

Philosophy 291 / 491
Recent African Political Thought
Professor Lewis R. Gordon
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Wednesdays 6 pm till 8:30 pm
Anderson Hall, Room 722
Office Hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 12 pm till 1:30 pm

This seminar will consist of discussions of several of the most influential recent texts in African political thought.

Required Texts:

Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*. Grove Press. ISBN: 0802150837

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Howard UP. ISBN: 0882580965

Steven Biko, *I Write What I Like*. U. Chicago Press. ISBN: 0226048977

Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity : Philosophical Reflections on the African Experience*. Oxford. ISBN: 0195112261

Mahmoud Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. Princeton UP. ISBN: 0691027935

Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*. U. California Press. ISBN: 0520204352

Oyeronke Oyewumi, *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*. ISBN: 0865436282

Elias Bongmba. *The Dialectics of Transformation in Africa* . Palgrave Macmillan. ISBN: 1403972117 .

Requirements: You will be required to submit 5 one-page, single-spaced papers, and complete a 10–15 page, single-spaced paper addressing any of the problems or texts in the course. The 5 papers will constitute 50 percent of your grade; class participation and attendance will constitute 10 percent; the final paper will be 40 percent.

Sessions**Reading assignments and topics**

- 1/18 Introduction: Overview of course; problems in Contemporary African Philosophy; importance of Frantz Fanon
- 1/25 *The Wretched of the Earth / Les Damnés de la terre*: themes of violence, colonialism, neocolonialism, Third World elites, development, and cultural atavism. On blackboard: Lewis Gordon, "Fanon and Development."
Recommended: Lewis Gordon, *Fanon and the Crisis of European Man*; Nigel Gibson, *Fanon*; Alice Cherki, *Frantz Fanon: A Portrait*
- 2/1 Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa*. Theme of underdevelopment and dependency. Blackboard: selections from Samir Amin, Paget Henry. Recommended: Rupert Lewis, Walter Rodney
- 2/8 Steve Biko, *I Write What I Like*. Critique of liberalism in African political thought and concept of Black consciousness. Blackboard: P. Mabogo More on South African philosophies of race and liberation
- 2/15 Kwame Gyekye, *Tradition and Modernity* (first half). Problem of modernity. Recommended: Gyekye, *An Essay on African Philosophical Thought*
- 2/22 Special lecture by Livio Sansone on E. Franklin Frazier and Herskovitz
- 3/1 Gyekye (continued)

Spring break (March 3–12, 2006)

- 3/15 Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*. Distinction between politics and rule. Retheorizing colonialism. Blackboard: Ortega Y Gasset, "Who Rules the World" and "Introduction" to *Of Revelation and Revolution*, John and Jean Comaroff
- 3/22 Mamdani (continued). Recommended: David Theo Goldberg, *The Racial State*
- 3/29 Achille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*. New challenges of colonizer-colonial paradigm
- 4/5 Mbembe (continued)
- 4/7 Heretical Nietzsche Studies symposium
- 4/12 Oyeronke Oyewumi, *African Women and Feminism: Reflecting on the Politics of Sisterhood*.
- 4/19 Oyewumi et al (continued)
- 4/26 Elias K. Bongmba, *The Dialectics of Transformation in Africa*. Concluding discussion

Final paper due: Monday, May 8th, 2006