

Department Philosophy

Course Number Phil 252

Course Name: **African Philosophy**

AREAS OF INQUIRY

GLOBAL AND MULTICULTURAL PERSPECTIVES

Check box for Honors course consideration **X**

This form must be submitted to the Faculty Council on Liberal Learning and Academic Life as part of the submission process.

Please attach a proposed syllabus for this course and the Undergraduate Curriculum Course Proposal Form.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS:

Please answer the following questions:

Check Only One:

◇ This course is an existing course (in the current curriculum) that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

XX This is a new course that we are now proposing for this Area of Inquiry.

1. Name and contact information for the department chair administering this course.

George Teschner

2. In any given semester, how many sections of this course is your department willing to offer?

Two sections

3. Why is this course being offered/what is it designed to achieve (Course purpose/goal) ?

The course will survey recent literature in African Philosophy and explore African philosophy historically and in terms of its relevance to contemporary Western Philosophy and non-Western philosophy. African Philosophy provides an important reference point for contrasting both Western and Asian philosophical traditions with alternative views of human reality, the cosmos, knowledge, ethics and politics. The goal of the course is to broaden the multicultural perspective of both majors in philosophy and non-majors by sympathetically and critically examining the philosophical traditions of African cultures in such areas as ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics and how these traditions have interacted philosophically. Issues of vulnerability, dominance and subversion, or assimilation and resistance, immediately arise when comparing and contrasting the African Intellectual tradition with the highly literate traditions of Western and Asian thought particularly in the light of the Western Intellectual tradition's inclination to marginalize non-technological cultures.

4. Check the objectives below that the course will address. The first objective is required and every proposal must include at least two more objectives from the list below.
- ◇ Examine the interactions and interrelationships among cultures, especially the relationship of marginalized to mainstream cultures(**required**)
 - ◇ Compare communication styles among cultures **X**
 - ◇ Assess how culture impacts and informs the development of creative expression/movements, politics, economics, or philosophy
 - ◇ Analyze how concepts of “self” and individuals in various cultures differ and/or intersect **X**
 - ◇ Articulate how culture influences languages, societies, and institutions
5. Briefly explain how this class addresses the above objectives. A course may cover more than three objectives.

a.)

Most of the literature in African Philosophy consists in a study of African thought that originates in oral traditions and which is seen through the lens of the Western European thought. The literature is explicitly conscious of the problems encountered in attempting to understand non-technological cultures from the point of view of a high-technological culture; oral cultures from the point of view of a literate culture; and Islamic thought from the point of view of Western culture, which has been shaped by Christianity and modern science.

b.)

One of the most important themes dealing with cross-cultural communication is the difference between oral and literate cultures and the impact that these two very different experiences of language have upon thought. Methodological techniques drawn from disciplines such as semiotics and hermeneutics are employed in trying to achieve cross-culture understanding. Techniques in critical thinking are used to uncover covert assumptions that are typically made in trying to understand worldviews different from our own.

c.)

One of the central themes throughout the study of African thought is how the nature of being human, that is, the self is defined in relationship to the cosmos, to society, and to nature.

6. Course Assessment: Identify how this course will accomplish the above objectives (choose at least one):

- ◇ Participating in class discussion and debate **X**
- ◇ Engaging in teamwork and other collaborative exercises
- ◇ Writing analytical or evaluative papers, perhaps incorporating original research **X**
- ◇ Making oral presentations **X**
- ◇ Creating an artistic product or a performance
- ◇ Participating in fieldwork
- ◇ Other means – please identify

7. Attach a proposed syllabus, which includes a statement of purpose, course objectives, and how these objectives will be accomplished.

See Attached

8. Please identify and explain if this course contributes to the Foundations of Liberal Learning expectations for:

◇ Oral Communication Literacy:

The format of the classroom is primarily discussion. Students are required to write short position papers on the discussion questions that are posted online and discussed in class. The student is required to orally defend and explain his or her term paper through the different stages of its development. Students are selected to orally present a review of the previous class.

◇ Information Literacy:

A large part of the course involves doing research outside the classroom, particularly over the Internet, and using online library resources. This is required for individual writing assignments that are posted on WebCT, and particularly for the term paper that students are required to write for the course.

◇ Writing Literacy:

Students are required to write papers, communicate online by sending messages, discuss the readings in class, and write a term paper that goes through developmental stages over the course of a semester.

9. Explain how this course connects to Vision 2010 – the CNU Strategic Plan.

The course connects with Vision2010 with its emphasis on critical thinking, writing, and reading. Because of the very nature of the subject matter, it has interdisciplinary implications for science, art, and history, and other areas in related fields. The course is essentially a values course that deals with the problematic nature of translating knowledge into action. Because of an emphasis on critical research and writing in the course, the student is exposed to a high level of scholarship in the area of study. The course creates a community of inquiry by providing the instructor with the opportunity to interact with the students about issues that are deeply important to both the instructor and the student. In the course, students are encouraged to seek other opportunities for learning and scholarship outside the classroom. The course is designed to instill in the students a sense of rigor through expectations of excellence in both oral and written communication and to encourage collaborative research and scholarship between student and the instructor.

Submission Checklist:

By the deadline, submit a packet with the following documents to the Assistant Dean for Liberal Learning. Please submit in electronic and hard copy form.

_____ Area of Inquiry Course Proposal Form

_____ Syllabus for the Course

_____ Undergraduate Curriculum Committee Course Proposal Form

**UNDERGRADUATE CURRICULUM COMMITTEE
NEW COURSE PROPOSAL FORM**

Does this proposal affect Liberal Learning requirements? Yes _____ No **X**

1. Title of Course: **African Philosophy**
Proposed Course Number (cleared with Registrar): **Phil 252**

Prerequisite Courses: **None**

Catalogue Description (including credits, lecture, and lab hours):

The course will survey recent literature in the area of African Philosophy and explore African philosophy historically as well as in terms of its relevance to contemporary Western Philosophy and non-Western philosophy. African Philosophy provides an important reference point for contrasting both Western and Asian philosophical traditions with alternative views of human reality, the cosmos, knowledge, ethics and politics. The goal of the course is to broaden the multicultural perspective of both majors in philosophy and non-majors by sympathetically and critically examining the philosophical traditions of African cultures in such areas as ethics, epistemology, and metaphysics. Issues of vulnerability, dominance and subversion, or assimilation and resistance, immediately arise when comparing and contrasting the African Intellectual tradition with the highly literate traditions of Western and Asian thought particularly in the light of the Western Intellectual tradition's inclination to marginalize non-technological cultures.

Is the course cross-listed? If so, what is the number of the other course?

No.

****A proposed syllabus, including complete text and/or reference information, as well as any relevant information to this decision, must be appended.**

NOTE: All affected department chairs must sign approval on last page.

2. For whom is the course primarily intended? Explain why it should be added to the curriculum.

Majors and Non-majors

3. If this course is required, append a description of how the course fits into the curriculum. Indicate how it affects hours required for graduation.

Course is not a required course.

4. Has this course been offered previously as a special topics course? If so, when? What course number was used?

No.

5. Has this course, or one closely related to it, been offered at CNU previously?

If so, is that course currently being offered? How does the proposed course differ? When is the last term the old course will be offered?

No.

6. What is the anticipated enrollment per offering for the next three years?

15-20

During which term will this course first be offered?

Fall 20__ **Spring 2007_X_** Summer 20__

During which semesters will this course regularly be offered?

Fall 20__ **Spring 2009__** Summer 20__

7. How will the course be staffed?

With existing faculty

8. Does the course involve a particular classroom, special equipment, or costs beyond those usually associated with a course at CNU? If so, please explain

No.

9. Is the course repeatable for additional credit? If so, is there a limit to the number of times the course can be repeated? (e.g., applied music courses)

No.

10. If this course is for an Area of Inquiry

a. Identify the Area of Inquiry ***Global and Multicultural Perspectives***

b. Demonstrate how your course will meet the objectives of this Area of Inquiry

Most of the literature in African Philosophy consists in a study of African thought that originates in oral traditions and which is seen through the lens of the Western European thought. The literature is explicitly conscious of the problems

encountered in attempting to compare and understand non-technological cultures from the point of view of a high-technological culture; oral cultures from the point of view of a literate culture; and Islamic thought from the point of view of Western culture, which has been shaped by Christianity and modern science.

The most important themes concerning communication are the differences between oral and literate cultures and the impact that these two very different experiences of language have upon thought. Methodological techniques drawn from disciplines such as semiotics and hermeneutics are employed in trying to achieve cross-cultural understanding. Techniques in critical thinking are used to uncover covert assumptions that are typically made in trying to understand worldviews different from our own. The course will assess how these very different modes of expression, and culture generally, informs the development of philosophical thought

The course analyzes how concepts of self and individual differ in various cultures. One of the central themes throughout the study of African thought is how the nature of being human is defined in relationship to the cosmos, to society, and to nature.

The material will be discussed and examined in a pedagogical atmosphere of critical inquiry and debate. The approach of philosophical pedagogy is to analyze arguments for their assumptions and implications. Ideas are examined both synchronically for their logic and diachronically as an historical evolution of ideas. The course uses an anthology of primary sources that are approached exegetically and hermeneutically. The students have a first hand exposure to selections from the major seminal texts in African Philosophy.

This course was approved by:

(Liberal Learning core courses must be reviewed by BOTH academic Deans.)

Concur

Do Not

Concur**

Department(s): (1) _____ Date: _____

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(2) _____ Date: _____

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College Curriculum
Committee: _____ Date: _____

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Dean: _____ Date: _____

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Dean: _____ Date: _____

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Undergraduate Curriculum
Committee: _____ Date: _____

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Changes to the Liberal Learning requirements must be reviewed by the Faculty Senate.

Faculty Senate President: _____ Date: _____ ☐ ☐
Provost _____ Date: _____ ☐ ☐

Distribution by Provost Office following approval:
Department Chair(s), UCC Chair, Deans, Registrar

*** If "Do Not Concur" is checked, please attach a statement of explanation.*

Rev. 09/22/04

Phil 252 African Philosophy

Course Description: The course will survey recent literature in African Philosophy and explore African philosophy both historically and in terms of its relevance to contemporary Western Philosophy and non-Western philosophy. Some of the topics to be read and discussed will be philosophy in post-colonial Africa; contemporary Moslem philosophies in North Africa; the nature of mind, body, self identity and the moral order in the African worldview; African views of power and leadership; the role of individual and community; African thought and Western science; Colonialism and African culture; racism and culture; the feminine and African moralities; problem of evil in African thought; and issues of marginalization and domination in the encounter between Western and African civilization.

TEXTS:

Eze, Emmanuel, African Philosophy, An Anthology, Blackwell Publishing, 1998.

Reading Assignments:

Reading will be selected from the following articles. In many cases, only portions of the following articles will be selected in order to be able to cover the widest range of topics.

African Philosophy: Yesterday and Today p.3

Philosophy and Post Colonial Africa p.9

African, African American, Africana Philosophy p. 23

The Relations of Okra (Soul) and Honan (Body): An Akan Conception p.59

“Mutumin Kirki”: the Concept of the Good Man in Hausa p.121

Yoruba Philosophy: Individuality, Community, and the Moral Order p.130

Elements of Physics in Yoruba Culture I and II p.163

The Concept of Truth in the Akan Language p.176

African Traditional Thought and Western Science p. 181

How Not to Compare African Thought and Western Thought p.193

Literacy, Criticism, and the Growth of Knowledge p.200

Modern Western Philosophy and African Colonialism p.213

Philosophy of Races p.275

The Nature of Slavery p.375

The Concept of Slavery p.379

Breath p.427

Bantu Ontology p. 429

The Igbo World and its Art p. 435

Course requirements:

Attendance: Students are required to attend all classes and participate in class discussion both online and in the classroom. Missing more 3 classes for a given assignment period will result in grade reduction. Students are expected to email the instructor when they plan to miss class.

Class notes: Selected students are required to post class notes on line for each class meeting. The responsibility for posting the class notes will be rotated. Class notes must be posted online before the next class meeting. Class notes should contain quotations

from the class and/or reading assignment. The notes should be written in prose rather than in bulleted format and end with a closing question.

Number of messages: There are six grading periods. The dates for each assignment period is listed at the end of the syllabus. For each assignment period, a quantity of 4 or more messages is required for an A, 3 messages for a B, 2 messages for a C and, 1 message for a D, and 0 for an F. For each grading period, 50% of the overall grade is given for the quantity of messages and 50% is given for the quality of the messages. The quality of the message is defined below. Messages can include class notes, answers to the discussion questions, reports, and replies to other student's messages about the discussion questions. Messages that do not conform to the criteria for a quality message will be placed in the folder labeled 'Redo'. The last message must be a summary message of discussion that has taken place during the grading period.

Term Paper: A final term paper of approximately 2000 words (8 pages double-spaced) is required from each student. The term paper topic, thesis, a 250 word abstract of the term paper, and an annotated bibliography must be submitted by the deadline listed at the end of the syllabus. Since the term paper is an argumentative essay, the abstract should outline the argument that supports the thesis of the paper. Students will present their term paper in class during the last week of the semester. The first draft of the paper is to be submitted for feedback from the instructor by the deadline listed at the end of the syllabus. The term paper should reflect and quote from the messages in the discussion board. For this purpose the search feature of the discussion board is very useful.

Attention: The term paper topic, the abstract, the bibliography and the first draft of the paper are all required. In case one or more are missing or significantly late, the final grade for the term paper will be lowered one letter grade.

Rules Governing the Quantity and Distribution of Messages:

The messages that will count toward your grade in the course will be class notes for inclass students, answers in part or whole to the discussion questions, and/or replies to other student's messages about the discussion questions. In order to achieve maximum interaction, messages are to be evenly distributed over the whole assignment period.

1. Although you are free to post more, no more than 2 messages will be counted per day. The purpose of the rule is to insure that messages are distributed over the assignment period in order to allow for replies.
2. At least half of the total number of your messages must be posted during the first half of the assignment period.
3. At least one of the messages must be a reply to other student messages or to the instructor. All students are required to include a question at the end of each message and one way of replying to messages is to answer these questions. Students are expected to

read all messages sent by the instructor. Messages from the instructor will usually include additional questions for discussion.

4. The last message posted for an assignment period must be a summary of the discussion that has taken place in class. The word 'summary' should be used as the subject header.

Formatting of Message

Please give attention to how your message will look to others. You may check on this by clicking the "preview" button before actually posting your message.

All postings must be color coded using the HTML editor supplied with the WebCTt composer. Click on the button that says "HTML editor" . Use blue for quoted material from the text, green for quoted material from other student messages, and **bold** for your closing question.

Please separate quoted material from the rest of the text by three lines. This makes your quote stand out. The instructor will be looking for quoted material, since quoting material is required in every message. Separating quoted material by three lines above and below helps the reader see the quoted material easier than if it were buried in the message. The spacing assures you that you will get credit for using quoted material.

Separate your closing question from the body of the message by a three lines. Ending all messages with a question is required.

If your message is an answer to a discussion question, copy and paste the discussion question to the beginning of your message.

Some messages that do not conform to these criteria will be placed in the topic area labeled "REDO" for revision. Whenever a message is placed in the "REDO" topic area, it will be accompanied by a message by the instructor explaining why the message has been removed from the course section and placed in "REDO" . You can copy, paste, and revise your messages and repost it in the current course section.

Quality of Messages:

A quality message must:

(1) contain a relevant quote from the reading assignment, and quote from the message to which it is a reply, if it is a reply to another message. Messages that do not contain quotes from the text are not counted. All quotes must be placed in quotation marks and set off from the rest of the text of the essay by *three empty lines above and below the quote*.

(2) contain a commentary on the quoted passage and a reason and justification for the statement or claim that the comment is making.

(3) contain a closing question based on the content of the message. The question must be placed at the end of the message and *separated by three lines from the body of the message*. **The question must make explicit reference to the reading assignment. In other words, the ending question of a message must be about the interpretation or**

understanding of some specific part of the text. For example, if the reading assignment is Epicurus writing about happiness, the question "What do you feel about happiness?" is not an acceptable closing question. The question, "Is there anything else in addition to wisdom and justice that are necessary for happiness according to Epicurus?" is an acceptable question. The summary message does not need to end with a closing question.

(4) be at least 350 words in length.

(5) With the exception of class notes, the messages must relate to a discussion question.

(6) Messages can be replies to other student messages or to the instructor, but must conform to all of the above criteria.

Other criteria determining a quality message are:

(7) Message should contain approximately 30% quotation; 70% commentary

(8) Quotations should be short and commentary should interpret the quote.

(9) Messages must contain good grammar and spelling. Download and use the spell checker available from the main page of the class.

Messages that do not conform to the above criteria will be placed in the forum labeled "conversational" and not counted toward the total number of messages that a student posts. The student is free to resubmit the message if he or she finds that it has been moved to this forum after making the appropriate changes.

An excellent message must have the following qualities:

It must be clear. Give examples where necessary or paraphrases where needed. Check your grammar. Use paragraphs to divide different topics. Use subsections and subtitles if the message is long or complex. Anticipate how different readers will interpret what you say. Use summary statements to achieve closure.

It must be concise. Edit the message to see whether the same sentences can be stated in fewer words. Do not repeat what has already been said. Do not give more examples than are necessary for clarity.

It must be complete. When a judgment is made it must be supported by reasons. A good piece of writing no matter how small must have the structure of a beginning, middle, and end. Good writing has direction and motion. It can move from reasons to conclusions, from questions to answers, from problems to solutions.

It must be convincing. An excellent message is one that contains compelling reasons to accept its thesis. Argumentative writing gives reasons in support of a conclusion or conclusions. The logical structure of the message should be explicit. Use conclusion

indicators and inference indicators such as the words 'therefore' and 'because' to make visible the logical relations.

Grading Benchmarks:

On the homepage, under the label 'Benchmarks' there is a list of criteria that are used in grading messages. Use these benchmarks as guide for writing messages as a way of understanding the grade that you receive.

Coding of subject header:

General Messages: An appropriate key word or phrase must be selected for the subject of the message indicating what is the topic of the message. Look over the message log to see whether messages have been posted on the topic of the message you wish to post and add your message as a reply, otherwise start a new topic. Deciding on the subject of your message is an important part of composing a message and effects the quality and intelligibility of the message log.

Class Notes: In the case of class notes, the phrase "class notes" and the date of when the class notes were taken is placed in the subject header, for example "class notes- 7/9/02".

Answers to Discussion Questions: In the case of answers to discussion questions, the phrase "discussion question" and the number of the discussion question should be used in the subject header. In the case of term papers, the words 'term paper' and the title of the term paper must be placed in the subject header. In the case of reports of articles, the title of the article should be used for the subject header.

Reports: If the report is from a book abbreviate the book title followed by the chapter or page number. If it is a report on a video abbreviate the title of video.

Replies: Messages can also include replies to other messages. When replying to a message hit the "quote" button at the top of the window that contains the messages. The entire message that you are replying to will be displayed on the editor screen. You can then delete or include any part of the original message in your reply. The subject header of the original message is automatically inserted in the reply. For replies to be counted for a grade the reply must include a quote(s) from the reading assignment and conform to the other criteria for a quality message.

Assignments and Discussion Questions: Reading assignments are to be found under the label "assignments" on the home page and discussion questions are found under the label "discussion questions". Messages from the instructor often contain questions that also can be used as discussion questions.

Discussion Board Topics:

"Topics" are categories for organizing submissions to the Discussion Board. You will find several topics on the discussion board. For the most part we will be working in

topics whose name corresponds to the various grading periods. Make sure that you are in the appropriate discussion board Topic when you post your message. (If you send a message to the wrong Topic, the instructor may move it to the proper Topic.) Please do not send assignment messages to the instructor as personal (private) mail. (Of course, you may correspond with the instructor or anyone else privately by using the course's mail feature.)

Among the Topics is one that is labeled "**Suggestion Box-Anonymous**." Students may make comments in this Topic area without revealing their identities. This can be useful to someone who wants to make a criticism of the course or propose a suggestion for how the course should proceed, etc., without fear of retribution. In order to assure anonymity, please remember to check the "anonymous" box before posting your message. Neither the instructor nor anyone else will be able to identify the author of anonymous messages.

Other topic areas are "**Conversational**" and "**Redo**". The conversational topic area is used for informal messages not necessarily related to the course and the redo topic area is used for messages that do not conform to the required criteria and can be edited and resubmitted. When a message is resubmitted, it should be copied and pasted to a new message and posted in the current topic area.

Reading Messages:

In order to see all the messages posted in a topic area choose the option labeled "**unthreaded**", otherwise student and instructor replies will not be visible. To see only those messages to which replies have been made choose "**threaded**". There is also the option of displaying only messages that you have not read by selecting "**show unread**". You can search all messages in a topic area according to a number of different criteria such as the name of the sender, the date of the message, or key terms that are contained in the message. Searching key terms is useful when using the discussion board as a resource for information for the term paper or searching for a message to which to reply.

Grading Policy:

Grades during the grading periods are based upon the quantity and the quality of the messages. The final grade of the course is based on 70% for the grades received during the grading periods and 30% for the term paper.

The numerical value for letter grades at CNU is the following:

A = 3.9

A- = 3.6

B+ = 3.3

B = 3.0

B- = 2.7

C+ = 2.3

C = 2.0

C- = 1.7

D+ = 1.3

D = 1.0

D- = .7

F = 0

For each assignment, a numerical grade will be posted which can be translated into a letter grade according to the above table. The final grade for the course is calculated by averaging the numerical grades for each assignment period. There are 4 assignment periods corresponding to the four reading assignments.

Attention: 3 Fs on three different assignments are equal to an F for the course.

First Message:

Please, send as your first message the following autobiographical information and place it in the forum marked "biographies"

1. The reason that you are taking the course and what background you have in the material such as what you have read or what courses you have taken.
2. What you expect to get from the course and/or what topics you would like to see discussed.
3. Your major and whether you have taken a philosophy course before.
4. Your address and telephone number and the best place and times at which you can be reached.

Please divide this message according to above numbering scheme so that it is easy for others to read. Use the word 'biography' for the subject header.

Key Dates:

Monday, Jan 16 Class Begins

Friday, Feb 10 First Grading Period Ends

Friday, Feb 17 Thesis and abstract due

Friday, March 3rd Second Grading Period Ends

Saturday, March 4th Spring Recess

Monday, March 13th Classes Resume

Friday, March 17th First Draft of Term paper due

Friday, March 31 Third Grading Period Ends

Friday, April 21 Final Draft of Term Paper is Due. Oral presentation of term papers during last week of class.

Friday, April 29 Fourth Grading Period and Course Ends