

**FLR 416/516 (27042/27045): AFRICAN FOLKLORE**  
**Winter 2016, 10:00-11:20 MW, 117 FEN**

**Professor:** Dr. Lisa Gilman

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**Office:** 447 PLC

**Office Phone:** 541-346-3967

**Office hours:** T 9-10 am, W 1-3 pm, and by appointment

**REQUIRED TEXTS:**

- Mirzeler, Mustafa Kemal. 2014. *Remembering Nayeche and the Gray Bull Engiro*. Toronto: The University of Toronto Press.
- Fabian, Johannes. 1996. *Remembering the Present: Painting and Popular History in Zaire*. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- Gilman, Lisa. 2009. *The Dance of Politics: Gender, Performance and Democratization in Malawi*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press.
- All other readings available electronically on Canvas

**COURSE DESCRIPTION:** This course investigates various expressive forms practiced by different groups of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa. We will examine the folklore (e.g. oral narratives, songs, paintings, and dance) of specific groups to explore issues of aesthetics, identity, politics, economics, gender, class, and globalization. Audio-visual materials—video footage, documentary films, audio recordings, and photographs—will be used to augment students' understanding and engagement with life across the continent and with the specific materials studied.

**LEARNING OUTCOMES**

1. Strengthen writing, oral communication, and critical thinking skills.
2. Identify, explain and apply basic concepts in folklore scholarship in African contexts.
3. Identify, explain, and analyze diverse folklore forms in African contexts in relationship to the historical, cultural, and social contexts in which they are performed, employing appropriate theoretical and methodological approaches.
4. Identify, explain, and critically analyze the role of folklore in community constitution, identity formation, and conflict negotiation for diverse groups on the African continent.

**CLASS POLICIES**

**Attendance**

- Class periods are used for discussions, lectures, group assignments, writings, and other activities. Attendance is mandatory and fundamental to your success in this course.
- If you have to miss class, you are responsible for obtaining notes and materials. If your absence is excusable, you may meet with me to review missed materials.
- Excusable circumstances include: a death in the family, serious illness, ill children, observance of a religious holiday, and other university recognized conflicts. Be prepared to provide documentation.
- If excusable circumstances prevent attendance at a quiz or turning in an assignment on time, inform me **before** or **within 24 hours after** the quiz or due date via e-mail, telephone, or a dated note in my mailbox (this requirement will be lifted in extreme circumstances). **LATE PAPERS (not due to excusable circumstances) WILL DROP ONE LETTER GRADE EACH DAY THEY ARE LATE.**

**Electronics:** Please turn off all electronic devices before class begins. Laptops are not permitted unless an arrangement has been made with the instructor.

**Inclusive Learning Environments:** We will work together to create a classroom environment where everyone feels free to express their opinions while simultaneously respecting a plurality of

experiences and perspectives.

**Accessibility:** If there are aspects of the instruction or course design that result in disability-related barriers to your participation, meet with me in the first week of class to discuss accommodation. I also encourage students to contact the Accessible Education Center (formerly Disability Services) in 164 Oregon Hall at 541-346-1155 or [uoaec@uoregon.edu](mailto:uoaec@uoregon.edu).

**Tutorial help:** Programs, workshops, courses, tutors, and mentors are among the many resources the Teaching and Learning Center provides to help students with educational pursuits at the University of Oregon. The TLC offers courses, tutorials, and drop-in assistance for students' academic writing. The TLC is located in 68 PLC and their website is <http://tlc.uoregon.edu/>.

**Academic Integrity:** The University of Oregon values academic honesty. All work submitted in this course must be your own and be written exclusively for this course. Any use of sources (ideas, quotations, and paraphrases) beyond FLR 416/516 lectures and discussion must be properly documented. Protect the integrity of your own work and others'. In cases of clearly established plagiarism or cheating, a final course grade of "F" will be the minimum penalty; all incidents will be reported to the Office of Student Conduct, as required by the University. Consult the UO's Student Conduct Code for definitions of plagiarism and information on documentation should you need it. Our Conduct Code (including guidelines for citations) can be found here: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/StudentConductCode.aspx>

### ***COURSE REQUIREMENTS***

#### **FLR 416 (UNDERGRADUATE) GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS**

- **Discussion postings (15% of final grade):** For each week of class (i.e. across two meetings), each student will post to the course Canvas site a set of observations and/or questions based in that week's materials. Each posting should have a minimum of two complete "thoughts" (questions or observations) that, while possibly related, should be distinct. These are due by 5 pm on the day before a class meeting for that week (i.e. Sunday or Tuesday). ***Postings begin in week 2 of class and continue through week 9.***
- **Quizzes (45% of final grade, 15% each on 2/1, 2/22, and 3/7):** Three short answer/essay quizzes will test students on terms and readings.
- **Term Project (choose from the two options below):**
  - Option #1, Research Paper:***
    - **Country Overview and Research Proposal (10% of final grade, DUE 1/20):** 3-page paper that provides 1) a brief overview of the geography, history, political system, and cultural make-up of the country students have selected for their research paper; 2) a brief description of the research topic; and, 3) three bibliographic references students plan to use. Guidelines will be distributed in class and posted on Canvas.
    - **Research paper (30% of final grade, DUE 3/14 by 5 pm in my office):** 10-page research paper about a folklore topic in an African country. Topic must be approved by instructor. Guidelines will be distributed in class and posted on Canvas.
  - Option #2, Folklore in Africa Project:***
    - **Country Overview and Proposal for Folklore in Africa Project (10% of final grade, DUE 1/20):** 3-page paper providing brief overview of geography, history, political system, and cultural make-up of the country students have selected for their Folklore in Africa project as well as a brief explanation of the types of folklore students will profile in their journals (see next assignment). Guidelines will be distributed in class and posted on Canvas.
    - **Folklore in Africa Project (30% of final grade, DUE by 5 pm in my office):** Students will select an African country to research. Over the course of the term, students will research six examples of folklore for their selected country. Guidelines to be distributed in class.

## **FLR 516 (GRADUATE) GRADING AND COURSE REQUIREMENTS:**

- **Discussion postings (10% of final grade):** For each week of class (i.e. across two meetings), each student will post to the course Canvas site a set of observations and/or questions based in that week's materials. Each posting should have a minimum of two complete "thoughts" (questions or observations) that, while possibly related, should be distinct. These are due by 5 pm on the day before a class meeting for that week (i.e. Sunday or Tuesday). **Postings begin in week 2 of class and continue through week 9.**
- **Quizzes (30% of final grade, 10% each on 2/1, 2/22, and 3/7):** Three short answer/essay quizzes will test students on terms and readings.
- **Lead class (10% of final grade).** Each graduate student will lead one class period. S/he will address that day's topics and readings through any combination of lecture, discussion, and small group activities. You are encouraged to bring relevant examples of folklore (material objects, records, photographs, video examples, etc.) to illustrate ideas and stimulate discussion
- **Term Project:**
  - **Country Overview and Research Proposal (5% of final grade, DUE 1/20):** 3-page paper that provides 1) brief overview of the geography, history, political system, and cultural make-up of the country students have selected for their research paper; 2) brief description of the research topic; and, 3) three bibliographic references students plan to use.
  - **Presentation of term paper (5% of final grade, 3/7).** Students will present a 10-minute formal presentation of term paper.
  - **Term paper 15-20 pages (40% of final grade, DUE 3/14 by 5 pm in my office):** a theoretically informed paper about some aspect of folklore on the African continent. Students interested in folklore in communities of the African Diaspora should meet with me to determine an appropriate topic.

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## **SCHEDULE OF CLASS READINGS AND ASSIGNMENTS**

### **WEEK 1**

**MONDAY, 1/4: Introduction: What is folklore? What is Africa?**

**WEDNESDAY, 1/6: Introduction: What is folklore? What is Africa?**

#### **Readings:**

- Peek, Philip M. and Kwesi Yankah. 2004. "Introduction." *African Folklore: An Encyclopedia*, eds. Philip M. Peek and Kwesi Yankah, pp. ix-xv. New York: Routledge.
- Finnegan, Ruth. 1994. The Poetic and the Everyday: Their Pursuit in an African Village and an English Town. *Folklore* 105 (1/2): 3-11.

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## **SECTION #1: ORAL TRADITION IN CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN CONTEXTS**

### **WEEK 2**

**MONDAY 1/11: What is "tradition"?**

#### **Readings:**

- Waterman, Christopher. 1997. "Our Tradition is a Very Modern Tradition.": Popular Music and the Construction of Pan-Yoruba Identity. In *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber, pp. 48-53. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Hannerz, Ulf. 1997. The World in Creolization. In *Readings in African Popular Culture*, ed. Karin Barber, pp. 12-18. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

**WEDNESDAY 1/13: Jie Storytelling**

**Reading:** Mirzeler, Intro and Ch. 1

**WEEK 3**

**MONDAY 1/18: \*\*\*MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. HOLIDAY/NO CLASS\*\*\***

**WEDNESDAY 1/20: Ethnography of Jie storytelling and images of historical tradition**

**\*\*\*DUE: COUNTRY OVERVIEW AND PROPOSALS\*\*\***

**Reading:** Mirzeler, Ch. 2 & 3

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**WEEK 4**

**MONDAY 1/25: History, Landscape, memory and poetic persuasion**

**Reading:** Mirzeler, Ch. 4 & 5

**WEDNESDAY 1/27: Memory, oral tradition, and the storyteller**

**Readings:** Chapters 6, 7 and conclusion

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**SECTION #2: ART, HISTORY, AND POLITICS  
IN THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO (DRC/formerly Zaire)**

**WEEK 5**

**MONDAY 2/1: Quiz and Lumumba Video (we will watch first part in class)**

**\*\*QUIZ #1:** quiz on readings and class materials from weeks 1-4\*\*

**WEDNESDAY 2/3: Video Lumumba (we will watch remainder of film in class)**

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**WEEK 6**

**MONDAY 2/8: Tshibumba's History: Colonialism**

**Reading:** Fabian, p. 3-90

**WEDNESDAY 2/10: Tshibumba's History: Independence**

**Reading:** Fabian, p 91-184.

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**WEEK 7**

**MONDAY 2/15: Genre and popular painting in Shaba**

**Reading:** Fabian, p. 187-246.

**WEDNESDAY 2/17: Performance and the production of history**

**Reading:** Fabian, p 247-96.

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**SECTION #3: DANCE, GENDER, AND POLITICS IN MALAWI**

**WEEK 8:**

**MONDAY 2/22: Gender, dance, and politics in Malawi's history**

**QUIZ #2:** quiz on Fabian book and relevant concepts from throughout term

**Reading:** Gilman, Ch. 1-2.

**WEDNESDAY 2/24: Gender, dance and politics during dictatorship and transition**

**Reading:** Gilman, Ch. 3-4.

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**WEEK 9**

**MONDAY 2/29 Gender, dance, and power in contemporary Malawian politics**

*Reading:* Gilman. Ch. 5-6.

**WEDNESDAY 3/2: The gendering of democracy through performance.**

*Reading:* Gilman. Ch. 7-8

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**Week 10:**

**MONDAY 3/7: Quiz and graduate presentations**

**\*\* QUIZ #3:** quiz on Gilman book and relevant concepts from throughout term

**\*\*Graduate students present on term papers**

**WEDNESDAY 3/9:**

**\*\*Undergraduates present on term projects**

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**MARCH 14 BY 5:00 PM  
DUE IN MY OFFICE  
Undergraduate and Graduate term projects**