
AFST 303 (LEC01)
Critical Contemporary Issues in Africa
GFC Hours 3-0
Fall 2023

Instructor: Dr. Motilola Akinfemisoye-
Adejare

Lecture Location: SB 105

Phone: 403-220-6688

Lecture Days/Time: MoWeFr/
2:00pm-2:50pm

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appointment; Zoom Tuesday

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Prerequisite(s): None

COURSE DESCRIPTION

Africa, the world's second largest continent, is very diverse. Home to fifty-four countries, this diversity finds expressions in the plurality of cultures, beliefs, arts, political structures and practices, among others. This course explores contemporary issues in Africa and how Africans navigate their everyday lives, cultures and practices on the continent. While images of Africa in the West mostly reveal pessimism, it is very useful to interrogate how various social and cultural context factors shape and constrain Africa's relations with herself and the world. Some of the themes that would be explored in this course include colonial legacies, women politicians, social media and political activism, youth and popular culture, among others.

LEARNING OUTCOMES:

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology is committed to student knowledge and skill development.

Upon completion of this course, you should be able to:

- Demonstrate conversance with African geographies, languages, cultures, histories (pre-colonial, colonial and post-colonial) and post-independence politics

- Critically read and demonstrate a balanced understanding of contemporary Africa and its peoples
- Analyse and debate contemporary issues in Africa through critical engagement with scholarship and peers
- Apply knowledge from interrogating these contemporary themes to develop critical writing and analytical skills
- Interrogate issues about Africa and Africans from a nuanced and contextual lens

READINGS AND TEXTBOOKS:

Required Text

Moseley, W. and Otiso, K. (eds.) (2023) *Debating African Issues: Conversations Under the Palaver Tree* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge

Recommended readings

Ogola, George (2015) Social media as a heteroglossic discursive space and Kenya's emergent alternative/citizen experiment, *African Journalism Studies*, 36:4, 66-81, DOI: [10.1080/23743670.2015.1119490](https://doi.org/10.1080/23743670.2015.1119490) <https://www-tandfonline-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/doi/abs/10.1080/23743670.2015.1119490>

Ugor, Paul (ed.) (2021) *Youth and Popular Culture in Africa: Media, Music and Politics*. Boydell & Brewer. <https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/core/books/youth-and-popular-culture-in-africa/0E533F31333CBC19C197C2B98F01ED7C>

Wasserman, Herman (ed.)(2011) *Popular Media, Democracy and Development in Africa* London: Routledge <https://www-taylorfrancis-com.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/books/edit/10.4324/9780203843260/popular-media-democracy-development-africa-herman-wasserman>

Welz, M. (2021) *Africa since Decolonization: The History and Politics of a Diverse Continent*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi: 10.1017/9781108599566. <https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/core/books/africa-since-decolonization/27E2A49DE2B6308449BC2DA73D7C2709>

REQUIRED TECHNOLOGY and EQUIPMENT:

To successfully engage in their learning experiences at the University of Calgary, students in this course will need reliable access to the following technology: A computer with a supported operating system; a current and updated web browser; current antivirus and/or firewall software enabled; broadband internet connection, a word processor such as Microsoft Word and PowerPoint for assignments and presentations. To participate effectively in this course, learners are expected to know how D2L and TopHat work, please visit: <https://elearn.ucalgary.ca/technology-requirements-for-students/> <https://app-ca.tophat.com>

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND ASSESSMENTS

Assessment	%	Due Date
Short reflective essay	20	Wednesday October 4, 2023, no later than 23:59
Group Presentation/ Debate	30	Beginning Wednesday November 8, 2023
Presentation summary and individual reflection (due before or on presentation day)	5	Beginning Wednesday November 8, 2023
Final Essay	30	From Monday December 4 to Wednesday December 6, 2023, no later than 23:59
Participation and Discussion	15	Ongoing throughout course
Total	100	

Details on Methods of Assessment

Short reflective essay (750 words) 20% weighting

For this assignment, students will be required to write a short essay based on what has been taught and discussed in class up to that moment, using Chimamanda Adichie's "Danger of a Single Story" TedTalk as an illustrative anchor. The essay will require students to reflect on what they have learnt so far in the class, and what assumptions they had about Africa before taking this course. Submission via D2L Dropbox on Wednesday October 4, 2023, no later than 23:59

Group Presentations 30% weighting + written summary and reflections 5%

Depending on the number of students taking the course, I will divide the class into groups of 5 students or 6 students at the most. Each group will make a presentation on a topic assigned to them. The essence of the group presentation is to test and improve students' ability to work as a team. Therefore, to get a good grade for group presentations, students should be able to convince the class that their work is truly a product of a collective effort. The presentation could take the form of a debate if the group wishes. The presentation should be between 20-25minutes. There will be a question-and-answer session after each presentation and students' ability to answer the questions directed at their group will fetch them more marks. While the presentation itself is worth 30 points, students are expected to provide a written summary of their presentation on or before the day of the presentation. This should include individual reflections for each group member, detailing each person's contribution to the presentation. The written summary is worth 5 points. The group presentations will come after we have discussed all topics in the class schedule. **Groups, topics and grading rubric will be posted on D2L by week 4.**

Participation/Discussion 15%weighting

One of the pedagogical legs on which this course stands is co-creating with learners. As such, discussions in class and on D2L will be useful to enhance our collaborative learning. Marks

for this component will be earned by your individual contributions in class discussions and online on D2L discussion posts. I will be looking out for students' ability to participate in class discussions and will be awarding 1 point after each class to the students who participate in the discussions. If students are not very comfortable with talking in class, they are welcome to post their contributions on the discussion section of D2L so that I can use that to grade them for participation. Again, as a participatory class, students are expected to have read the assigned readings beforehand. Students are encouraged to jot down their points/thoughts while reading as that will help them to be better discussants in class. Please note that the maximum score for this 100%. As such, once this is reached, students can no longer earn additional points. Extra points earned are also not transferrable to other assessment components.

Final Essay 1500 words 30%weighting

For the final essay, students are free to choose any research topic that broadly fits into the theme of the course. Students can choose, for instance to write about youth political engagements on social media, or how colonial legacies have impacted on the language of instruction in higher education institutions in Africa. You could also choose to write on a topic that you found interesting either during classes or from the textbook. While engaging with scholarly texts, such as books and journal articles will be very important, the grading will be based primarily on originality of ideas, clarity of argument and the ability to critically analyze a contemporary African issue. All topics must be approved by the instructor, so please email me with your final essay topic by Monday October 30, 2023, at the latest.

Submission via D2L from Monday December 4 to Wednesday December 6, 2023.

Policy on missed, late and deferred submissions:

Assessments may only be deferred in the case of serious illness or medical emergency, religious observance, or domestic affliction. [see: https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-final-exams](https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/exams/deferred-final-exams)).

Missed assignment or presentation cannot be made up without the approval of the instructor. Students who miss an assessment have up to **48 hours** to contact the instructor to ask for a makeup assessment. Please note that it is at the instructor's discretion if they will allow a make-up exam. Students who do not schedule a makeup assessment with the instructor within this **48-hour period** forfeit the right to a makeup assessment and will receive a mark of zero on the exam or assignment. At the instructor's discretion, a makeup assessment may differ significantly (in form and/or content) from a regularly scheduled assessment. For instance, instead of an essay, a student could be asked to write a closed-book short answer test. Once approved by the instructor a makeup test/exam must be written within **two weeks** of the missed assessment on a day/time scheduled by the instructor. You may also request, in writing, that the weight of a missed assessment be transferred to remaining assessments. Please note that this policy excludes the participation component of this course.

For written assignments: Late assignments will be penalized 5% per day, including holidays and weekends. All assignments must be submitted to the Dropbox on D2L.

Regarding documentation: Students may provide supporting documentation for an exemption/special request. This may include, but is not limited to, a prolonged absence

from a course where participation is required, a missed course assessment, a deferred examination, or an appeal. Students are encouraged to submit documentation that will support their situation. The decision to provide supporting documentation that best suits the situation is at the discretion of the student. Students cannot be required to provide specific supporting documentation, such as a medical note. Falsification of any supporting documentation will be taken very seriously and may result in disciplinary action through the Academic Discipline regulations or the Student Non-Academic Misconduct policy.

Please NOTE: Should a request to defer term work exceed the end of the term, a Deferral of Term Work form must be completed and submitted to the Office of the Registrar. The deferral will be recorded on the student record. Deferrals are granted at the discretion of the Dean or designate and are normally granted for 30 days beyond the last day of the term. Should circumstances warrant, the maximum time that may be granted for a deferral of term work is one additional term. Approved extensions must be sent to the Office of the Registrar. Application information is available at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/student-centre/student-forms>

Reappraisal of Graded Term Work: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-2.html>

Reappraisal of Final Grade: <http://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/i-3.html>

Department of Anthropology and Archaeology Grading Scheme:

A+	95 – 100%	B+	80 – 84.9%	C+	67 – 70.9%	D+	55 – 58.9%
A	90 – 94.9%	B	75 – 79.9%	C	63 – 66.9%	D	50 – 54.9%
A-	85 – 89.9%	B-	71 – 74.9%	C-	59 – 62.9%	F	< 50%

****Please note that no extra credit or ‘make up’ work is available in this class****

You do not need to pass each course component to earn a passing grade in the class

Land Acknowledgement

The University of Calgary, located in the heart of Southern Alberta, both acknowledges and pays tribute to the traditional territories of the peoples of Treaty 7, which include the Blackfoot Confederacy (comprised of the Siksika, the Piikani, and the Kainai First Nations), the Tsuut’ina First Nation, and the Stoney Nakoda (including Chiniki, Bearspaw, and Goodstoney First Nations). The City of Calgary is also home to the Métis Nation of Alberta Region 3.

Acknowledgment and Respect for Diversity

The Department of Anthropology and Archaeology views diversity of identity as a strength and resource. Your experiences and different perspectives are encouraged and add to a rich learning environment that fosters critical thought through respectful discussion and inclusion.

COURSE POLICIES

Respect is very crucial on this course. Viewpoints expressed during classes, presentations and online on D2L discussion boards should be done in a collegial manner. Harsh or hostile comments or insults are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Passing off AI generated content/essays as your work is not good academic practice and is therefore prohibited in this course.

Email Policy

I will make every effort to respond to your email within 24-48 hours. Please include your UCID and course code in the subject of your email when you contact me. Please note that formal email netiquettes apply when contacting me: "Dear Dr. Motilola" together with a well signed off greeting such as "Sincerely", "Kind regards" etc., work best. If I have not responded after 48 hours, it might be that I have missed your email. Kindly send a follow-up message, forwarding your initial message. Thank you for your kind understanding.

UNIVERSITY POLICIES

ACADEMIC ACCOMMODATIONS

Students seeking an accommodation based on disability or medical concerns should contact Student Accessibility Services; SAS will process the request and issue letters of accommodation to instructors. For additional information on support services and accommodations for students with disabilities, visit <https://live-ucalgary.ucalgary.ca/student-services/access>. Students who require an accommodation in relation to their coursework based on a protected ground other than disability should communicate this need in writing to their Instructor or the Department Head. The full policy on Student Accommodations is available at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/sites/default/files/teams/1/Policies-Student-Accommodation-Policy.pdf>

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY POLICY

Academic integrity is the foundation of the development and acquisition of knowledge and is based on values of honesty, trust, responsibility, and respect. We expect members of our community to act with integrity. The University Calendar includes a statement on the principles of conduct expected of all members of the university community (including students, faculty, administrators, any category of staff, practicum supervisors, and volunteers), whether on or off university property. This statement applies in all situations where members of the university community are acting in their university capacities. All members of the university community have a responsibility to familiarize themselves with the principles of conduct statement, which is available at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k.html.

ACADEMIC MISCONDUCT

The University of Calgary is committed to the highest standards of academic integrity and honesty. Students are expected to be familiar with these standards regarding academic honesty and to uphold the policies of the University in this respect.

Academic dishonesty is not an acceptable activity at the University of Calgary, and students are **strongly advised** to read the Student Misconduct section in the University Calendar at: www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/k-3.html. Often, students are unaware of what constitutes academic dishonesty or plagiarism. The most common are (1) presenting another student's work as your own, (2) presenting an author's work or ideas as your own without adequate citation, and (3) using work completed for another course. Such activities will not be tolerated in this course, and students suspected of academic misconduct will be dealt with according to the procedures outlined in the calendar at: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/student-academic-misconduct-procedure>

For students wishing to know more about what constitutes plagiarism and how to properly cite the work of others, the Department of Geography recommends that they attend Academic Integrity workshops offered through the Student Success Centre: <https://www.ucalgary.ca/student-services/student-success/learning/academic-integrity>

INSTRUCTOR INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

Course materials created by professor(s) (including course outlines, presentations and posted notes, labs, case studies, assignments and exams) remain the intellectual property of the professor(s). These materials may NOT be reproduced, redistributed or copied without the explicit consent of the professor. The posting of course materials to third party websites such as note-sharing sites without permission is prohibited. Sharing of extracts of these course materials with other students enrolled in the course at the same time may be allowed under fair dealing. Information on Instructor Intellectual Property can be found at <https://www.ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/intellectual-property-policy>

FREEDOM OF INFORMATION AND PROTECTION OF PRIVACY ACT

Student information will be collected in accordance with typical (or usual) classroom practice. Students' assignments will be accessible only by the authorized course faculty. Private information related to the individual student is treated with the utmost regard by the faculty at the University of Calgary.

COPYRIGHT LEGISLATION

All students are required to read the University of Calgary policy on Acceptable Use of Material Protected by Copyright (<https://ucalgary.ca/legal-services/university-policies-procedures/acceptable-use-material-protected-copyright-policy>) and requirements of the copyright act (<https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/acts/C-42/index.html>) to ensure they are aware of the consequences of unauthorized sharing of course materials (including instructor notes, electronic versions of textbooks, etc.). Students who use material protected by copyright in violation of this policy may be disciplined under the Non-Academic Misconduct Policy.

SUPPORTS FOR STUDENT LEARNING, SUCCESS, AND SAFETY

Please visit the Registrar's website at:

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/registrar/registration/course-outlines> for additional important information on the following:

- Wellness and Mental Health Resources
- Student Success Centre
- Student Ombuds Office
- Student Union (SU) Information
- Graduate Students' Association (GSA) Information
- Emergency Evacuation/Assembly Points
- Safewalk

TENTATIVE CLASS SCHEDULE

This schedule is subject to minor changes with prior notice.

Week	Date	Topic/Activity/Readings/Due Date
Week 1	W Sep 6 F Sep 8	Introductions, course outline discussions and course expectations Class Activity: What five words come to mind when you hear 'Africa'? Watch: Adichie, Chimamanda (2009) " The Danger of a Single Story "
Week 2	M Sep11 W Sep13 F Sep 15	Setting the scene Cursory overview: From Pre-colonial Africa to 'the Scramble for Africa' Read: Koster, M. and Choti, C. (2023) "Was Africa more peaceful and prosperous prior to European contact?" Chapter 3 in W. Moseley and K. Otiso, (eds.) (2023) <i>Debating African Issues: Conversations Under the Palaver Tree</i> Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge, 23-37. (Henceforth, readings from required text will be presented as chapter title and chapter number)
Week 3	M Sep18 W Sep20 F Sep 22	Colonial legacies and Africa today: Political and economic landscape Read: "Is Africa Truly Rising?" Chapter 6 of required text Further optional reading: Welz, Martins "Decolonization's Legacies" https://www-cambridge-org.ezproxy.lib.ucalgary.ca/core/books/africa-since-decolonization/decolonizations-legacies/D807D55B3266A630331400818C8CD514
Week 4	M Sep25 W Sep27 F Sep 29	Colonialism and Africa's Cultural identity Read: "Did colonialism distort African development?": Chapter 4 of required text
Week 5	M Oct 2 W Oct 4 F Oct 6	Religiosity in Africa: Of celebrity 'prophets', crusades, private jets and 'development' Music in Africa: Of Apala, Afrobeats, Amapiano and others.

		<p>Read: “Is African religiosity a hindrance to development?” Chapter 17 of required text Watch: BBC Culture “How Fela Kuti and Tony Allen created a new genre of music” Reflective Essay due Wednesday October 4, 2023 via D2L dropbox no later than 23:59</p>
	M Oct 9	Thanksgiving Day, No Classes
Week 6	W Oct 11 F Oct 13	<p>Youth and popular culture in Africa: Of ‘jollof wars’, activist politics, and online celebrities. Read: Ugor, Paul (2021) Introduction :Youth, Media, and Popular Arts Culture in Contemporary Africa, Chapter 1</p>
Week 7	M Oct 16 W Oct 18 F Oct 20	<p>Social media and social movements in Africa: Example of #EndSars protests and others Read: “Has the proliferation of cell phones strengthened social movements in Africa?” Chapter 21 of required text Further recommended reading: Ogola, George (2015) Social media as a heteroglossic discursive space and Kenya's emergent alternative/citizen experiment, <i>African Journalism Studies</i>, 36:4, 66-81</p>
Week 8	M Oct 23 W Oct 25 F Oct 27	<p>China in Africa: Is this a ‘new scramble’ for Africa? Read: “Is China better than other outside powers in fostering African Economic transformation?” Chapter 8 of required text</p>
Week 9	M Oct 30 W Nov 1 F Nov 3	<p>Democratic governance in Africa Read: “Is multi-party democracy the best form of governance in African countries?” Chapter 18 of required text Where are the women politicians in Africa? Read: “Do more women in politics lead to better governance in African countries?” Chapter 20 of required text (Monday October 30, 2023 is the last day to submit final essay topic proposal)</p>
Week 10	M Nov 6 W Nov 8 F Nov 10	<p>Who owns the land? Land debates and issues in Africa Read: “Are foreign land acquisitions the latest form of neo-colonialism in Africa?” Chapter 7 of required text Student Presentations, Discussions and Feedback (beginning Wednesday November 8, 2023)</p>
Week 11	Nov 12-18	Reading Break, No Classes
Week 12	M Nov 20 W Nov 22 F Nov 24	Student Presentations, Discussions and Feedback
Week 13	M Nov 27 W Nov 29 F Dec 1	Student Presentations, Discussions and Feedback

Week 14	M Dec 4	Student Presentations, Discussions and Feedback Final Essay due from today Monday December 4 to Wednesday December 6, 2023
	W Dec 6	Concluding remarks and thoughts, End of Classes, Final Essay due no later than 23:59

IMPORTANT DATES

M Sept 4	Labour Day, No Classes
T Sept 5	Start of Classes
R Sept 14	Last day to drop a class without a financial penalty
F Sept 15	Last day to add or swap a course
F Sept 22	Fee payment deadline for Fall Term full and half courses.
S Sept 30	National Truth and Reconciliation Day
M Oct 9	Thanksgiving Day, No Classes.
M Nov 13	Remembrance Day Observance
Nov 12-18	Reading Break. No classes.
W Dec 6	Fall Term Lectures End. Last day to withdraw with permission from Fall Term half courses.
Dec 9-20	Fall Final Exam Period.
Dec 25-31	Holiday Observance, University Closed.

<https://www.ucalgary.ca/pubs/calendar/current/academic-schedule.html#fall2017>