

ENGL 4245.001 – The African Novel in English

Fall 2025 / Th 3:30-6:20 / ART 226

Inst: J. Foertsch / foertsch@unt.edu / LANG 409-D

Office hours: Via Zoom W 1:30-4:30 (via Zoom or in person) and by appt.

Course Goals: In this course, we will study an array of novels from Sub-Saharan African fiction (mainly novels and novellas) written in English from the late 1950s to the present. We will familiarize ourselves with the colonial and post-colonial contexts of the African nations represented in this survey - specifically Nigeria, Ghana, South Africa, Zimbabwe, and Kenya - and attend to key themes that recur throughout this canon: the evils of colonialism and Apartheid, the corruption and disenchantment of the post-colonial enterprise, the intersection of tradition and modernity, the influence of ancient custom (especially the oral storytelling tradition), and the special plight of colonial and post-colonial African women.

Required Texts: Schedule of Readings below.

Papers/Requirements:

Essay #1 (5-7 pages) - 30%
Essay #2 (5-7 pages) - 30% (25% source-free / 5% source material)
Final Exam (take-home / essay format) - 20%
Class Participation - 20%

Please note how heavily weighted class participation will be in this course. By this I mean frequent, on-topic, spontaneous contribution to class discussion (either in the form of comment or questions); regular class attendance; and compliance with all course requirements. I give big points to students who take their roles as members of this class seriously, regardless of ability to speak or write at the “A” level. Be prepared, follow directions, pay attention in class, and you'll earn much credit. Office conferencing - especially over drafts of the essay assignments - is another way to maximize your participation grade. E-conferencing is also an option for both earning participation points and improving one's essay drafts. A word, however, re: e-mail etiquette: please use courteous forms of address and signature, and correct spelling, grammar, and punctuation when writing.

Attendance/Technology Policy: Excessive absences (more than *two*) will lead to reduction in the final grade as follows:

3 classes (3 wks. of class): 10%
4-5 classes (4-5 wks. of class): 20%
6-7 classes (6-7 wks. of class): 40%
8-10 classes (8-10 wks. of class): 60%
11-13 classes (11-13 wks. of class): 80%
14-15 classes (14-15 wks. of class): 100%

UNT recognizes absences only for certain religious observances and authorized school activities; thus for other reasons (illness, job conflict) please do not approach me before or after class or via e-mail regarding your upcoming or recent absences, as these are your own business, your own decision, and your own funeral when they become excessive. Please also note: **mental as well as physical presence** is required. Lack of preparation (e.g., no book brought to class, repeated late arrival, late assignments, internet use/texting in class, getting up during class to take or make phone calls) will count as absences with reductions in final grade. **No laptops open in class** – pls. take notes, as need be, with paper and pencil. (Students with special needs requiring laptops, pls. see me.) **No AI for essay-writing.**

Students with Disabilities: I am happy to accommodate students with physical or learning disabilities with respect to room scheduling, seating arrangements, test time, tape recording, etc., once necessary documentation from the Office of Disability Accommodation (ODA) is produced. If you need to obtain these documents, or would like to be tested or counseled for a disability, please contact the ODA at Sage Hall, Ste. 167, 565-4323.

POLICIES RELATED TO COVI/FLU/RSV:

Face coverings: Face coverings – mouth and nose – are recommended in all UNT facilities whenever experiencing COVID or flu-related symptoms. Please consider using one of your four automatic absences if experiencing respiratory or GI distress.

Absences: While attendance is expected as outlined above, it is important for all of us to be mindful of the health and safety of everyone in our community, especially given concerns about COVID-19. If you are experiencing cough, shortness of breath or difficulty breathing, fever, or any of the other possible symptoms of COVID-19 (<https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/symptoms-testing/symptoms.html>) please seek medical attention from the Student Health and Wellness Center (940-565-2333 or askSHWC@unt.edu) or your health care provider. While attendance is an important part of succeeding in this class, your own health, and those of others in the community, is more important.

Live Recordings: Synchronous (live) sessions in this course will be streamed and recorded for students to refer to throughout the semester. Class recordings are reserved for use only by students in this class for educational purposes. The recordings should not be shared outside the class, or outside the Canvas LMS, in any form. Failing to follow this restriction is a violation of the UNT Code of Student Conduct and could lead to disciplinary action.

Final Examination: due 11 December 2025 / 6:20 p.m.

Schedule of Readings

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|------|----------------------------------------------------------|-------|------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8/21 | Introduction: texts and contexts | 10/16 | Emecheta, <i>The Joys of Motherhood</i> (1979) |
| 8/28 | Tutuola, <i>The Palm Wine Drinkard</i> (1952) | 10/23 | Dangarembga, <i>The Book of Not</i> (2006) |
| 9/4 | Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> (1958) | 10/30 | Adichie, <i>Half of a Yellow Sun</i> (2006) |
| 9/11 | Ngugi, <i>Weep Not, Child</i> (1965) | 11/6 | Finish Adichie |
| 9/18 | Armah, <i>The Beautiful Ones are Not Yet Born</i> (1968) | 11/13 | Gordimer, from <i>Jump and Other Stories</i> (1991) |
| 9/25 | La Guma, <i>A Walk in the Night</i> (1962) | 11/20 | view <i>Tsosti</i> (2005) Essay #2 (source-free) due |
| 10/2 | Finish La Guma stories Essay #1 due | 11/27 | Fall break, no class |
| 10/9 | La Guma <i>In the Fog of the Season's End</i> (1972) | 12/4 | Finish Gordimer stories Essay #2 (source-enhanced) due |