

United States International University

School of Humanities and Social Sciences

Department of International Relations

Credit- 3 units

IRL 3021-African Philosophy and ideologies

Course Description

Introduction

The course seeks to understand whether there is an African philosophy and at the same time trace evolution and development of African political thought in a manner that places more emphasis on the political, social and intellectual growth. The circumstances that have shaped particular way of thinking among African thinkers shall equally be considered. The limitation however is that we shall only focus on selected thinkers and themes. The course in general shall on how selected intellectuals such as Nyerere, Nkurumah, Cheikh Anta Diop, Nabudere, Amicar Cabral, among others (professional philosophers), thought and reacted on internal and external political, social and economic challenges they confronted.

Course objectives

The objective of the course is to introduce students to philosophical ideas of renowned African intellectual and political thinkers. By the end of the course, students shall be able to discourse fluently and knowledgeably about African philosophy and ideologies. Students shall also have acquired a body of knowledge on African philosophy and ideologies.

Course learning outcomes

- To discourse knowledgeably about African philosophy and central issues in the study of African philosophy and ideologies.
- To understand the social, economic and political thoughts of selected African philosophers
- To address theoretical and normative contexts that African philosophy addresses.
- To understand challenges facing African philosophy and ideologies
- To critique selected ideologies
- Relate different philosophical ideas to policy programs adopted by various post colonial states in Africa.

Link to program learning outcomes

- Collect, collate, analyze and respond critically to information

- Explain and use various theories and ideologies in the study OF IR.

Recommended texts-

Gideon Mutiso and CM Rohio(1975) Readings in African Political thought, Heinman, London.

Rwakaza Mukandala(1977) Approaches to the study of political thought , TAAMULI vol7 no 2, December, 1977.

July RW () Origins of modern African thought

Nkurumah, K (1970) Consciencism: Philosophy and Ideology for Decolonization, London, Pan African Books.

Wright, RA (1984) African philosophy: An introduction, Washington DC, Langham.

Week one

Introduction to the course

Learning outcomes

- **Understand the nature of African philosophy and its challenges**
- **Discuss the discipline and the issues it addresses.**

Critical issues in African philosophy and ideologies- Selected themes

- Is there an African Philosophy?
- The person and the self in African thought
- Ethics in African philosophy
- Colonialism and shadow over African philosophy

Assigned Readings

Samuel Oluoch Imbo(1998) An introduction to African Philosophy, Rowan and Littlefield publishers- Chapter five of the book deals with discussions concerning what African philosophy is or should be.

Additional readings

Joseph Asike, Contemporary African Philosophy, in Indian Philosophical Quaterly 19: 1, January 1992 pages 23-39

Oladipo Olusegun(1992) The debate on African philosophy: A critical survey, in Indian Philosophical quarterly 19:1 January 1992.

On ethics- see Kudadjie JN () towards moral development in contemporary Africa in Person and community, edited by Kwesi Wiredu, Washington 1992.

Dan Masolo(1997) African Philosophy and the post colonial: some misleading abstractions about identity in Eze, E.C Eds, Post colonial African Philosophy: A critical reader, London, Blackwell publishers pages- 283-300.

Week two

African political and economic philosophy

Consciencism, Ujamaa to development, Socialism, Marxism and democracy,

- What is a nation
- Challenges of building a nation
- Nyereres philosophy on nation building, education, etc

Recommended book-

Tsenay Serequeberhan() Hermeneutics of African philosophy

Gyekeye Kwame() Traditional political ideas and their relevance to development in contemporary Africa In Wiredu, CRVP, Washington, 1992.

Ebboh, Marie, Democracy with an African Flair, in Quest, 7(1) 92-99

Week three

Colonialism and African nationalism

Learning outcomes

- **Understand the ideas behind the struggle for national liberation and methods of liberation**
- **Understand what African political thinkers thought of colonialism and decolonization**

Discussion topics

- **What was colonialism according to Amicar Cabral**
- **What was the meaning and theory of national liberation**
- **What should the political class do when they capture state power**
- **What does Cabral, Nkurumah, Toure, Nyerere and other selected thinkers portray colonialism and what ideologies did they construct to liberate Africa?**

Anti colonialism and struggle for national Liberation

- Theorizing anti colonialism

- Ideas of Memmi, Fanon, Césaire, Amílcar Cabral and Nkurumah, Toure, Che Guevara, Nyerere and Gandhi.

Assigned Readings

Cabral, A (1996) *Identity and Dignity in the Context of African Struggle* in Molefi Asante and Abdu Barry eds *African Intellectual Heritage*, Philadelphia, Temple University.

Nyerere, J (1973) *Freedom and Development*, Arusha, Oxford University Press pages 1-40.

Guevarra, C (1997) *The Cuban Years: 1959-1965* in David Deutchmann, eds *Che Guevarra Reader*, NY, Ocean Press, pages 73-105.

Samora Machel (1975) *Sowing the Seeds of Revolution*, London: Committee for Freedom in Mozambique.

Memmi, A (1969) *The Colonizer and the Colonized*, Boston, Beacon Press.

Week four

Pan Africanism

Learning outcomes

- Understand the theoretical and ideological origins and development of Pan Africanism
- Understand the ideological differences within Pan African Movement

Discussion topics

- The meaning of Pan Africanism
- Development of Pan Africanism
- The future of African Union

Assigned readings

Kwame Nkurumah() *Africa Must Unite*

P. Olanwuche Esedebe (1994) *Pan Africanism, the Idea and Movement*, second edition, Washington DC.

Lecture notes.

Week five

Négritude – Cultural nationalism

Learning outcome

- **To understand how ideologies are constructed and for what purpose**

Negritude, Senghor and Césaire

Assigned texts

Emmanuel Edame Egar(2008) *The crisis of negritude: a study of the black movement against intellectual oppression in the early 20th century*, Brown Waller Press, Boca Raton.

Week six

Continuous Assessment Test (CAT) and discussions on assigned topics in class.

Week seven- Mid semester examination

Week eight

African philosophy and African diaspora

The relation between African philosophy and the African diaspora. How can Africans describe this relationship?

The Haiti Revolution and its influence on Africa and Latin America

CLR James and his ideology

Eric Williams

Cornell West

Week nine

Learning outcome

- Understand tensions between professional philosophers, nationalist ideological philosophers and philosophic sagacity.

Selected Academic African philosopher s and their ideas

- Anthony Appiah

- Molefi Asante
- Placide Tempels

Assigned reading

Lee Brown eds(2004) African philosophy: New and traditional perspectives, Oxford University press.

Discussion topics

Is African philosophy distinctly African?

Week ten

Nkurumaism: the quest for Pan African Ideology

Learning outcomes

- To understand how Nkurumaism relates to other ideologies such as liberalism and neoliberal globalization
- To highlight the importance and challenges of Nkurumaism in the era of neoliberal globalization
- To discourse knowledgeably about Nkurumaism

Discussion topics

- What were the differences between Nyerere and Nkurumah's ideas on continental unity
- What challenges did Nkurumah point out as the most pressing during his reign as the president of Ghana and after his regime was overthrown?

Assigned Readings

Abayomi Azikiwe(2007) Nkurumaism: Quest for a Pan African Ideology.

Nkurumah, K() Africa must Unite.

Journals and other relevant reading material to be provided in class.

Week eleven

Ubuntu Philosophy

Assigned readings

Nabudere, DW() Ubuntu philosophy, memory and reconciliation

Critiques of ubuntu philosophy- to be provided.

Learning outcome

- **To understand what ubuntu is**

Week twelve

The influence of Islam and Christianity on African philosophy and ideologies

Learning outcomes

- **To understand how dominant western philosophy has influenced African philosophy**

Assigned readings (later)

Week thirteen

Summary of the whole course and discussions on the relevance of the course

Week fourteen

Final examination

Course evaluation

Attendance and participation- 10 marks

2 class assignments- 20 marks

Mid semester examination-20 marks

Term paper- 20 marks

Final examination- 30 marks

