

Course Outline

1. Course Information

Course: ENGLISH 3698G/GSWS 3450G, Winter 26

Time: Monday, 4:30- 5:30 pm; Wednesday, 3:30 – 5:30 pm

Prerequisite: At least 60% in 1.0 of English 1020-1999 or permission of the Department.

Note: Unless you have either the requisites for this course or written special permission from your Dean to enroll in it, you may be removed from this course, and it will be deleted from your record. This decision may not be appealed. You will receive no adjustment to your fees in the event that you are dropped from a course for failing to have the necessary prerequisites.

2. Instructor Information

Instructor: Dr. Sakiru Adebayo

Office hour: Monday, 3:30 pm

UC-3220

Email Policy: All email communication be professional, courteous and concise, with the course indicated in the subject line or sent through Canvas. Responses can usually be expected within 24 hours during weekdays. Also, address me as Dr. Adebayo in your emails to me.

Note: Students are responsible for checking the course OWL site (<https://westernu.brightspace.com/>) regularly for news and updates. This is the primary method by which information will be disseminated to all students in the class. If students need assistance with the course OWL site, they can seek support on the [OWL Brightspace Help](#) page. Alternatively, they can contact the Western Technology Services Helpdesk. They can be contacted by phone at 519-661-3800 or ext. 83800.

3. Course Overview, Format, and Learning Outcomes

Course Format

Lectures will be in-person. Classes will involve the discussion of primary texts and secondary readings.

Course Overview

This course examines the notion of Afropolitanism, a philosophical and an aesthetic concept that amplifies Africa's influence and positioning in the (post)modern world. For a long time in the European universe of reason, Africa was (mis)construed as the heart of darkness. Also, for a long time, an African classic novel like Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* was read as an

anthropological – rather than a literary – work by many Western intellectuals. However, with the mass exodus of Africans to the West beginning in the 1970s, there emerged a crop of young, multicultural, multiracial, multilocal and often multilingual Africans who challenge stereotypes and spearhead the move to redefine and complicate – rather than oversimplify – what it means to be African in this age of accelerating globalization. These relatively young Afropolitans – including, for example, Wangéchi Mutu, Trevor Noah, Lupita Nyong’o, Derrick Ashong, Esi Edugyan, Taiye Selasi – help us to better understand the various ways in which Africa is enmeshed into the world in the 21st century.

Learning Outcomes

In this course,

1. students will learn how, in the works of Afropolitan writers, methodological nationalism is transcended in order to present a hybrid world with multidirectional flows of memories and networks of sensibilities.
2. Students will learn about the ideological underpinnings of the concept of Afropolitanism and how that may illuminate our understandings of contemporary African identities.
3. They will learn how Afropolitan novels contribute to the recalibration of discourses around nationalism, citizenship and the diaspora.
4. Students will work together in groups and as a class to explore and explain how the Afropolitan novel formulates new modes of being African in the world.
5. Ultimately, at the end of this course, students will develop advanced skills in writing, research and analysis for academic audiences and public audiences.

4. Course Materials

Taiye Selasi's *Ghana Must Go*, Penguin Random House UK, 2013. ISBN 9780670919888

Chimamanda Adichie's *Americanah*, 4th Estate, 2017. ISBN 9780007356348

Helon Habila's *Travellers*, Ouida Books, 2019. ISBN 9789789741922

Teju Cole's *Open City*, Random House, 2012. ISBN: 9780812980097

[ENG 3698G Custom Link](#) (here is a link to the prices of the novels and where to get them)

5. Course Schedule

Monday, January 5, 2026: Introduction

Wednesday, January 7, 2026: Discussing “[How to Write About Africa](#)” and “[The Danger of a Single Story](#)”

Monday, January 12, 2026: Discussing Benedict Anderson’s “[Imagined Communities](#)” and Ernest Renan’s “What is a Nation?”

Stand alone class: Kwame Appiah’s “[Cosmopolitan Patriots](#)”.

Wednesday, January 14, 2026: Discussing “[Don’t Ask Me Where I am From](#)” and “[Bye-Bye Babar \(or What is an Afropolitan\)](#)”,

Monday, January 19, 2026: Achille Mbembe’s “[On Afropolitanism](#)” and Simon Gikandi’s “[Foreword-on Afropolitanism](#)” in *Negotiating Afropolitanism*.

Wednesday, January 21, 2026: Afropolitanism after reading Eva Knudsen and Ulla Rahbek’s “[An Afropolitan Literary Aesthetics? Afropolitan Tropes in Recent Diasporic African Fiction](#)”

Monday, January 26, 2026: Afropolitanist Reading of *Americanah*

Wednesday, January 28, 2026: Afropolitanist Reading of *Americanah* II (with a focus on race relations in the novel)

Monday, February 2, 2026: Afropolitanist Reading of *Americanah* III (with a focus on return migration)

Wednesday, February 4, 2026: The Afropolitan Flaneur in *Open City*

Monday, February 9, 2026: Rooted Cosmopolitanism? A Continued Discussion on *Open City*

Wednesday, February 11, 2026: Discussion on *Open City* continues

Monday, February 16, 2026: **No Class**

Wednesday, February 18, 2026: **No Class**

Monday, February 23, 2026: Discussing Emma Dabiri’s “[Why I am not Afropolitan](#)”, Stephanie Santana Bosch’s “[Exorcizing Afropolitanism](#)” and Simon Gikandi’s “[Between Roots and Routes](#)” (this may look like a lot of readings for one class, but I promise you, the first two readings are very short).

Wednesday, February 25, 2026: **No Class**

Monday, March 2, 2026: **No Class**

Wednesday, March 4, 2026: Afropolitan Trends in *Ghana Must Go* I

Monday, March 9, 2026: Afropolitan trends in *Ghana Must Go* II (with a focus on the Afropolitan Family)

Wednesday, March 11, 2026: Afropolitan trends in *Ghana Must Go* III (with a focus on the melancholy of dispersals)

Monday, March 16, 2026: Reading Ethical Afropolitanism in *Travellers*

Wednesday, March 18, 2026: African Refugees Seen Through the Eye of an Afropolitan in *Travellers*

Monday, March 23, 2026: Last discussion of *Travellers*

Wednesday, March 25, 2026: Group presentations (*Americanah* and *Ghana Must Go*)

Monday, March 30, 2026: Group presentations (*Open City* and *Americanah*)

Wednesday, April 1, 2026: Group Presentations (*Travellers* and *Open City*)

Monday, April 6, 2026: Group Presentations (*Ghana Must Go* and *Travellers*)

Wednesday, April 8, 2026: Final Exam Discussions

6. AI Policy

Students may use AI tools for preliminary research work, such as gathering information or brainstorming, but are not permitted to use them on any assessed work or final submission. Put simply, you can use AI as part of (not the only) research tools, but not as a writing tool. YOU MUST WRITE YOUR ESSAYS BY YOURSELF. As you may already be aware, AI tools are not always accurate, and they sometimes perpetuate biases. Additionally, AI tools plagiarise materials from the internet and often provide wrong references. So, for your own good, do not use AI to write, although you can use it as part of your many research tools. If you end up using AI, you must indicate the specific AI tool you used and how you used it at the end of your essay.

If AI use is suspected in essay writing, the instructor will ask for research notes, rough drafts, essay outlines, and other materials used in preparing assignments. Students are expected to retain these materials until after final grades have been entered. In the unlikely event of concerns being raised about the authenticity of any assignment, students may be asked to produce these materials; an inability to do so may weigh heavily against them.

7. Methods of Evaluation

The overall course grade will be calculated as listed below:

Attendance	12
Participation	10
Midterm Essay	23
Group Presentation	15
Final Exam	40

Attendance

There are 24 classes in all, and I will be marking attendance in every class. Your attendance in each class will fetch you half a point. Please note that there will be no consideration for any missed classes. However, students who can provide proper documentation for their absence will be given the opportunity to make their contributions to class readings on Brightspace.

Participation

You are expected to do every reading before class and make contributions (at least once) in every class discussion. The overall point for participation is 10, and it is going to be awarded based on my discretion. This means that you are required to contribute to class discussion on every reading. You are expected to demonstrate to the instructor that you are doing the readings and are invested in the conversations that arise from them. Each class has a short essay or a short speech/talk that we are meant to discuss. Again, as a participatory class, you are meant to have read the essay or listened to the talk beforehand. Try to jot down your points (or the points that strike you in each essay/talk), as that will help you to be a better discussant in class. Even if you do not have any thoughts to share on the reading, you can ask questions based on the reading, and it would count as participation. It is important that you read all the novels— that is your currency in the course. If possible, try to read each novel before we start discussing it in class. Because I do not want you to feel overburdened, I have limited the list of novels for this course to four. Of all the four novels, only one is a bit lengthy and even that one is such an unputdownable read. So, PLEASE, create time to read each novel. And, of course, you are allowed to listen to an audiobook of the novel, if that works better for you.

Group Presentation

Depending on the number of students taking the course, I will divide the class into four to eight groups. Each group will make a presentation on a novel assigned to them. The essence of the group presentation is to test and improve your ability to work as a team. Therefore, to get a good grade for your group presentation, you should be able to convince us (the class) that your work is truly the product of a collective effort. There will be a question-and-answer session after each presentation and your ability to answer the questions directed at your group will fetch you more marks. While the presentation itself is worth 10 points, you are expected to provide a written summary of your presentation (not more than 500 words) on or before the day of the presentation. The written summary is worth 5 points. The group presentations will come after we have discussed all the novels in class.

Midterm Paper (1200 words)

For the midterm paper, you are required to write a 1200-word essay on how the concept of Afropolitanism challenges the question of race, citizenship, and the nation-state. The aim of the essay is to test your understanding of Afropolitanism, so an excellent essay will start with a definition of the concept before moving to its tenets. A good essay will also provide literary, cultural and philosophical examples. It will cite scholarly works that has been written on the subject (about five references would be ideal). An excellent paper will appropriately reference the works cited using the MLA format. Further Instructions on the essay will be discussed in class and posted on Canvas. The midterm essay is due February 20th.

Final Exam

There will be a three-hour sit in/in-person exam for this class. You will answer two essay questions based on novels discussed in class. More instructions to come....

Late Submission Policy: A point will be deducted from the total for every 24 hours that an assignment (midterm and final paper) is not submitted, but in extenuating circumstances (with formal documentation), students may be given a maximum of 72 hours' grace, depending on the gravity of their situation.

Formal Documentation Designation statement

Please note that all assessments are central to the learning objectives for this course.

Accordingly, students seeking academic consideration for assessments will be required to provide formal supporting documentation.

Note that supporting documentation is **always** required for academic consideration requests for examinations scheduled by the office of the registrar (e.g. December and April exams) and for practical laboratory and performance tests typically scheduled during the last week of the term.

Students must request academic consideration as soon as possible and no later than 48 hours after the missed assessment.

General information about missed coursework

Students must familiarize themselves with the *University Policy on Academic Consideration – Undergraduate Students in First Entry Programs* posted on the Academic Calendar:

<https://www.uwo.ca/univsec/pdf/academicpolicies/appeals/academicconsiderationSep24.pdf>

This policy does not apply to requests for academic consideration submitted for **attempted or completed work**, whether online or in person. The policy also does not apply to students experiencing longer-term impacts on their academic responsibilities. These students should consult: [Accessible Education](#).

For procedures on how to submit Academic Consideration requests, please see the information posted on the Office of the Registrar's webpage:

<https://registrar.uwo.ca/academics/academicconsiderations/>

All requests for Academic Consideration must be made within 48 hours after the assessment date or submission deadline.