

African Studies through Literature

Class Description:

This one semester course will study different regions of Africa through the reading of 5-8 novels and 3-4 short stories written by African authors from the diverse regions of Africa. To study the novels, the classes will use literature circles, as described by the Penn Literacy Network and the work of educator Harvey Daniels. Within each “lit circle” students are assigned a role. Some of these roles include Discussion Director, Illustrator, Summarizer, Passage master and more. Each role has a job description that students must follow within their “lit circle”.

The course will be reading and writing intensive to coincide with our literacy based school-wide initiative. Classes will be organized into “lit circle” days and reading days. On reading days, students will be assigned a section of a book to read. Following a reading day, on “lit circle” days, students will meet in their group to discuss the pages that were assigned. Students will be given questions or talking points by the teacher to help lead the group discussion. Additionally, students will be keeping a “lit journal.” In their journal, they will be asked to respond to questions about their readings or reflect on a part of African culture that was discussed in the novel. The journals will also be used to respond and reflect on current event articles from the news regarding Africa. The course will be supplemented with online videos about the specific regions of Africa that the class is studying.

The following novels, which will be provided for students in class, are among the books we will study:

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| East Africa: | Joseph Lemasolai Lekuton, <i>Facing the Lion</i> Uwem Akpan, “Ex-mas Feast” and “What Language is That” |
| North Africa: | Mariama Ba, <i>So Long a Letter</i> |
| Central Africa: | Chinua Achebe, <i>Things Fall Apart</i> Uwem Akpan, “My Parents’ Bedroom” Ngugi wa Thiong’o, <i>Dreams in a Time of War</i> |
| Southern Africa: | J. Nozipo Maraire, <i>Zenzele: A letter for My Daughter</i> Athol Fugard, <i>Tsotsi</i> |

Assessment:

Students will be assessed numerous ways throughout the course:

- Participation in literature circle will be given a grade every time their group meets.
- At the end of each novel, there will be essay questions students will have to complete to assess their understanding of the book and their comprehension of the culture of that specific region.
- Literature journals will be graded at the end of each unit.
- There will be an end of the semester assessment that will summarize their understanding of all the novels together as a unit.

Prerequisite:

- Students who take African Studies need to be prepared for the amount of reading and writing in the course
- Students should have already taken World History II and received a B or better and received a B or better in English class.