race, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, religious belief, health, economic status, etc. Disruptive behavior may negatively impact your class participation grade and, if egregious enough, result in your expulsion from the class. Be mindful that the best way to participate in class is to both talk and listen to what others have to say. I don't expect class members to agree, but I do expect that you will acknowledge other points of view.

SCHEDULE (Subject to slight changes, which will be announced beforehand)

Week 1

Tuesday Jan 13 (**Monday January 12: Late Registration Fee in Effect for All Students**)

- Introductions; Syllabus Overview

Thursday Jan 15 (**Friday January 16: Last day to Register, Add New Courses, Make Section Changes, Change Pass/Fail and Audit**)

- Adichie, “The Danger of a Single Story” (available on ecampus)
http://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story
- Ngugi, Decolonizing the African Mind (Chapter 4 – I-VI) – (available on ecampus)
https://www.humanities.uci.edu/critical/Wellek_Readings_Ngugi_Quest_for_Relevance.pdf;

Week 2

Tuesday Jan 20

- South American Poetry: Jorge Luis Borges; Sara de Ibáñez; Pablo Neruda (available on ecampus)

Thursday Jan 22

- “How to Write About Africa” <http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1>
- African Poetry: Okot p'Bitek; Kofi Awoonor; Ama Ata Aidoo (available on ecampus)

Week 3

Tuesday Jan 27

- *Persepolis*
- “Orientalism”
http://politicsandsocietyofthemiddleeas.weebly.com/uploads/1/3/5/2/13525224/said-introduction_and_chapter_1_of_orientalism.pdf
- https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fVC8EYd_Z_g (available on ecampus)

Thursday Jan 29

- *Americanah* (Chapters 1-2)

Week 4

Tuesday Feb 3

- *Americanah* (Chapters 3-9)

Thursday 5

- *Americanah* (Chapters 10-22)

Week 5

Tuesday Feb 10

- *Americanah* (Chapters 23-41)

Thursday Feb 12

- *Americanah* (Chapters 42-49)

Week 6

Tuesday Feb 17

- *Americanah* (Chapters 50-55)
- *Interpreter of Maladies* (“A Temporary Matter”)

Thursday Feb 19

- How I Would Teach... Round I

Week 7

Tuesday Feb 24

- *Interpreter of Maladies*: (“Mrs. Sen’s”; “The Treatment of Bibi Haldar”)

Thursday Feb 26

- Mid Semester Exam

Week 8

Tuesday Mar 3

- *Modern African Drama: Death and the King's Horseman* (Author's Note, Scenes 1-3)

Thursday Mar 5

- *Modern African Drama: Death and the King's Horseman* (Scenes 4-5)

Week 9

Tuesday Mar 10

- *Modern African Drama: Dilemma of a Ghost* (Prelude-Act 3)

Thursday Mar 12

- *Modern African Drama: Dilemma of a Ghost* (Acts 4-5)

Week 10

Tuesday Mar 17

- *Interpreter of Maladies* ("When Mr. Pirzada Came to Dine"; "The Third and Final Continent")

Thursday Mar 19

- *Interpreter of Maladies*: ("Interpreter of Maladies")

Spring Break!

Week 11

Tuesday Mar 31

- *Tales from the One Thousand Nights*: "Prologue" (pages 15-23)

Thursday Apr 2

- *Tales from the One Thousand Nights*: Selections from "The Tale of the Hunchback" (pages 24-76); "The Historic Fart" (pages 163-164)

Week 12

Tuesday Apr 7

- *Tales from the One Thousand Nights* “Sinbad the Sailor and Sinbad the Porter” (pages 113-144)

Thursday Apr 9

- How I Would Teach... Round II

Week 13

Tuesday Apr 14

- *Interpreter of Maladies*: (“A Real Durwan”; “Sexy”)

Thursday Apr 16

- *Interpreter of Maladies*: (“This Blessed House”)

Week 14

Tuesday Apr 21

- *Modern African Drama: Sizwe Bansi is Dead* (92-125)

Thursday Apr 23

- Poetry from Singapore: Arthur Yap, Wong May and Alfian Sa'at (Led by Guest Lecturer)

Week 15

Tuesday Apr 28

- *Tales from the One Thousand Nights* (“Aladdin and the Enchanted Lamp”); *Tales from the One Thousand Nights*: “The Fisherman and the Jinnee” (pages 79-105); Aladdin Clip <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aEryAoLfnAA> (available on ecampus)

Thursday Apr 30

Last Day of Class

Monday May 4 Final Exam (3:00-5:00 pm)