

Instructor: Dr. Thomas Auxter

Office hours: T 12:45-1:35, R 3:00-3:50

115C Griffin-Floyd

African Philosophy

PHI 4930 (18609)

T 3:00-4:55

R 4:05-4:55

MAT 0118

In this course we will read important works in recent African philosophy. We will also discuss some of the most controversial issues addressed by African philosophers.

African philosophers to be studied include Steve Biko, Cheikh Anta Diop, Frantz Fanon, Kwame Gyekye, Paget Henry, Tsenay Serequeberhan, and Kwasi Wiredu.

Topics:

Why have the issues raised by African philosophers been all but invisible in Western discussions of significant philosophical questions? How is this phenomenon to be explained?

How do Eurocentric accounts of the history of philosophy frame categories of interpretation that rule out, or at least skew, identification of the problems Africans urgently need to have addressed?

How do conceptions of moral ideals framed by African philosophers change formulations of what it is to be human and what values are important?

If we recognize the dimensions of the problem resulting from the Atlantic slave trade, what would it take to pursue social and economic justice today?

If we recognize dimensions of the problem resulting from cultural genocide during colonization, what policies can we adopt today to address this issue?

How do values and priorities that are identified and advocated by African philosophers help shape and define choices for how to set policies today?

Requirements: A term paper (2000 words) is due the week before classes end. Class attendance is required.

Texts:

Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*

Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*

Franz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*

The Wretched of the Earth

Paget Henry, "Afro-Caribbean Philosophy" in *Existence in Black*,

edited by Lewis R Gordan. (recommended, not required)

Tsenay Serequeberhan, ed., *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*

Readings:

January

9 Tsenay Serequeberhan, "African Philosophy: The Point in Question"

14 Innocent Onyewenyi,

Henry Oruka, "Philosophic Sagacity"

16 Peter Bodunrin, "The Question of African Philosophy"

21 Kwasi Wiredu

23 Steve Biko, "Let's Talk about Bantustans" (80-86)

"The Righteousness of our Strength" (120-137)

28 Steve Biko, "Black Souls in White Skins?" (19-26)

"We Blacks" (27-32)

30 Steve Biko, "The Definition of Black Consciousness" (48-53)

February

- 4 Steve Biko, "White Racism and Black Consciousness" (61-72)
- 6 "Fear - an Important Determinant in South African Politics" (73-79)
- 11 Steve Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity" (87-98) "On Death" (152-153)
- 13 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, "Foreword" by Kwame Anthony Appiah (vii-x) and "Introduction" (xi-xviii)
- 18 " " "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" (89-119)
- 20 " " "The Black Man and Hegel" (191-197)
- 25 "By Way of Conclusion" (198-206)
- 27 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence" (1-31)

March

2-6 Spring Break

- 10 Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*, "On Violence" (31-62)
- 12 "On National Culture" (145-180)
- 17 Paget Henry, "Afro-Caribbean Philosophy"
- 19 Paget Henry, "Afro-Caribbean Philosophy"
- 24 Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization: Myth or Reality*
 - "The Meaning of Our Work" (xii-xvii)
 - "What Were the Egyptians?" (1-9)
- 26 "Birth of the Negro Myth" (10-28)
- 31 "Arguments Supporting a Negro Origin" (134-155)

April

- 2 "Arguments Opposing a Negro Origin" (156-178)**
- 7 "Peopling of Africa from the Nile Valley" (179-203)**
- 9 "Political and Social Evolution of Ancient Egypt" (204)**
- 14 "Contribution of Ethiopia-Nubia and Egypt" (230-235)**
- 16 "Early History of Humanity: Evolution of the Black World" (260-275)**
- 21 "Conclusion" (276-277)**