

Department of English & Writing Studies
Department of Women's Studies & Feminist Research

Topics in Postcolonial Literature - Cultures of African Queer Representations
English 3882F (001)/Women's Studies 3363F (001)

Fall 2016

Instructor: Taiwo Adetunji Osinubi
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519.661.2111 x84310
Office Hours: Tues 10:00-12:00pm, Thurs
11:00-12:00pm

Course Location: Somerville House 2317

Date/Time: Tuesday 3:30-5:30pm,
Thursday 4:30-5:30pm

Teaching Assistant: Gabriele Vita
AHB 2G30
Office Hours: Tues 1:00-3:00pm or by appt

Prerequisites for English 3882F: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020E or 1022E or 1024E or 1035E or 1036E or both English 1027F/G and 1028F/G, or permission of the Department.

Prerequisites for Women's Studies 3363F: Women's Studies 2220E or 2253E or 2273E or permission of the Department.

Course Description

This course will introduce students to representations of queer figures in African literature, film, and political discourse. That figure—incarnated as lesbian, gay, inter-sexed, transgendered, or indeterminate—has recently gained a new visibility in the political dialogue of African democracies, in circulating ideas of Africa, and the claims of new national and transnational networks criticizing the legal and social predicaments faced by African sexual minorities. This course will provide students with an opportunity to read, discuss, analyze, and write critically about creative responses to these developments. We will analyze novels, short stories, life writing, essays, films, blogs, videos, legislation, and some critical work published by scholars in the field of African queer studies. Extra Information: 3 hours, 0.5 course.

Learning Objectives:

- Analyze and write about LGBTI themes in African literatures and film. A key component of this course will be documentation of concepts specific to African LGBTI narratives.
- Understand the rise of African queer studies and develop knowledge of the specific histories and dialogues about LGBTI advocacy in African countries.
- Analyze the circulation—reception, adaptations, and contestations—of queer theory in the African studies.
- Understand anxieties around sexual minorities in the contexts of decolonization, anti-imperialism, and the global circulation of rights-based identity discourses.
- Understand the aesthetic forms through which new narratives about divergent sexual identities are disseminated.

Course Materials

These texts are available at the UWO Bookstore.

Books:

Huchu, Tendai. *The Hairdresser of Harare*.

Okparanta, Chinelo. *Under the Udala Tree*.

Wainaina, Binyavanga. *One Day I Shall Write About This Place*.

Shorter Readings:

Achebe, Chinua. "Uncle Ben's Choice." ✓

Adichie, Chimamanda N. "On Monday of Last Week." ✓

Adichie, Chimamanda N. "The Shivering." ✓

Brutus, Denis. "Letters to Martha." ✓

Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mount Kenya*. Chapters 6-8. 125-178. ✓

Nyeko, Monica Arac. "Jambula Tree." ✓

Okparanta, Chinelo. "America." ✓

Osundu, E.C. "I Will Lend You My Wife." ✓

Morgan, Ruth. Ed. *Trans: Transgender Life Stories from South Africa*. Selections. ✓
Queer Africa: A Reader. Selections. ✓

Titles marked with ✓ are on the course OWL site under "Course Readings."

Films:

Confusion Na Wa. Dir. Kenneth Gyang. 2013. NETFLIX.

Call Me Kuchu. Dir. Malika Zouhali-Worrall & Katherine Fairfax Wright. 2012.

Faculty of Arts & Humanities Film Resource Library and Screening Room is located in AHB 1G19.

Websites:

Binyavanga Wainaina, "We Must Free Our Imagination." Parts 1-6 on YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8uMwppw5AqU>.

Where Love is a Crime: Website for Nigerian LGBT communities:

http://www.whereloveisacrime.org/?page_id=973

The selections from books will be available in a course pack. Please do not purchase the entire books for the class, unless you are interested in reading them for your personal study.

Methods of Evaluation

Assignments and Examination:

Attendance	10%
Research essay 1	25%
Research essay 2	30%
Final Exam	35%

A student must receive a passing grade for both term work and the final examination in order to receive a passing grade for the course. This applies to all courses in all programs offered by the department. Students whose term and final exam grades average 50% or above, even though one of the two is a failure, shall receive a default grade of 48%. **Please note:** The department of English & Writing Studies does not release final grades. All undergraduate grade reports will be available online from the Office of the Registrar.

Students are fully responsible for looking at and being familiar with the information posted on the department website at <http://www.uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/info%20for%20students.html#grade>.

Timetable:

TERM 1 FALL 2016

Week 1 September 8	INTRODUCTION
Week 2 September 13/15	<i>Call Me Kuchu & Confusion Na Wa.</i>
Week 3 September 20	Lecture: Colonial Modernity, Queer Representations, & the Global Culture Wars Jomo Kenyatta, <i>Facing Mount Kenya</i> . Chapters 6-8. 125-178. ✓ Chinua Achebe, "Uncle Ben's Choice." ✓ Denis Brutus, "Letters to Martha." ✓
September 22	Monica Arac de Nyeko, "Jambula Tree." ✓
Week 4 September 27	Chinelo Okparanta, "America." ✓ E.C. Osundu, "I Will Lend You My Wife." ✓ Chimamanda N. Adichie, "On Monday of Last Week." ✓
September 29	Chimamanda N. Adichie, "The Shivering." ✓
Research essay 1	Due Date: October 20 in class.
Week 5 October 4/6	Huchu, Tendai. <i>The Hairdresser of Harare</i> .
Week 6 October 11/13	Huchu, Tendai. <i>The Hairdresser of Harare</i> .
Week 7 October 18/20	Binyavanga Wainaina. <i>One Day I Shall Write About This Place</i> .
Week 8 October 25	Binyavanga Wainaina, <i>One Day I Shall Write About This Place</i> . Binyavanga Wainaina, "I am a Homosexual Mum." ONLINE
Research essay 2	Due Date: October November 22 in class.
October 27	Fall Study Break
Week 9 November 1	Binyavanga Wainaina. <i>One Day I Shall Write About This Place</i> .
Week 9 November 3	Okparanta, Chinelo. <i>Under the Udala Tree</i> .

Week 10 November 8/10	Okparanta, Chinelo. <i>Under the Udala Tree</i> .
Week 11 November 15/17	Okparanta, Chinelo. <i>Under the Udala Tree</i> .
Week 12 November 22/24	Morgan, Ruth. Ed. <i>Trans: Transgender Life Stories</i> . ✓
Week 13 November 29	<i>Queer Africa: A Reader</i> . Transgender Lives: Essays. 54-68. ✓
Week 14 December 1/6	REVIEW

Course Mechanics

Pedagogy: The **teaching methodology** for this course comprises of lectures, in-class analysis, and group discussions. The course requires student participation; we will spend part of each class discussing individual responses to the readings. Students are expected to complete all assigned readings and to come to class with questions about sections they would like to go over during discussion periods.

Assignments: There will be a final exam and two paper. The first paper is 6 pages long and the final paper is a research paper of 8-10 pages. Both papers must be connected to material covered in the course. All essays will be graded on the basis of 1) the quality of the argument, 2) the attention to textual analysis, 3) the use of critical concepts we would have used in the course, 4) the organization of the essay (including its use of the MLA documentation style), and (the final paper) the quality of the research.

The Final Exam will assess students' familiarity with the primary texts and key concepts discussed over the term. A list of all key concepts for the course will be on the course OWL site. **The use of texts, lecture notes, and electronic devices is not allowed during the final exam.**

Each assignment in this course will come with a set of guidelines. There are, however, some basic guidelines for all assignments that are not written in class under exam conditions.

NOTE: Students must receive a passing grade for BOTH term work and the final exam in order to pass this course. Failing the final exam automatically implies a failing grade for the course irrespective of grades accrued prior to the final exam.

Participation: The participation grade covers attendance and contributions to discussions.

Essay Format: All papers must be submitted in the standard essay format. They must be typed in 12-point font on 8.5" x 11" white paper; they must be double-spaced and must have 1" margin on every page! All essays must have pagination: the page number must appear in the top right corner with the student's name preceding the page number—i.e. "Jones 7." Instead of a separate title page, students are required to provide the following information on the first page of their essays: 1) name and student number; 2) the names of the Professor and Teaching Assistant; 3) course title; 4) essay submission date. The title of the paper comes after this information. The title of the paper is centered, but the preceding information must be adjusted to the left.

Documentation: All papers must follow the Modern Language Association (MLA) documentation style. At its most basic, this implies that page numbers appear in parentheses after each citation and there is a Works Cited list at the end of the paper. The Department of English provides an overview of the MLA style. Students can use the "Guidelines for Properly Citing Sources" at: <https://instruct.uwo.ca/english/234e/site/essygdlns.html#Thesis>.

Essay Submission: All assignments are due in class on the due date before class begins! Students must keep an extra hard copy of submitted written assignments. Students must also retain all copies of graded work until the final grades for this course are available. If students are unable to come to class, essays may be placed in the drop-box outside of the Department of English office (AHB 2G02). Such assignments will be considered submitted on the date the office staff retrieve them from the drop-box. **Please do not email or fax assignments to the Professor or Teaching Assistant.**

Late Submissions: Requests for extensions must be made in writing for extension can be sent to the Teaching Assistants or the Professor. Unapproved late submissions will be penalized 5% for each late day including Saturdays and Sundays. Assignments will not be accepted ten days beyond the due date.

Absenteeism: Excessive absenteeism is grounds for barring a student from taking the final examination. The [Academic Calendar states](#): "Any student who, in the opinion of the instructor, is absent too frequently from class or laboratory periods in any course, will be reported to the Dean of the Faculty offering the course (after due warning has been given). On the recommendation of the department concerned, and with the permission of the Dean of that Faculty, the student will be debarred from taking the regular examination in the course".

Classroom Conduct: All students are required to conduct themselves in a manner that promotes an effective learning environment and according to Western University rules and regulations on classroom behavior. Since this is a large class, our discussions will work best when everyone gets a chance to participate. The best comments tend to be pertinent to readings/discussions and offer insight into the ongoing inquiry. The most helpful questions also tend to be focused. It is sometimes better to avoid long comments or anecdotes that offer no specific insights.

Students are allowed to use laptops in the classroom to take notes on the lectures and discussions. They are NOT allowed to surf the Web, or engage in activities on social media sites such as Facebook or Twitter during class. Students who contravene this rule may expect to have their laptops banned or be asked to leave lectures. Should there be rampant abuse of this laptop rule, the Professor may ban all laptops from the classroom. Students are asked to SWITCH OFF ALL WIRELESS TRANSMISSION DEVICES. Students may not FILM, PHOTOGRAPH or RECORD the Professor or Teaching Assistants in any way without first asking and receiving permission. Such requests should be submitted by email. Students may NOT post papers to the professor or the TA. Students may not chat with each other while the Professor or Teaching Assistants are addressing the class.

Communication: Students may send the Professor and Teaching Assistants emails regarding any course related issues they would like to discuss, but please allow a window of at least 24 hours—excluding Saturdays and Sundays—for a response to emails.

Important Dates for 2016-17 Academic Year

Classes begin:	Thursday, September 8, 2016
Thanksgiving Holiday:	Monday, October 10, 2016
Fall Study Break:	Thursday, October 27 - Friday, October 28, 2016
Fall Term classes end:	Wednesday, December 7, 2016
	Final due date for all first-term half-course assignments
Study Days:	Thursday, December 8 - Friday, December 9, 2016
December examinations:	Saturday, December 10 - Wednesday, December 21, 2016

The official Undergraduate Sessional Dates can also be found at:

http://uwo.ca/english/undergraduate/important_dates.html

Accommodation

Students seeking academic accommodation on medical grounds for any missed tests, exams, participation components and/or assignments worth 10% or more of their final grade must apply to the Academic Counselling office of their home Faculty and provide documentation. Academic accommodation cannot be granted by the instructor or department. Documentation shall be submitted, as soon as possible, to the Office of the Dean of the student's Faculty of registration, together with a request for relief specifying the nature of the accommodation being requested. The UWO Policy on Accommodation for Medical Illness and further information regarding this policy can be found at http://uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/accommodation_medical.pdf.

Downloadable Student Medical Certificate (SMC):

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/medicalform.pdf

Academic Offences

Scholastic offences are taken seriously and students are directed to read the appropriate policy, specifically, the definition of what constitutes a Scholastic Offence, at

http://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academic_policies/appeals/scholastic_discipline_undergrad.pdf

Plagiarism: Students must write their essays and assignments in their own words. Whenever students take an idea or passage from another author, they must acknowledge their debt both by using quotation marks where appropriate and by proper referencing such as footnotes or citations. Plagiarism is a major academic offence.

Plagiarism Checking: All required papers may be subject to submission for textual similarity review to the commercial plagiarism detection software under license to the University for the detection of plagiarism. All papers submitted for such checking will be included as source documents in the reference database for the purpose of detecting plagiarism of papers subsequently submitted to the system. Use of the service is subject to the licensing agreement, currently between The University of Western Ontario and Turnitin.com <http://www.turnitin.com>.

All instances of plagiarism will be reported to the Chair of Undergraduate Studies. Proven cases of plagiarism will result in a grade of zero for the assignment. Subsequent offences will result in failure for the course.

Support Services

Registrarial Services <http://www.registrar.uwo.ca>

Student Support Services <https://student.uwo.ca/psp/heprdweb/?cmd=login>

Services provided by the USC <http://westernusc.ca/services/>

Student Development Centre <http://www.sdc.uwo.ca/>

Students who are in emotional/mental distress should refer to MentalHealth@Western:
<http://www.uwo.ca/uwocom/mentalhealth/> for a complete list of options about how to obtain help.