

Literature in English: Modern Period III (A005259)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2023-2024

A (semester 2) English Gent seminar
independent work

Lecturers in academic year 2023-2024

Adenekan, Olorunshola LW21 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2023-2024

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Micro-credential Environmental Humanities	5	A
Exchange Programme Cultures and Languages in Context	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

West African literature; women's writing; contemporary literature in English

Position of the course

This advanced course aims to explore how contemporary West African female writers address various issues facing their societies. We will address the aesthetic, ethical, historical and contemporary themes in the work of selected writers. The course will be mainly taught by Shola Adenekan, in addition to guest lecturers. We hope to invite at least two female writers of West African descent to talk to the students about their work.

Position of the course in terms of language proficiency: In the master programme in English, students are expected to progress from an initial CEFR C1 level to a first-stage C2 level (Mastery).

Exchange students may take this course. Knowledge of Dutch is not required.

Contents

Women Writing West Africa

Discussions around contemporary literature from the continent of Africa often focus on male writers. But there are female writers from across the over 50 African countries who produce creative writings that deserve our critical attention. The complex story of each African country cannot be grasped without a thorough examination of writing by women because they provide powerful insight into various discourses affecting our world.

Since we want to avoid what Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (July 2009) refers to as the danger of

a single story - Africa is a continent of about a billion people living in 55 countries and where hundreds of languages are spoken – our focus will be on selected female writers from three West African countries – Nigeria, Ghana and Senegal.

We shall examine some of the issues raised in their fictional narratives and poetry, such as the environment, gender, sexuality, class, colonialism, migration to Europe and local politics. We will also analyse how these discourses intersect one another.

Initial competences

Students must be highly proficient in English (CEFR C1 level (“Expert”/“Effective operational” proficiency)) and familiar with literary-analytical methods.

Final competences

- 1 To have acquired a robust knowledge of Africa, especially West Africa, far beyond the Africa that is portrayed in mainstream media.
- 2 To be familiar with some of the key concepts used in postcolonial literature.
- 3 To critically assess different theories, concepts and approaches proposed in postcolonial African literary studies.
- 4 To be thoroughly familiar with the inner workings of a range of West African literary responses to history and the contemporary.
- 5 To independently formulate an original research question in relation to literature by West African female writers.
- 6 To report insights and research results orally and in writing in an academically appropriate form.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Interactive classes. Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned reading. Collaborative learning through ongoing engagement with an online discussion forum.

Learning materials and price

Short Stories

Chika Unigwe: How to Survive a Heat Wave -

<https://lithub.com/how-to-survive-a-heat-wave/>

Chika Unigwe: Borrowed Smile -

<https://www.africanwriter.com/borrowed-smile-a-short-story-by-chika-unigwe/>

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Jumping Monkey Hill -

[Jumping Monkey Hill | Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie | Granta Magazine](https://www.granta.com/Chimamanda-Ngozi-Adichie/Jumping-Monkey-Hill)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Cell One -

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie: Sierra Leone, 1997 -

<https://www.newyorker.com/magazine/2006/06/12/sierra-leone-1997>

Novels

Aminata Sow Fall: *La grève des Bàttu* (French, translated into English: *The Beggars' Strike*): A novel to be taught by guest lecturer Dr Sara Buekens.

Ama Ata Aidoo, *Our Sister Killjoy*

Ayobami Adebayo: *Stay with Me*

Yaa Gyasi: *Homegoing*

Poetry

Jumoke Verissimo: *I Am a Memory*

Unoma Azuah: Home is Where the Heart Hurts – Sentinel Online -

<https://www.sentinelpoetry.org.uk/magonline0305/page15.html>

Unoma Azuah: Two Poems - <https://iselemagazine.com/2022/12/15/two-poems-unoma-azuah/>

These literary works will be on sale from Standaard Boekhandel (Kouter 31). You can also buy them online stores including Amazon Belgium.

You can access recommended articles on JSTOR.org or through the university's library

catalogue.

References

Course content-related study coaching

Interactive teaching in the classroom, office hours

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

The course is assessed by three weighted pieces of course work. Students must achieve at least a pass mark in each of these elements in order to 'pass the course'.

1. **Final Essay:** This will form 50 percent of the overall grade. At the end of the summer semester, each student is required to submit an essay based solely on theme(s)/issue(s) related to literature written by West African women. The topic must be approved by the tutor at least four weeks before the submission deadline. Please note the deadlines carefully. No extensions of the deadline are possible without either a medical certificate or, in other really exceptional circumstances.

2. **Course Journal:** *Women Writing West Africa* is not the kind of course where you will fill up your file with handouts or reams of dictated lecture notes. It is essentially a reading and discussions course - with a lot of varied cultural inputs leavening the mix. For the purpose of your course journal, if nothing else, it is important that you keep notes on all your reading, on the lectures and seminars and -in some form - book events, plays, or readings - that you attend throughout the semester that raise issues connected to African women. These will form the core of your course journal. At the end of the semester, you are required to submit a Course Journal. This will form 25 percent of the overall grade.

3. **Project and Oral Presentation:** Your oral presentation will be based on a project that you have to do independently. A project should ideally be a following up of some personal interest in issues relating to African women. To give you some flexibility, you can look at genres of music, art, literature and film. You are expected to give a presentation of not more than 8 minutes. This will form 25 percent of the overall grade.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic evaluation counts towards 60% of the final mark, non-periodic evaluation towards 40%.

Facilities for Working Students

Attendance is not compulsory but recommended.

Classes will be livestreamed and recorded via Opencast (if available).

Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time during the regular examination period.

Feedback can be given at a different time: by appointment.