

AFRICAN POLITICS AND THE NOVEL

GEORGETOWN UNIVERSITY: SUMMER 2008

WEDNESDAY. 6:00-9:00

Professor Herb Howe

African novels help us to experience factual material--the continent's cultures, trends and events-- through the eyes of fictional characters. Novels for this class treat pre-colonial culture and Europe's imperialism (*Things Fall Apart*), different African reactions to foreign rule (*God's Bits of Wood*), post-colonial personal rule (*Man Of the People*), resistance to apartheid (*A Dry White Season*), life under military rule (*Arrows of Rain*), "child soldiers" in conflict (*Song For Night*), and the evolving identities of African women (*So Long a Letter*). Non-fiction reading will provide a factual background for each novel as well as for several additional trends, e.g. the growth of democratization.

Course requirements are regular attendance and strong class participation, one six page paper, and a final written exam. The course will also have several pop quizzes.

Disabilities Statement: If you believe you have a disability, then you should contact the Academic Resource Center (arc@georgetown.edu) for further information. The Center is located in the Leavey Center, Suite 335. The Academic Resource Center is the campus office responsible for reviewing documentation provided by students with disabilities and for determining reasonable accommodations in accordance with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) and University policies.

This is a draft syllabus which lists all the novels and much of the background material.

MAY 28. INTRODUCTION TO COURSE AND POLITICAL OVERVIEW OF AFRICA

JUNE 4. EFFECTS OF COLONIALISM:
Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*.
Thomas O'Toole, "The Historical Context," *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon, eds.
Ali Mazrui, "A Clash of Cultures," *The African Condition*.

JUNE 11. RESISTANCE TO COLONIALISM:
Ousmane Sembene, *God's Bits of Wood*.
Francis T. McNamara, "From Pacification to Administration," *France in Black Africa*.
Charles Kutter, "Senegal," *Africa 2007*, The World Today Series.
Robert Edgerton, "'Something Called Maw Maw' The Evolution of a Rebellion," *Mau-Mau: An African Crucible*.

Readings on the concept of “heroism.”

- JUNE 18. MINORITY RULE IN SOUTHERN AFRICA;
Andre Brink, *A Dry White Season*.
Nelson Mandela, “I Am Prepared to Die” and other readings, *The Anti-Apartheid Reader*, David Mermelstein, ed.
- JUNE 25. POST-COLONIAL POLITICS: PERSONAL AND INSTITUTIONAL RULE:
Chinua Achebe, *Man of the People*.
Okey Ndibe, *Arrows of Rain*.
Donald L. Gordon, “African Politics,” *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon, eds.
Charles Kutter, “Nigeria,” *Africa 2007*, World Today Series.
- JULY 2. CONFLICT IN AFRICA:
Christopher Abani, *Song For Night*.
Herb Howe, “Africa’s Ongoing Security Predicament,” *Ambiguous Order: Military Forces In African States*.
- JULY 9. CHANGING ROLES OF WOMEN
Mariama Ba, *So Long A Letter*.
- JULY 16. AFRICA IN THE 21ST CENTURY
Larry Gordon, “The State of Democracy in Africa,” *Democracy in Africa: What Progress Toward Institutionalization?* Ghana Campaign for Democracy and Development.
April and Donald Gordon, “Trends and Prospects,” *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon, eds.
H. Kwasi Prempeh, “The Persistence of the ‘Imperial Presidency’ in Africa’s Emerging Democracies,” *Democracy in Africa: What Progress Toward Institutionalization?* Ghana Campaign for Democracy and Development, 2008.
“Islam, Democracy, and Public Opinion in Africa,” *Afrobarometer Briefing Paper No. 3*, September 2002.
- JULY 23. IN-CLASS FINAL EXAMINATION