

PHI3790 - African Philosophy

Bruce Janz (mailto:janzb@mail.ucf.edu?subject=HUM3423)

Instructor: Bruce Janz

Term: Fall 2012

Time: n/a

Mediated (M) Course

Phone: 407-823-2273

Credits: 3

Section: 0001 **Code:** 90686

Final Exam Date: TBA

Course Page & Resource Page:

Office: Psychology 223

<http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/afphil/home.html>

Office Hours: See website

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This course will address African philosophy as a living set of traditions in philosophy, with a set of significant and historically rooted concerns. We will consider both what unifies African philosophy, and what the distinctions are within its set of practices. Our ultimate goal will be to ask - What does it mean to do philosophy in this (African) place? What concepts are meaningful and useful to Africans?

Required Texts:

- PH Coetzee and APJ Roux, eds *The African Philosophy Reader 2nd Edition*. Routledge, 2003
- Web-based readings and resources, as assigned in class.

Requirements:

1. **Discussion contributions** (15% of final grade). These contributions will be based on questions that I raise, and also will involve questions that you come up with, related to the readings, viewings, and audio content for the week. These will be done on Webcourses. Each week you will need to make at least two significant responses to questions, and come up with one significant question yourself, related to the week's topics. There may be times when the discussions could involve students from the African Humanities course, which is also running this term.
2. **One response paper, to a reading from the course text or another assigned reading in the course** (15% of final grade, 5 pages). This will be due in the week that the reading is scheduled. The purpose of this paper will be to analyse a philosopher's argument. You will need to identify the central question the writer is addressing, and the argument he/she is using to address that question. You are not graded on whether you agree or not (in other words, you are welcome to completely

agree, completely disagree, or something between those two). You are graded on your ability to understand, explicate, and respond to the argument given. This paper will be submitted through Webcourses, and will go up on the class site (without my grades on it, of course).

3. **Two term papers** (15% x 2, 5-6 pages each) – one on the first half of the course, one on the second half. The first of these papers will require you to analyze some problem or issue within African philosophy that we have discussed or will discuss. The point will be to show that you can identify different forms of thought on a topic or different positions on an issue. I will be looking to see that you go beyond the class discussions and readings in your description. You will need to look at other work by African philosophers on a topic.

The second of these papers will ask you to focus on producing your own argument on some issue within African philosophy. The paper will be judged on its understanding of existing positions within the area, and your ability to clearly develop and defend a position.

4. **One term test** (15%) – This test will cover all material in the first half of the course. The midterm will be more than a content quiz – it will ask you to think through some of the concepts we raise in the course, and apply them to new cultural objects within Africa. See the schedule below for dates.
5. **One final test** (25%) - This will be a comprehensive test on all the course material. Like the midterm, it will emphasize your ability to work with the concepts of the course, as well as your ability to know specific works from the course.

Grade Distribution: Assignments are graded out of the percentage that they hold in relation to the final grade. So, for instance, the response paper will be out of 15, the final exam will be out of 25. The letter grade will be calculated only at the end of the course, based on full course grade. The distribution will be as follows:

A: 93-100	B: 83-86	C: 73-76	D: 63-66
A-: 90-92	B-: 80-82	C-: 70-72	D-: 60-62
B+: 87-89	C+: 77-79	D+: 67-69	F: 0-59

Schedule: African Philosophy

	Week	Topic	Readings/Viewings	Assignments & Significant Dates
1	Aug. 20	Intro to Philosophy; Intro to Africa	Web courses page and videos Janz, "African Philosophy" (available in Webcourses)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts

2	Aug. 27	Where Is Africa?	<p>The Status of Father Tempels (Ch. 2: Deacon)</p> <p>Four Trends in Current African Philosophy (Ch. 2: Oruka)</p> <p>An Alienated Literature (Ch. 2: Hountondji)</p> <p>African 'philosophy' (Ch. 2: Outlaw)</p> <p>Is there an African philosophy (Ch. 1: Laleye)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
3	Sept. 3	Who Is African?	<p>Critique of Eurocentrism (Ch. 1: Serequeberhan)</p> <p>Black Consciousness (Ch. 1: Biko)</p> <p>Sources on race, on Webcourses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
4	Sept. 10	Race & Gender	All of Ch. 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
5	Sept. 17	Ethnophilosophy and Sage Philosophy	<p>Hountondji, "African Philosophy: Myth and Reality"</p> <p>Oruka, excerpts from <i>Sage Philosophy</i>, available in Webcourses</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
6	Sept. 24	Tradition: Yoruba Thought; Dogon Thought	Excerpts from Graiule, <i>Conversations with Ogotemmel</i> and other sources, in Webcourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
7	Oct. 1	Tradition	Janz, "Tradition in the Periphery" and other sources, in Webcourses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts • Short paper #1 due
8	Oct. 8	Epistemology	Ch. 4, except for the Ramose article.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts • Midterm on Oct. 9

9	Oct. 15	Reason: Universal or Particular?	The Struggle for Reason in Africa (Ch. 1: Ramose) Categories of Cross-Cultural Cognition (Ch. 1: Biakolo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
10	Oct. 22	Culture	On Decolonizing African Religion (Ch. 1: Wiredu) Negritude (Ch. 1: Irele) Moving the Center (Ch. 1: wa Thiong'o) Ideology and Culture (Ch. 1: Oruka)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
11	Oct. 29	Reality	Themes in African Metaphysics (Ch. 3: Teffo & Roux) The Concept of Cause (Ch. 3: Sogolo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
12	Nov. 5	Reality: The Nature of Persons	Eniyan (Ch. 3: Gbadegesin) Metaphysics, Religion & Yoruba Traditional Thought (Ch. 3: Oladipo) Self as a Problem (Ch. 3: Okolo)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
13	Nov. 12	Morality & Justice	All of Ch. 5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
14	Nov. 19	Morality & Justice: Ubuntu	Philosophy of Ubuntu (Ch. 4: Ramose) Globalization and Ubuntu (Ch. 8: Ramose 2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts
15	Nov. 26	Political Structures	Later Marxist Morality (Ch. 8: Coetzee) Rethinking Communities (Ch. 8: Masolo) African Renaissance (Ch. 8: Ramose 1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts • Short paper #2 due
16	Dec. 3	Africa: Wrap-up		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion posts • Final exam will be during the

				exam period as established by the university
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The Fine (but Important) Print

My version of the Fine Print for Web Courses is available on the Webcourses site, under "Course Content". This contains the important details relevant to the course.

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Pages are maintained by **Bruce Janz** (<mailto:bruce.janz@ucf.edu?subject=HUM3423>)

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