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392-2084

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African Philosophy

PHI 3930

Syllabus

Spring 2022

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.

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: There will be a midterm essay exam and another essay written in a final examination. Choices of questions will be made available at least 10 days before each exam. Students will submit one essay each time by the deadline 10 days later.

Texts:

Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like* (required)

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

Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (required)

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth* (recommended, not required)

Paget Henry, “African and Afro-Caribbean Existential Philosophies” (available in an e-book in Library Course reserves for PHI 3930) and “Rastafarianism and the Reality of Dread” in *Existence in Black*, edited by Lewis R Gordan. (Purchasing the book is not required)

Cheikh Anta Diop, *The African Origin of Civilization* (1974), At the end of the semester, there will be four lectures on this book. Students are not required to purchase the book. An e-book will be available in Library course reserves for PHI 3930.

Thomas Auxter, “Abolishing Apartheid: The Importance of Sanctions” (located in Canvas “Files”)

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Details about grading policies and scale, as well as course policy, can be found at the end of this syllabus. Students are also invited to visit the Canvas site to familiarize themselves with details concerning grading and course policies. Grades and comments on graded work will be available only on the Canvas site.

For communication on most issues, contact instructor at tauxter@ufl.edu.

Communication requiring confidentiality is restricted to Canvas.

Readings:

January

5 Introduction

7 Steve Biko, "Let's Talk about Bantustans," *I Write What I Like* (hereinafter cited as 'WWL') pp 80-86

10 Steve Biko, "The Righteousness of our Strength," WWL pp 120-137

12 Steve Biko, "Black Souls in White Skins?," WWL pp 19-26

14 Steve Biko, "We Blacks," WWL pp 27-32

17 Martin Luther King, Jr. Day - holiday

19 Steve Biko, "The Definition of Black Consciousness," WWL pp 48-53

21 Steve Biko, "Fear - an Important Determinant in South African Politics," WWL pp 73-79

24 Steve Biko, "Black Consciousness and the Quest for a True Humanity," WWL pp 87-98

26 Steve Biko, "On Death," WWL pp 152-153

28 Tsenay Serequeberhan, *African Philosophy: The Essential Readings*, (hereinafter cited as 'AP'), "African Philosophy: The Point in Question," pp 3-28

31 " " " "

February

2 Innocent Onyewenyi, "Is There an African Philosophy?" AP 29-46

4 " " " "

7 Henry Oruka, "Sagacity in African Philosophy," AP pp 47-63

9 Peter Bodunrin, "The Question of African Philosophy" AP pp 63-73 and 83-84

11 Kwasi Wiredu, "On Defining African Philosophy," AP pp 87-110

14 " " " "

16 Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks* (hereinafter cited as 'BSWM'),
"Forward" by Kwame Anthony Appiah (vii-x) and "Introduction" (xi-xviii)

18 " " " "

21 Frantz Fanon, BSWM, "The Lived Experience of the Black Man" pp 89-119

23 " " " "

25 Frantz Fanon, BSWM, "The Black Man and Hegel" (191-197)

28 " " " "

March

2 Frantz Fanon, BSWM, "By Way of Conclusion" (198-206)

4 " " " "

Spring Break: March 5-13

14 Midterm essay due @ 11:59pm

16 Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," *The Wretched of the Earth* (hereinafter cited as
'WE'), pp 1-31

18 " " " "

21 " " " "

23 Frantz Fanon, "On Violence," WE, pp 31-62

25 " " " "

28 " " " "

30 Frantz Fanon, "On National Culture," WE, pp 145-180

April

1 “ “ “ “

3 Paget Henry, “African and Afro-Caribbean Existential Philosophies,” *Existence in Black*, pp 13-36 (available as an e-book in Library course reserves for PHI 3930, click “forthcoming”)

5 Paget Henry, “Rastafarianism and the Reality of Dread,” *Existence in Black*, pp 157-164

8 “ “ “ “

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

12 “ “ “ “

15 “ “ “ “

17 “ “ “ “

20 Conclusion

23 Final examination essay due at 11:59pm

References:

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

“The Meaning of Our Work” (xii-xvii)

“What Were the Egyptians?” (1-9)

“Birth of the Negro Myth” (10-28)

“Arguments Supporting a Negro Origin” (134-155)

“Arguments Opposing a Negro Origin” (156-178)

“Peopling of Africa from the Nile Valley” (179-203)

“Political and Social Evolution of Ancient Egypt” (204)

“Contribution of Ethiopia-Nubia and Egypt” (230-235)

“Early History of Humanity: Evolution of the Black World” (260-275)

“Conclusion” (276-277)

Note: The University asks faculty to post information about the grading scale, academic honesty, assigned work, students with disabilities, classroom policies, and online course evaluation. That information from the University, as well as information about the criteria for grading essays in this class, follows. See also the Canvas site for this information. – T.A.

Graded Work and Grading Schema

There will be a midterm essay test (due March 14 at 11:59pm) and another essay written in a final examination (due April 23 at 11:59pm). Essays are take-home exams, with choices of questions given to students at least ten days in advance. Students will choose the one question that they want to answer. Each of the essays will count as one half of the grade.

Grades and comments on graded work will be available only on the Canvas site. Make-up exams can be arranged by contacting the instructor through Canvas.

CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAYS

CRITERIA FOR GRADING ESSAYS ARE AS FOLLOWS: CONSISTENCY, COHERENCE, COMPREHENSIVENESS IN RELATION TO SUBJECT MATTER AND UNIVERSE OF DISCOURSE, PLAUSIBILITY OF EXAMPLES AND COUNTER-EXAMPLES, AND ANTICIPATION OF OBVIOUS OBJECTIONS. AT LEAST TWO CLASS SESSIONS (ONE BEFORE THE MIDTERM AND ONE BEFORE FINAL EXAMS) WILL BE DEVOTED TO

QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS ABOUT THE MEANING OF THE CRITERIA AND WHAT COUNTS AS MEETING THE CRITERIA.

STUDENTS CAN EXPECT MOST ESSAYS TO BE RETURNED IN SEVEN DAYS.

Course Policy:

1. Attendance is expected but not required in all circumstances. Exceptions can be made upon request in Canvas for family emergencies, changes in employment schedules, changes in child-care responsibilities, etc.

2. Students will have an opportunity to raise questions at the beginning and end of each class.

3. It is also permitted to ask questions during a lecture by raising a hand. This can be a request for clarification. It can also be to challenge a point that has been made. Debate is always welcome.

4. To communicate with the instructor of most issues, email tauxter@ufl.edu. To communicate regarding confidential issues, use Canvas.

5. Policies on Academic Honesty, Assigned Work, Students with Disabilities, and Online Course Evaluation Follow:

ASSIGNED WORK REFLECTS THE CARNEGIE I STANDARD OF AT LEAST AT LEAST TWO HOURS OF WORK OUTSIDE OF CLASS FOR EACH CONTACT HOUR.

IN-CLASS RECORDING? PLEASE CONSULT UF RULES.

**The following grade scale will be used to assign final letter grades for the course. See UF grading policies for assigning grade points at:
<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.**

Grade Scale Grade Value

100-93=A	A=4.0
92-90=A-	A-=3.67
89-86=B+	B+=3.33
85-82=B	B=3.00
81-79=B-	B-=2.67
78-76=C+	C+=2.33
75-72=C	C=2.00
71-69=C-	C-=1.67
68-66=D+	D+=1.33
65-62=D	D=1.00
61-60=D-	D-=0.67
59-0=E	E=0.00

**ACADEMIC HONESTY. UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge, which states,
“We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold**

ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: "On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment." The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class. Plagiarism on any assignment will automatically result in a grade of "E" for the course. Plagiarism is defined in the University of Florida's Student Honor Code as follows: "A student shall not represent as the student's own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to): a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution. b. Submitting a document or assignment which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student." Students found guilty of academic misconduct will be prosecuted in accordance with the procedures specified in the UF honesty policy.

ATTENDANCE AND CLASSROOM POLICIES. Students are expected to attend class and to have done all assigned reading in advance. Failure to do so will adversely affect students' ability to perform well in this course. The use of laptop computers, smart phones, or other electronic devices during class is not permitted. Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>.

CANVAS E-LEARNING ENVIRONMENT. This course is supplemented by online content in the e-Learning environment known as "Canvas." To login to the e-Learning site for this course, go to <https://lss.at.ufl.edu/>, click the e-Learning in Canvas button, and on the next page enter your Gatorlink username and password. You can then access the course e-Learning environment by selecting PHH 3100 from the Courses pull-down menu at the top of the page. If you encounter any difficulties logging in or accessing any of the course content,

contact the UF Computing Help Desk at (352) 392-4537. Do not contact the course instructor regarding computer issues.

ONLINE COURSE EVALUATION. Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

ACCOMMODATION FOR STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES. Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Counseling and Wellness Center:

<http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575

University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES: (1) CONTENT: STUDENTS DEMONSTRATE COMPETENCE IN THE TERMINOLOGY, (2) COMMUNICATION: STUDENTS COMMUNICATE KNOWLEDGE, IDEAS AND REASONING CLEARLY AND EFFECTIVELY IN WRITTEN AND ORAL FORMS

APPROPRIATE TO THE DISCIPLINE. CONCEPTS, THEORIES AND METHODOLOGIES USED WITHIN THE DISCIPLINE. (3) CRITICAL THINKING: STUDENTS ANALYZE INFORMATION CAREFULLY AND

LOGICALLY FROM MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES, USING DISCIPLINE-SPECIFIC METHODS, AND DEVELOP REASONED SOLUTIONS TO PROBLEMS.