

## COURSE TEMPLATE

ELS 111 – Origins of Nigerian Literature in English (Credit Units: 2)

Departments of Languages (English and Literary Studies Unit), Faculty of Arts,

University of Delta, Agbor, Nigeria

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**Office Hours:** Mondays (12.00 noon - 2.00 pm), Tuesdays (4.00 pm - 5.00 pm), Wednesdays (3.00 pm - 4.30 pm), Thursdays (10.00 am - 2.00 pm), & Fridays 3:00 pm - 5:00 pm

**Meeting Time and Place:** Mondays, 9:00 am to 10:00 am, Fridays 1.00 pm to 2.00 pm for English and Literary Studies, Language and Communication Arts, and English Education students at FOA Block 1, Hall A1 in the main campus; 12.00 pm to 2.00 pm at Law Lecture Theatre (250 capacity) at Owa-Oyibu Campus for Law Students.

There are many ways to reach me. But ultimately, there is no substitute for face-to-face interaction which often leads to more refined and focused questions resulting in your improved understanding. I encourage you to take advantage of my office hours. Questions during class or immediately after class are always welcome. Email is an easy way to ask questions outside of class but is not productive as face-to-face communication. Our telegram platform is equally free for all to ask questions. This is without prejudice to DLMS all things being equal.

### Attendance

You are expected to attend every class. If you must miss a class, it is your responsibility to make up for the work that you missed. If you are going to be absent from any class, you must please notify the

me in advance.

### Methods of Instruction

This syllabus contains an overview of what will be covered in class; for specific information,



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students are referred to the class web page maintained on the University website. Assignments will be posted on the University of Delta LMS or given in the class or the telegram platform. and should be submitted through the prescribed channel as will be directed.

Class attendance, and doing all your seminars and homework will help the borderline cases.

## OVERVIEW

This course traces the beginning of written literature in English from pre-literate to literate Nigeria. Attention shall be paid to the influences of the oral tradition on the written literature in English in Nigeria. Efforts shall be made to trace the influences and thematic preoccupations of Literature-in-English by Nigerians over time.

## OBJECTIVES

The objectives of this course are to: (i) describe the concept of Nigerian Literature; (ii) discuss oral literature; (iii) explain the rise of written literature; (iv) examine the influences of oral tradition in the pioneer written Nigerian Literature-in-English; (v) discuss written literature in Indigeneous languages in the North and South; (vi) discuss the first literature in English by a Nigerian; (vii) discuss the first English-language Literature in Nigeria; (viii) examine the literary view of Nigeria by British writers; (ix) relate the mergence of Chinua Achebe and his contemporaries; (x) discuss the thematic considerations of Nigerian Literature in English; (xi) discuss the place of Nigeria on the global literary scene.

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

At the end of this course, the students should be able to: (i) situate Nigerian Literature; (ii) explain the contents of oral literature; (iii) trace the history of written literature in Nigeria by Nigerians; (iv) account for the factors influencing the pioneer Nigerian literary artists; (v) account for the relative unpopularity of written literature in Indigeneous languages in Nigeria; (vi) examine Olaudah Equiano's narrative as an autobiography; (vii) discuss *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* as a literature of oral traditions; (viii) asses the literary view of Nigeria by British writers like Joseph Conrad and Joyce Lunel Carey; (ix) asses the place of Chinua Achebe and his



contemporaries in Nigerian written literature in English; (x) discuss the themes of cultural clash, colonialism, disillusionment, eco-criticism and political corruption in written Nigerian Literature; (xi) assesses the place of Nigeria on the global literary scene.

### **Course Contents**

Literature in Pre-Literate Nigeria. Classification of Oral Literature: The Spoken Form (Prose): Myth, Legend, Folktale, Fable, Proverb. The Sung Form (Poetry): Musical poetry, Lyrics, Dirges/Elegy, Invocative poetry, Panegyric Poetry, Special Occasion poetry e.g. Births, Weddings. The Performance (Drama): Festival, Ritual, Masquerades, Storytelling as Drama, Music and Dance. Writings in Indigenous languages. The rise of written literature-in-English. Colonialism in Nigerian Literature. Eco criticism in Nigerian Literature. Womanism and feminism, political corruption in Nigerian literature. The place of Chinua Achebe and his contemporaries in Nigerian written literature in English

### **Lecture Schedules**

#### **Week / Content**

1 and 2. Literature in Pre-Literate Nigeria. Classification of Oral Literature: The Spoken Form (Prose): Myth, Legend, Folktale, Fable, Proverb. The Sung Form (Poetry): Musical poetry, Lyrics, Dirges/Elegy, Invocative poetry, Panegyric Poetry, Special Occasion poetry e.g. Births, Weddings. The Performance (Drama): Festival, Ritual, Masquerades, Storytelling as Drama, Music and Dance. Writings in indigenous languages.

3. The rise of written literature-in-English.



4. Thematic considerations in Nigerian Written Literature in English. Colonialism in Nigerian Literature. Eco criticism in Nigerian Literature. Womanism and feminism, political corruption in Nigerian literature.

5 and 6. Textual analysis and discussion (poetry)

7 and 8. Textual analysis and discussion (prose)

9. Textual analysis and discussion (drama)

10. Test

11 to 13. Seminar presentations

14. Revision

15. Final Exam

### **Assessment schedule**

**Attendance 2** (Note that meeting 70 percent attendance to class is a condition for taking the end of semester examination)

**Assignment 8**

**Class Test 10**

**Seminar presentation 10**

**End of Semester Exam 70**



## Primary Literary Texts\*

*The Palm-Wine Drinkard* - Amos Tutuola

*Things Fall Apart* – Chinua Achebe

*Death and the King's Horseman* – Wole Soyinka

*The Trials of Oba Ovonramwen* – Ahmed Yerima

*The Swamp Dwellers* by Wole Soyinka

*The Lion and the Jewel* by Wole Soyinka

*Arrow of God* by Chinua Achebe

*"Piano and Drums"* by Gabriel Okara

*"You Laughed and Laughed and Laughed"* by Gabriel Okara

Selected poems of Christopher Okigbo and Dennis Osadebey

"Abiku" – J.P Clark

"Don't Call Me Daddy" – Tayo Olafioye

"Deep Green" - Niyi Osundare

"The Eye of the Earth" - Niyi Osundare

"The Casualties" - J. P. Clark

## Secondary Texts\*\*

*The Interesting Narrative of the Life of Olaudah Equiano, or Gustavus Vassa, The African: Written by Himself* - Olaudah Equiano

*Gandoki* - Muhammed Bello

*Omenuko* - Pita Nwana

### Authors\*\*\*

D. O. Fagunwa, Pita Nwana, Ene Henshaw, Malam Tafida, Muhammed Bello, Cyprian Ekwensi, Amos Tutuola, Chinua Achebe, Ola Rotimi, Wole Soyinka, Flora Nwapa, Zulu Sofola, John Pepper Clark, Gabriel Okara, Ahmed Yerima, Niyi Osundare, Zainab Alkali, Tayo Olafioye, Buchi Emecheta, Ben Okri, Chimanda Ngozi Adichie, Toni Kan, Chika Unigwe, Helon Habila, Lola Shoneyin.

### Selected Critical Texts\*\*\*\*

Douglas Killam and Ruth Rowe (2000). *The Companion to African Literatures*



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Moody, H. (1972). *The Study of Literature*. London: George Allen and Unwin.

Ruth Finnegan. (1973). *Oral Literature in Africa*. Kenya: Oxford UP.

M. Umukoro, A. A. Sam, A. M. Bangbose and I. E. Anene (1997). *Exam Focus: Literature in English*. Ibadan: University Press Plc.

**(Symbols and their meanings)**

\*Each member of the class **MUST** own copies, read them and always come to class with them.

\*\*Necessary but not compulsory.

\*\*\*Students are expected to know who these authors are.

\*\*\*\*Required (Any of the texts would suffice)

