

The Color of Feminist Agency in 21st Century Africa

Email: jkabwil1@binghamton.edu

Venue: SW 328

Time: 8.30 – 9.55 a.m.

Office: LSG 501D

Office Hours: Tuesday 10. 10 to 12.10p.m.

Course Description

Africa's historicity and global positionality makes scholarship on the oppression and agency of the African woman not only imperative but urgent. The course uses Bakare-Yusuf's summary of the debate on the sources of female oppression in Africa (2003) and Ndambuki's (2006) take on feminist agency, to anchor an exploration of this issue of female oppression and agency. According to Acosta Belen, the west is responsible for the bulk of the oppression facing the African woman (1997). Some say the problem is the Africa and the African woman herself whilst others say colonialism is to blame. This course is interested in exploring this question by listening to the representation from the continent itself. The question is, how is the continent itself representing the oppression and agency of the African woman in contemporary Africa? This course will explore narratives of some of the leading, most current writers, from across Africa. We will look at texts from Somalia, Nigeria, Zimbabwe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, South Africa and Uganda. It includes a mixture of novels, a short story and films. The views of leading feminist and critical thinkers like Nkiru Nzegwu, Oyeronke Oyewumi, Molaria Ogundipe-Leslie and Patricia Mcfadden will be featured.

Goals and Objectives:

- To provide an understanding of the complex context of the oppression of the African women, explore the role played by colonialism and the western world.
- Cultivate and sharpen critical skills, extricate relevance of the texts to every day life.
- Enhance writing and research skills

Schedule of Classes

Introductions	Jan 29
Bakare Yusuf, Nzegwu on Sources of Oppression	Jan 31
Agency- Ndambuki, Lewis, Satre, Fanon	Feb 5, 7
Madame Brouette	Feb 12, 14

Purple Hibiscus/Ancestor Stones	Feb 19,21,26,28
Nervous Conditions/Knots	March 4, 6, 11, 13
Neria and Oliver Mtukudzi	March 18, 19
Tropical Fish/ The Tongue's Blood Does Not Run Dry and Sylvia Tamale	March 25, 27
Ways of Dying/Secrets and Ampofo, Beoku-Betts	April 8,10,15,17, 22, 24
Revision on texts, evaluation of course, writing tips	April 29, May 6, 8.

Due to some books being out of print, I have put 2 options, you will not be required to buy both, I will indicate which one we have gotten before we open or in the first class.

Papers

Two short papers (2 pages of written work plus 1 page of Works Cited) due in class, in a folder.

The first one: 'The debate on the Source/s of the oppression of the African woman' is due **12 February 2008**. Follow the MLA system of referencing.

The second: Agency in your text of choice – the ones done that far, is due **March 4 2008**.

Two longer paper, the first write up and the rewrite (7pages of written work plus 1 page of Works Cited) and is due in class in your folder on **1st April 2008**

The rewrite is due **May 1st 2008**.

Group Presentation

Each member of the class will work with a small group to discuss, study and present parts of the novels studied in class and make at least two presentations. Group members will meet outside class to discuss the novel, share the researching of backgrounds of the African history and culture relevant to the issue in the novel, explore important critical and theoretical texts, form questions and interpretations and develop a presentation for the class. Presentations that combine, creativity, active learning strategies, extensive class involvement, fun and depth will be attract a good participation grade.

Group presentations should be unified and coherent, not a series of individual reports or verbatim downloads from the internet.

Grades

1 st 2.5 page paper	10%
2 nd 2.5 page paper	10%
Final Paper - 7.5page paper	15%
Rewrite 7.5 page paper	15%
Group Presentation	12.5%

Individual Participation	12.5%
Attendance	25%

Absences

Students who are absent must still submit assignments on time. Absent students are responsible for finding out from fellow classmates what was missed during the class lecture; absent students are responsible for any syllabus changes (i.e. changes in due dates, homework, etc.) that were discussed during the class period. It is **the student's responsibility** to become familiar with Binghamton University policies regarding absences. Students who are late to class will be counted absent for the day.

Over **three** absences will result in the subtraction of 5 points per absence from the final total points.

Handing Papers and Late Work

This is a reading and writing intensive class, therefore time management is a crucial skill students must master. Late work will be penalized. Papers will be docked 3 points for each day they are late. Only hard copies will be accepted, make sure you do your printing well in advance. If you will not come to class, hand your paper in on time in my mail box in the Comparative Literature Department, library tower 15th Floor. It is the student's responsibility to locate the correct mail box.

Email correspondence

All e-mail correspondence must be as professional as possible, avoid being emotional. All emails concerning this class need to have COLI 214 B in the subject heading. Cell phones, laptops, newspapers (or other reading material not related to this class) and any other gadgets are not permitted in the classroom.

Academic Honesty

This class aims at inculcating a value for original thinking. Plagiarism will not be tolerated; all cases of plagiarism will be sent to the Dean and result in partial or total failure of the course. Any questions concerning plagiarism may be raised either in class or during the instructor's office hours, it is your responsibility to make sure you understand what amounts to plagiarism is ignorance is no defense in this issue.

(Instructor reserves the right to make changes at any time)