SJSU SAN JOSÉ STATE UNIVERSITY

College of Humanities and the Arts \cdot English & Comparative Literature

Literatures of Africa Section 01 ENGL 123B

Fall 2023 3 Unit(s) 08/21/2023 to 12/06/2023 Modified 08/16/2023

🗖 Course Description and Requisites

Course promotes global understanding by examining the cultures and literary arts of Africa, and covers representative texts and authors.

GE Area(s): V. Cultures and Global Understanding

Prerequisite(s): Passage of the Writing Skills Test (WST) or ENGL/LLD 100A with a C or better (C- not accepted), completion of Core General Education and upper division standing are prerequisites to all SJSU studies courses. Completion of, or co-registration in, 100W is strongly recommended.

Note(s):All of SJSU Studies courses require completion of the WST and upper division standing.

Letter Graded

* Classroom Protocols

COVID-19 Policies: Feeling Sick? Exposed to someone with COVID-19? Awaiting COVID-19 test results? <u>Don't come to class</u>. Email me as soon as possible, and we will work out how you will complete any classwork on that day and will negotiate a new deadline. (See Late Work Policy.)

Need a Place to Be Between Classes or While Taking Online Classes?

New for Fall 2021, SJSU has designated available classrooms for student study and workspace purposes. When these classrooms are not in use for teaching purposes, they are available for students to use. Students may use the classrooms for individual or group studying, attending online classes while on campus, and other student work activities. All classrooms have wifi. Only a limited number of outlets are available in any classroom.

Find out the availability of these classrooms here: <u>https://www.sjsu.edu/learnanywhere/campus-resources/study-resources.php</u>

Late Work: Unless arrangements have been made well ahead of time (at least 2 days prior to due date), late work will be penalized by a grade reduction of 10% per day and will not be accepted after a week.

Attendance and Participation: Your success in this class will largely be dependent on your attendance and active participation in class discussions, as well as your keeping closely up to date with our reading schedule. Staying on top of lecture attendance and reading will result in a better understanding of the material, which will translate into higher grades on assignments and quizzes and generally a better connection to the course, your classmates, and the literature we are engaging. Please plan accordingly and develop a schedule to manage the variety of assignments for this course, including readings, blog posts, and major essays.

Scholastic Honesty: Turning in work that is not your own, or any other form of scholastic dishonesty, will result in a major course penalty, possibly failure of the course. This standard applies to all drafts and assignments, and a report of the incident will be submitted to the appropriate Dean's office on campus.

Course Guidelines on ChatGPT and AI tools

Generative AI tools, like the popular ChatGPT website and application, are both powerful and ambiguous in the benefits they provide. If you want to engage with them, you must do so appropriately.

In the following, I use ChatGPT as my main example, but what I say applies to all existing generative AI tools.

ChatGPT is not an authoritative source of information.

Consulting ChatGPT is like consulting Wikipedia. It can be very informative and helpful, but it should not be treated as an authoritative source of information. There are a number of reasons for this.

ChatGPT is known to "hallucinate" answers to prompts that are patently false or even made-up. Only humans have the ability to make the qualitative judgements required to deem something "true" or "false." ChatGPT can appear to know what it's talking about, but it doesn't actually know what it's saying in the way that humans do: it does not have consciousness, after all. As a result, it will sometimes give answers that are totally false without realizing it. Here is an embarrassing story about a lawyer that tried to cut corners using ChatGPT and ended up submitting court filings with completely made-up information in them:

https://www.cbsnews.com/.../lawyer-chatgpt-court-filing.../

ChatGPT's answers are plagiarized—always.

ChatGPT doesn't know anything (again, it is not human intelligence). When you give it a prompt, it scans an enormous amount of information taken from the Internet (including a large dataset of digitized books). It then synthesizes that information to give you its best answer. It does not acknowledge its sources; you do not know where or how it got that information which it is passing off as its own. This is plagiarism. This is another reason why ChatGPT's answers lack authority. Authoritative research shows you its sources so you can judge for yourself the quality of what the researcher has consulted.

If you rely on information generated by ChatGPT in one of your assignments or essays, you must cite it.

I have just detailed all the ways in which ChatGPT is not an authoritative source of information. But if you find yourself needing to rely on information generated by ChatGPT to write one of your assignments or essays, you must cite it. The same is true of a Wikipedia page. Wikipedia is not an authoritative source of

information either, but if you are going to rely on it for information, you must cite it. Your instructor might tell you that it's not the best source of information, but they can't accuse you of plagiarism if you cite it correctly. The same is true of ChatGPT. Here is a link detailing how to cite ChatGPT using MLA style: https://style.mla.org/citing-generative-ai/

Using ChatGPT to write your assignments and essays is a form of academic dishonesty and plagiarism.

The University's Policy on Academic Integrity "defines plagiarism as the act of representing the work of another as one's own without giving appropriate credit, regardless of how that work was obtained, and submitting it to fulfill academic requirements. Plagiarism includes:

1.2.1 knowingly or unknowingly incorporating the ideas, words, sentences, paragraphs, parts of sentences or paragraphs, or the specific substance of another's work without giving appropriate credit, and representing the product as one's own work;

1.2.2 representing another's artistic or scholarly works, such as computer programs, instrument printouts, inventions, musical compositions, photographs, paintings, drawings, sculptures, novels, short stories, poems, screen plays, or television scripts, as one's own."

There is no ambiguity here. If you use ChatGPT to write or help to write your paper, you will be representing as your own ideas or the expression of ideas that you did not yourself produce.

Notice that the policy specifies that this also applies to the wording, or expression of ideas. Even if the ideas are your own, you are still committing an academic offense if you use Artificial Intelligence to craft the expression of your ideas (the paragraphs and sentences). The same would be true if you gave your big sister your notes and asked her to write the assignment for you instead. In both these cases, the only way to avoid plagiarism would be to identify ChatGPT or your big sister as the co-author of your essay. But you are not allowed to have a co-author for any the assignments in this course; so this is not an option.

I know some students will find this frustrating, especially those who feel they have good ideas but struggle to articulate these ideas well. But good ideas are not actually very good if they cannot be communicated effectively. It is only through the process of communication that another person is able evaluate the quality of an idea. This is why your education places just as much weight on the expression and articulation of ideas and arguments as it does their generation. The goal is for you to learn how to express your ideas effectively and not to teach a machine how to do it for you. After all, you are the student enrolled in this class, not ChatGPT.

So, is it ever okay to use ChatGPT?

Yes, it is always okay to consult ChatGPT for general information and advice (which is basically the way we've been using the Internet for decades now). But if you are going to rely on any of the information it gives you, you need to cite it as a source, and you should know now from reading the above that it is not an authoritative source: ChatGPT plagiarizes and hallucinates.

When it comes to the writing of your assignments and essays, you may find that there are ways you can get helpful advice from ChatGPT by asking it *how* you can improve your writing. But this is a very slippery slope, which, in most cases, will result in you blurring the lines between what you have produced and what

ChatGPT generates. So be disciplined when using ChatGPT in this way. The bottom line is, if you are relying on ChatGPT for the generation and/or expression of ideas (in any part of your essay) without acknowledging ChatGPT as a co-author (something that, anyway, is not allowed in this course), you are committing the academic offence of plagiarism.

Always check in with your instructor if you are in doubt.

If you have any uncertainties about the appropriate use of ChatGPT, you should always consult with your instructor. Keep in mind that, while I have tried to offer guidelines and advice that are consistent with University policy and academic standards, other instructors may have different attitudes and policies with regards to the use of generative AI, for example, when it comes to the more technical application of the technology in the sciences. But even there, you are going to want to check in with your instructor first.*

*Shared with the permission of original author Thomas Loughlin.

University Policies

Per <u>University Policy S16-9</u> (*http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf*), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on <u>Syllabus Information web page</u>

(http://www.sjsu.edu/gup/syllabusinfo), which is hosted by the Office of Undergraduate Education. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

E Program Information

Welcome to this General Education course.

SJSU's General Education Program establishes a strong foundation of versatile skills, fosters curiosity about the world, promotes ethical judgment, and prepares students to engage and contribute responsibly and cooperatively in a multicultural, information-rich society. General education classes integrate areas of study and encourage progressively more complex and creative analysis, expression, and problem solving.

The General Education Program has three goals:

Goal 1: To develop students' core competencies for academic, personal, creative, and professional pursuits.

Goal 2: To enact the university's commitment to diversity, inclusion, and justice by ensuring that students have the knowledge and skills to serve and contribute to the well-being of local and global communities and the environment.

Goal 3: To offer students integrated, multidisciplinary, and innovative study in which they pose challenging questions, address complex issues, and develop cooperative and creative responses.

More information about the General Education Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) can be found on the <u>GE</u> <u>website</u>.

English Program Information

The following statement has been adopted by the Department of English for inclusion in all syllabi: In English Department Courses, instructors will comment on and grade the quality of student writing as well as the quality of ideas being conveyed. All student writing should be distinguished by correct grammar and punctuation, appropriate diction and syntax, and well-organized paragraphs. The Department of English reaffirms its commitment to the differential grading scale as defined in the SJSU Catalog ("The Grading System").

Grades issued must represent a full range of student performance:

- A = excellent;
- B = above average;
- C = average;
- D = below average;
- F = failure.

Within any of the letter grade ranges (e.g. B+/B/B-), the assignment of a +(plus) or -(minus) grade will reflect stronger (+) or weaker (-) completion of the goals of the assignment.

Program Learning Outcomes (PLO)

Upon successful completion of an undergraduate degree program in the Department of English and Comparative Literature, students will be able to:

- 1. Read closely in a variety of forms, styles, structures, and modes, and articulate the value of close reading in the study of literature, creative writing, or rhetoric.
- 2. Show familiarity with major literary works, genres, periods, and critical approaches to British, American, and World Literature.
- 3. Write clearly, effectively, and creatively, and adjust writing style appropriately to the content, the context, and nature of the subject.
- 4. Develop and carry out research projects, and locate, evaluate, organize, and incorporate information effectively.
- 5. Articulate the relations among culture, history, and texts, including structures of power.

Department Information:

Department Name: English and Comparative Literature Department Office: FO 102 Department Website: www.sjsu.edu/english (https://www.sjsu.edu/english) Department email: english@sjsu.edu (mailto:english@sjsu.edu) Department phone number: 408-924-4425

Course Learning Outcomes (CLOs)

GE Area V Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of an Area V course, students should be able to:

- 1. Analyze historical, social, and/or cultural significance of creative works of human expression (examples include, but are not limited to, written works, images, media, music, dance, technologies, designs), from at least one cultural tradition outside the United States;
- 2. Examine how creative works of human expression [as defined in #1] outside the United States have influenced the United States' cultures;
- 3. Explain how a culture outside the U.S. has changed in response to internal and external influences;
- 4. Appraise how the study of creative works of human expression from outside the United States shapes one's own understanding of cultural experiences and practices.

Writing Practice: Students will write a minimum of 3000 words in a language and style appropriate to the discipline.

📃 Course Materials

Required Books

Weep Not, Child (1964) Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o ISBN: 978-0143106692

Nervous Conditions (1988) Tsitsi Dangarembga ISBN: 978-0954702335

The Joys of Motherhood (1979) Buchi Emecheta ISBN: 978-0807616239

Oil on Water (2010) Helon Habila ISBN: 978-0393339642

Homegoing (2016) Yaa Gyasi ISBN: 978-1101971062

⇐ Course Requirements and Assignments

There will be a series short writing assignments and critical analysis essays that make up the majority of the grade for this class. Should you choose to revise essays, the deadline for revisions is one week from the date you receive your paper back with comments.

Short Writing Assignments 15%		PLO 1, 3 CLO 1, 3
Essay 1:	25%	PLO 1, 2, 3, CLO 1
Essay 2	30%	PLO 1, 2, 3, 4, 5 CLO 1, 3
Weekly Blog Posts	15%	PLO 1, 2, 3, 5 1, CLO 1, 2, 4
Quizzes	10%	PLO 2
Participation	5%	

A (93%-100%)	B- (80%-82.9%)	D+ (67%-69.9%)
A- (90%-92.9%)	C+ (77%-79.9%)	D (63%-66.9%)
B+ (87%-89.9%)	C (73%-76.9%)	D- (60%-62.9%)
B (83%-86.9%)	C- (70%-72.9%)	F (0%-59.9%)

Blog Posts

You will be asked to contribute to the course blog at least once a week. Your contributions will include both an original post (300 words) and a response to a classmate's post (50-100 words). Original posts are due Monday at midnight; responses are due Thursday by the time class meets. Blogs should center on the course readings for that upcoming week, focusing on critical analysis and deploying close reading skills and addressing texts' social, political, and historical contexts to produce analytical readings as discussed in class. Blog posts should make an argument about some element of the text, as well as providing support for the argument with textual evidence and your own interpretation and analysis of the evidence to support your point or idea. The audience for this will be your peers - educated readers familiar with the text therefore, the goal is to produce a value-added piece of writing for the class that hinges on persuading your readers that your interpretation is valid (though debatable). Examples might include: a pattern or theme you have noticed developing in the text, and what you think the author is trying to reveal through it; a close reading of a particular scene in an attempt to get at its possible meaning or implications; the use of outside research to contextualize the text and make an argument about it; a consideration of how the text's conditions of production may relate to or influence its meaning, etc. These posts are designed for you to be able to practice your analytical skills, and receive substantive weekly feedback on your writing and critical thinking in preparation for our longer writing assignments, and to encourage attentive reading practices to facilitate class discussion.

Close Reading Exercises and Research Summaries

Over the course of the semester you will be asked to complete structured close reading exercises to practice and fine-tune this skill leading up to essay assignments. In addition, you will also be asked to complete research summaries in preparation for the research component of papers 1 and 2. These summaries will include an MLA citation of the summarized source, a brief review of the venue of the text, and a concise summary of the text's argument. These assignments are intended to provide support for developing ideas for essays, as well as to provide frequent opportunities for feedback on close reading and research skills necessary for successful completion of the larger writing assignments.

Quizzes

You will be quizzed periodically on reading and lecture materials as well as conventions and mechanics of writing and research covered in readings or during class time. If you are regularly attending class and keeping up with readings, these should be an easy way to keep your grade up – I see them as built-in accountability to encourage you to stay on top of materials.

Participation

As you may have discovered, active participation is key to success and learning. Active participation will help us develop a community to discuss ideas, collaborate, and discover new insights into the texts and topics through the perspectives of others. Participation includes more than merely attending class, as I expect each of you to arrive prepared by having carefully read assigned readings, and to actively participate in full class discussions and smaller group discussions and in class projects and activities.

Contextual Analysis Papers

Length: 1000-1,500 words double-spaced, plus a separate Works Cited list. Use standard margins and 12-point Times New Roman font.

Essay Guidelines: The purpose of this essay is to analyze how a text responds to one specific historical issue at the time of writing. The goal is not to write a comprehensive explanation of the whole book, but to focus closely on a set of passages, verbal patterns, or recurring images that can help readers understand one specific aspect of the text's relationship to its particular time and place.

Your **introduction** should briefly introduce the context you're focusing on and state your **thesis**: your central argument about how you think the author represents or implicitly responds to a specific cultural/historical/political issue.

In your **body paragraphs**, provide background information to orient readers to your historical issue, and use textual analysis to explain how you think the author is representing or responding to this issue. You might choose to focus closely on one or two passages or gather a range of quotations from across the book. Your Contextual Analysis Paper will develop the same skills you've practiced in the close reading exercises: analyzing the significance of the author's formal choices, such as their word choice, tone, selection of detail, and use of metaphors. For this paper, you'll be focusing on **how those formal details reveal the author's response to a specific cultural/political/social conflict**.

Research: This assignment requires you to gather evidence from outside of your main literary text. You are required to incorporate **at least 2** (1st paper)-**3** (2nd paper) **credible scholarly sources**: these could include sources that provide background information on your historical topic, critical essays that make an argument related to your historical topic, or other sources as appropriate such as a relevant primary text. Cite all of your sources within the paper using parenthetical citations (Author #), and include a Works Cited page citing all 2/3 sources in MLA style.

To locate sources in the SJSU library system, visit the MLK Library's English and Comparative Literature research guide: <u>https://libguides.sjsu.edu/english</u>. The research guide includes contact information for the English and Comparative Literature librarian, who can help with research questions. For more guidance, please visit my office hours, the Writing Center, or the MLK Library's Research help desk.

Grading Criteria:

For a C or above, your paper must be at least 1000 words long, incorporate 2/3 sources, and include a debatable thesis statement about your selected text's relation to one specific historical context. If your paper meets these basic requirements, I will assess your grade based on the following criteria, listed in

order of importance:

- *Argument:* Does the paper develop a compelling argument about how the author represents and responds to a specific historical context, rather than just summarizing the book and listing contextual information? Does the evidence in your body paragraphs support your argument?
- *Historical specificity:* Do you ground claims about the author's historical and cultural context in your research, rather than making assumptions? For example, do you describe specific ways in which people were constrained at particular moments or in particular circumstances under colonialism, rather than vaguely stating that people were oppressed?
- *Organization:* Does the essay develop logically? Do you use transitions and topic sentences to link your paragraphs?
- *Integrating research:* Do you effectively incorporate your three sources? Do you frame each quotation or paraphrase with an explanation of its significance? Do you attribute ideas and phrases to their sources using in-text citations?
- *Presentation:* Is your paper free of grammatical errors and edited for style?

🟛 University Policies

Per <u>University Policy S16-9 (PDF) (http://www.sjsu.edu/senate/docs/S16-9.pdf</u>), relevant university policy concerning all courses, such as student responsibilities, academic integrity, accommodations, dropping and adding, consent for recording of class, etc. and available student services (e.g. learning assistance, counseling, and other resources) are listed on the <u>Syllabus Information</u>

(<u>https://www.sjsu.edu/curriculum/courses/syllabus-info.php</u>) web page. Make sure to visit this page to review and be aware of these university policies and resources.

📅 Course Schedule

ENG 123B: Literature for Global Understanding: Africa, Fall 2022, Course Schedule

Below is a table with the proposed weekly agenda for the semester. This is subject to change with fair notice.

Notification of changes will be made via Canvas Announcements, or in class. Please make sure that your email on Canvas is your preferred email.

Course Schedule

Note: **readings should be done for the day they are assigned**, please bring hard copies of the texts with you to class for discussion.

Week One	Aug. 22 nd Introductions/Syllabus TedTalk: The Danger of a Single Story	HW: Read Chinua Achebe "An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's <i>Heart of Darkness"</i> ; Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o, "The Language of African Literature" from <i>Decolonizing the Mind</i> (Canvas)
	Aug. 24 th Review of Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o in the context of African literature and colonialism	HW: Read Simon Gikandi: Introduction: "East African Literature in English From 1945 to the Present" and Simon Gikandi <i>Ngũgĩ wa Thiong'o</i> Preface, Chronology, and section in Introduction "Ngũgĩ and the drama of (post)colonialism" (3-12) canvas
Week Two	Aug. 29 th Discussion of introductory and contextual readings; close reading steps and practice	HW: Read <i>Weep Not, Child</i> Part One
	Aug. 31st Lecture on and discussion of readings	HW: Close reading #1 due Tuesday, 9/5 No Blog Post this week
Week Three	Sept. 5 th : Discussion of <i>Weep Not, Child</i>	HW: Weep Not, Child, Part Two, chapters 8-13
	Sept. 7th Close Reading assignment review; discussion of <i>Weep Not, Child</i>	HW: Weep Not, Child, Part Two, chapters 14-end
Week Four	Sept. 12th Introduction to <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , discussion of gender in African literature	HW: Read <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Intro through Chapter Three (pp. vii-57)
	Sept. 14 th	HW: <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Chapter Four through Chapter Five (pp. 58-104) Close Reading #2 Due Tuesday, 9/19

Week Five	Sept. 19 th Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i>	HW: <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , Chapter Six through half of Chapter 8 (pp. 105-161)
	Sept. 21st Review of Close Reading Assignment	HW: <i>Nervous Conditions</i> , second half of Chapter 8 through end (pp. 162-208).
Week Six	Sept. 26 th Discussion of <i>Nervous Conditions</i> ; Review of Contextual Analysis essay and research summary assignment;	HW: Research Summary 1 due Thursday 9/28
	Sept. 28 th Introduction to <i>The Joys of</i> <i>Motherhood</i>	HW: Read <i>The Joys of Motherhood</i> Introduction, and chapters 1-6 (pp. 1-62)
		Recommended: Read, from <u>Gikandi's book on</u> <u>Ngugi</u> : section from the Intro: "Ngugi and the Drama of (post) Colonialism" (pages 3-12)
Week Seven	Oct. 3rd Discussion of <i>The Joys of</i> <i>Motherhood</i>	HW: <i>The Joys of Motherhood</i> Chapters 7-9 (pp. 63-110)
	Oct. 5th No class: Read Down Girl, by Kate Manne (on canvas) and respond to blog post for credit for today	HW: Read <i>The Joys of Motherhood</i> chapters 10-12 (pp. 111-150); Research Summary 2 due Oct. 10th

Week Eight	Oct. 10th Discussion of <i>The Joys of</i> <i>Motherhood</i>	HW: Read <i>The Joys of Motherhood</i> chapters 13-18 (pp. 151-224)
	Oct. 12th Paper One review – prewriting steps	HW: Paper One Worksheet due 10/17: optional
		Recommended: From <i>The Cambridge Companion</i> <i>to the African Novel,</i> Chapter 11: "The African novel and the feminine condition" by Nana Wilson-Tagoe
Week Nine	Oct. 17 th Thesis and outline peer review; model essay/final tips	HW: Paper One due Thursday 10/19
	Oct. 19th Intro to context of Oil crisis in the Niger Delta	HW: Read <i>Oil on Water</i> Ch. 1-5 (pp. 1-64)
Week Ten	Oct. 24th Discussion <i>Oil on Water</i>	HW: Read <i>Oil on Water</i> Ch. 6-9 (pp. 65-111)
	Oct. 26th Discussion of novel	HW: read <i>Oil on Water</i> chapter 10-15 (pp. 112-179)

Week Eleven	Oct. 31 st Discussion of <i>Oil on Water</i>	HW: Oil on Water (Ch. 16-end) (180-end)
	Nov. 2 nd Introduction to <i>Homegoing</i>	HW: Homegoing, Effia, Esi (pp. 3-49)
		Recommended: Roots, History Channel, 2016 available on Hulu; Ta-Nehisi Coates, <u>"The Case for</u> <u>Reparations"</u>
Week Twelve	Nov. 7th Discussion of <i>Homegoing</i> Election Day	HW: <i>Homegoing</i> , Quey, Ness, James (pp. 50-110)
	Nov. 9th Saidiya Hartman; discussion of <i>Homegoing</i>	HW: Homegoing, Kojo, Abena, H (110-153)
		Recommended: Introduction and Chapter One of <u>Scenes of Subjection</u> by Saidiya Hartman, The 13 th (available on Netflix); <u>Introduction and Chapter 1 of</u> <u>Michelle Alexander's <i>The New Jim Crow</i></u>
Week Thirteen	Nov. 14th The New Jim Crow and H; Final Paper review	HW: <i>Homegoing</i> , Akua, Willie (157-221)
	Nov. 16th : The Great Migration; discussion of novel	HW: <i>Homegoing</i> , Yaw, Sonny (222-242) Research Summary 3
		Recommended:
		Reading and Interview with Yaa Gyasi;

Week Fourteen	Nov. 21st : Final Paper Review and Reminders	HW: <i>Homegoing</i> , Marjorie, Marcus; Research Summary 4
	Thanksgiving	
Week Fifteen	Nov. 28 th Discussion of end of novel	HW: Final Paper Worksheet due Nov. 30 th (optional)
	Nov. 30 th extended office hours	HW: Final Blog Post; work on Final Paper
Week Sixteen	Dec. 5th Extended office hours for discussion of final paper	HW: Final Paper due Dec. 8th