

AAS/PHI 305: AFRICAN PHILOSOPHICAL THOUGHT

Spring 2013

Instructor: Professor Julie Maybee

Office: 371 Carmen Hall

Office hours: Mondays 8:00 - 9:00 and 12:15 - 1:00; Wednesdays 8:00 - 9:00; or by appointment (contact me by email to arrange an appointment)

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(1) Course Description

For those students who have already taken AAS/PHI 269 “Introduction to African Philosophy,” this course aims to deepen their understanding of central issues in African philosophy. For students who have not taken 269, this course will introduce them to central issues in African philosophy, such as the debate over the status of so-called “ethnophilosophy,” or the philosophy of traditional African thought, debates in African metaphysics and epistemology, morality, race, gender, and political philosophy.

(2) Course Learning Objectives

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- read a text and explain or restate it in his or her own words—either orally and/or in writing—for a reasonably intelligent person
- articulate arguments on both sides about the status of “ethnophilosophy”
- explain the debate between the “traditionalists” and the “modernists” in African philosophy
- explain one distinction made by some African philosophers (traditional or contemporary) between African philosophy and traditional, Western philosophy.
- offer quotations to support claims about and interpretations of the class's texts (i.e. offer textual support) and properly cite those quotations (proper use of citations).
- articulate and defend his or her own views on issues in African philosophy
- utilize information resources to investigate questions related to contemporary African philosophy

(3) Required Text and Readings

Coetzee, P.H. and Roux, A.P.J. (eds.). *The African Philosophy Reader (2nd Edition)*. New York: Routledge, 2003.

Access to and use of the Blackboard web learning system.

Access to and use of your Lehman e-mail account

Students are required to use a **bibliographic program**. You should use the free program **Zotero**. Zotero works as an add-on to the Firefox web browser, and allows you to capture bibliographic references from library web-databases, as well as from many other websites such as WorldCat.org and Amazon.com. See the weekly module for Week 1 to see a video I created to demonstrate what Zotero can do for you, as well as to see links to tutorials on how to install and use Zotero.

(4) Work for the Course

Work for the course will include:

Participation and attendance	10%
Online tests (averaged out)	25%
Midterm exam	20%
Final paper	20%
Final exam	25%

When assigning the overall grade, I consider a student's performance on each and every assignment, but I also take into consideration improvement during the semester, and will weigh later work more heavily than earlier work when such improvement is shown.

(5) Participation and Attendance: Students will be expected to attend each class and participate in class discussions. A student's participation grade will suffer if a student fails to attend and/or participate in more than two classes. Because oral expression and debate is one of the requirements of this course, students are expected to participate in each class at least once, by asking a question, answering a question, engaging in debate, etc. All questions and comments must be germane to the class material, respectful, and conducive to the task of learning. If a student has a genuine, documentable emergency and cannot attend class, please let the instructor know if possible by email.

(6) Academic Misconduct and Plagiarism:

Plagiarism is the act of presenting another person's ideas, research or writings as your own. The following are some examples of plagiarism.

- Copying another person's actual words without the use of quotation marks and footnotes attributing the words to their source;
- Presenting another person's ideas or theories in your own words without acknowledging the source;
- Using information that is not common knowledge without acknowledging the source
- Failing to acknowledge collaborators on homework or laboratory assignments.

Internet Plagiarism includes submitting downloaded term papers or parts of term papers, paraphrasing or copying information from the internet without citing the source, and "cutting & pasting" from various sources without proper attribution.

This class will be governed by Lehman College's general policies on intellectual property, academic misconduct, and plagiarism. Students are expected to bear individual responsibility for their work, to learn the rules and definitions that underlie the practice of academic integrity, and to uphold its ideals. *A student who plagiarizes may incur academic and disciplinary penalties, including failing grades, suspensions, and expulsion.*

For more complete information about expectations regarding academic integrity, please see the section entitled "Academic Integrity" in the "Academic Services and Policies" section of Lehman's Undergraduate Bulletin at <http://www.lehman.edu/undergraduate-bulletin/academicintegrity.htm>.

Students caught cheating and/or plagiarizing will receive a grade of 0 (zero) for the relevant assignment.

(7) Accessibility, accommodations, abilities: It is our goal for students to feel comfortable in discussing how to maximize student learning, participation and access to the course. If any student has specific accommodation needs, please let the instructor know *as soon as possible* so they can be addressed. Please don't hesitate to contact your instructor by email, telephone or before or after class to discuss these issues. To make arrangements for accommodations, please contact the Office of Student Disability Services at 718-960-8441 or visit their website at <http://www.lehman.edu/vpstud/splstudentserv/home.html>.

(8) Course Reading Schedule

Week	Date	Reading
1	1/28	Introductions <u>Topic: Trends in African Philosophy</u>
	1/30	“Four trends in current African philosophy,” Oruka
2		<u>Topic: The Debate Over Ethnophilosophy</u>
	2/4	“An alienated literature,” Hountondji
	2/6	“The status of Father Tempels and ethnophilosophy in the discourse of African philosophy,” Deacon
3	2/11	“Essence of cultures and a sense of history: A feminist critique of cultural essentialism,” Narayan
		<u>Topic: African and Western Philosophy</u>
	2/13	“African ‘philosophy’: Deconstructive and reconstructive challenges,” Outlaw
4	2/18	(Monday: No class) (Wednesday: Following a Monday schedule)
	2/20	“The colour of reason: The idea of ‘race’ in Kant’s anthropology,” Eze
5		<u>Topic: African Metaphysics I</u>
	2/25	“Themes in African metaphysics,” Teffo & Roux
	2/27	“The concept of cause in African thought,” Sogolo
6	3/4	“Self as a problem in African philosophy,” Okolo
		<u>Topic: African Metaphysics II: Metaphysics and Religion</u>
	3/6	“Metaphysics, religion and Yoruba traditional thought,” Oladipo
7	3/11	“On decolonizing African religions,” Wiredu
		<u>Topic: African Epistemology (Theory of Knowledge)</u>
	3/13	“African Epistemology,” Kaphagawami and Malherbe
8	3/18	“The concept of truth in the Akan language,” Wiredu
	3/20	<u>MIDTERM EXAM 3/21</u>
	3/25-4/2	Spring Break

9	4/3	<p><u>Topic: African Morality I</u></p> <p>“The moral foundations of an African culture,” Wiredu</p> <p><u>PAPER DUE IN CLASS 4/3</u></p>
10	4/8	<p>“Primacy of the ethical order over the economic order: Reflections for an ethical economy,” Ya-Mona</p> <p><u>Topic: African Morality II: Rights</u></p>
	4/10	<p>“Person and community in African thought,” Gyekye</p>
11	4/15	<p>“An Akan perspective on human rights,” Wiredu</p> <p><u>Topic: African Philosophy and Feminism</u></p>
	4/17	<p>“South African women and the ties that bind,” Wilkinson</p>
12	4/22	<p>“Should women love wisdom?,” Presby</p> <p><u>Topic: Biology, Identity, Culture</u></p>
	4/24	<p>“Race, culture, identity: Misunderstood connections,” Appiah</p>
13	4/29	<p>“Visualizing the body,” Oyéwùmi</p> <p><u>Topic: Politics and the Future of Africa</u></p>
	5/1	<p>“Producing knowledge in Africa today,” Hountondji</p>
14	5/6	<p>“Neo-dependency and Africa’s fragmentation,” Mazrui</p> <p><u>Topic: Africa and Marxism</u></p>
	5/8	<p>“Later Marxist morality: Its relevant for Africa’s post-colonial situation,” Coetzee</p>
15	5/13	<p>“Alienation and the African-American experience,” McGary</p>
	5/15	<p>Final exam review class</p>
	5/21	<p><u>FINAL EXAM, Monday, May 20, 8:30 am – 10:30 am</u></p>