

Department of African American & African Studies: Online Syllabus Course - AFRO 3578
ARTS OF AFRICA | Fall 2022 Online| University of Minnesota

Course Modality : **Hybrid [50% remote and 50% in-person]**

Zoom Meeting Link:

<https://umn.zoom.us/j/91675216252?pwd=eWdMUGJmVGxuaXl1UTlYalVLZW5TUT09>

Instructional Time : **M/W 11:15am – 12:30pm**

Instructor : Njeri Githire (she/her/hers)

Course Assistant :

Email : Canvas

Online Office Hours : By appointment;

Credits : Three (3) credits

Course Description: Welcome to AFRO 3578! This course explores popular art practices and representations – mediated through the lens of radio, popular cinema, sequential art, and the internet – as the everyday expressions of modern African identities. As sites where the tensions, frictions, collisions and notably, the productive creativities of the local and the global are circulated, negotiated and contested, African popular cultures provide insights into a unique and increasingly crucial facet of contemporary African artistic practice as critical intervention. The course is designed on the premise that Africans of all social strata and lifestyles are strategic and deliberate consumers of popular cultural forms, generated within local cultures as signifiers of larger social, political, and economic processes. In light of prevailing studies which sometimes end up naively celebrating agency and resistance, AFRO 3578 underscores the role of popular cultures as public/private sites of power's ideological and material (re-) production, contestation, or transformation. It considers creative practices as sites of both resistance and accommodation; of creative adaptation, innovation and resilience. Through our discussion of communication technologies and their role in transmitting artistic and political ideas beyond the confines of dominant discourses and established institutions, we will evaluate the interface of technology and sociocultural shifts.

Course Objectives:

- Identify key debates and processes around African popular cultures;
- Invoke and reveal the “other” Africa that is hardly captured on the radar of postcolonial literary and scholarly establishment;
- Contribute towards a richer and fuller understanding of public spheres in Africa;
- Examine the gendering of specific popular forms, their role in hegemonic formations, as well as their subversion in resistant practices and discourses;
- Spotlight the liberalization of the media sector in the post-Cold War period, including its challenge to the invasion of daily life by state media and surveillance systems;
- Reflect on prevailing narratives about technology in Africa as a history of transfer rather than indigenous invention;

- Understand the increasingly important role of technology in the development, production and consumption of art and culture in Africa;
- Consider the impact of modern technologies on African identities and cultural values;
- Analyze how medium-specific inequities in terms of access, literacy, and cultural bias, both within and between societies across the continent inhibit civic engagement;

Name/Pronouns:

I will do my best to address you by a name or gender pronoun that you have identified. Please advise me early in the semester so that I may make appropriate changes to my records.

CLE Requirements

AFRO 3578 is designed to meet the Council of Liberal Education's requirements of Arts & Humanities Core and Technology & Society Theme.

Arts & Humanities Core

AFRO 3578 begins by identifying popular cultures as practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity. As practices whose principle function is to signify, that is, to produce or to be the occasion for the production of meaning, popular cultures are symbolic or expressive forms through which people communicate important messages about their culture both to themselves and to outsiders. Accordingly, through a detailed analysis of film excerpts, musical lyrics, and other artistic representations, students will develop an understanding of the way that artistic discourse constructs and forwards particular meanings.

Technology & Society Theme

Technology is the means by which human societies interact directly with and adapt to the environment (Moss 2001). In her "Foreword" to *African Popular Culture* (2013), Karin Barber writes: "Raymond Williams argued that it's not technology that drives social change but social change that determines not only how technological innovations are taken up but which aspects of them are developed at all. But as he emphasizes, the process is dialectical: the uses of media in turn help to reconfigure social forms. In Africa since the 1990s, new media have been massively adopted – but in locally specific ways; in turn, categories of cultural production and social status have been transformed by changes in the mediascape" (xix). This course specifically analyzes works produced during the critical thirty years beginning 1990 to the present time, as the end of the Cold War jolted authoritarian regimes into adopting multi-party politics and democratic reforms. AFRO 3578 underscores the impact of technologies on social change in Africa over the last several decades.

Statement of Inclusion

Shortly after 8pm on Monday, 25 May 2020, Derek Chauvin, a white police officer with the Minneapolis Police Department, pinned his knee on the neck of George Floyd, a 46-year old Black man, and continued to press him to the ground even as Floyd repeatedly begged for air and affirmed that he could not breathe. Neither Floyd's pleas nor those of the swelling crowd of bystanders, who soon joined in a chorus of protest against the brutal and unnecessary take down and arrest tactics against an already handcuffed and clearly distressed man, could sway Chauvin. More than nine minutes of Chauvin's deadly restraint later, George Floyd's body limped into unconsciousness and he was pronounced dead at 9:25pm at the Hennepin County Medical Center's emergency room. In the days that followed, and after a bystander's video was shared widely on social media, Minnesota earned a level of national and global disrepute that became the subject of serious national reckoning.

Whatever our location as we explore the material presented in AFRO 3578 this spring, I will be inviting us to reflect on the manner in which Minnesota's severely tarnished reputation is embedded within a history of injustices that define the American experience. Students and scholars of this historical context know all too well that George Floyd's death only served to bring to the fore the scourge of racism and unequal justice that lay beneath the veneer of the myth of "Minnesota nice." Like many myths, the perception of Minnesotans as cordial and courteous all too often stands in the way of our appreciation of our state's – and indeed, our country's – origins and continued existence in conquest, dispossession and genocide of Native Americans, and in the inhuman exploitation of enslaved Africans.

For these reasons and for many others not possible to mention here, it is critical that there be an atmosphere of trust and respect in the classroom. I will attempt to foster a safe space for class interaction, where discussion encourages both sharing and listening. I have purposefully designed course material and activities that advocate for the celebration of diversity: ethnicity, race, gender identity, sexuality, age, disability, socioeconomic status, nationality, culture, and religion. I encourage each one of you to share your thoughts and opinions openly, while valuing respectful disagreement and the capacity to learn from each other as essential life skills that foster healthy discussion and help build community. However, I will not tolerate rude, dismissive, combative, insulting, degrading or hostile conduct in my class.

Classroom Decorum & Course Content

We enter this course with a range of different positions on and opinions about the topics we will be discussing. We will leave this course with a range of different positions on and opinions about the topics we will have discussed. This is a good and necessary thing. What is neither good nor necessary, however, is that we disrespect each other as a consequence of these differences. Some of the material we cover may be emotionally difficult or frustrating for some students. Some of it may force students to encounter worldviews or ideas they were previously unfamiliar or uncomfortable with. While we should feel free to express our divergent points of view, it is important that our discussions remain civil, respectful, and mindful of our various ways of being in the world. I will not hesitate to begin disciplinary proceedings against students who cannot abide by this standard.

Some of the materials in this course will include profanity, sexual situations, scenes or descriptions of racial and/or sexual violence, depictions of death, and other descriptions or representations that may be disturbing for some students. While it is not my pedagogical practice to provide "trigger warnings" in class, you should feel free to talk with me individually about any potential concerns you might have in this regard so that I can work to better prepare you for disturbing content. Further, if you anticipate having difficulty with particular material I encourage you to engage in appropriate self-care measures, including doing research on any films we will be watching ahead of time and logging out of class or viewing sessions that are difficult for you to view or engage with.

Procedures and Expectations

Statement of Instructional Time

This course is conducted in a hybrid format, meaning that the course will meet face-to-face half the time and online the other half. Course attendance will be evaluated based on your completion of assignments as well as on your engagement with course material through online forums, in-class, and other designated forms of communication. Overall, you are expected to do roughly 9 hours of

work/week for this course. For undergraduate courses, one credit is defined as equivalent to an average of three hours of learning effort per week necessary for an average student to achieve an average grade in the course. The approximately 9 hours a week required to complete this course correspond to the average time obligation for a 3-credit course such as ours.

Our instructional time will amount to 75 minutes of face-to-face instruction with me per week during the first half of the semester and synchronous the second half. My continuous asynchronous feedback on your work on Canvas during the week will be geared toward promoting instructor/learner interaction and exchange through group discussions and other online activities. Outside of the instructor-student contact hours, you will view the assigned films, listen to musical recordings, and so forth (2-2.5 hours/week), read the assigned articles (approximately 2 hours/week), respond to and complete weekly assignments (roughly 2 hours/week), as well as complete exams related to themes examined throughout the course. The assigned viewings will be available through Stream access, while the assigned articles will be accessed through the University of Minnesota Electronic reserve services. All readings and viewings are required in order to pass the class and your knowledge of this material will be tested on writing assignments, discussion postings, etc. Through Canvas, I will evaluate learner performance in relation to learner outcomes established at the beginning of the semester.

Statement of Technology

The use of Canvas is a requisite component to learning in this course and all students are expected to use technology that can access Canvas. It is recommended that students use a desktop or laptop computer less than six years old with at least 1GB of RAM, and to use the most recent version of Chrome or Firefox with JavaScript enabled. Internet connections should be at least 512kbps. If you have trouble accessing technology, please contact me, and please consult with the Office of Information Technology: <https://it.umn.edu/working-learning-campus/get-internet-access-campus>

Course Communication

This course is provided with a *Canvas* course web site onto which class notes, course guidelines, announcements and other helpful information will be posted. Students are required to log on to the course web site on a regular basis and to familiarize themselves with the information and content therein. Students will be held responsible for any information defined in announcements and other formal communications on the course web. Furthermore, all course-related email communication will be conducted via the *Canvas* course web. Students who experience problems logging onto *Canvas* should contact UMN Canvas Admin & Support <help@umn.edu> Please let the instructor/TA know if you are encountering technological challenges.

Statement of Assessment

All online exercises will be assigned 15 minutes beyond the time that it would normally take to complete them so as to offset the possibility of losing your wireless connection at a crucial moment. The extra time allowance is also meant to ensure that students with DRC accommodation for extended time have the extra time requested on the accommodation.

Course Cadence:

Below are the crucial components that represent required weekly activities for students in this course:

1. On Monday morning from 11:15am to 12:30pm, I will deliver face-to-face lectures based on the assigned readings as per the schedule established and provided at the beginning of the semester. During the second part of the semester, I will deliver synchronous lectures on Wednesday morning

from 11:15am – 12:30pm. While attendance during all meetings is important, if only because you cannot participate in absentia, simply coming to class and listening to the discussion does not constitute participation. Therefore, in and of itself, attendance will have little, if any, effect on your final grade. Regular contribution to class discussions is required to earn a participation grade, and you will be assessed on how actively and positively you participate in discussions.

2. On Wednesday morning from 11:15am to 12:30pm, students will – *when* prompted – engage in online discussion forums as a reflective process for interpreting and interrogating the assigned material. Because online discussion is designed to stimulate conversation, share knowledge and ideas and build a learning community, your postings will be evaluated based on their quality, timely participation, thoughtfulness, courtesy, relevance to the topic, and evidence of your engagement with the core concepts and key ideas discussed in the course. The degree to which your posting promotes discussion among class members will be an added advantage, as well as a requirement for excellent performance. Each forum will open on the Sunday prior to the week in which the material is assigned on the syllabus and will be due via Canvas by 12:00pm CST on the Wednesday of the week on which the material is covered in class. While the forum will remain open until 12:59pm CST on Wednesday, only content posted on the forum by 12:00pm on Wednesday will be awarded credit for timeliness. During the second part of the semester, each forum will open on the Friday prior to the week in which the material is assigned on the syllabus and will be due via Canvas by 12:00pm CST on the Monday of the week on which the material is covered in class. While the forum will remain open until 12:59pm CST on Monday, only content posted on the forum by 12:00pm on Monday will be awarded credit for timeliness. Timed exams and in-class assignments may also be conducted during this scheduled class time.

3. Writing Assignments: From time to time, short questions and summaries based on the assigned readings/viewings will be assigned during the class period on which they are scheduled.

4. Students will submit a 5-6 page (typed and single-spaced) essay in which they will discuss the role of the technologies discussed in AFRO 3578 in enhancing artistic and socio-political expression in sub-Saharan Africa as explored in course readings/viewings. This is a research paper in which students will be required to incorporate information contained in the course readings (required & optional, i.e. further readings). Indeed, the course readings are deemed to constitute sufficient authority in matters relating to sub-Saharan popular art forms for the purposes of the final report. Students who feel the need to discuss other material will be required to consult the instructor for authorization to explore other sources. To this end, they will need to provide the instructor with the references of the reliable texts from which they intend to derive any bibliographic information. By “reliable” I mean any material written by a person who has authority to make statements about African popular cultures by virtue of their recognized scholarly knowledge in that particular topic. While students are entitled and welcome to express knowledge from other sources, therefore, this assignment will consider as ‘valid’ and ‘worthy of credit’ only those ‘views,’ ‘opinions,’ and ‘interpretations’ that will be clearly and explicitly substantiated by the course material contained on the AFRO 3578 syllabus.

Attendance

Participation at the face-to-face/synchronous meetings will amount to 10-15% of your grade. While attendance is very important, you will not get any grade towards participation simply because you never miss a class. A student whose quality of participation is superior could miss two/three meetings and still get an A. However, attendance is imperative and critical in order for students to participate

and a student with excessive absences will see their grade adversely affected and their overall performance negatively impacted. Participation consists of active involvement in all the communicative activities that will take place in class. Additionally, there is no way to make up “missed” participation opportunities. If you miss a class period, please arrange to meet with the instructor/TA during virtual office hours if you have any questions on material that you have missed.

Use of Camera during Synchronous Meetings

In the non-virtual world, a student cannot choose to turn off their face, so why should they online? In most virtual classrooms, students are turning their cameras off during lessons and in breakout rooms. This could be because a student feels embarrassed to be the only one showing their face, or because they are not paying attention. While it is the student’s choice whether or not they turn on their cameras, showing your face increases productivity by keeping you focused, reduces a sense of isolation by creating more personal connections to others. It could be argued that forcing students to turn on their cameras is an invasion of privacy. While it is true that turning on your camera gives others a view of your surroundings, be aware of what is around you, and prepared to let others see.

Extra Credit / Questions & Answers Forum

It is normal to have many questions about things that relate to the course, such as clarification about assignments, course materials, or assessments. Please post these in the “Questions & Answers” forum, which you can access by clicking the DISCUSSIONS link in the course navigation links. This is an open forum, and you are encouraged to give answers to help each other. For the first clear and comprehensive answer provided to each question, the answering student can expect to receive one (1) extra credit point for participation (up to three (3) points maximum to be tallied at the end of the semester).

Netiquette - Rules of Online Communication:

Read with Respect:

Your classmates come from diverse backgrounds and life experiences. They may share beliefs and ideas that may not be agreeable with your own beliefs. Understand where they are coming from and Give them the benefit of the doubt.

Think, before Posting:

Your responses must be constructive, intentional, and well-articulated. Review your responses to ensure that you've conveyed exactly what you intended. Profanity and derogatory remarks directed at your instructor and classmates is unacceptable and will not be tolerated.

Refrain, from Yelling:

All caps (“I’M YELLING AT YOU”) and exclamation points (“Give me a break!!!”) can be misinterpreted as intense anger or humor without the appropriate context.

Mindful, your/others Privacy:

In a professional environment try to keep personal information private. Get permission before you use emails, pictures, videos for any content that is shared in class.

Use Humor and Sarcasm, Sparingly:

Be cautious when using humor or sarcasm as tone is sometimes lost in an email, chat or discussion post and your message might be taken seriously or sound offensive.

Grading Policies

1. Class Participation (25 %). Your participation at face-to-face and synchronous meetings will be evaluated based on your preparedness for class through prior engagement with the assigned readings/viewings. Overall, you will earn credit for your willingness to offer answers to questions asked in class and to contribute to a positive class atmosphere. Your responsiveness, enthusiasm and active role in promoting intellectual exchange, eliciting your peers' understanding of the course material, etc., will all be considered evidence of your readiness for class as well as consistent engagement with the assigned readings/viewings outside of classroom. Therefore, I encourage you to eagerly share your opinions, remarks, and ideas concerning issues discussed in class. Please also endeavor to refer to concrete supporting examples from the course materials and other credible sources, where necessary. Participation and preparation are evaluated as follows:

A/A-: student makes frequent unprompted contributions (questions, comments, answers) to each class discussion, engages fully in debates and other activities, and contributions demonstrate excellent preparation and solid understanding of the material;

B+/B/B-: student makes frequent contributions to discussions, engages well in debates and other activities, and contributions demonstrate good preparation and good understanding of the material;

C+/C/C-: student makes regular contributions to each class discussion, engages in debates and other activities, and contributions demonstrate some preparation and understanding of the material;

D+/D: student rarely makes contributions to class discussions, rarely engages in debates and other activities, and contributions do not demonstrate adequate preparation and understanding of the material;

F: student does not contribute to class discussions, does not engage in debates and other activities, and contributions do not demonstrate preparation and understanding of the material.

Postings on the discussion forum will also count towards your participation grade. Every week, several prompts will be posted on canvas in order to guide your viewing/reading and to help you reflect on the major points in the assigned material. **Not all prompts** will require online discussion. *When directed*, however, you will respond, offer queries or comments to that week's prompt and engage in threaded conversations with other postings already on the wall. Your postings need not be extensive or voluminous. However, they should be or finely detailed to specifically answer the prompt question. In general, I expect no more than 150 words for each response. A baseline for your comments will be the ability to offer insightful reflection on the material under discussion. Beyond responding to the prompt, you are encouraged to help with community building by showing interest in what others are discussing. Therefore, students should respond to at least **one** comment on the wall. The response should go beyond superficial statements such as "I agree" or "good job". You may, of course, chose to expand on another posting not merely by rephrasing but by offering insightful, value-add information that illuminate your peers' posts.

Overall, your response to the prompt question and to your peers' postings should display evidence of thoughtful engagement with the material. I also typically do not accept posts after the forum has closed because, I promise you, no one is coming back to a closed forum, and because engagement is really the key here

2. Writing Assignments (50%): From time to time, you will be called upon to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the course material through. short questions and summaries based on the assigned readings/viewings, assigned during the class period on which they are scheduled. These assignments will require you to write between 150 and 300 words in response to each prompt. Note, however, that the word count is indicative, not exact. These will be timed assignments, to be

done during the class period for which they are scheduled. The assignments will assess your understanding of the material covered in assigned readings, viewings, class discussions, and lectures. While the assignments are open book/open notes, meaning that you are free to use any resources from class, a thorough grounding in the material before the opening of the exams on Canvas is a requisite for successful completion of the exams. Note, however, that no resources outside of the course readings/viewings may be used. Furthermore, the exams are strictly individual endeavors. Therefore, students may not share study notes or summaries of the lecture content and NO communication with any other human is allowed in any form (either real-time communication or delayed form). Note, too, that students are required to use their own words and phrasing instead of cutting and pasting from course material. In an effort to help students focus and prepare discussion prompts will be embedded within each of the course modules. A useful way to prepare therefore will be to refer to these prompts, as well as to lecture notes and assigned readings. Late timed exams will be penalized a one grade notch (e.g., B- to C+) for each fifteen minutes following the close of the Canvas course portal. No work will be accepted more than an hour past closing time.

3. Final Report (25%): Students will submit a 5-6 page (typed and single-spaced) essay in which they will critically assess the role of the technologies discussed in AFRO 3578 in enhancing artistic and socio-political expression in sub-Saharan Africa as explored in course readings/viewings. Among questions that the paper should seek to answer are the following: what role has the radio (or the cellphone, or the Internet, etc.) played as a venue for artistic and socio-political expression in the country (or countries) examined in AFRO 3578? In other words, what is the artistic and socio-political significance of these media, and what social transformations have resulted from the artistic and technological innovations? What challenges, conflicts, or problems might have hindered the dissemination of the artistic production process, or alternatively, what socio-cultural, economic and/or political impact might have resulted from the artistic expression? What might be the benefit of some media over other modes (written vs. oral, for instance) in helping convey ideas and information? What is the **science or technology** behind the invention of **at least one of these media**? In your critical analysis, be sure to provide an historical framework to understand the artistic and political aspects, and to explain the intersection of changing geopolitical, artistic, gender and technological forces. The last page of the final report should include a discussion of your experience in AFRO 3578. This is a reflective piece. Therefore, the tone will be informal yet confident and authoritative; engaging, but not colloquial; structured and consistent, yet not casual. Here, students are asked to respond to the course by discussing the ways in which the focus of the course relates to them and their scholarly development including the ways they will apply what they have learned in this course to their future career or interactions with others. In other words, what have you learned in AFRO 3578 and what is its value to you *and/or its* impact on your work. In other words, what is the applicability of what you have learned to the outside world? What is its relevance to society?

The final grade will be determined as follows:

- Class participation		25%
- Writing Assignments		50%
- Final Report		25%

Your final grade will be determined by the percentage of score earned:

A (94-100%)	A- (90-93%)	B+ (87-89%)	B (83-86%)	B- (80-82%)
C+ (77-79%)	C (73-76%)	C- (70-72%)	D+ (67-69%)	D (60-66%)
S (70 % & above)				

Generally the scale is not curved. If you find that you are having trouble with any part of the course, please see the instructor early in the semester.

University Policies

Student Conduct Code

The University seeks an environment that promotes academic achievement and integrity, that is protective of free inquiry, and that serves the educational mission of the University. Similarly, the University seeks a community that is free from violence, threats, and intimidation; that is respectful of the rights, opportunities, and welfare of students, faculty, staff, and guests of the University; and that does not threaten the physical or mental health or safety of members of the University community.

As a student at the University you are expected to adhere to Board of Regents Policy: Student Conduct Code. To review the Student Conduct Code, please see:
https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy_student_conduct_code.pdf

Note that the conduct code specifically addresses disruptive classroom conduct, which means "engaging in behavior that substantially or repeatedly interrupts either the instructor's ability to teach and/or a student's ability to learn." The classroom extends to any setting where a student is engaged in work toward academic credit or satisfaction of program-based requirements or related activities.

Scholastic Dishonesty

You are expected to do your own academic work and cite sources as necessary. Failing to do so is scholastic dishonesty. Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering, forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

(Student Conduct Code:
https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy_student_conduct_code.pdf)

If it is determined that a student has cheated, the student may be given an "F" or an "N" for the course, and may face additional sanctions from the University. For additional information, please see: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/instructorresp>.

The Office for Community Standards has compiled a useful list of Frequently Asked Questions pertaining to scholastic dishonesty: <https://communitystandards.umn.edu/avoid-violations/avoiding-scholastic-dishonesty>.

If you have additional questions, please clarify with your instructor for the course. Your instructor can respond to your specific questions regarding what would constitute scholastic dishonesty in the context of a particular class, e.g., whether collaboration on assignments is permitted, requirements and methods for citing sources, if electronic aids are permitted or prohibited during an exam.

Makeup Work for Legitimate Absences

For take-home assignments, late work will be penalized one grade notch (e.g., B- to C+) for each day it is late. The weekend counts as one day. If you wish to avoid this penalty when you submit late work, please provide documented evidence of illness, etc. It is up to the instructor's discretion whether to accept late work after 3 days. Grades and grade-related concerns after the end of the semester will *only* be addressed via an official email account (umn.edu). Students will not be penalized for absence during the semester due to unavoidable or legitimate circumstances. Such circumstances include verified illness, participation in intercollegiate athletic events, subpoenas, jury duty, military service, bereavement, and religious observances. Such circumstances do not include voting in local, state, or national elections. Documented absence due to illness, injury, surgery, death in the family, a family emergency should be reported to the Instructor with an appropriate written excuse *immediately* following your absence. For complete information, please see: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/makeupwork>.

Appropriate Student Use of Class Notes and Course Materials

Taking notes is a means of recording information but more importantly of personally absorbing and integrating the educational experience. However, broadly disseminating class notes beyond the classroom community or accepting compensation for taking and distributing classroom notes undermines instructor interests in their intellectual work product while not substantially furthering instructor and student interests in effective learning. Such actions violate shared norms and standards of the academic community. For additional information, please see: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/studentresp>.

University Grading Scales

The University has two distinct grading scales: A-F and S-N.

A-F grading scale. The A-F grading scale allows the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Grade	GPA	Points Definitions for undergraduate credit
A	4.000	Represents achievement that significantly exceeds expectations in the course.
A-	3.667	
B+	3.333	
B	3.000	
B-	2.667	Represents achievement that is above the minimum expectations in the course.
C+	2.333	
C	2.000	
C-	1.667	
D+	1.333	Represents achievement that partially meets the minimum expectations in the course. Credit is earned but it may not fulfill major or program requirements.
D	1.000	
F	0.000	Represents failure in the course and no credit is earned.

S-N grading scale.

The S-N grading scale allows for the following grades and corresponding GPA points:

Grade	GPA	Points Definitions for undergraduate credit
S	0.00	Satisfactory (equivalent to a C- or better)
N	0.00	Not Satisfactory

For additional information, please refer to: <https://policy.umn.edu/education/gradingtranscripts>.

Sexual harassment, sexual assault, stalking and relationship violence

The University prohibits sexual misconduct, and encourages anyone experiencing sexual misconduct to access resources for personal support and reporting. If you want to speak confidentially with someone about an experience of sexual misconduct, please contact your campus resources including the Aurora Center, Boynton Mental Health or Student Counseling Services (<https://eoaa.umn.edu/report-misconduct>). If you want to report sexual misconduct, or have questions about the University's policies and procedures related to sexual misconduct, please contact your campus Title IX office or relevant policy contacts.

Instructors are required to share information they learn about possible sexual misconduct with the campus Title IX office that addresses these concerns. This allows a Title IX staff member to reach out to those who have experienced sexual misconduct to provide information about personal support resources and options for investigation. You may talk to instructors about concerns related to sexual misconduct, and they will provide support and keep the information you share private to the extent possible given their University role.

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy_sexual_harassment_sexual_assault_stalking_and_relationship_violence.pdf

Equity, Diversity, Equal Opportunity, & Affirmative Action

The University provides equal access to and opportunity in its programs and facilities, without regard to race, color, creed, religion, national origin, gender, age, marital status, disability, public assistance status, membership or activity in a local commission created for the purpose of dealing with discrimination, veteran status, sexual orientation, gender identity, or gender expression. For more information, please consult Board of Regents Policy:

https://regents.umn.edu/sites/regents.umn.edu/files/2019-09/policy_equity_diversity_equal_opportunity_and_affirmative_action.pdf.

Disability Accommodations

The University views disability as an important aspect of diversity, and is committed to providing equitable access to learning opportunities for all students. The Disability Resource Center (DRC) is the campus office that collaborates with students who have disabilities to provide and/or arrange reasonable accommodations.

If you have, or think you have, a disability in any area such as, mental health, attention, learning, chronic health, sensory, or physical, please contact the DRC office on your campus (UM Twin Cities - 626.1333) to arrange a confidential discussion regarding equitable access and reasonable accommodations.

Students with short-term disabilities, such as a broken arm, can often work with instructors to minimize classroom barriers. In situations where additional assistance is needed, students should contact the DRC as noted above.

If you are registered with the DRC and have a disability accommodation letter dated for this semester or this year, please contact your instructor early in the semester to review how the accommodations will be applied in the course.

If you are registered with the DRC and have questions or concerns about your accommodations please contact your (access consultant/disability specialist).

Additional information: Twin Cities - <https://diversity.umn.edu/disability/>, drc@umn.edu)

Mental Health and Stress Management

As a student you may experience a range of issues that can cause barriers to learning, such as strained relationships, increased anxiety, alcohol/drug problems, feeling down, difficulty concentrating and/or lack of motivation. These mental health concerns or stressful events may lead to diminished academic performance and may reduce your ability to participate in daily activities. University services are available to assist you. You can learn more about the broad range of confidential mental health services available on campus via the Student Mental Health Website: <http://www.mentalhealth.umn.edu>.

Academic Freedom and Responsibility:

Academic freedom is a cornerstone of the University. Within the scope and content of the course as defined by the instructor, it includes the freedom to discuss relevant matters in the classroom. Along with this freedom comes responsibility. Students are encouraged to develop the capacity for critical judgment and to engage in a sustained and independent search for truth. Students are free to take reasoned exception to the views offered in any course of study and to reserve judgment about matters of opinion, but they are responsible for learning the content of any course of study for which they are enrolled.*

Reports of concerns about academic freedom are taken seriously, and there are individuals and offices available for help. Contact the instructor, the Department Chair, your adviser, the associate dean of the college, or the Vice Provost for Faculty and Academic Affairs in the Office of the Provost. [Customize with names and contact information as appropriate for the course/college/campus.]

* Language adapted from the American Association of University Professors "Joint Statement on Rights and Freedoms of Students."

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Complaints Regarding Teaching/Grading

Students with complaints about teaching or grading should first try to resolve the problem with the instructor involved. Please note that no such discussion can be held at the beginning or end of class because of time constraints. Kindly, therefore, arrange to virtually meet with the instructor during a mutually convenient time. If no satisfactory resolution is reached through these venues, students may then discuss the matter with the Department Chair, Professor Yuichiro Onishi (ohni0001@umn.edu) 612-624-9847, who will attempt to mediate. Failing an informal resolution, the staff in the AA&AS departmental office will facilitate the filing of a formal complaint. Official U of M information on grading can be found at: <http://www1.umn.edu/usenate/policies/gradingpolicy.html>

Viewing/Reading Schedule

SEPTEMBER

Week One: September 5-11

Distribution & explanation of the syllabus followed by an introduction to the course; a brief survey of Sub-Saharan African artistic traditions;
(**face-to-face meeting: Wednesday 09/07**);

Week Two: September 12-18

Sub-Saharan African artistic traditions continued; **eReserve Readings**: “How to Write about Africa” by Binyavanga Wainaina; “On a Croc's Back, America-Bound” by Okey Ndibe; “Weary Professors Give Up; Concede that Africa is a Country” by Laura Seay & Kim Yi Dionne; “Problematic Terms”;

Film Excerpts to View Prior to Class Discussion:

“Binyavanga Wainaina: Rewriting Africa”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qMODRFS2Pbc>

Africa: Episode One (Different but Equal) Lib.umn.edu;

Further eReserve Readings: “What is Popular Culture” by John Storey;

(**face-to-face meeting: Monday 09/12**);

Week Three: September 19 - 25

The Cold War's African Battleground - **eReserve Readings**: “Take the IMF off Life Support”; “Cultural and Creative Industries Fuel Global Economy ...

Film to View Prior to Class Discussion:

The Big Sellout lc.elevator.umn.edu;

Further eReserve Readings:

“The Cold War” by Tsuyoshi Hasegawa in *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (eds. Helmut K. Anheier & Mark Juergensmeyer);

“Globalization, Phenomenon of” in *Encyclopedia of Global Studies* (eds. Helmut K. Anheier & Mark Juergensmeyer);

“Structural Adjustment” by Tina Lynn Evans, in *Green Politics: An A-to-Z Guide* (eds. Dustin Mulvaney & Paul Robbins);

“Foreword” by Karin Barber – **hard copies at Wilson Reserves**

“Introduction” *Popular Culture in Africa: The Episteme of the Everyday* by Stephanie Newell & Onookome Okome; **hard copies at Wilson Reserves**

(**face-to-face meeting: Monday 09/19**);

Week Four: September 26-October 02

From Colonial to Global **eReserve Readings**: “The Politics of Language”; “Griots & Griottes”;

Film Excerpts to View Prior to Class Discussion:

Africa: *Episode Six (This Magnificent African Cake)* **00:00 – 20:00 min.** – Lib.umn.edu

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OuUAPVFFCRQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=irGk5PltLgk>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=J_fchAAAUSA

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MWeR08O9YIg&t=107s>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Jy-efxk-MSU>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5Kvs8SxN8mc>

“Poyi! Bamana Jeli Music, Mali & the Blues” by Lucy Duran: <https://faculti.net/poyi-bamana-jeli-music-mali-and-the-blues/>

Mali: <https://www.bbc.com/news/av/world-africa-21147192>

Further eReserve Readings:

“Women’s Oral Genres” by Mary E. Modupe Kolawole;

“The Language Question” by A. Keith Booker;

(face-to-face meeting: Monday 09/26);

Week Five: October 03 – 09

Introduction to African Popular Music; **Lyrics to Review**: “Génération sacrifiée”; “Kouyou”; “Orphelin”; “Rêve d’enfance”; “Tébé”

Film Excerpts to View Prior to Class Discussion

Africa... States of Independence - Ivory Coast;

Emmanuel Akyeampong on Africa’s 21st Century - <https://vimeo.com/223193302>

Further eReserve Readings:

“A Generation of Orphans: The Socio-Economic Crisis in Côte d’Ivoire as seen through Popular Music” by Anne Schumann;

“Youth in Africa: Rebels without a Cause but not without Effect” by Stephen W. Smith;

(face-to-face meeting: Monday 10/03);

Week Six: October 10 – 16

African Popular Music Cont.; **eReserve Readings**: “Foreword: Retracing Kenya’s Songs of Protest” by Maurice Makoloo; “Unbwogable” Lyrics;

Film Excerpts to view prior to Class Discussion:

History of Rwanda - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RphYwV91MN4>

Hotel Rwanda: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2x8UzELvKIY>

Hotel Rwanda: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3m5qx7JMpOI>

RTLM <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VNbUeLnxQEI&t=4s>

Hal Turner: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t_7cBwfc5w

Further eReserve Readings:

“Daniel Branch. *Kenya: Between Hope and Despair, 1963-2011*” by Ike E. Udogu;

“Making Violence Ordinary: Radio, Music and the Rwandan Genocide” by Jason McCoy;

“Popular Music, Popular Politics: *Unbwogable* and the Idiom of Freedom in Kenyan Popular Music” by Joyce Nyairo & James Oguide;

“To the Beat of a Hit Song: The New Kenya Sends Spirits off the Chart” by Marc Lacey, *The New York Times*, February 16, 2003

(face-to-face meeting: Monday 10/10);

Week Seven: October 17 – 23 - (face-to-face meeting - Monday 10/17)

Week Eight: October 24- 30 - (face-to-face meeting - Monday 10/24)

Week Nine: October 31- November 06

Media Technologies & African Popular Cultures **eReserve Readings:**

“What is Popular Culture?” Notes;

“African Popular Culture” Notes;

Film Excerpts to View Prior to Class Discussion:

Africa's youthful population seen as an asset and also a liability

<https://ntv.nation.co.ke/news/2720124-4864652-1025uhq/index.html?platform=hootsuite>

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 11/02);

Week Ten: November 07-13

African Popular Cultures & the Politics of Gender; **eReserve Readings:** “Literature,

Feminism and the African Woman Today” by Ama Ata Aidoo;

Film Excerpts to View Prior to Class Discussion:

Are you a feminist? <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fcapO8EsKM8>

Adichie https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hg3umXU_qWc

Nzinga: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=siCT-3I_GDE

Dora Milaje: <https://theglowup.theroot.com/digging-the-dora-milaje-then-love-the-dahomey-women-wa-1823114028>

<https://www.smithsonianmag.com/videos/category/smithsonian-channel/how-african-female-ex-slaves-became-agooji-w/>

The Hunting Ground <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GBNHGi36nlM>

The Invisible War: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3fBaFQk6aE0> (2.5 mins.)

Private Violence: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lp6gCadKY8o> (3.3 mins.)

Birthright: A war Story <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H4heeJGmN8o>

Weinstein, etc: <https://time.com/5015204/harvey-weinstein-scandal/>

Further eReserve Readings: “Bringing African Women into the Classroom: Rethinking Pedagogy and Epistemology” by Obioma Nnaemeka;

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 11/09);

Week Eleven: November 14– 20

Introduction to Sub-Saharan African Popular Cinema; **eReserve Readings:** "Look, I am not Francophone" by Newton Aduaka;

Film to View Prior to Class Discussion

“Welcome to Nollywood” - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K1_Of4UfLlk&t=1s

“How Nigeria's Nollywood Became A Multi Billion & World 2nd Largest Film Industry”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fwo0ImSEF-M&t=11s>

Further eReserve Readings: "I could go to Hollywood, Where it's Dog Eat Dog, or I Could Stay in South Africa, Where it's Dog Eat Nothing" by Zola Maseko;

“Nollywood was actually a reaction by people who had nothing to do with film” by Jahman Anikulapo;

Nollywood Babylon lc.elevator.edu

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 11/16);

Week Twelve: November 21- 27

Introduction to Comics & Graphic Novels; **eReserve Readings:**

Film to View Prior to Class Discussion

Supa Modo (74 mins.);

Just a Band *Ha He* “Makmende” <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mG1vIeETHc>

Further Viewing: *White Scripts and Black Supermen: Black Masculinities in Comic Books* (55 mins.);

Further eReserve Readings: “Liberating Bicentennial America: Imagining the Nation through TV Superwomen of the Seventies” by Jennifer S. Clark;
“Panthers and Vixens: Black Superheroines and Sexuality in Contemporary Comic Books” by Jeffrey A. Brown;

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 11/23);

Week Thirteen: November 28 – December 04

Introduction to Digital Media: **eReserve Readings:** “Emergent African Digital Identities: The Story Behind 'Africa is a Country'” by Sean Jacobs;

Films to View Prior to Class Discussion

Afro@Digital;

Further Viewing: *Lo and Behold, Reveries of the Connected World*;

Further eReserve Readings: “Challenging Humanitarian Communication: An Empirical Exploration of *Kony 2012*” by Johannes von Engelhardt & Jeroen Jansz.

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 11/30);

Week Fourteen: December 05 – 11

Technologies of the Voice: Voices of the Future: eReserve Readings: “The Radio in Africa” https://www.bbc.co.uk/worldservice/specials/1624_story_of_africa/page17.shtml

“How Radio Works”: <https://electronics.howstuffworks.com/radio.htm#pt8>

“Radio”: <https://www.pcmag.com/encyclopedia/term/radio>

Radio Systems Engineering by Steven W. Ellingson (pp. 1–4);

Film Excerpts to view prior to class discussion:

Who invented the radio: <https://moviecultists.com/who-invented-radio-communication>

<https://now.northropgrumman.com/you-can-thank-guglielmo-marconi-for-your-favorite-wireless-devices/>

Further eReserve Readings: “Information Communication Technologies for Gender and Development in Africa The Case for Radio and Technological Blending” by Christobel Asiedu;

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 12/07);

Week Fifteen: December 12-18

Technologies of the Voice: Voices of the Future: eReserve Readings:

“Who Made That Cellphone?” by Kennedy Pagan, *The New York Times*, 15 March 2013, p.19

“Mobile Phones for Development and Profit: A Win-Win Scenario” by Rohit Singh;

Film Excerpts to view prior to class discussion:

History of the cellphone - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nrdNdprcYls>

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IV1js6_mMoE

Mpesa - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UPhStME3f98>

<https://olc.worldbank.org/content/transforming-peoples-lives-mobile-money-kenya>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QKjofAUhSso>

Further eReserve Readings: “Information Communication Technologies for Gender and Development in Africa: The Case for Radio and Technological Blending” by Christobel Asiedu; “Africa’s Technology Futures: Three Scenarios” by Dirk Swart;

(synchronous meeting: Wednesday 12/14);

Wednesday 21: Final Report due on Canvas

Updates, Changes, Modifications and/or Revisions:

The instructor reserves the right to make changes in this schedule to facilitate student learning. Any changes in the schedule will be communicated to students in advance. This syllabus is available in alternative formats upon request.