

MULTI-CULTURAL LITERATURE
LITERARY MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS
DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF ARTS

MR. KOYE OYEDEJI (ROOM 11)

WE WELCOME YOU TO THE DUKE ELLINGTON SCHOOL OF THE ARTS LITERARY MEDIA and COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, WHERE OUR MISSION IS:

The Literary Media and Communications Department's (LMC) goal is singular, to train its student in the different strands of communication (written, verbal and new media), considering how this translates to the marketplace. This department necessitates interdisciplinarity, including, but not limited to LMC, Theater, Museum Studies, Visual Arts, and TDP (recording studio). Our aim is to dismantle the sometimes self-indulgent, and strictly cathartic workshop model of writing and leave in its place a department that imparts to its students the notion that they are writing to work, rather than just writing to write. The department has five strands, that are product driven, products that range from performance, to print, archival, to design, research to debate, and within the strands, culminating work both within the Duke Ellington School of the Arts (copy and content for the Ellington website, developing archives of Ellington work, creating script in the areas of performance/performance marketing, writing copy and public service announcements, serving as viable extension/support mechanism of and for Ellington Fund, to name a few), and outside the context of the school.

Strand One – Research, Public Speaking, Speech, and Debate (within this formation of an interdisciplinary, Ellington Debate team that competes within the District of Columbia, eventually, nationally) -----this discipline would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and Theater

Strand Two – Dramatic Writing and the Construction and Understanding of Character ----this discipline would encompass LMC and Theater

Strand Three – Magazine, Newspaper, and Online (borrowed from Syracuse Graduate Program in New Media studies), in addition to serving as the magazine, print and online face of Ellington, this strand could also liaison/serve the parent community through blogs, and work in conjunction with Ellington Fund to market and deliver Ellington brand to outside/funding communities – this discipline would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and Visual Arts

Strand Four – Film and New Media, in addition to the screenwriting component, this strand could serve as the archiving entity for Ellington, pod casting that would complement strand three and also in conjunction with branding for the institution/Ellington Fund. Additionally copy/psa writing/content writing across discipline---this strand would encompass LMC, Museum Studies, and TDP, Theater

Strand Five – Internship (across discipline)

Multi-Cultural Literature

Tutor: Mr. Koye Oyedeji

Room: 11

Contact: phone- 202 282 0123 ext 2645; email- koyeoyedeji@gmail.com

Course Description

The aim of this course is to introduce students to global literatures from around the world. Students will be expected to examine the literature and the cultural, social and political context which informs the writing. The texts that will be examined range from African to French and Russian Literature, Black British Literature and Black Francophone Literature, they include Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* and his famous essay *An Image of Africa: Racism in Conrad's "Heart of Darkness"*, Chinamanda Ngozi Adiche's *Purple Hibiscus*, Fyodor Dostoyevsky's *The Christmas Tree and The Wedding*, Bernardine Evaristo's *Lara*, Linton Kwesi Johnson's *Selected Works* as well as critical introductions to the concept of colonialism and post-colonialism, Orientalism and the works of Edward Said, Stuart Hall, Paul Gilroy and Franz Fanon. The class will also feature guest visits from published writers and as well as visits to relevant readings, exhibitions etc.

Students will learn the principles of studying literature. They will be expected to read the texts, identify the themes and issues raised in the book and to be able to discuss these in class as well as form essays. They will consider the use of imagery, illusion and irony in texts as well as the use of other techniques, metaphor, simile, etc.

Concept and Context – Students will be expected to grasp the concepts explained in class and to gather a working sense of the context to each piece of writing examined, from author background to historical and social context, as well as the place in which a piece of writing fits into a larger corpus of work.

Output: writing assignments, class presentations and final essays, the highest marked essay of the year will be submitted for publication on the website / in the end of the year journal.

MULTI-CULTURAL LITERATURE IS A ONE SEMESTER COURSE.

FIRST ADVISORY:

WEEKS ONE TO THREE - THE NOBEL LAUREATES

The unit focuses on short works by two of the world's most renowned writers, both of which are recipients of the prestigious Nobel Prize for Literature. Toni Morrison won the prize in 1993; the unit examines her sole short story "Recitatif", considering its themes of racial integration. The unit also conducts a comparative examination of the work of the 1986 recipient of the Nobel Prize for Literature, Wole Soyinka. Students will contrast the racial exclusion found at the heart of his poem "Telephone Conversation".

Toni Morrison is the author of several books including *The Bluest Eye*, *Beloved* & *Jazz*. She has received the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Pulitzer Prize. In 1993 she was awarded the Nobel Prize for Literature. She lives in Rockland County, New York, and Princeton, New Jersey.

Wole Soyinka is the author of many famous plays and literary works such as *Jero's Metamorphosis* and *Death and the King's Horsemen*; he is also the author of the essay collection *Myth, Literature and The African World*. His work *The Man Died* recounts his time in jail as a political prisoner. In 1986, Wole Soyinka was awarded the Nobel Laureate in Literature.

WEEKS FOUR TO SIX AFRICAN LITERATURE: CHINUA ACHEBE

The unit begins its focus on African literature with perhaps the most famous work of fiction to emerge from the continent of Africa. Chinua Achebe's 1958 novel is a staple text in schools throughout Africa, Europe and America.

Students will read *Things Fall Apart* and study its themes of loss and gain, tradition and change, society, social value and ambition. They will also explore the historical context of the novel and the emergence of colonialism in Africa.

Chinua Achebe is the author of five novels, among them the critically acclaimed *Things Fall Apart*, he is the author of several other pieces of work, including

poetry and essays and is the recipient of the Man International Booker Prize. He is currently a professor at Bard College.

WEEKS SIX TO NINE

AFRICAN LITERATURE: CHIMAMANDA NGOZI ADICHE

Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche has been hailed as the successor to Chinua Achebe and the “future voice of African writing”. The African Literature element of the course concludes with a focus on contemporary Africa and a study of the circumstances that inform the continent today.

Students will read *Purple Hibiscus* and study its themes of religious fundamentalism, family, domestic violence and political upheaval. Through the book and supporting materials students will be introduced to post-colonialism through both a political and theoretical context.

Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche is the author of *Purple Hibiscus*, *Half of a Yellow Sun* and the recent short story collection, *The Thing Around Your Neck*. She is the recipient of a Commonwealth Writer’s Prize and the Orange Prize for Fiction. She splits her time between the U.S. and Nigeria.

SECOND ADVISORY:

WEEKS ONE TO THREE

19TH CENTURY EUROPE

The unit looks at 19th century Europe through the short works of two of Europe’s literary bastions, Guy de Maupassant and Fyodor Dostoyevsky. Students will read Guy de Maupassant’s *The Diamond Necklace* and Fyodor Dostoyevsky’s *The Christmas Tree and The Wedding*. Themes explored include ambition, class and isolation.

Fyodor Dostoyevsky is a prominent figure in world literature. The Russian essayist, author and philosopher is best known for his works *Crime and Punishment*, *The Idiot* and *The Brothers Karamazov*. Dostoyevsky’s psychological penetration into the human soul had a profound influence on the 20th century novel.

Guy de Maupassant is considered one of French literature’s best short story writers. During the 1880s Maupassant created some 300 short stories, six novels,

three travel books, and one volume of verse. Among Maupassant's best-known books are *Une Vie (A Woman's Life, 1883)*, about the frustrating existence of a Norman wife and *Bel-Ami (1885)*, which depicts an unscrupulous journalist.

WEEKS FOUR TO SIX

BRITISH LITERATURE: LINTON KWESI JOHNSON

The unit looks at British Literature from an alternative lens other than the texts that have been canonized in the western world. Students will consider the themes of multiculturalism, nation and nationhood, racism and the state.

The unit begins with a focus on the work of the dub-poet Linton Kwesi Johnson. Often vocal in his criticism of the British state, his work has been an outspoken representation of the frustrations and difficulties of ethnic minorities and the working labor class of the country.

Linton Kwesi Johnson is considered one of the most influential poets of his generation. Known as a pioneer of dub-reggae poetry and the black artists movement in Britain, Linton Kwesi Johnson's poems first appeared in the journal *Race Today* and he has gone on to produce five collections of work including *Dread Beat An' Blood*, *Inglan is a Bitch* and *Tings An Times*.

WEEKS SEVEN TO NINE

BRITISH LITERATURE:

Where does Scotland feature in the representation of British Literature? Our unit concludes with a focus on Scottish author Irvine Welsh and his portrayal of the downtrodden and often maligned Scot living in the urban city.

For this unit students will review Welsh's debut novel *Trainspotting*. His most famous novel to date, *Trainspotting* recounts the story of a group of characters, most of which are heroin addicts, as they begin to grow distant from one another.

Irvine Welsh is the author of eight novels and four collections of short stories. His novel *Trainspotting* was adapted into a film in 1996.

TEXTS REQUIRED:

Things Fall Apart by Chinua Achebe

Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adiche

Mi Revalueshanary Fren by Linton Kwesi Johnson

Lara by Bernardine Evaristo

GRADING

Students will be graded in four primary areas:

Classroom Participation and Quality of Contribution/Return of written agreements: **10%**

Writing Assignments: **20%**

Research and Presentation: **20%**

Essays: **50%**

COURSE REQUIREMENTS:

- Signed agreements – Class Rules, Student Information and Agreement to acquire key texts (Return of agreements goes towards Classroom Participation and Quality of contribution grading, failure to return agreements leads to deduction.)
- Current functioning e-mail address.
- Students must have a flash drive.
- Students must contribute to the class by way of verbal communication.
- Computer, Printer and Internet accessibility outside of Duke Ellington School to dialogue with instructor on ways to improve work and presentations.
- Respect for the works and classroom contributions of others and the willingness to learn how to critique constructively.

- Attendance and promptness are essential for all classes.
- Timely completion and submission of assignments, late work will not be accepted and student will be marked as failed assignment.
- Maintenance of course notebook in compliance with periodic notebook checks.
- Regular and comprehensive note-taking.

THE USE / CHARGING OF CELL PHONES WILL NOT BE TOLERATED IN CLASS; ANY PHONES VISIBLY SEEN SHALL BE CONFISCATED AND DELIVERED TO FATHER PAYNE FOR COLLECTION.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Binder with college-ruled paper
Writing instrument
Notebook

Methodology

The course utilizes the “Triangle Method,” a methodology of learning. The methodology references the triangle as a shape, in that all sides of a triangle are equal and equidistant, and in this methodology the sides are Character/Context, Compassion, and Citizen. The “Triangle Method” does this because it is our contention that we need to produce students who understand that knowledge, language, information, indeed art, are not privileged spaces. The idea, within the “Triangle Method” is that the student makes no decision about which part of learning, which part of the “Triangle” is more important, but rather how each, in concert, produces lifelong learners.

A Note on Grading: For Students and Parents

A grade is final. I will not change grades on the result of a discussion. I am available to discuss any concerns that you might have, but will not be able to change the grade for any work submitted and marked.

A Note on Absence and Tardiness

You will be marked tardy if you fail to show up in class before the bell rings.

It is important to note that the school has implemented a policy whereby **five unexcused instances of tardiness equal an absence** per advisory. Five unexcused absences from a class in any single advisory will **result in automatic failure of that class** regardless of the level of work submitted. **This is an automatic process that takes place on our administration system. As teachers we are in no position to overturn this process/grade.**

Five unexcused tardiness = 1 absence.

Five unexcused absences = failure.