

## **African Philosophy (UG) and (PG)**

### **Overview**

Since its inception in the mid-20th century, African Philosophy has become a full-fledged academic discipline. Many readers and anthologies, introductions, and other pedagogical publications have been published, along with a great number of texts striving to give an overview of the field, often in comparison with Western philosophy or with philosophies from other regions of the world. African Philosophy has branched out to cover the philosophical activities of various groups: of people of African origin in the Diaspora (mostly the US), called "Africana Philosophy", the philosophical thought of African women ("womanism"), African aesthetics, ethics, etc.

This course gives an introduction to this discipline. In the first part of the term, we will look at "ethnophilosophy" as the discourse that started African Philosophy, based on the assumption that African thought is fundamentally different from Western philosophy. This belief shows in the oppositions through which African philosophical thought has been defined and characterized: communal, collective thought has been opposed to Western philosophy's individual thinkers; emotionality to the West's analytical spirit; African concepts of time as circular and lacking a distant future dimension to the West's linear concept of time, etc.

It is in reaction to these generalizing and often racist and/or Eurocentric conceptions that Africa's "professional philosophers" have launched their project of "conceptual decolonization" (Wiredu). In the second part of the course, we will explore the ideas of some of these "professional philosophers". The Sage Philosophy project of the late Henry Odera Oruka, which directly addresses the objections raised against "ethnophilosophy", will be a transition to the study of the thought of prominent contemporary African philosophers, such as Kwasi Wiredu, Valentin-Yves Mudimbe, Paulin J. Hountondji, and Kwame Anthony Appiah. In an expressive phrase coined by Kwasi Wiredu, this is "African Philosophy in the making": looking for inspiration in African cultures, while firmly seated in Western-style philosophical discourse, its methods and standards.

The topics that the course will examine include race, time, (economic, societal, intellectual) development, the connexions between African traditions and politics, and the possible links between African Philosophy and other expressions of ideas in Africa, in particular literature and film.

### **Teaching**

10 weeks teaching with 3 contact hours per week (2 hours lecture and 1 hour tutorial). The course is taught in Term 1 and focuses on philosophy in Africa that is expressed in European languages. The course "Afrophone Philosophies" (UG) and (PG) builds up on this course in Term 2, focusing on the area of philosophies in African languages.

UG students taking this course should have completed either of the introductory courses on African culture or African languages, "Culture in Africa" (155900838) or "Language in Africa" (155900867). Exceptionally they may take "African Philosophy" without having taken either of these courses, after a consultation with the course convenor.

PG students must take this course together with the course Afrophone Philosophies (PG) if they wish to take it as a major. The course can be taken on its own as a minor.

### **Course objectives (UG)**

- acquire solid knowledge of African Philosophy, its history, main topics, and its relationship to other philosophical discourses in the world (European philosophies, Intercultural Philosophy, Latin American philosophy, etc.)

- develop the ability of fundamental reflection and critical analysis of central philosophical issues
- develop a critical approach to the underlying cultural presuppositions of philosophical discourses
- develop oral presentations skills (gain practice for giving conference papers)
- develop writing skills (learn to produce high-quality academic articles)

### **Methods of assessment (UG)**

TWO oral presentations of 10 minutes, one in the first half of the term and one in the second half of the term, discussing the essay topics prior to the submission of the essays. The students are required to prepare handouts and/or a short Powerpoint presentation for at least one of these presentations. The presentations should include a brief mention of the readings for the essays. These presentations are intended to help the students develop the practice of giving a conference paper. The presentations will account, respectively, for **5% and 10% of the total mark.**

TWO written analyses of readings of 500 words, to be submitted on the day of the lecture in Week 5 and in Week 11. Each of the analyses should cover ONE of the weekly topics covered respectively in weeks 1-5 and in weeks 7-11, the topics should be different from the essay topics, and the analyses should cover the required readings (listed under Readings) relevant to the topics. Each of the analyses will account for **10% of the total mark.**

ONE essay of 2000 words to be submitted on Day 5 of Week 7 (after Reading Week), valued at **25% of the total mark**, and ONE essay of 2500 words to be submitted on Day 5 of Week 1 of Term 2, valued at **40% of the total mark.** The topics of the essays will be chosen individually by each student but based on a consultation with the course convenor and approved by the course convenor. The essays help the students develop the skills to write essays and academic papers. The first, shorter essay provides an opportunity to get early feedback so that BA students can improve their writing for the second, longer and higher valued essay.

### **Course objectives (PG)**

- acquire solid knowledge of African Philosophy, its history, main topics, and its relationship to other philosophical discourses in the world (European philosophies, Intercultural Philosophy, Latin American philosophy, etc.)
- develop the ability of fundamental reflection and critical analysis of central philosophical issues
- develop a critical approach to the underlying cultural presuppositions of philosophical discourses
- learn to to give conference papers
- learn to to produce high-quality academic writing

### **Methods of assessment (PG)**

ONE 20-minute oral presentation of the essay topics to be presented in the tutorial before the submission of the essays. The students must prepare handouts and/or a Powerpoint presentation as a basis for the oral presentation and must discuss the basic bibliographical sources for their essays in the presentation. This presentation is intended to help the students develop the practice of giving a conference paper and will account for **20% of the total mark.**

TWO written analyses of readings of 1000 words, to be submitted on the day of the lecture in Week 5 and in Week 11. Each of the analyses should cover ONE of the weekly topics covered respectively in weeks 1-5 and in weeks 7-11, the topics should be different from the essay topics and should discuss ALL the required readings (listed under Readings) PLUS at least TWO additional readings of about 30-50 pages each (selected from Additional Bibliography or independently found by the student) on top of the required readings. Each of the analyses will account for **10% of the total mark.**

ONE 5000-word essay to be submitted on Day 5 of Week 1 of Term 2. The topic of the essay will be chosen individually by each student but based on a consultation with the course convenor and approved by the course convenor. The essay will account for **60 % of the total mark**. Only one essay is required for MA students, who are expected to have the practical essay-writing skills at this stage, to enable them focus and in-depth reading.

## **Bibliography**

In the course outline, essential readings are listed under "Readings". "Additional bibliography" contains resources relevant to the given topics that the students can consult or draw on, especially when preparing essays. Foreign-language publications (in European languages apart from English or in African languages) are included in this section for those with a competence in the specific language(s). Introductory texts, readers, and publications of a general nature are listed below. This list is for general reference only; required readings relevant to the individual lessons are listed under each week.

### **Basic pedagogical texts: introductions and history**

- Hallen, Barry. 2009 (2002<sup>1</sup>). *A Short History of African Philosophy*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Imbo, Samuel Oluoch. 1998. *An Introduction to African Philosophy*. Lanham et al.: Rowman and Littlefield.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Wiredu, Kwasi (ed.). 2004. *A Companion to African Philosophy*. Malden, Oxford, Victoria: Blackwell Publishing.

### **Readers, anthologies, conference proceedings**

- Brown, Lee M. (ed.). 2004. *African Philosophy: New and Traditional Perspectives*. Oxford et al.: OUP.
- Coetzee, P. H. & A. P. J. Roux (eds.). 1998. *The African Philosophy Reader*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Coetzee, P. H. & A. P. J. Roux (eds.) 2003. *The African Philosophy Reader. Second edition. A text with readings*. London and New York: Routledge. [A "second edition" of the previous book, but with completely different texts.]
- English, Parker & Kibujjo M. Kalumba (eds.). 1996. *African Philosophy. A Classical Approach*. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi. (ed.). 1997. *Postcolonial African Philosophy. A Critical Reader*. Cambridge, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Eze, Emmanuel Chukwudi. (ed.). 1998. *African Philosophy. An Anthology*. Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers.
- Fløistad, Guttorm (ed.). 1987. *Contemporary Philosophy. A new survey*. Volume 5, *African Philosophy*. Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Karp, Ivan & Dismas A. Masolo (eds.). 2000. *African Philosophy as Cultural Inquiry*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Mosley, Albert G. (ed.). 1995. *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall.
- Mudimbe, V.-Y. (ed.). *The Surreptitious Speech. Présence Africaine and the Politics of Otherness 1947-1987*. Chicago and London: The University of Chicago Press.
- Oladipo, Olusegun (ed.). 2002. *The Third Way in African Philosophy. Essays in Honour of Kwasi Wiredu*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Oruka, Henry Odera and Dismas A. Masolo (eds.). 1983. *Philosophy and Cultures. Proceedings of 2nd Afro-Asian Philosophy Conference, Nairobi, October/November 1981*. Nairobi: Bookwise Limited.
- Serequeberhan, Tsenay (ed.). 1991. *African Philosophy. The Essential Readings*. St. Paul, Minnesota: Paragon House.

Wright, Richard A. (ed.) 1984<sup>3</sup> (1977<sup>1</sup>). *African Philosophy. An Introduction*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America.

### **Overviews and publications of a general nature**

- Abraham, W. E. 1962. *The Mind of Africa*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- Bell, Richard H. 2002. *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues in Africa*. New York and London: Routledge.
- Bidima, Jean-Godefroy. 1995. *La philosophie négro-africaine*. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Diemer, Alwin (ed.). 1981. *Symposium on 'Philosophy in the Present Situation of Africa', Wednesday, August 30, 1978*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag.
- Eboussi-Boulaga, Fabien. 1977. *La crise du Muntu. Authenticité africaine et philosophie*. Paris and Dakar: Présence africaine.
- Gordon, Lewis R. 2008. *An Introduction to Africana Philosophy*. Cambridge et al.: CUP.
- Hallen, Barry. 2006. *African Philosophy. The Analytic Approach*. Trenton and Asmara: Africa World Press.
- Heising, Johannes. 1990. *Entwicklung und moderne Philosophie in Schwarzafrika. Wege zu einer unbekanntem geisteswissenschaftlichen Tradition*. Frankfurt am Main: Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation.
- Houndtoudji, Paulin J. 1996 (1983<sup>1</sup>). *African Philosophy. Myth and Reality*. Second edition. Translated by Henri Evans with the collaboration of Jonathan Rée. Introduction by Abiola Irele. Bloomington and Indianapolis. (Translation of *Sur la "philosophie africaine". Critique de l'ethnophilosophie*, Paris: François Maspero, 1976.)
- July, Robert William. 1968. *The Origins of Modern African Thought. Its Development in West Africa During the Nineteenth and Twentieth centuries*. London: Faber and Faber.
- Karp, Ivan and Charles S. Bird. 1980. *Explorations in African Systems of Thought*. Washington D.C., London: Smithsonian Institution Press.
- Kasanda Lumembu, Albert. 2003. *Pour une pensée africaine émancipatrice. Points de vue due Sud. Alternatives Sud 10/4*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Centre Tricontinental & Paris et al.: L'Harmattan.
- Kimmerle, Heinz. 1991. *Philosophie in Afrika – afrikanische Philosophie. Annäherungen an einen interkulturellen Philosophiebegriff*. Frankfurt am Main, New York: Edition Qumran im Campus Verlag.
- Kimmerle, Heinz. 2005. *Afrikanische Philosophie im Kontext der Weltphilosophie*. Nordhausen: Traugott Bautz.
- Makinde, M. Akin. 1988. *African Philosophy, Culture, and Traditional Medicine*. Athens, Ohio: Ohio University.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 2000. From Myth to Reality: African Philosophy at Century-End. In: *Research in African Literatures* 31/1, pp. 149-172.
- Maurier, Henri. 1976. *Philosophie de l'Afrique noire*. St. Augustin bei Bonn: Verlag des Anthropos-Instituts.
- Nagl-Docekal, Herta and Franz M. Wimmer (eds.). 1992. *Postkoloniales Philosophieren: Afrika*. Wien, München: R. Oldenbourg Verlag.
- Ndaw, Alassane. 1983. *La pensée africaine. Recherches sur les fondements de la pensée négro-africaine*. Dakar: Les Nouvelles Éditions Africaines.
- Okere, Theophilus. 1983. *African Philosophy. A Historico-Hermeneutical Investigation of the Conditions of its Possibility*. Lanham, New York, London: University Press of America.
- Oladipo, Olusegun. 2000. *The Idea of African Philosophy. A Critical Study in the Major Orientations in Contemporary African Philosophy*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.
- Ruch, E. A. and K. C. Anyanwu. 1981. *African Philosophy. An Introduction to the Main Philosophical Trends in Contemporary Africa*. Rome: Catholic Book Agency - Officium Libri Catholici.
- Serequeberhan, Tsenay. 1994. *The Hermeneutics of African Philosophy. Horizon and Discourse*. New York, London: Routledge.
- Shutte, Augustine. 1995 (1993<sup>1</sup>). *Philosophy for Africa*. Milwaukee: Marquette University Press.

- Smet, A. J. 1980. *Histoire de la philosophie africaine contemporaine. Courants et problèmes*. Kinshasa-Limete: Département de Philosophie et Religions Africaines, Faculté de Théologie Catholique.
- Sogolo, Godwin. 1993. *Foundations of African Philosophy. A Definitive Analysis of Conceptual Issues in African Thought*. Ibadan: Ibadan University Press.
- Theron, Stephen. 1995. *Africa, Philosophy and the Western Tradition. An Essay in Self-Understanding*. Frankfurt am Main, Berlin, Bern, New York, Paris, Wien: Peter Lang.
- Towa, Marcien. 1971. *Essai sur la problématique philosophique dans l'Afrique actuelle*. Yaoundé: Editions CLE.
- UNESCO (ed.). 1984. *Teaching and Research in Philosophy: Africa*. Paris: UNESCO.

### **African Philosophy in the context of world philosophies**

- Fløistad, Guttorm (ed.). 1987. *Contemporary Philosophy. A new survey*. Volume 5, *African Philosophy*. Dordrecht, Boston, Lancaster: Martinus Nijhoff Publishers.
- Deutsch, Eliot & Ron Bontekoe (eds.). 1999 (1997<sup>1</sup>). *A Companion to World Philosophies*. Malden, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Jahn, Bruce. 2004. Philosophy as if Place Mattered: The Situation of African Philosophy. In: Havi Carel and David Gamez (eds.). *What Philosophy Is. Contemporary Philosophy in Action*. London, New York: continuum, pp. 103-115
- Makumba, Maurice M. 2005. *Introduction to Philosophy*. Nairobi: Paulines Publications Africa.
- Smart, Ninian. 2001 (1999<sup>1</sup>). *World Philosophies*. London, New York: Routledge.

### **Journals**

- Journal on African Philosophy* - <http://www.africanphilosophy.com/> - Nigeria-based journal, ed. by Olufemi Taiwo.
- Quest* - <http://www.quest-journal.net/>
- polylog* - <http://www.polylog.org/> - a tri-lingual (English, German, Spanish) journal on intercultural philosophy with many contributions on African Philosophy.
- Second Order* - a journal published by the University of Ile-Ife, Nigeria

### **Websites**

There are many online resources; the following are among the most helpful:

- <http://www.crvp.org/book/Series02/series-II.htm> - publications of The Council for Research in Values and Philosophy, George F. McLean, General Editor, Gail M. Presbey, Editor for Series II (i.e. focusing on Africa).
- <http://pegasus.cc.ucf.edu/~janzb/afphil/> - Bruce Janz's website referring to a plethora of resources on African Philosophy.

**Week 1: Introduction: is there an African philosophy?**

This class will provide an introduction to the debate on philosophy in Africa: the question of its possibility and existence, the question of the difference between African and Western modes of thought, and the suggested classifications of the existing texts qualifying as African philosophy. It will look at the relationship between Francophone and Anglophone African Philosophy and at the relationship of African Philosophy to other "regional" philosophies, in particular Latin American philosophy. It will also look at the place of African Philosophy among other philosophical streams and other disciplines, in particular Africana Philosophy (philosophy of black people in the Diaspora, especially the U.S.A.), Intercultural Philosophy, and Post-Colonial Theory. Last but not least, the class will ask why "finding" an African philosophy is important (or not) and what we really mean by "philosophy".

**Readings**

- Bodunrin, Peter. 1981. Which kind of philosophy for Africa. In: Alwin Diemer (ed.). *Symposium on 'Philosophy in the Present Situation of Africa', Wednesday, August 30, 1978*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, pp. 8-22.
- Hountondji, Paulin J. 1996 (1983<sup>1</sup>). *African Philosophy. Myth and Reality*. Second edition. Translated by Henri Evans with the collaboration of Jonathan Rée. Introduction by Abiola Irele. Bloomington and Indianapolis. (Translation of *Sur la "philosophie africaine". Critique de l'ethnophilosophie*, Paris: François Maspero, 1976.) Part 1: Arguments, pp. 33-107.
- Oruka, Henry Odera. 1981. Four Trends in Current African Philosophy. In: Alwin Diemer (ed.). *Symposium on 'Philosophy in the Present Situation of Africa', Wednesday, August 30, 1978*. Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, pp. 1-7.

**Week 2: The challenge of ethnophilosophy: Tempels, Kagame**

"Ethnophilosophy" refers to the collective thought of ethnic groups or nations. The term was coined by Paulin Hountondji and Marcién Towa as a pejorative designation of the work of certain African and Africanist thinkers, in particular Placide Tempels, Alexis Kagame, John Mbiti, and Léopold Sédar Senghor. Their work is seen as a philosophically impermissible and illegitimate amalgamation of the methods and objectives of ethnography and philosophy. Although the criticism of ethnophilosophy was embraced by most African "professional philosophers", in the further development of African Philosophy it proved that avoiding the pitfalls of ethnophilosophy was harder than its critics imagined at first. Indeed, many writings of the most caustic critics of ethnophilosophy, such as Kwasi Wiredu, effectively return to the methods of ethnophilosophy - although these thinkers would probably object to their work being called that way. In this way, ethnophilosophy continues being both the constantly revisited departure point and the main temptation of African Philosophy. A profound reflection on this concept is key to any work not only on African Philosophy but on other non-European philosophical traditions (in particular, Latin American philosophy). In this class, we will examine the "classical" examples of ethnophilosophy, Tempels's "Bantu philosophy" and Kagame's "Bantu-Rwandan philosophy". We will question the legitimacy of both ethnophilosophy and its criticism.

**Readings**

- Blakeley, Thomas J. 1984<sup>3</sup> (1977<sup>1</sup>). The Categories of Mtu and The Categories of Aristotle, In: Richard A. Wright (ed.) *African Philosophy. An Introduction*. Lanham, London: University Press of America, pp. 163-170.
- Jahn, Janheinz. 1990 (1961<sup>1</sup>, German original 1958). *Muntu: African Culture and the Western World*. New York: Grove Press. Chapter 4, "Ntu - African Philosophy", pp. 96-120.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapters 2 and 4, "Tempels and the Setting of Ethnophilosophy" and "Language and Reality", pp. 46-67 and pp. 84-102.
- Tempels, Placide. 1959. *Bantu Philosophy*. Paris: Présence africaine.

**Additional bibliography**

- Estermann, Josef. 1999. *Andine Philosophie. Eine interkulturelle Studie zur autochthonen andinen Weisheit*. Frankfurt am Main: IKO - Verlag für Interkulturelle Kommunikation.
- Kagame, Alexis. 1955. *La philosophie bantu-rwandaise de l'Être*. Mémoires in-8° de l'Académie royale des Sciences coloniales. Brussels: Pontificia Universitas Gregoriana.
- Kagame, Alexis. 1976. *La philosophie Bantu comparée*. Paris: Présence Africaine.

**Week 3: The challenge of race: Senghor**

Much of the discussion on African Philosophy hinges on the putative distinction of African ways of thinking from European ones. The foundation upon which this distinction is predicated is, to most thinkers, race. The concept of race, understood as biological reality that determines cultural expression, has largely influenced the way the African continent has been approached and theorized; it was abused as a way to justify both slavery and colonialism, and it has been at the base of hypotheses that strive to trace manifestations of advanced culture to foreign influences (cf. "Hamitic Theory"). The revindication of race is at the heart of theories reclaiming the African self, both in the New World (Harlem Renaissance, *indigenisme*, *cubanismo*) and on the continent itself (Black Personality, Afrocentricity, *négritude*). Few philosophers have expressed views about the differences between the races in a more comprehensive and sophisticated manner than Léopold Sédar Senghor. Also, few thinkers have been more influential and received more critical reactions than Senghor. This class will be devoted to a reading of Senghor's writings and a discussion of the criticism of his works within African Philosophy.

**Readings**

- Harney, Elizabeth. 2004. *In Senghor's Shadow. Art, Politics, and the Avant-Garde in Senegal, 1960-1995*. Durham and London: Duke University Press. Chapter 1, "Rhythm as the Architecture of Being: Reflections on *un Âme Nègre*", pp. 19-48.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapter 1, "Logocentrism and Emotivism: Two Systems in Struggle for Control of Identity", pp. 1-45.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1995. On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro. Translated by H. Kaal. In: Albert G. Mosley (ed.). *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 116-127. The article originally appeared in *Diogenes* 37 (1962), pp. 1-15.

**Further readings**

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1995. The Uncompleted Argument: Du Bois and the Illusion of Race. In: In: Albert G. Mosley (ed.). *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 199-215. Another version of this text is: Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1992. *In My Father's House. Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, New York. Chapter 2, "Illusions of Race", pp. 28-46.
- Crawford, Jeffrey. 1995. Cheikh Anta Diop, the 'Stolen Legacy,' and Afrocentrism. In: Albert G. Mosley (ed.). *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 128-146.
- Mosley, Albert G. 1995. Negritude, Nationalism, and Nativism: Racists or Racialists? In: Albert G. Mosley (ed.). *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 216-235.
- Outlaw, Jr., Lucius T. 1996. *On Race and Philosophy*. New York and London: Routledge.

**Additional bibliography - Senghor's bibliography**

- Senghor, Léopold Sédar (ed.). 1948. *Anthologie de la nouvelle poésie nègre et malgache de langue française*. Preceded by *Orphée noir* by Jean-Paul Sartre. Paris: Presses Universitaires de France.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1962. *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, transl. by Mercer Cook. Paris: Présence Africaine (Original edition by Présence Africaine, 1961).

- Senghor, Léopold Sédar 1962. *Pierre Teilhard de Chardin et la politique africaine*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1964. *Poèmes*. Paris: Editions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1988. *Ce que je crois. Négritude, Francité et Civilisation de l'Universel*. Paris: Bernard Grasset.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1980. *La poésie de l'action. Conversations avec Mohamed Aziza*. Paris: Éditions Stock.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1990. *Oeuvre poétique*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1964. *Liberté I: Négritude et humanisme*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1971. *Liberté II: Nation et voie africaine du socialisme*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1977. *Liberté III: Négritude et civilisation de l'universel*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1983. *Liberté IV: Socialisme et planification*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1993. *Liberté V: Le dialogue des cultures*. Paris: Éditions du Seuil.

### **Additional bibliography - selected works on Senghor**

- Adotevi, Stanislas Spero. 1998 (1972<sup>1</sup>). *Négritude et Négrologues*. Bègles: Le Castor Astral.
- Guibert, Armand. 1961. *Léopold Sédar Senghor*. Paris: Éditions Pierre Seghers.
- Hymans, Jacques Louis. 1971. *Léopold Sédar Senghor. An Intellectual Biography*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Markovitz, Irving Leonard. 1969. *Léopold Sédar Senghor and the Politics of Negritude*. New York: Atheneum.
- Martinetto, Antonella Emina. 1992. *Senghor. L'uno e i molti*. Rome: Bulzoni editore.
- Milcent, Ernest & Monique Sordet. 1969. *Léopold Sédar Senghor et la naissance de l'Afrique moderne*. With a preface by Georges Pompidou. Paris: Éditions Seghers.
- Towa, Marcien. 1971. *Léopold Sédar Senghor: Négritude ou Servitude?* Yaoundé: Editions CLE.

### **Week 4: The challenge of time: Mbiti**

The Kenyan priest, John S. Mbiti, presented an analysis of the "African concept of time", maintaining that the Africans were unable to conceive of the distant future (beyond about two years from now). In addition, the present time ("Sasa") was a constant repetition of events that took place in the distant past ("Zamani"), thus precluding the possibility of anything really new happening. This, of course, was a major challenge to the notion of economic and societal development, because development means a constant, progressive improvement in time. Mbiti supported his views with compelling linguistic and anthropological evidence. In this class, we will examine Mbiti's arguments. We will also look into other conceptualizations of "African" time and specific ethnic versions of time concepts and time reckoning. In addition to this, we will explore the relationship between the underlying conceptions of time and development.

### **Readings**

- Beyaraza, Ernest K. 2000. *The African Concept of Time. A Comparative Study of Various Theories*. Kampala: Makerere University Press. Chapters 5-6, "The African Concept of Time - by John S. Mbiti" and "The Bakiga Concept of Time", pp. 99-145.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapter 5, "Cultures Without Time? Mbiti's Religious Ethnology", pp. 103-123.
- Mbiti, John S. 1970 (1969<sup>1</sup>). *African Religions and Philosophy*. Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, Doubleday & Company. Chapter 3, "The Concept of Time as a Key to the Understanding and Interpretation of African Religions and Philosophy", pp. 19-36.
- Offe, Johanna A. 2001. "Smart Guys Plan for the Future!": Cultural Concepts of Time and the Prevention of AIDS in Africa. *Africa Spectrum* 36/1: 53-72



**Additional bibliography**

- Ayoade, John A. A. 1984<sup>3</sup> (1977<sup>1</sup>). Time in Yoruba Thought. In: Richard A. Wright (ed.) *African Philosophy. An Introduction*. Lanham, London: University Press of America, pp. 93-111.
- Beidelman, T. O. 1986. *Moral Imagination in Kaguru Modes of Thought*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Chapters 5-6, "Legendary Time, Clans, and Ethnicity" and "Persons and Time: Seasons, Names, and Omens", pp. 67-83 and pp. 84-104.
- Bohannon, Paul. 1967. Concepts of Time among the Tiv of Nigeria. In: John Middleton (ed.). *Myth and Cosmos. Readings in Mythology and Symbolism*. Garden City, New York: The Natural History Press, pp. 315-329.
- Booth, Newell S. 1975. Time and Change in African Traditional Thought. *Journal of Religion in Africa* 7/2: 81-91.
- Damome, Étienne Lakétienkoia. 2011. Médias d'Afrique : entre temps immanent et temps transcendant. L'exemple des radios locales. In: Valérie Carayol and Alain Bouldoires (eds.). *Temporalités et Communications*. Pessac: MSHA, pp. 171-190.
- Diagne, Souleymane Bachir & Heinz Kimmerle (eds.). 1998. *Temps et Développement dans la pensée de l'Afrique subsaharienne/Time and Development in the thought of Sub-Saharan Africa*. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi.
- Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1939. Nuer Time-Reckoning. *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute* 12/2, pp. 189-216.
- Hamminga, Bert (no date). The Western versus the African Time Concept. Removed from its original location, but can be accessed here: <http://web.archive.org/web/20050415222303/http://mindphiles.com/floor/teaching/timeafr/ti-meafri.htm> or here: <http://laofutze.files.wordpress.com/2010/01/africanconceptoftime.pdf>. For a summary, see also: <http://www.eldrbarry.net/ug/afertime.pdf>.
- Kato, Byang H. 1987 (1975<sup>1</sup>). *Theological Pitfalls in Africa*. Nairobi, Kenya: Evangel Publishing House. Sections from Chapter 5, "Dr. J. S. Mbiti", "Philosophy of Time", and "Time in Biblical Perspective", pp. 56-68.
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- Pocock, David F. 1967. The Anthropology of Time-Reckoning. In: John Middleton (ed.). *Myth and Cosmos. Readings in Mythology and Symbolism*. New York: The Natural History Press, pp. 303-314.
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- Wiredu, Kwasi. 1996. Time and African Thought. In: D. Tiemersma and H. A. F. Oosterling (eds.). *Time and Temporality in Intercultural Perspective*. Amsterdam, Atlanta: Rodopi, pp. 127-135.
- Ziegler, Jean. 1972. Contribution à l'étude de la notion de temps dans certaines sociétés d'Afrique centrale. In: *Congrès international des africanistes. Deuxième session, DAKAR, 11-20 décembre 1967*. Paris: Présence Africaine, pp. 257-281.

### **Week 5: African Philosophy and development**

In this week, we will develop the reflection started last week and look at the relationship between philosophy and the theories of African development. Several approaches to African development can be distinguished. The early "statesmen-philosophers", the first presidents of the independent African states, such as Julius Nyerere, Kwame Nkrumah, Kenneth Kaunda, Jomo Kenyatta, or Léopold Sédar Senghor, sought to develop their nations by a return to a pre-colonial state of society, seen as idyllic and harmonious, free of wars and of exploitation of man by man. They reformulated Marxism, excising all forms of violence (revolution, dictatorship of the proletariat, class struggle) from it, and suggested theories of "African socialism". Another approach sees philosophy (in particular the logic, precision and methodological rigour it teaches) as the foundation of science and technology. These, in turn, are the foundations of societal and economic development (e.g. Wiredu 1980). The issue of development also raises questions regarding the relationship between African traditions and modernity: what does modernity mean for Africans? Is Africa to adopt the Western forms of modernity, or is there "a third way" (Oladipo 2002)? Philosophers such as Kebede (2004) establish a direct link between development and "philosophical decolonization". Interestingly, also the example of Japan, a highly developed nation yet steeped in traditions, is an inspiration to several thinkers (Ethiopia's "Japanizers", see Clarke III 2004).

#### **Readings**

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#### **Additional readings**

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- Clarke III, Jay Calvitt. 2004. Seeking a Model for Modernization: Ethiopia's Japanizers. *Selected Annual Proceedings of the Florida Conference of Historians* 11: 35-51. <http://users.ju.edu/jclarke/model.html>, also <http://fch.fiu.edu/FCH-2002/Clarke-Seeking%20a%20Model%20for%20Modernization-2002.htm>.
- Clarke III, Jay Calvitt. 2011. Ethiopia's Non-Western Model for Westernization: Foreign Minister Heruy's Mission to Japan, 1931. <http://www.africanidea.org/Heruy.html>.
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- Nkrumah, Kwame. 1970. *Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for De-Colonization*. New York: Monthly Review Press.
- Njoku, Francis O. C. 2004. *Development and African Philosophy. A Theoretical Reconstruction of African Socio-Political Economy*. New York, Lincoln, Shanghai: iUniverse.
- Nyerere, Julius K. 1968. *Ujamaa. Essays on Socialism*, Oxford University Press, Dar es Salaam et al.
- Senghor, Léopold Sédar. 1962. *Nationhood and the African Road to Socialism*, transl. by Mercer Cook. Paris: Présence Africaine (Original edition by Présence Africaine, 1961).

**Week 6: Reading week****Week 7: Paulin Hountondji and Kwame Anthony Appiah**

In this week we will study the work of two famous African thinkers: Paulin J. Hountondji and Kwame Anthony Appiah. Each of them represents a different tradition of philosophy: Hountondji is a former student of Derrida, Althusser, and Ricoeur, and his work is firmly rooted in the tradition of Continental Philosophy and has been decisively influenced by Husserl's phenomenology, Appiah is a disciple of the Anglo-Saxon tradition of Analytical Philosophy. But the two are close in their effort to bring the two traditions of philosophy together: Hountondji has been extremely influential in the Anglophone world with the English translation of his seminal work, *Sur la "philosophie africaine"*, and Appiah is well-versed in French philosophy. The two also converge in their critical attitudes to ethnophilosophy and race, and their interest in the question of identity.

**Readings**

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. 1992. *In My Father's House. Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*. New York, Oxford: Oxford University Press, New York. Chapter 6, "Old Gods, New Worlds", pp. 107-136.
- Hountondji, Paulin J. 1996 (1983<sup>1</sup>). *African Philosophy. Myth and Reality*. Second edition. Translated by Henri Evans with the collaboration of Jonathan Rée. Introduction by Abiola Irele. Bloomington and Indianapolis. (Translation of *Sur la "philosophie africaine"*. *Critique de l'ethnophilosophie*, Paris: François Maspero, 1976.) Read at least Part 1: Arguments, pp. 33-107.
- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapter 8, "'Tradition' and 'Modernity': The Role of Reason", pp. 194-246.

**Additional bibliography**

- Appiah, Kwame Anthony. *Cosmopolitanism. Ethics in a World of Strangers*. London et al.: Penguin Books.
- Hountondji, Paulin J. 2002. *The Struggle for Meaning: Reflections on Philosophy, Culture, and Democracy in Africa*. Transl. by John Conteh-Morgan, foreword by Kwame Anthony Appiah. Athens: Ohio University Press.

**Week 8: Valentin-Yves Mudimbe**

This week we will study the thought of one of the most influential thinkers in African Philosophy, Valentin-Yves Mudimbe. Drawing on Michel Foucault's project of "archeology of knowledge" and on Edward Said's views on portraying another cultural domain (in Said's case, the Orient) as the West's "Other", Mudimbe focuses on the production of knowledge about Africa in Western scholarship. He calls it the "invention of Africa", to underscore the role of the West in the conceptualization of the African continent. Mudimbe maintains that, since both Western and African scholars have been exposed to this body of knowledge about Africa and have been trained to use exclusively the West's epistemological categories, Africans do not understand and theorize their own rationality within a conceptual framework originating from African cultures themselves. The possibility of an "African gnosis", namely theorizing Africa within an epistemological framework derived from and rooted in the African experience of the world, is Mudimbe's central question. We will revisit this question drawing on texts produced in African languages and valid within a local context, with its own political and economic centres of gravity. We will especially elaborate the question of whether and how local discourses in African languages can really provide the foundation of an "African episteme".

**Readings**

- Kresse, Kai. 2005. Reading Mudimbe, applying 'Mudimbe', turning an insider out: problems with the presentation of a Swahili poet. In: *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 17/1, pp. 103-129.

- Masolo, Dismas A. 1994. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Chapter 7, "Excavating Africa in Western Discourse", pp. 147-193.
- Mudimbe, V.-Y. 1988. *The Invention of Africa*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press & London: James Currey. "Introduction", Chapter 5, "The Patience of Philosophy", and "Conclusion: The Geography of a Discourse", pp. ix-xii and pp. 135-200.

### **Additional bibliography**

- Hountondji, Paulin J. (ed.). 2007. *La rationalité, une ou plurielle ?* Dakar: CODESRIA.
- Mudimbe, V.-Y. 1994. *The Idea of Africa*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press & London: James Currey.

### **Week 9: Henry Odera Oruka**

The work of the Kenyan philosopher Henry Odera Oruka gravitates around two themes: ethics and law and the project of "Sage Philosophy". Both are very relevant topics in African Philosophy. The Sage Philosophy project has revolutionarized the study of African "traditional" philosophies: it strives to find "sages", i.e. individuals capable of critical and analytical thinking, in the context of "traditional society". The project was innovative for several reasons: for its emphasis on the individuality of the thinkers and the distance it took from the study of the anonymous intellectual "unanimity" believed to prevail in "traditional cultures"; the importance it gave to precise documentation of information about the thinkers as well as the exact formulations of their beliefs, facilitated by the use of a tape recorder; the empirical aspect itself of this study of "traditional African philosophy" - so different from the speculative type of debating Africa's "traditional thought" common until then (or even until now). On the other hand, the project was loaded with a host of methodological and practical difficulties, and we will discuss these in class. Oruka's second focus is ethics and law, i.e. the domains of practical applications of African Philosophy. The issue of ethics gave rise to a major debate among Africa's professional philosophers, questioning the existence of "cultural universals" and the related question of the nature of "truth". The main contributions to this debate were made by Oruka and by Kwasi Wiredu. This topic will therefore spill over to the next week, when we will discuss Wiredu's ideas.

### **Readings**

- Oruka, Henry Odera (ed.). 1990. *Sage Philosophy. Indigenous Thinkers and Modern Debate on African Philosophy*. Leiden et al.: E. J. Brill. Chapters 2-4, "Sage-Philosophy: The Basic Questions and Methodology", "Philosophic Sagacity in African Philosophy", "Sagacity in Development", pp. 27-64.
- Oruka, Henry Odera. 1990. Cultural Fundamentals in Philosophy. Obstacles in Philosophical Dialogues. *Quest* IV/ 2: 20-37.
- Presbey, Gail. 1998. Who Counts as a Sage? Problems in the Further Implementation of Sage Philosophy. Paper presented at Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, Massachusetts U.S.A., 10-15 August 1998. <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriPres.htm>

### **Additional bibliography**

- Granness, Anke. 1998. Das Projekt einer globalen Ethik und die afrikanische Philosophie. Paper presented at Twentieth World Congress of Philosophy, Boston, Massachusetts U.S.A., 10-15 August 1998. <http://www.bu.edu/wcp/Papers/Afri/AfriGran.htm>
- Ochieng'-Odhiambo, F. 2009. *Foundations of Ethics. A Critical Reader in Moral and Social Philosophy*. Nairobi: University of Nairobi Press.
- Oruka, Henry Odera. 1985 (1976<sup>1</sup>). *Punishment and Terrorism in Africa: Problems in the Philosophy and Practice of Punishment*. Nairobi: Kenya Literature Bureau.
- Oruka, Henry Odera. 1988. For the Sake of Truth. *Quest* II/2: 2-21. Reprinted as Chapter 2 of Part I of *Practical Philosophy: In Search of an Ethical Minimum*.
- Oruka, Henry Odera. 1990. *Ethics. A Basic Course for Undergraduate Studies*. Nairobi: Nairobi University Press.

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### **Week 10: Kwasi Wiredu**

Kwasi Wiredu is the single most famous and studied philosopher of Sub-Saharan Africa. Several conferences and conference proceedings study aspects of his work, but also a few monographs, notably Sanya Osha (2005), have been devoted to this Ghanaian philosopher. Wiredu has written on many aspects of African cultures and their relevance in philosophy. He has also authored several articles elaborating the ethnic concepts of the mind, the truth, or the Akan tradition of thought as such. While these will be studied in more detail in the course on "Afrophone Philosophies", this week we will concentrate on Wiredu's general philosophical contributions to African Philosophy: his ideas about the development of African Philosophy and the comparisons of African and Western philosophy, his theory of truth as opinion, and the views about cultural universals.

### **Readings**

Wiredu, Kwasi. 1980. *Philosophy and an African Culture*. Cambridge et al.: Cambridge University Press. Part 1, pp. 1-62. Special attention to be given to Chapter 3, "How not to compare African traditional thought with Western thought", pp. 37-50. This chapter has also been reproduced in: Albert G. Mosley (ed.). *African Philosophy. Selected Readings*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, pp. 159-171, and in: Emmanuel Chukwudi Eze (ed.). *African Philosophy. An Anthology*. Malden, Massachusetts, Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, pp. 193-199.

Wiredu, Kwasi. 1990. Are There Cultural Universals? *Quest* IV/2, pp. 4-19.

Kresse, Kai & Kwasi Wiredu. 2000. Language matters! Decolonization, multilingualism, and African languages in the making of African philosophy. Kwasi Wiredu in dialogue with Kai Kresse. (Dialogue originally from 1996.) In: *polylog. Forum for Intercultural Philosophizing* 1.2, §§ 1-50. <http://www.polylog.org/them/1.2/dlg1-en.htm>.

### **Additional bibliography**

Oladipo, Olusegun. 1996. *Philosophy and the African Experience. The Contributions of Kwasi Wiredu*. Ibadan: Hope Publications.

Osha, Sanya. 2005 *Kwasi Wiredu and Beyond. The Text, Writing and Thought in Africa*. Dakar (Senegal): CODESRIA.

Wiredu, Kwasi. 1996. *Cultural Universals and Particulars. An African Perspective*. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press.

### **Week 11: African Philosophy and art**

The concluding week of our course will tentatively explore broader horizons of the discourse on African Philosophy. We will look into the relationships between African Philosophy and other forms of scholarship and creativity, in particular literature and film. We will pose several provocative questions and the seemingly fixed boundaries of our discourse (i.e. African Philosophy as an academic discipline) will become fluid and less clear. Must philosophy be expressed in language? What is the role of embodiment/enactment (the bodily representation of ideas) in the expression of thought? Can a non-verbal expression, say dance, express philosophical ideas (remember Senghor and "dancing the Other")? What can we say about verbally or partly verbally articulated ideas that are, nevertheless, decisively co-articulated through behaviour and bodily action, in a literary or cinematographic narrative? Can philosophy be, in principle, expressed in a fictional account? Are customs and other cultural practices fossilized forms of philosophy? There are two radical ways to answer these questions, both of which strive to show the structural similarity/sameness of various forms of expression and both of which also run the risk of "all cats being black at night": one sees everything as "text" (Derrida) and the other reduces every expression to a form of mimicry or mimesis (Taussig). We will examine these approaches and try to see if there could also be other ways to answer these questions.

### Readings

- Dovey, Lindiwe. 2009. *African Film and Literature. Adapting Violence to the Screen*. New York: Columbia University Press. Introduction, "African Cinema': Problems and Possibilities", pp. 1-33.
- Okolo, M. S. C. *African Literature as Political Philosophy*. Dakar: CODESRIA & London, New York: Zed Books. Chapters 1-2, "Introduction: a neglected benefit" and "Literature as philosophy: a theoretical framework", pp. 1-34.

### Additional bibliography

- Auerbach, Erich. 2003 (German 1946<sup>1</sup>). *Mimesis. The Representation of Reality in Western Literature*. Transl. Willard R. Trask. With a new introduction by Edward W. Said. Princeton and Oxford: Princeton University Press.
- Bakari, Imruh & Mbye Cham (eds.) 1996. *African Experiences of Cinema*. London: British Film Institute.
- Bickford-Smith, Vivian & Richard Mendelsohn (eds.). 2007. *Black and White in Colour. African History on Screen*. Oxford: James Currey, Athens: Ohio University Press, Cape Town: Double Storey.
- Derrida, Jacques. 1997 (1974<sup>1</sup>, 1967<sup>1</sup> first French edition). *Of Grammatology*. Translated by Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak. Baltimore and London: The Johns Hopkins University Press.
- Givanni, June (ed.). 2000. *Symbolic Narratives/African Cinema. Audiences, Theory and the Moving Image*. With an introduction by Imruh Bakari. London: British Film Institute.
- Spariosu, Mihai (ed.). 1984. *Mimesis in Contemporary Theory: An Interdisciplinary Approach. Volume 1: The Literary and Philosophical Debate*. Philadelphia and Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Taussig, Michael. 1993. *Mimesis and Alterity. A Particular History of the Senses*. New York and London: Routledge.