

**PHL- 365-01 African Philosophy and Culture Spring 2003 University of Detroit Mercy
Tues. eve 6:40 - 9:10 p.m. B 28 Instructor: Dr. Gail Presbey**

Office: Briggs 330 Office Phone: (313) 993-1124 Office fax: (313) 993-1166

Email: <presbegm@udmercy.edu>

Office Hours: Tuesday, 2-4:30 and 6-6:30 p.m.; Thursday, 11:15 a.m. - 12:15 p.m.; and Friday
2:30 - 4:30 p.m.

PURPOSE OF THE COURSE: To give a broad introduction to African philosophy and culture. We will read key texts which describe the field of African philosophy today. We will read texts, hear lectures, and watch video excerpts that will supply the background in African history, politics, economics, and culture that is needed in order to understand African philosophy in its context. Required reading, lecture and discussion will form the basis of our shared knowledge, while each student, through additional research, will study a particular topic in-depth.

Required Texts: The following articles

1. G. Presbey, "Teaching and Research in African Philosophy." In Luanga A. Kasanga, ed., *Changes and Challenges at Historically Disadvantaged Universities*. Sovenga, South Africa: University of the North Press, 2000, pp. 133-157.
2. Molefi Kete Asante, *The Egyptian Philosophers: Ancient African Voices from Imhotep to Akhenaten*. Chicago, Illinois: African American Images, 2000, excerpts.
3. Jeffrey Crawford, "Cheikh Anta Diop, the "Stolen Legacy," and Afrocentrism." in Mosley, A., ed., *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, Prentice Hall, 1995.
4. "Broad" and 'Strict' Distinctions Proposed by Claude Sumner Regarding Ethiopian and African Philosophy." In *Perspectives on African Philosophy*, ed. Claude Sumner and Samuel Wolde-Yohannes. Addis Ababa University Printing Press, 2002.
5. "Treatise of Zera Yacob" and "Life and Maxims of Skendes," *Classical Ethiopian Philosophy*, Claude Sumner, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia: Commercial Printing Press, 1985.
6. "Should Women Love 'Wisdom'? Evaluating the Ethiopian Wisdom Tradition," in *Research in African Literatures*, 30/2, Summer 1999, 165-181.
7. Sam Oluoch Imbo, "How is African Philosophy to be defined?" in *An Introduction to African Philosophy*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.
8. Odera Oruka, H. "Sage Philosophy: The Basic Questions and Methodology," and Oriare Nyarwath, "Sagacity and Freedom," in *Sagacious Reasoning: Henry Odera Oruka in memoriam*. New York: Peter Lang, 1997.
9. Presbey, G. "The Wisdom of African Sages" in Teodros Kiros, ed., *Explorations in African*

Political Thought: Identity, Community, Ethics. New York: Routledge, 2001, pp. 7-20.

10. H. Odera Oruka, Chapter 7, "Freedom, Independence, and Development: The First Three Decades," in *The Philosophy of Liberty: An Essay on Political Philosophy*, STGP Nairobi, revised ed., 1996, pp. 87-110.

11. Presbey, G. "H. Odera Oruka on Moral Reasoning." *Journal of Value Inquiry*, 34/4 December 2000, pp. 517-528.

12. Presbey, G. "Black Hawk Down: Somali and U.S. perspectives on the "Day of the Rangers" (October 3, 1993)." *Agenda* (Ann Arbor, MI): April 2002, pp. 5-9.

13. Adefioye Oyesakin, "Women as Agents of Indiscipline in Yoruba Traditional Poetry," in *Nigeria Magazine*, vol. 53, no. 3, July-Sept. 1985, pp. 38-43.

14. Amba Oduyoye, "The Asante Woman: Socialization Through Proverbs." In *African Notes: Bulletin of the Institute of African Studies*, University of Ibadan, vol. VIII, no. 1, 1979, pp. 5-11.

15. Florence Dolphyne, "Polygamy and the Emancipation of Women," in Safo Kwame, ed., *Readings in African Philosophy: An Akan Collection*. U. Press of America, 1995, pp. 242-247.

16. Wambui Wa Karanja, "Outside Wives and Inside wives in Nigeria: A Study of changing Perceptions of marriage" in David Parkin, David Nyamwaya (Editors) *Transformations of African Marriage* (International African Seminars) Manchester Univ Pr, 1989.

17. Klaus E. Muller and Ute Ritz-Muller, "The Dead are Awake, when the living are asleep," from *Soul of Africa: Magical Rites and Traditions*, Cologne, Germany: Konemann, 1999.

18. Leopold Senghor, "On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro," in Mosley, A., ed., *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, Prentice Hall, 1995, pp. 116-127.

19. Al Mosely, "Negritude, Nationalism, and Nativism: Racists or Racialists?" in Mosley A ed., *African Philosophy: Selected Readings*, Prentice Hall, 1995, excerpt pp. 217-226.

20. Sam Imbo, "Is African Philosophy Unique?" in *An Introduction to African Philosophy*, New York: Rowman and Littlefield, 1998.

21. Basil Davidson, excerpt from Chapter 4, "Tribalism and the New Nationalism," *The Black Man' Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State*, James Currey, 1992, pp. 102-114.

22. Olufemi Taiwo, "On the Misadventures of National Consciousness: A Retrospect on Frantz Fanon's Gift of Prophecy." In *Fanon: A Critical Reader*, ed. Lewis Gordon et al. Blackwell, 1996.

23. G. Presbey, "Akan Chiefs and Queen Mothers in Contemporary Ghana: Examples of Democracy, or accountable authority?" *International Journal of African Studies*, 3/1, Fall 2001, 63-83.

24. Rob Nixon, "Harlem, Hollywood, and the Sophiatown Renaissance," in *Homelands, Harlem, and Hollywood: South African Culture and the World Beyond*. New York: Routledge, 1994.

25. Richard Bell, "African Moral Philosophy II: Truth and Reconciliation." In *Understanding African Philosophy: A Cross-Cultural Approach to Classical and Contemporary Issues*. New York: Routledge, 2002.

GRADING:

The grade is divided into five parts, with a total of 100 points possible.

- 1) Midterm exam, 20 points
- 2) Final exam, 20 points
- 3) Ten papers, one page each, three points each paper for a total of 30 points
- 4) Research paper, -or- reflection paper on service learning experience, 20 points
- 5) Class participation, 10 points.

Further descriptions of the above assignments:

Exams:

Each is worth 20 points. There will be a series of short questions, true and false, multiple choice, matching, short answer, and/or fill in the blank questions that make up the exam. These questions will test your retention of key information covered in the class. This is an in-class exam, no notes are allowed. If enough students are interested, a one-hour review session for the exam will begin at 6:40 p.m., and the exam itself will begin at 8 p.m.

One Page Papers:

There will be 10 one-page papers, and each will be worth a possible 3 points. Papers are due on the day that a reading is being discussed. Reading review questions/ paper topics will be handed out ahead of time, and you will have some choice regarding which paper you write. This means that you can skip writing on some of our authors. I suggest you save those "skips" for days in which you are ill, caught in traffic or otherwise unable to make it to class, when you forget your paper at home, when you have no time to type it, or for those authors which you have the most difficulty in understanding. Those who join class two or three weeks late should begin writing papers from the day they begin attending and should not go back and write about previous authors. Handwritten papers will be accepted but penalized 1 point. Papers can be accepted one week late only with written proof of a valid excused absence (doctor's note, etc.) for the previous class session attached to the paper. If you are not able to make it to class but you have your paper completed, please fax it or send it by e mail to reach by 6:30 p.m. on Tuesday so that it can be accepted. If sending by e mail I greatly prefer if you copy and paste your paper into the body of the e mail message rather than sending it as an attachment.

You are encouraged to try to have at least four of your ten papers handed in by the midterm exam. While this is not a requirement, the midterm grade I hand in for you will be based on the expectation that you have completed four papers.

Grading:

3 points: A (100 %)

2 ½ points: B (83%)

2 points: D (66%)

1 ½ or less: F (50% or less)

Research Paper

This gives you an opportunity to follow up on your favorite topics, and do some extra reading and research in relation to the topic. To do the paper, you should read and cite at least one book and two academic articles. No later than February 25, you will submit a paper topic to me, with a list of your sources for your paper. I will give you feedback on your topic. Your paper is due on April 1 (I'm serious). Papers should be 6-8 pp. typed and double spaced.

Service Learning Experience and Reflection

If you prefer to interact with people and learn in that way, rather than to hit the library books, then you may prefer this option. Get involved in a service learning experience. Volunteer at least 14 hours of your time over the semester to a charity that is involved in helping Africans in the Detroit Metro area. I highly recommend that you get involved in Freedom House, which houses and helps refugees, many from Sub-Saharan Africa. After you complete your hours, write a paper reflecting on your personal experience, 6 - 8 pp. typed and double spaced, due April 1. You do not have to do any extra research for this paper, although you might want to include background information on the plight of refugees. The paper should, however, include at least two pages of your applying knowledge you gained in our course to your reflection on your experience. Cite several of the authors we have covered in class in a way that ties in their insights to your experience. You must be signed up for and begin your service learning by the end of February. If you want to do an alternative service learning project, please discuss your idea with me. For example, you might want to raise awareness around issues of Africa on our campus through participating in our "Africa Rising" program.

Class Participation

There are many opportunities for class participation. As we go over each author, I do not expect to just lecture material which the class just copies down what I said. Since I expect you have read the authors, I will be asking the class to tell me what the author said. Your participation at this point by volunteering answers will help the class in learning the material. Also, your volunteering of interesting reflections on the author's ideas will help the class and improve your grade.

The class participation grade can be adversely affected by absences, repeated tardiness, silence, sleeping in class, or distracting side conversations. Also, dominating class discussion so that others do not have a chance to speak is a grave shortcoming. Speak your ideas and then give the teacher a chance to solicit answers and views from others as well. Your grade can also be harmed by showing disrespect to other students or the teacher. In philosophy class, very different views will be presented, and you are encouraged to put forward whatever position you hold on the

topic. But if you disagree with others, do not turn it into personal animosity. Just state your counterargument in a way that the debate in class can continue productively.

Your estimated class participation grade will be handed back to you with your midterm exam. It can still go up or down depending on whether your participation improves or gets worse for the second half of the semester. If you are dissatisfied with your grade, you have a choice to work on improving it, or to choose instead to write an additional (or longer) research paper. If you are interested in that latter option, please discuss it with me in person.

Extra Credit Policy:

There are two ways to get extra credit:

1) If there is a public event on campus that is related to our course material, you can attend the event, and write a one page typed double spaced paper on it (within one week of the event). Events must be announced in class so that other students know that it is an extra credit opportunity. You can receive up to 3 points for your paper, depending on the quality of the entry.

2) There are some films that are related to our course material. These films will be announced as extra credit opportunities. You can watch the film, and write a one page typed, double spaced paper where you analyze the film in relationship to our course topics. You can receive up to 3 points for your paper, depending on the quality of the entry.

NOTE: Do not EXPECT 3 points for your paper if you only recount incidentals while avoiding the philosophical importance of the presentation or film.

3) West African Dance class. On Monday evenings there will be an eight week long class on African Dance, taught by instructors from Senegal. The class will be taught in the ballroom of the Student Center (2nd floor). The class only costs \$30 and is a great way to learn and exercise at the same time. If you take the class, attend at least five classes, and then write a two page paper about what you learned and describing your experience, you can get six points extra credit.

Grading Scale: Final grade based on total points out of 100.

A 100- 93	C+ 79.5-77
	C 76.5-73
A- 92.5- 90	C- 72.5-70
B+ 89.5- 87	D 69.5-63
B 86.5- 83	D- 62.5- 60
B- 82.5- 80	F: 59.5 and lower.

Reading/ Topic Schedule

1/7: Introduction, review of syllabus. What is Africa? Mudimbe and Mazrui on definitions.

Beware of stereotypes.

Reading: article, G. Presbey, "Teaching and Research in African Philosophy."

VIDEO Basil Davidson, episode one (Were the Egyptians Black Africans?)

1/14: NORTH AFRICA

Ancient Egypt

Asante, the Egyptian Philosophers, excerpts

Jeffrey Crawford, on George James and Cheikh Anta Diop re: "The Stolen Legacy"

1/21: Ethiopia

Part 1:

slides of Ethiopia, Lalibela

G. Presbey "'Broad' and 'Strict' Distinctions Proposed by Claude Sumner regarding Ethiopian and African Philosophy," excerpt.

"The Treatise of Zera Yacob"

Part 2:

"Life and Maxims of Skendes," excerpt

G. Presbey, "Should Women Love 'Wisdom'? Evaluating the Ethiopian Wisdom Tradition."

(On reserve in the library, if interested, is the original of *Life and Maxims of Skendes*)

EAST AFRICA

1/28: Sam Imbo, "How is African Philosophy to be defined?" Covers topics of Tempels, Mbiti, Kagame, and Imbo's analysis 18 pp

2/4: Odera Orika, Chapter 2, "Sage Philosophy: The Basic Questions and Methodology." Oriare Nyarwath, "Sagacity and Freedom"

Presbey, "The Wisdom of African Sages," article, and slides.

2/11: Odera Orika, "Freedom, Independence, and Development: The First Three Decades"

Presbey, "H. Odera Orika on Moral Reasoning," on global rich-poor dichotomy.

Video clip of Del Monte in Kenya, from video, "Hungry for Profits"

2/18: midterm exam. (Possible review in the first half if students want it).

2/25: Somalia and Hollywood: "Black Hawk Down", and my review of it.

AIDS – Fr. D'Agostino's center. Possibly CRS video. -OR- special guest speaker, to be announced.

HAPPY SPRING BREAK

WEST AFRICA

3/11: Marriage, polygamy, divorce, old and new
old: Geerwol, Wodaabe of Niger (Millennium video)
new: from Mazrui video, episode "A Clash of Cultures."

Adefioye Oyesakin, "Women as Agents of Indiscipline in Yoruba Traditional Poetry,"

Amba Oduyoye, "The Asante Woman: Socialization Through Proverbs."

Florence Dolphyne, "Polygamy and the Emancipation of Women,"

Wambui Wa Karanja, "Outside Wives and Inside wives in Nigeria: A Study of changing Perceptions of marriage"

3/18: Death and burial in Ghana (Akan) and Mali (Dogon). Muller and Muller book, pp 170-197, 370-373. Also explores sense of self/soul, and role of ancestors.
video – from Millennium, death in Mali

3/25: Senghor and negritude

Leopold Senghor, "On Negrohood: Psychology of the African Negro,"

Critique of negritude and Senghor by Al Mosely, same book, "Negritude, Nationalism, and Nativism: Racists or Racialists?"

Senghor video.

S. Imbo's chapter, "Is African philosophy unique?"

4/1: Fight against colonialism:

Nkrumah, from Basil Davidson video

Basil Davidson, excerpt from Chapter 4, "Tribalism and the New Nationalism," *The Black Man's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation State*, James Currey, 1992, 102-114.

Olufemi Taiwo, "On the Misadventures of National Consciousness: A Retrospect on Frantz Fanon's Gift of Prophecy."

G. Presbey, "Akan Chiefs and Queen Mothers in Contemporary Ghana: Examples of Democracy, or accountable authority?"

SOUTHERN AFRICA

- 4/8: Rob Nixon on Harlem/ Sophiatown film, "Sarafina" (and new film on songs)
- 4/15: Richard Bell, "African Moral Philosophy II: Truth and Reconciliation." Documentary?
- 4/22: Final exam. (Again, possible review in first half of class.)

General Classroom Policies:

Timeliness: Students should arrive to class on time. Those who, on rare occasion because of difficulties, must come in late to class, must do so quietly, using a back entrance if possible, and take the closest seat available. Repeated and/or noisy tardy entry to the classroom is bound to disrupt students' attention and distract the teacher as well, and will be dealt with on an individual basis.

Leaving the Classroom During Class: This is to be done only due to crisis or illness. If you leave the class and return, let me know the cause of the emergency at the end of class. If you leave and don't return, let me know what happened at the beginning of the next class. Those who must leave at the break should notify me then of their departure (rather than sneaking off seemingly undetected!).

Talking during class: Talking to others while classroom lecture or discussion is going on is disruptive to the teacher and other students. You will be reprimanded by the teacher and asked to discontinue your conversation.

Attendance: Attendance at all classes except in illness or other emergency is expected. To have an absence excused, either: 1) hand in a written or typed short explanation of your circumstances, with doctor's note etc. appended if you have such documentation, on the day of your return to class after the absences. You can hand in these papers at the same time I collect usual assignments. Or, 2) stay after class (not before) and give me an oral report of your prior circumstances. Excused absences for which I have been properly notified will not be penalized, but unexcused absences (beyond one) or absences with excuses for which I was not notified in a timely manner as stated above carry a penalty of minus three points. The penalty can be made up by submitting a one-page paper from a reading question due the day you were absent (If you do so, clearly mark "to make up for absence" on the top of your assignment). There is no need to call or e mail me about your absence unless it is for an extended time or on the day of an exam. Those who miss a midterm or final exam will be rescheduled. The make-up exam will have more short-answer questions and less of the multiple choice, matching etc.

Excuses will be judged for their legitimacy. Legitimate excuses include in general seriously unhappy experiences and unforeseen emergencies (funerals, illness, car wrecks, car consumed by snow, court appearances). Excuses which are not legitimate are happy ones (planned vacation on

the beach, wedding or family reunion) or involve only mild discomfort or lack of planning (such as oversleeping, traffic on mild weather days, or mild headache). If a series of borderline excuses develops over time they may be judged more harshly as they accumulate.

University Policies:

Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty

Cheating on exams and assignments is wrong and can result in a failing grade for the course. Plagiarism is a form of academic dishonesty. Plagiarism entails “submitting the words or style of another author or source without acknowledgment or formal documentation. Plagiarism occurs when specific phrases or entire passages, whether a sentence, paragraph, or longer excerpt, are incorporated into one’s own writing without quotation marks or documentation.” (UDM Policy on Plagiarism and Academic Dishonesty). Be careful when creating your essays, journals entries, and paper assignments, to use your own words to express ideas, and to use quotation marks and references when using the words of others. At the same time, do not overdepend on quotes; show me that you understand what you’re writing about, by translating the ideas into your own words.

Accommodation for Handicapped Students:

Any handicapped student in need of special accommodation due to his or her handicap should see me so as to arrange for alternatives that will work for us both.

Questions for one page papers

ASANTE

1. What are the principal precepts of Ptahhotep? Do you think that these precepts are wise? Why or why not?
2. What was Amenemhat’s perspective on the world? Do you share his perspective or not? Why or why not?

CRAWFORD

1. What were George James’ claims regarding the sources of Greek philosophy? What arguments did he use to defend his claims? What does Crawford think about the validity of James’ claims? What do you think about the debate?
2. According to Cheikh Anta Diop, what are the key claims of Egyptian philosophy, and how are they thematically connected to ancient Greek philosophy? In what way does Diop disagree with other Afrocentrists? What do you think of Diop’s position on issues, as they are presented here?

PRESBEY, “Broad and Strict”

1. What is the debate as to whether proverbs are philosophy, or not? What is Sumner’s view?

What do you think, and why?

2. What is Sumner's definition of broad philosophy? And his definition of strict philosophy? According to his own criteria, which of the works in Ethiopian philosophy are considered broad, or strict, and why? What do you think of the project to include broad philosophical works in the study of philosophy?

Zera YACOB, The Treatise of Zera Yacob

1. What method does Zera Yacob use to come to his insights about God's attributes, and God's laws for humans? What do you think of his approach?
2. Give an example for each of Christianity, Islam and Judaism, of God's laws for humans which Zera Yacob has decided are irrational. What does Zera Yacob propose instead? What do you think of his approach and analysis?

The Life and Maxims of Skendes, and/or PRESBEY, "Should women Love Wisdom?"

1. What is Skendes' stated motivation for tricking his mother? What did he learn from his experiment? What do you think of Skendes' project and its outcome? Explain.
2. According to Presbey, what double standard is present in the story? Do you notice this same double standard, and if so, do you find this double standard troubling?
3. According to Yeshe Habte Mariam (as reported in Presbey), what is the connection between proverbs and politics? What is the situation of women's equality in Ethiopia today, and how is it reflected in its literature? Do you think that the problem of women's equality is a universal problem, or not? Please explain.

IMBO, "How is African Philosophy to be Defined?"

1. What is the definition of philosophy? What are the most important characteristics of philosophy? Why is it sometimes debated whether there is an African philosophy? Include coverage of the role of "politics" in defining African philosophy. What do you think about this debate?
2. What are the key philosophical theses of Tempels in his Bantu Philosophy? How does his book get embroiled in the debate over the existence of African philosophy? Do you think that Tempels' book is African philosophy? If so, in what sense?
3. Summarize the key ideas of Mbiti and Kagame regarding philosophy in Africa. What are Imbo's critiques of their approaches? What do you think?

ODERA ORUKA

1. According to Odera Oruka, what is the difference between popular and didactic wisdom?

What kind of wisdom is found in the speeches of the sages? What is the definition of a sage? What do you think of the role of sage philosophy in the larger field of philosophy?

2. Odera Oruka quotes several of the ideas of the sages. Using his own criteria, do you think the comments of the sages are didactically wise? Popularly wise? Or, perhaps, foolish? Explain your view.

ORIARE NYARWATH

1. According to Nyarwath, what do the sages find as the distinction between restrained and unrestrained freedom? According to Nyarwath, how is the insight of the sages helpful to contemporary Kenyan society? Do you find the insight helpful to our own society? Explain.

G. PRESBEY, "The Wisdom of African Sages"

1. According to Wanjohi and Masolo, what is the role of wisdom in philosophy? What about the views of Godlovich, Nielesen, and Khatchadourian? What do you think the role of wisdom should be?

2. What are key themes, and examples, of wisdom found in the writings of four sages? Explain their views, and then comment on their insights.

ORUKA, "Freedom, Independence, and Development"

1) What does "underdevelopment" mean, in everyday language? According to Oruka, how should we understand this term? What do you think?

2) What is the problem with African countries being "given" independence by European powers? In what ways are countries still dependent?

3) How has democracy suffered in Africa due to military coups? What are the different kinds of coups that one can find in Africa?

PRESBEY, "H. Odera Oruka on Moral Reasoning"

What are Oruka's arguments for the moral necessity of foreign aid?

What are the key dangers of our current world, and what is the role of the philosopher in preventing further harm? How does the philosopher do so?

OYESAKIN

1. Choose one of the three vices that women are considered to have, according to Yoruba tradition: a) loose tongue; b) avarice; or c) sexual laxity. For the one you choose, explain what the traditional poetry says on the topic, and then, according to Oyesakin, what is the reality of the situation for each. What do you think about this opinion?

ODUYOYE

1. What do Asante proverbs say about women? What sex-roles are women encouraged to uphold? What do proverbs suggest should be the kind of relationship between men and women? What do you think of this? Explain.

DOLPHYNE

1. According to Dolphyne, what are the benefits of a polygamous marriage? Do contemporary, educated women still prefer polygamy? Why or why not? What do you think about the benefits or shortcomings of this practice?

KARANJA

1. What is an “inside wife” compared to an “outside wife”? How are these distinctions an updated (and changed) version of traditions of polygamy? What do you think- is this practice empowering to women, or not? Explain.

SENGHOR

Compare and contrast the African Negro to the white European, according to Senghor. How are the methods of knowing different between the two groups? Do you think he is right? Explain.

MOSLEY

According to Mosely, how is “negritude” as a movement involved in a debate about what constitutes racism (and “racialism”)? What is Mosley’s position on the topic? What do you think?

How did DuBois’s concept of “race” change during his lifetime? What is Appiah’s argument regarding “intrinsic racism,” and what does Mosley think of it? Who do you agree with, and why?

IMBO, “Is African Philosophy Unique?”

Summarize the debate regarding whether African philosophy is “unique,” focusing on two of the following mentioned by Imbo: Tempels, Senghor, Hountondji, or Appiah. Do you think African philosophy can be, or should be unique? Explain.

BASIL DAVIDSON

1. Outline the debate regarding who should take over Ghana when the British leave – the Chiefs and Queen Mothers who ruled Ghana before colonialism (“tribalists”), or the “new nationalists” – educated in democracy abroad? What do you think of this debate?

FEMI TAIWO

1. According to Fanon, what went wrong in the African liberation movements? What was the role of the national middle class? What do you think of the arguments on both sides of this dilemma?
2. How did the legacy of colonialism, and international capitalism, make it difficult for Nigeria to have a good beginning as an independent nation? What is the role of the “comprador” ruling class? What lessons do you think should be learned from this situation?

GAIL PRESBEY, “Akan Chiefs and Queen Mothers”

1. According to Gyekye and Wiredu, why would it be better for Ghana to return to its traditional practices of self-governance rather than to copy Western-style multi-party democracy? In what ways was the tradition democratic in spirit? Explain. Are you convinced that the traditional Ghanaian ways are better than multi-party democracy? Explain.
2. What is Eze’s argument against Wiredu and Gyekye regarding the common good and the role of multi-party democracy in Ghana? What about the “common good” as understood by Aristotle, or Nana Ama Adobea II and other chiefs and queen mothers of Ghana? What do you think should be the role of the “common good” in politics?

Rob NIXON:

1. Explain how urbanized South Africans turned to Harlem (and the artistic movement of the Harlem Renaissance) as role models for a new, urban African identity. What do you think of all this?
2. Describe the racial tensions in South Africa, and more specifically Sophiatown at the time (politically and socially), including relationships between South African Blacks and Jews. What do you think of all this?
3. What was the theme of the film, “Cry the Beloved Country,” and why did Sophiatown residents not like the way the film depicted the struggle in South Africa? What Hollywood films were influential in south Africa? What argument did critics of Hollywood films have about their influence in South Africa? What do you think of all this?