Fall 2018  (GESM110-35279R)
General Education Seminar in the Arts
African Literature and Film
M-W 2:00-3:20 pm
Location: KAP 137

Instructor: Professor Lydie E. Moudileno
Office: 278 Taper Hall
Office Hours: Tuesdays 11-1pm and by appointment
Contact Info: moudilen@usc.edu

Course Description
This class will introduce students to the history and culture of Africa by way of literature and film. It will provide students with some basic tools with which to understand and evaluate creative works coming from the continent as a whole, while at the same time underscoring the diversity of individual figures and endeavors that have marked Africa’s cultural history since the 1950s, and into the first decades of the millennium (2013).

Using a range of sources from literature (fiction, autobiography, poetry, drama) as well as film (drama and documentaries) from different regions and countries (Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Senegal, Congo, Zimbabwe) the course will explore a number of recurring themes or tensions, such as: Tradition and modernity; Colonialism, power and politics; Gender and Sexuality; Memory and Trauma; Postcolonial identities; Migration and globalization. We will explore the ways in which African images produced by Africans compete with or echo each other in their effort to represent their respective societies and experiences. It is the hope of this course that students will learn to think globally and critically about Africa, beyond some of the ubiquitous stereotypes that still determine the continent and its people today.

Note:
- The course will include a session taking using the resources of the USC Shoah Foundation archives on the Rwandan genocide.

Learning Objectives
The main objective of this course is to increase students’ basic knowledge of African history and culture while becoming aware of Africa’s contribution to the arts in a global perspective.

In the process, it will make students aware of the cultural richness and complexity of a continent whose creativity and overall contribution to contemporary arts is often ignored. Because the imaginary on Africa is loaded with stereotypical representations, a significant aim of the course is to help students recognize such stereotypes, critically assess them and learn to formulate informed and nuanced analyses on “African culture”. Finally, the course will teach students to better situate Africa’s place in and contribution to global identities and cultures.

Expectations
- Come to class. Regular attendance is mandatory. You will be allowed two unexcused absences for the semester, after which your "attendance and participation" grade will be lowered by one letter.
- Prepare all assignments and participate in class. Active participation in discussions is crucial and is expected of all students.
- Turn in hard copies of short written assignments on time.

Assignments are to be submitted in class, via email and/or Blackboard.
**Required Readings and Supplementary Materials**

Books can be purchased at the Bookstore.

Joseph Conrad, *The Heart of Darkness*, (Poland/Great Britain, 1899)
Achebe, Chinua, *Things Fall Apart* (Nigeria, 1958)
Dangaremba, Tsitsi, *Nervous Conditions* (Zimbabwe, 1988)
Mabanckou, Alain, *Blue White and Red* (Congo, 1998)
Zoe Wicomb, *You can’t get lost in Cape Town* (South Africa, 2000)
Teju Cole, *Known and Strange Things* (USA, 2016)-Excerpts

Films- Available on YouTube, Vimeo, Blackboard or Library.
*The Battle of Algiers* (Gilles Pontecorvo, Italy/Algeria,1966)
*Black Girl* (Sembene Ousmane, Senegal, 1966)
*Lumumba, Death of a Prophet* (Raoul Peck, Haiti/Belgium, 1990)
*Hotel Rwanda* (Terry George, UK/South Africa, 2004)
*Africa United* (Debs Gardnr-Paterson, UK/USA, 2010)

**Assignments and evaluation**

Assessment will take the form of:

- Three short (3-4 pages) essays over the course of the semester to make sure that students a) have read primary texts and/or screened films; b) increasingly develop critical ways to address some of the thematical and aesthetical issues raised in class material and by class discussion; express their thoughts in informed and sophisticated ways.
- Two (1 short + 1 long) presentations to assess the capacity of students to do preliminary research on a given topic and to share their findings pedagogically with the group;
- One final research paper to further assess their capacity to a) identify a feasible research topic; b) expand critical thinking beyond the scope of class material; c) relate their findings to wider interdisciplinary issues and practices.

**Grading**

Participation: 10%
Short presentations and misc. assignments: 15%
One long (15 mn) presentation: 10%
Three written assignments: 45%
Final paper: 20%

Grading and feedback will be provided within one week. Course final grades will be determined using the following scale:

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Statement on Academic Conduct and Support Systems

Academic Conduct:
Plagiarism – presenting someone else’s ideas as your own, either verbatim or recast in your own words – is a serious academic offense with serious consequences. Please familiarize yourself with the discussion of plagiarism in SCampus in Part B, Section 11, “Behavior Violating University Standards” policy.usc.edu/scampus-part-b. Other forms of academic dishonesty are equally unacceptable. See additional information in SCampus and university policies on scientific misconduct, http://policy.usc.edu/scientific-misconduct.

Support Systems:
Student Counseling Services (SCS) – (213) 740-7711 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential mental health treatment for students, including short-term psychotherapy, group counseling, stress fitness workshops, and crisis intervention. engemannshc.usc.edu/counseling

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline – 1 (800) 273-8255
Provides free and confidential emotional support to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. www.suicidepreventionlifeline.org

Relationship and Sexual Violence Prevention Services (RSVP) – (213) 740-4900 – 24/7 on call
Free and confidential therapy services, workshops, and training for situations related to gender-based harm. engemannshc.usc.edu/rsvp

Sexual Assault Resource Center
For more information about how to get help or help a survivor, rights, reporting options, and additional resources, visit the website: sarc.usc.edu

Office of Equity and Diversity (OED)/Title IX Compliance – (213) 740-5086
Works with faculty, staff, visitors, applicants, and students around issues of protected class. equity.usc.edu

Bias Assessment Response and Support
Incidents of bias, hate crimes and microaggressions need to be reported allowing for appropriate investigation and response. studentaffairs.usc.edu/bias-assessment-response-support

The Office of Disability Services and Programs
Provides certification for students with disabilities and helps arrange relevant accommodations. dsp.usc.edu

Student Support and Advocacy – (213) 821-4710
Assists students and families in resolving complex issues adversely affecting their success as a student EX: personal, financial, and academic. studentaffairs.usc.edu/ssa

Diversity at USC
Information on events, programs and training, the Diversity Task Force (including representatives for each school), chronology, participation, and various resources for students. diversity.usc.edu

USC Emergency Information
Provides safety and other updates, including ways in which instruction will be continued if an officially declared emergency makes travel to campus infeasible. emergency.usc.edu

USC Department of Public Safety – UPC: (213) 740-4321 – HSC: (323) 442-1000 – 24-hour emergency or to report a crime.
Provides overall safety to USC community. dps.usc.edu
WEEKLY SESSIONS

Week 1- Introductions: Representing the (post)colony
Mon, Aug 20: Chimamanda Adichie: “The Danger of a single story” (TED)
   Homework: Read Myers essay on Images of Africa (on BB)
Wed, Aug 22: Representing Africa: Tropes and themes
   Homework: Read *Heart of Darkness*

Week 2- The Heart of Darkness
Mon, Aug 28: *Heart of Darkness*
   Homework: Continue reading
Wed, Aug 30: *Heart of Darkness*
   Homework: Read *Things Fall Apart*, part 1

Week 3- The Empire writes back
Mon, Sept 3: Labor Day- NO CLASS
Wed, Sept 5: *Things Fall Apart*, part 1
   Homework: continue reading

Week 4- Writing back, continued
Mon, Sept 10: *Things Fall Apart*, part 2
   Homework: Finish *Thing Fall Apart*
Wed, Sept 12: *Things Fall Apart*, end,
   Homework: Prepare Response # 1

Week 5- Africa on screen, part 1
Mon, Sept 17: Lecture on African cinema + Presentations
   Homework: Choose 1 film on Africa to present to class.
Wed, Sept 19: Lecture + Presentations
   Homework: Read *Nervous conditions*, chapters 1-3

Week 6- Negotiating traditions
Mon, Sept 24: *Nervous conditions*
   Homework: Continue reading
Wed, Sept 26: *Nervous conditions*
   Homework: Finish reading

Week 7- Negotiating traditions, continued
Mon, Oct 1st: *Nervous conditions*
   Homework: Read essay from *World Literature Today* (on BB)
   + other TBD
Wed, Oct 3: Essays
   Homework: Watch *Battle of Algiers*
Week 8- Africa on screen, Part 2: Decolonization and Independence
Mon, Oct 8: Battle of Algiers
  Homework: Watch Lumumba
Wed, Oct 10: Discussion Lumumba
  Homework: Write response #2

Week 9- Zoe Wicomb
Mon, Oct 15: Presentations + Intro Wicomb.
  Homework: Read Wicomb, You can’t get lost in Cape Town
Wed, Oct 17: Zoe Wicomb
  Homework: Read Wicomb

Week 10- Essays
Mon, Oct 22: Zoe Wicomb + Presentations
  Homework: Read essay on Postcolonial Theory (on BB)
Wed, Oct 24: Postcolonial theory
  Homework: Watch Hotel Rwanda
  + Read essay on Trauma (on BB)

Week 11- History, Memory, Trauma
Mon, Oct 29: Hotel Rwanda
  Homework: Read essay (on BB)
Wed, Oct 31: Shoah Foundation
  Homework: Read Mabanckou, Blue, White and Red, part 1

Week 12- Fictions of Migration
Mon, Nov 5: Blue, White and Red, part 1
Wed, Nov 7: Blue, White and Red, part 2
  Homework: Finish reading + Watch Africa United

Week 13- Contemporary Africa/Identities
Mon, Nov 12: Blue, White and Red, end. Discussion Africa United
  Homework: Response #3
Wed, Nov 14: Discussion Selasi on Afropolitanism (on BB)
  Homework: Read from Teju Cole, Known and Strange Things
  Response # 3 due

Week 14- Known and Strange Things
Mon, Nov 19: Known and Strange Things + How to write a research paper
Wed, Nov 21: NO CLASS
  Homework: Paper topics and draft paper introduction due
Week 15- Paper preparation and course conclusions
Mon, Nov 26: Presentation of paper topics
Homework: TBD
Wed, Nov 28: Course conclusions.

Final papers due Monday December 10, 2018