

ENGL 2231: Images of Africa

General Information

Instructor: Sean McAlister smcalister@langara.ca (Office: A308b)

Course Times: M/W 10:30-12:30

Credits: 3 (for information about transfer credit, visit bctransferguide.ca)

Course Description

How should we characterize African literature? This is the central question posed by J.M. Coetzee's provocative essay, "The Novel in Africa." For Coetzee, the question is inseparable from the non-African world's stereotypical image of Africa as an unfamiliar, exotic, and dangerous place. Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* represents the most famous—and perhaps, the most damaging—example of this image. Yet, there have been countless counter-images of Africa to appear in African fiction over the last sixty or more years, beginning with Chinua Achebe's world-renowned novel, *Things Fall Apart*. Africa has become a site of vibrant literary production and experimentation, incorporating, for example, folk histories and oral traditions and modes of storytelling into the traditional novel form. African literature has also been forced to grapple with horrifying histories of genocide, colonial exclusion and exploitation, and racism. The result is a relatively new but remarkably rich and experimental fiction tradition. This course represents a small sampling of that tradition.

Course Texts

- Chinua Achebe, "An Image of Africa" and *Things Fall Apart*
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Half of a Yellow Sun*
- J.M. Coetzee, "The Novel in Africa" and *Disgrace*
- Joseph Conrad, *Heart of Darkness*
- Tsitsi Dangaremba, *This Mournable Body*
- V.Y. Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa* (selections)
- Ben Okri, *The Famished Road* (selections)
- Amos Tutuola, *The Palm-Wine Drinkard* (selections)

***course texts are subject to change before the semester begins**