

UNITED STATES INTERNATIONAL UNIVERSITY-AFRICA
SEMESTER
PHIL 3306: COMPARATIVE PHILOSOPHY
CREDIT: 3 UNITS
LECTURER :

COURSE OUTLINE

1. **Introducing Philosophy: (General)**

What kind of discipline is it?

Philosophy --general and technical

The ultimate questions of philosophy.

Philosophy as a process and as a product.

Branches of philosophy?

Philosophy : a universal discipline?

Philosophy implies philosophers / Can there be a collective or tribal

Philosophy?

What about “African philosophy”, “Greek philosophy”,

“Asian philosophy”, “oriental philosophy” and “European philosophy”?

-Readings from Phil 3306 textbook pp 83-6

-J. Mbae “From Myth to Reason: The story of the Origins of Philosophy and the Implications for Philosophy in Africa” African Christian Studies, vol. 7, 1991

2. **African Philosophy:**

What is it? What are its main characteristics? Is there one “African Philosophy” or are there many “African Philosophies”? What are the main issues/ the main preoccupations of African philosophy (or philosophy in Africa)?

Who are the leading African thinkers (philosophers).

*- J. Mbae, “Is there an African Philosophy?” in **Philosophical Focus on Culture and Traditional Thought Systems in Development** (ed) J. M. Nyasani, pp. 427-435*

*-F. Ochieng, **African Philosophy: An Introduction**, Consolata Institute of Philosophy, 1995, pp. 61-80*

3. **Questions of Metaphysics :**

a) The nature of the human person. (Man).

Is the human person naturally good, naturally evil or naturally neutral?

Is he/she a creature of nature, nurture or circumstances?

Does the concept of Man (read human person) differ from culture to culture/ from civilization to civilization?

The person in African, Oriental, Asian, and European thinking.

-Readings for Phil 3306 pp. 36-49

*-Mortimer J. Adler, **Ten Philosophical Mistakes**, Collier Books, 1985, pp. 156-166*

b) Truth as it relates to ontology.

What is truth? Is it objective and absolute or relative and subjective?

Does truth represent a convergence between nature and thought or are the two independent?

To what extent is truth (or perception of it) culturally determined?

How does truth in Africa compare to truth in other parts of the world?

- Bertrand Russell : *The Problems of Philosophy, Opus, N. York,(1980 edition)*
- J. Mbae, 'Knowledge, Belief, and the Teacher" in *Journal of Humanities, University of Malawi, No. 7, October 1993, pp. 17-26*

4. Questions of Knowledge:

What is knowledge? What are the main sources of knowledge? What does knowledge define in the ontological world of being?

Who are the custodians of knowledge in society? Comparing the African sages to philosophers in other cultures.

Mortimer J. Adler, Ten Philosophical Mistakes, Collier Books, 1985, pp. 83-107

5. Ethical Questions:

- a) homosexuality and lesbianism, gay marriages, gay rights, etc.---the African verdict is Africa outdated, conservative and backward in its fight against same sex unions? What is the African ethical argument for or against homosexuality. What are the ethical issues involved?

b) Sexual permissiveness. What is the general African thinking about extra marital sex? What are the grounds/justifications of such a stand? Are these teachings relevant to the present day?

-Readings for PHIL 3306, pp 70-82

6. Theological problems:

A general comparison of major world religions.

Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, and Jainism.

The purpose of religion in modern times.

Do religions contradict themselves beyond credibility?

Emphasis will be laid on the attempt to answer nagging questions of philosophy.

Compare arguments for the existence of God, eschatological questions and life after death.

7. Class Presentations:

- 1)African Philosophy ---Does it exist?
- 2)Asian Philosophy ---the religious connection
- 3) Western philosophy ---characteristics
- 4) comparing African, Western and Asian philosophy
- 5) Mwalimu Julius Nyerere ---African Nationalist philosopher
- 6) Jean Paul Sartre ---the philosophy of Existentialism
- 7) Religion and Philosophy ---the convergence
- 8) Knowledge: African, European, and Asian perspectives

EVALUATION

The final grade will be the aggregate of the following:

Class Assignments, quizzes etc:	10
Class Presentations:	25
Mid- Term Exam	30
End-Term Exam	25
Attendance and Class Participation	10

GRADING.

A	90 - 100
A-	87 - 89
B+	84 - 86

B	80 - 83
B-	77 - 79
C+	74 - 76
C	70 - 73
C-	67 - 69
D+	64 - 66
D	62 - 63
D-	60 - 61
F	0 - 59