

# SAMPLE SYLLABUS



## Course Title

# African Women Playwrights

## Course Number

COLIT-UA 9851

## Instruction Mode: Blended

## Fall 2021

If you are enrolled in this course 100% remotely and are not a Go Local/Study Away student for NYU Accra, please make sure that you've completed the online academic orientation via Brightspace so you are aware of site specific support structure, policies and procedures. Please contact [nno211@nyu.edu](mailto:nno211@nyu.edu) if you have trouble accessing the Brightspace site.

**Syllabus last updated on: 4-8-2022**

## Lecturer Contact Information

Esi Sutherland-Addy

Office Hours

Monday 3pm and by appointment.

## Prerequisites

A background in literary or theatre studies is highly recommended

Students should be prepared to do perform readings of works and to engage in practical theatrical exercises. (These will be adapted as far as practicable for on-line participant)

Grounding in African/Africana studies will be

**Units earned - 4**

## Course Details

- Class Meeting:- 12.30pm – 3.00pm Universal Time
- Location: Rooms will be posted in Albert before your first class.
- Remote Participants: Your instructor will provide with the Zoom link via NYU Classes.

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- COVID-related details: In the interest of protecting the NYU Accra community, we are closely following CDC guidance around COVID-19 and adjusting our recommendations and policies accordingly. Your health and well-being is our top priority.
  - If you are attending in person, you will be assigned a seat on the first day and are expected to use that seat for the entire semester due to NYU COVID-19 safety protocol. Please note that you are expected to attend every class meeting in-person; however, this may change during the drop/add period if in-person student registration increases significantly or at any point during the semester if local COVID-19 regulations require additional physical distancing.
  - Additionally, in-person students will be split into cohorts who will attend sessions [Currently not relevant to this course]

## Course Description

Within and beyond the borders of its fifty-four sovereign nations, the African continent is rich with distinct traditions with their diverse contemporary cultures, aesthetics, and politics. Aware of its Africanness, each nation acknowledges, to varying extents, its own unique relationship to the continent of which it is a part. Historically, the forced movements of Sub-Saharan Africans from their homeland--movements that created diasporic African cultures globally--constructed a modern Africa that remains geographically recognizable yet profoundly de-centralized culturally as its multiple populations are dispersed throughout the world. Concurrently, over centuries, as North Africa solidified its identity as Arab (and, for many, as Middle Easterners), the "twoness" of the continent--African and Arab--has, for many, remained commonplace or contested. For this course, which considers on a macro-level the continent of Africa as an originating site, we explore through its dramas the degree to which Africanness inspires, diminishes, resolves, or dismisses a contested ideological and geo-political space. The course specially focuses on the dramatic heritage of Ghana.

## Course Objective

"African Women Playwrights" is a reading intensive course that focuses on the structural and narrative diversification of the theatrical texts written by women from the continent in the 20th and 21st century. We will critique the plays as both literature and dramatic texts intended for production. What is clearly evident in African women playwrights' writing is its focus on women's agency; generational legacies; tensions among tradition, colonialism, and modernism; family relationships; intimacy and commitment; the spiritual conflicts set forth among the worlds of rituals, polytheism, and monotheism; the challenging coexistence among Christianity, Islam, and Judaism; the impact of the global diaspora on African identity; and the intersecting issues of blackness, Africanness, and womanhood.

The course will address these various foci through the works of such writers as Andiah Kisia, Sitawa B Muragori (Kenya), Meaza Worku (Ethiopia), Werewere Liking (Cameroon), Tsitsi Dangarembga, Dania Gurira (Zimbabwe), Fatima Gallaire (Algeria), Penina Mlama, Amadina Lihamba (Tanzania), Ama Ata Aidoo, Efua Sutherland (Ghana), Osonye Tess Onwueme, Julie Okoh (Nigeria), Sindiwe Magona, Malika Ndlovu, Gcina Mhlope (South Africa), Violet Barungi, Asiimwe Deborah Kawe (Uganda), Jalila Baccar (Tunisia), Dalia Basiouny (Egypt), Lorraine Hansberry and Lynn Nottage.

The foundational critical theories for the course are postcolonialism, feminism, critical race theory, and performance ethnography.

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## Assessment Components

Assignments/Activities	% of Final Grade
Class participation	[15%]
Response papers	[30%]
Mid semester examination	[15%]
Oral presentation of research	[10%]
Final Research Paper	[30%]

You are expected to attend class in person or remote synchronously. Failure to submit or fulfill any required component may result in failure of the class, regardless of grades achieved in other assignments. You may be required to attend performances as they come to the notice of your lecturer. Once assigned these are compulsory for in-person participants.

## Teaching & Learning Philosophy

Teaching should lead to learning. My Teaching and learning philosophy is based the conviction that everyone has something to offer, thus learning is an inherently inspiring, shared experience.

## Required Text(s)

Electronic Resources (via Brightspace / NYU Library Course Reserves)  
Efua Sutherland – Tahinta . Afram Publications Ghana Ltd  
(TBA)

Supplemental Text(s) (not required to purchase)  
(TBA)

## Additional Required Equipment

NOT APPLICABLE

## COURSE OUTLINE.

### Session 1 – 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022

#### Introduction: Africa, Inside Out

The first part of the session will include an interaction on

- the syllabus and students' expectations of the course
- the notion of Africa in a global context
- gender as it operates in society
- the arts in society

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The **second part** of the session will comprise viewing and discussion of video clips of ceremonies and rites picked mainly from Akan, Ga, Yoruba cultures.

## Reading

### Criticism:

- Esi Sutherland-Addy and Aminata Diaw. "Introduction" *Women Writing Africa: West Africa and the Sahel*. Feminist Press 2007 \*
- Cole, Catherine. "When is African Theater 'Black'?" *Black Cultural Crossroads in Global Performance Culture*. Eds. Harry Elam and Kendall Jackson. Ann Arbor: U of Michigan P, 2005. 43-58. (C)
- Fanon, Frantz. "The Fact of Blackness." *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove, 1967. 109-40. (C) Please read the chapter available on NYU Classes, rather than in book at bookstore
- Soyinka, Wole. "Drama and the African World-View." *Myth, Literature, and the African World*, Cambridge UP, 1976 (rpt 1990), 37-60. (C) \*
- Wainaina, Binyavanga. "How to Write Africa."

## Assignment

Prepare a 600 word on issues arising in approaching the study of African Drama for submission on 19<sup>th</sup> September 19<sup>th</sup> 2022

Session 2 12<sup>th</sup> September 2022

## Women in the making of Contemporary Ghanaian Theatre

### Plays

- The Dilemma of a Ghost, Ama Ata Aidoo (AWP)
- Edefia, Edefia Sutherland (C)
  - Tahinta, Edefia Sutherland

### Criticism:

- Aidoo, Ama Ata. Interview from *In Their Own Voices: African Women Writers Talk*, edited by Adeola James. (C)
  - Aidoo, Ama Ata. "To Be an African Woman Writer—An Overview and a Detail." *Criticism and Ideology*. (C)
  - Gaines, Malik. "Chapter 2: Edefia Sutherland, Ama Ata Aidoo, the State, and the Stage." *Black Performance on the Outskirts of the Left: A History of the Impossible*. NYU P (2017). (C)
- Anne V. Adams and Esi Sutherland-Addy (Eds) *The Legacy of Edefia Sutherland: Pan African Cultural Activism*. Ayebia 2007

Session 3 19<sup>th</sup> September 2022

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## **Nigerian and Camerounian Women Writers**

### **Plays (Nigeria):**

- Tell It to Women, Osonye Tess Onwueme ;  
Edewede (The Dawn of a New Day), Julie Okoh (APW)

### **Criticism:**

- Buchi Emecheta. "Feminism with a small 'f'" Criticism and Ideology. (C)
  - William Over. "Redefining Political Drama: Onwueme and Nigerian Society." Contemporary Justice Review: Issues in Criminal, Social, and Restorative Justice 13.2 (2010): 173-89. (C)
- A lecture by Tess Onwueme will be shown in Class.

### **Plays (Cameroun) :**

- Better Days Come in Bitter Ways, Nathalie Etoke (AWP)
- The Widow Dylemma, Werewere Liking (trans. Judith G. Miller) (C)

### **Criticism:**

- Miller, Judith. "Is There Such A Thing as Francophone African Stage Textuality?" Yale French Studies 112 (2007): 131-44.

### **Assignment**

How Nigerian women writers studied dramatize resistance to Patriarchy:  
A response paper in 600-700 words.(Present on 3<sup>rd</sup> October)

## **Session 4 26<sup>th</sup> September 2022**

### **South African Women's Theatre**

#### **Plays**

Plays:

- Vukani! (Wake Up!), Sindiwe Magona (AWP)
- Have You Seen Zandile?, Gcina Mhlope (C)

#### **Criticism:**

- James, Adeola. "Introduction." In Their Own Voices, London: Currey. 1-6. (C)

#### **Assignment**

Discover Gcina Mhlope : Conduct a Utube search and prepare a brief 300 word artistic biography in addition to audiovisual material (Links and a 1-2 minute clip) to be presented in class on 3<sup>rd</sup> October for mid-semester assessment.

## **Session 5 3<sup>rd</sup> October 2022**

### **Mid Semester Assessment**

#### **South African Women's Theatre 2**

##### **Plays:**

- A Coloured Place, Malika Ndlovu (Lueen Conning) (1996) (AWP)

##### **Criticism:**

- Hlongwane, Ali Khangela. "The Mapping of the June 16, 1976 Soweto Student Uprisings Routes: Past Recollections and Present Reconstruction(s)." Journal of African Cultural Studies 19.1 Special Issue: Performing (In) Everyday Life (2007): 7-36. (c)

"Truth and Reconciliation Commission," South Africa's website < [www.justice.gov.za/trc/](http://www.justice.gov.za/trc/) >

## **Session 6 10<sup>th</sup> October 2022**

### **FALL BREAK. NO CLASS**

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## Session 7 17<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Zimbabwe / USA and Zimbabwe collaboration

#### Plays:

- She No Longer Weeps, Tsitsi Dangarembga (AWP)
- In the Continuum, Dania Gurira and Nikkole Salter (AWP)
- Eclipsed, Dania Gurira

#### Criticism:

- Mushongah, Josphat. "Dimensions of Vulnerability: The Impact of HIV/AIDS on Livelihoods in Southern Zimbabwe, 1986-2007." *Journal of Southern African Studies* 38.3 (2012): 551-77

#### Assignment

Identify the themes which burden the hearts of the Zimbabwean Playwrights assigned for this week.

## Session 8 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022

### Women's Theatre: Tanzania and Ethiopia

#### Plays:

- The Works of Penina Muhando Desperate to Fight, Meaza Worku (Kampala Festival, 2014) (C)
  - C. Cheseina African Drama :Representation and Role PhD Thesis University of Leeds 1987Chapter 5 (Scanned copy to be provided)

#### Zoom interaction with Penina Mlama (To be confirmed).

#### Criticism:

- Ashagrie, Aboneh. "The Role of Women on the Ethiopian Stage." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 24.1 (2012): 1-8. (C)
- Muhando, Penina. "Creating in the Mother-Tongue." *Women Writing Africa*. NYCL Feminist Press, CUNY, 2007. (C)
- Muhando, Penina O. Interview from *In Their Own Voices: African Women Talk* Adeola James. (C)
- Ngcobo, Lauretta. "African Motherhood—Myth and Reality." *Criticism and Ideology*. Ed. Kristen H. Petersen. Uppsala: Scandinavian Institute of African Studies, 1988. (C)

## Session 9 31<sup>st</sup> October 2022

### Women Playwrights of Kenya

#### Plays:

- Homecoming, Andiah Kisia (Chika Okigbo) (AWP)
- Room of Lost Names, Sitawa Betty Muragori (Kampala Festival, 2015) (C)

#### Criticism:

- Thiong'o, Ngugi wa. "Art War with the State: Writers and Guardians of a Post-Colonial Society." *Penpoints, Gun points, and Dreams: Towards a Critical Theory of the Arts and the State in Africa*. New York: Oxford UP, 1998. 7-36. (C)

## Session 10 7<sup>th</sup> November 2022

### Women Playwrights of Kenya

#### Plays:

- Cooking Oil, Asimwe Deborah Kawe (C)
- Forgotten World, Asimwe Deborah Kawe (C)
- Strings, Angella Emurwon (C)
- Over My Dead Body, Violet Barungi (AWP)

#### Criticism:

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- Anderson, John, Joann Sadgrove, Gill Valentine, Robert M. Vanderbeck, and Kevin Ward. "Morality Plays and Money Matters: Towards a Situated Understanding of the Politics of Homosexuality in Uganda." *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 50.1 (2012): 103-29. (C)

## **Assignment**

Students to prepare an assessment of the similarities and differences among the works of East African Playwrights. ( 600-700 words for submission on 14<sup>th</sup> November)

## **Session 11 14<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

### **Mozambican Women Playwrights .**

Plays:

- *Darkness Is Against Us*, Celma Costa (C)
- *Us, Too, We're People*, Celma Costa (C)

Criticism: tbd (by C. Costa)

### **Women Writing Plays in North Africa (I)**

#### **Algeria**

Play:

- *House of Wives*, Fatima Gallaire (Algeria) (FP)

Criticism:

- Carlson, Marvin. "Introduction." *Four Plays from North Africa*. New York: Martin E. Segal Theatre Center Publications, 2008. 1-

## **Session 12 21<sup>st</sup> November 2022**

### **Women Writing Plays in North Africa (2)**

#### **Egypt, Tunisia**

Plays:

- *Solitaire*, Dalia Basiouny (Egypt) (C)
- *Araberlin*, Jalila Baccar (Tunisia) (FPNA)

Criticism:

- tbd

## **Session 13 28<sup>th</sup> November 2022**

### **Africa on the mind of African American Women Playwrights**

Plays

Lorraine Hansberry – *A Raisin in the Sun*

Lynn Nottage – *Ruined*

Dania Gurira and Nikkole Salter – *In the Continuum*

Criticism

Kathy A. Perkins and Sandra L. Richards :*Black Women Playwrights in American Theatre Theatre Journal* Vol. 62, No. 4, Contemporary Women Playwrights (December 2010), pp. 541-545 (5 pages) [The Johns Hopkins University Press](#)

### **Zoom interaction with Mshai Mwangola on East African Theatre (to be confirmed)**

## **Session 14 5<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

### **African Women's Theatre Now**

African women playwrights are creating some of the most vivid theatricalities, dialogues, poignant characterizations and situations, and politically and personally charged thematics written in Africa

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today. Along with their socially challenging and artistically innovative works, the plays written by African women nevertheless remain among the most under produced and rarely published works on the continent and elsewhere. Why is this the case  
Field Trip to the Ghana Drama Studio , Legon and Terra Alta  
The class will meet Dr Sara Dorgbadzi , Dr. Ekua Ekumah and Ms. Elisabeth Sutherland

## **Session 15 12<sup>th</sup> December 2022**

Oral Presentation of Final Research Paper

### **NOTE**

**Aspects of the scheduled activities could change over the course of the semester.**

### **Classroom Etiquette**

To optimize the experience in a blended learning environment, please consider the following:

- Please be mindful of your microphone and video display during synchronous class meetings. Ambient noise and some visual images may disrupt class time for you and your peers.
- Please do not eat during class and minimize any other distracting noises (e.g. rustling of papers and leaving the classroom before the break, unless absolutely necessary).
- If you are not using your cell phone to follow the lesson, cell phones should be turned off or in silent mode during class time.
- Make sure to let your classmates finish speaking before you do.
- If deemed necessary by the study away site (i.e. COVID related need), synchronous class sessions may be recorded and archived for other students to view. This will be announced at the beginning of class time.
- Students should be respectful and courteous at all times to all participants in class.

Further classroom etiquette will be shared during the initial meetings of the class.

### **Suggested Co-Curricular Activities**

Your lecturer will be happy to provide suggestions for co-curricula activities upon request.

### **Your Lecturer**

Esi Sutherland-Addy Professor of African Studies specializing in oral and written Literature of Africa as well as educational and cultural policy with a special interest in women and girls.

## **Academic Policies**

### **Grade Conversion**

Your lecturer may use one of the following scales of numerical equivalents to letter grades:



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A = 94-100 or 4.0  
A- = 90-93 or 3.7  
B+ = 87-89 or 3.3  
B = 84-86 or 3.0  
B- = 80-83 or 2.7  
C+ = 77-79 or 2.3  
C = 74-76 or 2.0  
C- = 70-73 or 1.7  
D+ = 67-69 or 1.3  
D = 65-66 or 1.0  
F = below 65 or 0

## **Attendance Policy**

Studying at Global Academic Centers is an academically intensive and immersive experience, in which students from a wide range of backgrounds exchange ideas in discussion-based seminars. Learning in such an environment depends on the active participation of all students. And since classes typically meet once or twice a week, even a single absence can cause a student to miss a significant portion of a course. To ensure the integrity of this academic experience, class attendance at the centers, or online through NYU Brightspaces if the course is remote synchronous/blended, is expected promptly when class begins. Attendance will be checked at each class meeting. If you have scheduled a remote course immediately preceding/following an in-person class, you may want to write to [nno211@nyu.edu](mailto:nno211@nyu.edu) to see if you can take your remote class at the Academic Center.

As soon as it becomes clear that you cannot attend a class, you must inform your professor and/or the Academics team by e-mail immediately (i.e. before the start of your class). Absences are only excused if they are due to illness, Moses Center accommodations, religious observance or emergencies. Your professor or site staff may ask you to present a doctor's note or an exceptional permission from an NYU Staff member as proof. Emergencies or other exceptional circumstances that you wish to be treated confidentially must be presented to staff. Doctor's notes must be submitted in person or by e-mail to the Academics team, who will inform your professors.

Unexcused absences may be penalized with a two percent deduction from the student's final course grade for every week's worth of classes missed, and may negatively affect your class participation grade. Four unexcused absences in one course may lead to a Fail in that course. Being more than 15 minutes late counts as an unexcused absence. Furthermore, your professor is entitled to deduct points for frequently joining the class late.

Exams, tests and quizzes, deadlines, and oral presentations that are missed due to illness always require a doctor's note as documentation. It is the student's responsibility to produce this doctor's note and submit it to site staff; until this doctor's note is produced the missed assessment is graded with an F and no make-up assessment is scheduled. In content classes, an F in one assignment may lead to failure of the entire class.

Regardless of whether an absence is excused or not, it is the student's responsibility to catch up with the work that was missed.

## **Final exams**

Final exams must be taken at their designated times. Should there be a conflict between your final exams, please bring this to the attention of the Academics team. Final exams may not

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be taken early, and students should not plan to leave the site before the end of the finals period.

## **Late Submission of Work**

- (1) Work submitted late receives a penalty of 2 points on the 100 point scale for each day it is late (including weekends and public holidays), unless an extension has been approved (with a doctor's note or by approval of NYU SITE Staff), in which case the 2 points per day deductions start counting from the day the extended deadline has passed.
- (2) Without an approved extension, written work submitted more than 5 days (including weekends and public holidays) following the submission date receives an F.
- (3) Assignments due during finals week that are submitted more than 3 days late (including weekends and public holidays) without previously arranged extensions will not be accepted and will receive a zero. Any exceptions or extensions for work during finals week must be discussed with the Site Director.
- (4) Students who are late for a written exam have no automatic right to take extra time or to write the exam on another day.
- (5) Please remember that university computers do not keep your essays - you must save them elsewhere. Having lost parts of your essay on the university computer is no excuse for a late submission.

## **Academic Honesty/Plagiarism**

As the University's policy on "[Academic Integrity for Students at NYU](#)" states: "At NYU, a commitment to excellence, fairness, honesty, and respect within and outside the classroom is essential to maintaining the integrity of our community. By accepting membership in this community, students take responsibility for demonstrating these values in their own conduct and for recognizing and supporting these values in others." Students at Global Academic Centers must follow the University and school policies.

NYU takes plagiarism very seriously; penalties follow and may exceed those set out by your home school. Your lecturer may ask you to sign a declaration of authorship form, and may check your assignments by using TurnItIn or another software designed to detect offences against academic integrity.

The presentation of another person's words, ideas, judgment, images, or data as though they were your own, whether intentionally or unintentionally, constitutes an act of plagiarism. It is also an offense to submit work for assignments from two different courses that is substantially the same (be it oral presentations or written work). If there is an overlap of the subject of your assignment with one that you produced for another course (either in the current or any previous semester), you **MUST** inform your professor.

For guidelines on academic honesty, clarification of the definition of plagiarism, examples of procedures and sanctions, and resources to support proper citation, please see:

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[NYU Academic Integrity Policies and Guidelines](#)

[NYU Library Guides](#)

## **Inclusivity Policies and Priorities**

NYU's Office of Global Programs and NYU's global sites are committed to equity, diversity, and inclusion. In order to nurture a more inclusive global university, NYU affirms the value of sharing differing perspectives and encourages open dialogue through a variety of pedagogical approaches. Our goal is to make all students feel included and welcome in all aspects of academic life, including our syllabi, classrooms, and educational activities/spaces.

### **Attendance Rules on Religious Holidays**

Members of any religious group may, without penalty, excuse themselves from classes when required in compliance with their religious obligations. Students who anticipate being absent due to religious observance should notify their lecturer AND NYU SITE's Academics Office in writing via e-mail one week in advance. If examinations or assignment deadlines are scheduled on the day the student will be absent, the Academics Office will schedule a make-up examination or extend the deadline for assignments. Please note that an absence is only excused for the holiday but not for any days of travel that may come before and/or after the holiday. See also [University Calendar Policy on Religious Holidays](#)

### **Pronouns and Name Pronunciation (Albert and Zoom)**

Students, staff, and faculty have the opportunity to add their pronouns, as well as the pronunciation of their names, into Albert. Students can have this information displayed to faculty, advisors, and administrators in Albert, NYU Brightspace the NYU Home internal directory, as well as other NYU systems. Students can also opt out of having their pronouns viewed by their instructors, in case they feel more comfortable sharing their pronouns outside of the classroom. For more information on how to change this information for your Albert account, please see the [Pronouns and Name Pronunciation website](#).

Students, staff, and faculty are also encouraged, though not required, to list their pronouns, and update their names in the name display for Zoom. For more information on how to make this change, please see the [Personalizing Zoom Display Names website](#).

### **Moses Accommodations Statement**

Academic accommodations are available for students with documented and registered disabilities. Please contact the Moses Center for Student Accessibility (+1 212-998-4980 or [mosescsd@nyu.edu](mailto:mosescsd@nyu.edu)) for further information. Students who are requesting academic accommodations are advised to reach out to the Moses Center as early as possible in the semester for assistance. Accommodations for this course are managed through NYU [SITE].

### **Bias Response**

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The New York University Bias Response Line provides a mechanism through which members of our community can share or report experiences and concerns of bias, discrimination, or harassing behavior that may occur within our community.

Experienced administrators in the Office of Equal Opportunity (OEO) receive and assess reports, and then help facilitate responses, which may include referral to another University school or unit, or investigation if warranted according to the University's existing Non-Discrimination and Anti-Harassment Policy.

The Bias Response Line is designed to enable the University to provide an open forum that helps to ensure that our community is equitable and inclusive.

To report an incident, you may do so in one of three ways:

- Online using the [Web Form \(link\)](#)
- Email: [bias.response@nyu.edu](mailto:bias.response@nyu.edu)
- Phone: 212-998-2277

Local Phone: +233 243 150011