

HIS 350L | AFR 374F | WGS 340

Between Nollywood and Hollywood: Historical Imagining of Africa in Films

Flags: Writing; Independent Inquiry

Course Time: Tuesday 3:30—6:30 PM

Class Location: MEZ 1.216

Instructor: Toyin Falola

Office: Gar. Hall, 2.142

Office hours: Tuesday and Thursday: Strictly by appointment

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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Since the late 1980s, the African film industry has undergone radical changes that reflect increased globalization, the availability of new production and distribution methods, and the rise of a new generation of African filmmakers. This revolution is characterized, for example, by the relatively young industry of low budget, direct to video films produced in Nigeria, an industry commonly referred to as Nollywood. While these films have drawn criticisms for their low production values and popularization of negative cultural stereotypes, the Nigerian video industry has become the third largest film industry in the world, following Hollywood and Bollywood, sweeping across the continent and throughout the global diaspora. This course examines the genesis of a popular African art form and the rise of Nollywood in particular. Through a combination of films and readings, students will explore how Nollywood, in comparison to other major popular film industries, depicts the society and culture of Nigeria, Africa and the African Diaspora as a whole. Each week addresses a different facet of a general theme in an attempt to introduce students to the various dynamics that shape African cultures, societies and governments. Additionally, this course seeks to engage students in a debate about how popular films affect

historical imaginations and memory. While these images have previously been the exclusive product of primarily Hollywood and European films, this course will introduce Nollywood as an African alternative to how films depict, and people understand, their history.



READING LIST:

Matthias Krings and Onookome Okome, eds., *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2013.

Toyin Falola, *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt: An African Memoir*. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2005.

Toyin Falola and Matthew M. Heaton, *A History of Nigeria*, Cambridge University Press, 2008.

Adeshina Afolayan, ed., *Auteuring Nollywood: Critical Perspectives on The Figurine* (Ibadan: University Press, 2014) to be supplied by the Instructor.

COURSE OBJECTIVES:

1. To increase the knowledge and understanding of African history, culture, and society.
2. To identify key themes in African history that transcend national boundaries, particularly in the diaspora.
3. To help students understand the social, cultural, political, and economic agents that shape African history.
4. To assess the viability of films as a historical source.
5. To understand popular perceptions about Africa depicted in films and how they lead to misunderstandings of the past.

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6. To teach the art of writing and critical thinking.

ASSIGNMENTS:

Assignment		Portion of grade
Attendance		10
Group Participation**		15
Film Review*		15
Conference Attendance, Report* and Volunteering		25
Book Review*		15
Final Paper*		20

*Assignments to be submitted by hardcopy on due days, at the beginning of class.

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** Group participation: Join a group. A group presentation, three pages, will be submitted and presented in class. This is to teach how to work in a group, debate, exercise leadership, and reflect. Presentation should be less of a summary but condensed opinions of group members. Dissent is allowed where a group member disagrees. A copy of the report has to be submitted to the Instructor. A note by the group leader must indicate the participation, contribution and level of commitment of each member.

CLASS SCHEDULE

Section I. Introduction to Nollywood: production, budgets, industry, and aesthetics

1. Week One: January 16
Context and History of Nollywood as an Industry. Artistic Production in Nigeria. African Identities.
 - a. Reading:
 - i. Femi Okiremuette Shaka. "Nollywood: Reconstructing the Historical and Socio-Cultural Contexts of the Nigerian Video Film Industry." —

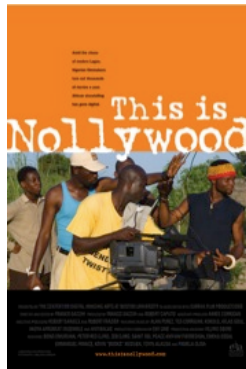
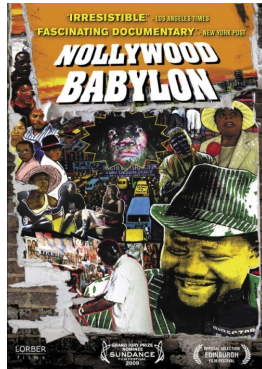
<http://www.supplemagazine.org/nollywood-reconstructing-the-historical-and-socio-cultural-contexts-of-the-nigerian-video-film-industry.html>

- ii. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 1-38
- iii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 1-50
- iv. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 1-24

b. Films:

- i. *Nollywood Babylon* (2008)
- ii. *This is Nollywood* (2007)
- iii. Chinua Achebe with Nuruddin Farah (Writers Talk Series, The Roland Collection; 1986) —to be viewed outside of class.

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Form Groups for Group Presentations

Section II. Nollywood's Early Roots: the films of Tunde Kelani

2. Week Two: January 23

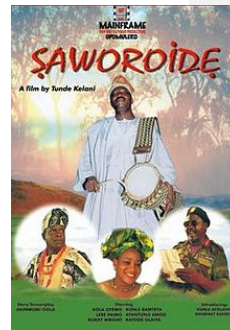
Yoruba language films. Tradition and Custom. Modernity and Urbanization.

a. Reading:

- i. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 39-84
- ii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 237-256
- iii. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 46-72

b. *The Saworoide* (1999)

c. Group A presentation



3. Week Three: January 30

Global plot. Reflections on films of weeks one and two.

a. Reading:

- i. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 85-135

ii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 217-236; 298-323

- b. *Maami* (2010)
- c. Group B Presentation



Section III. African Auteurs: local production, local content, technical and aesthetic innovation

4. Week Four: February 6

High production values, international acclaim, consciously Nollywood.

- a. Reading:
 - i. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 136-180
 - ii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 151-164; 257-297
 - iii. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 25-45
- b. *The Figurine* (2009; Kunle Afolayan)
- c. Group C Presentation



5. Week Five: February 13

Representations of African history (for Nigeria and abroad), from Africa.

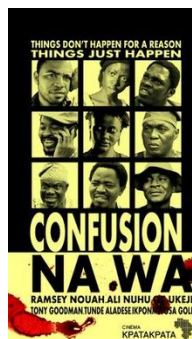
- a. Reading:
 - i. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 181-242
 - ii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 118-134; 165-186
- b. *October 1* (2014; Kunle Afolayan)
- c. Group D Presentation



6. Week Six: February 20

Urbanization, street life, modern communications

- a. Reading:
 - i. *History of Nigeria*, pp. 243-279
 - ii. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 332-350; 257-297
 - iii. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 73-99
- b. *Confusion Na Wa* (2012; Kenneth Gyang)
- c. Group A Presentation



* **Submit Film Review:** Any film of your choice. Report must incorporate evidence of reading.

7. Week Seven: February 27

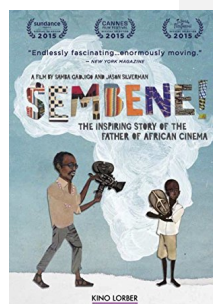
Canonization, international recognition, Pan-Africanism (?) through film

a. Reading:

- i. *Auteuring Nollywood*, pp. 324-331; 409-426
- ii. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 264-286

b. *Sembene!* (2015; Jason Silverman, Samba Gadjigo)

c. Group B Presentation



Section IV. Nollywood Travels: representations of transnational movement

8. Week Eight: March 6

A common trope, from Nigeria to the West (and its contradictions)

a. Reading:

- i. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 139-157; 158-178

b. *30 Days in Atlanta* (2014; Robert Peters)

c. Group C Presentation



Spring Break: March 12–17

Section V. Returnees: Directors of the Diaspora

9. Week Nine: March 20

African production companies outside of Africa, African content, African settings

a. Reading:

- i. *Global Nollywood*, pp. 100-120

b. *Relentless* (2010; Andy Amadi Okoroafor)

c. Group D presentation



10. Week Ten: March 27

- a. Reading
 - i. *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt*
- b. *Half of a Yellow Sun* (2013; Biyi Bandele)
- c. Group A presentation

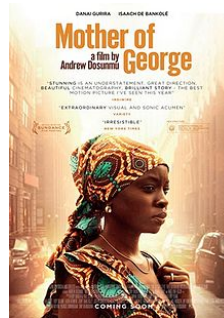


***Conference

11. Week eleven: April 3

Representations of experience of diaspora

- a. Reading:
 - i. *A Mouth Sweeter than Salt*
- b. *Mother of George* (2013; Andrew Dosunmu)
- c. Group B presentation



***Submit conference report.

Section VI. Films of the Diaspora: global Africa, foreign production, attraction to Nollywood (or lack of connection)

12. Week Twelve: April 10

Interactions with Africa

- a. Reading: Individual Research
- b. *Gone Too Far!* (2013; Destiny Ekaragha)
- c. Group C Presentation



13. Week Thirteen: April 17

a. Reading: Individual Research

b. *The Price* (2017; Anthony Onah)

c. Group D presentation—discussion of research methods and sources; presentation of topics

****Submit book review***



Section VI. Conclusion.

14. Week fourteen: April 24

a. Reading: individual research

b. *Nollywood* (2017; Al Jazeera)

<http://www.aljazeera.com/programmes/aljazeeraworld/2015/07/nollywood-150719092553566.html>

****Submit a one-page introduction of your research paper***

****Submit research outline and bibliography***

15. Week Fifteen: May 1

a. Research findings and short presentations of papers

******FINAL PAPER DUE, May 4 at 5 PM (Submit by Email)***



Attendance Guidelines:

Students must be present to view each film, and engage in discussions. Therefore, attendance is mandatory. Late attendance will disturb the class. You must arrive on time. Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Such conflicts will require signed documentation explaining the reason for your absence. Students who miss class must arrange to view the film on their own time. Each unexcused absence will result in an automatic 5 points deduction from your cumulative grade.

Group Discussion:

Every student must belong to a group. The group leader will convey a meeting where they will all discuss the reading for the week, make questions for the rest of the class, and offer analytical presentations of the materials. Group leader will report participation to the Instructor.

Conference Participation and Report: All students must endeavor to attend the 2018 Africa Conference to held March 30–April 1 (additional information will be announced in class).

For information and panels, go to <http://www.utexas.edu/cola/africa-conference/>

The conference is part of the attempt to provide students with new knowledge about Africa. Attend a minimum of two panels (not two presenters!) and a Keynote of your choice and write a report on these—a minimum of 3 pages. A panel consists of a set of presenters. **Participation in the conference is part of the class and it is mandatory. There is no substitute assignment unless on medical grounds or mandatory official duties.** During the presentations, students will be allowed to ask respective presenters questions on issues pertaining to the lecture. For the review, students will be expected to fulfill a two-fold task: first, summarize the lecture in no more than 1 page (roughly 300 words); second, give your opinion of the lecture in no less than 2 page (roughly 600 words). Report will be due in class on April 6, 2017.

Film Review Guidelines:

A good way to write a film review is as follows:

Watch the film. Give your opinion of the film. What are your overall impressions? Likes and dislikes? Make sure to provide impartial details that support your assessments of the film. Understand that you are writing to an academic audience. Facts and specifics are mandatory, as is objective prose. Saying something “sucks” or “stinks” is unacceptable unless you can back up your opinions with facts. Give an outline of the film without excessive details. Too much detail will result in summarization, which you want to avoid. Make sure to analyze the acting performances. How is the film’s structure? Does the plot flow? Are there continuity gaps? How does the film use music? How does the music add or distract from the story and your connection with the film? Remember that this is a history class and that readings go along with the films. How does the film bring to light aspects in the readings, or vice versa?

Book Review Guidelines:

Each student is required to write a review of the book *A Mouth Sweeter Than Salt*. Reviews should be between 1000 and 1500 words, typed, double-spaced and stapled. The book is not part of your weekly assigned readings. Therefore, you are responsible for reading the book apart from your weekly assignments.

Reviews should be analytical, and not just a retelling of the book's chapters. The best way to do this is by synthesizing the different aspects of the book in your own mind and then critically examining such things as the content, style and the overall impression these had on you. Additionally, you will need to incorporate examples and evidence from the reading that either support or contradict your statements. Feel free to express your own opinion, but do so in a clear statement. Organize and develop the main points you wish to make and re-emphasize them in your conclusion.

A summarization of the book and its chapters is acceptable in your introduction, but this can be no more than one page. Do not simply retell the book's chapters, but discuss the context, style and perspective of the book.

A good way to learn how to write book reviews is to look up reviews written by others. You can find these on the university libraries webpage. Go to the "Research Tools" tab at the top of the library homepage. In the drop down menu select "Find Articles Using Databases." Warning: review the plagiarism guidelines. Reviews are intellectual property, too.

Proofread your review before submitting it. See the format guidelines section of this syllabus for further information. Turn your review in on time (that means by the beginning of class) because late reviews will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late. Your book review is worth 15 points of your final grade.

Final Paper: Contextualizing Nollywood

Each student is required to write a research paper that addresses the key theme of the class, namely the meaning of Nollywood as a local, African form and style and its impact in the African Diaspora and, more generally, abroad. While other themes are apparent in these films (i.e., colonialism, traditionalism vs. modernity, relationship, affect, sexuality, love, gender dynamics, corruption, the diaspora, etc.), the research must be inflected with the interactions between Africa and the Diaspora, carried out through the use of films and written texts. The professor may also suggest research topics. While students are allowed to use films and texts from class, they are also required to explore the growing body of literature about African cinema as well as the increasing number of African films becoming available, produced in Africa and abroad. The Fine Arts Library and online databases has a wealth of material available.

Research papers must have a clear thesis statement and organizational structure.

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Research papers should be between 2400-3000 words, typed, double spaced, with size 12 Times New Roman font. Proofread your research paper before submitting it. See the format guidelines section of this syllabus for further information.

During the next to last week of class, students will present their papers. Presentations should be between 5-7 minutes long followed by several minutes of questions from the class. You are allowed to include a power point presentation.

Turn your research paper in on time, because late papers will be penalized half a letter grade for each day late. Your research paper is worth 20 points of your final grade.

FORMAT GUIDELINES:

All assignments must be typed, double spaced, have 1" margins and size 12 Times New Roman font. Assignments that do not follow these guidelines will not be accepted.

A part of writing history includes clearly communicating your ideas. As such, written assignments must conform to standard rules of written English including the organization of essays, grammar and punctuation. Students who require assistance can use the undergraduate writing center in the FAC free of charge.

PLAGIARISM:

How do you avoid committing plagiarism? Here are some basic tips:

1. Historians use a variety of citation formats, including footnotes, endnotes, and indicating their source directly in their text within parentheses. Within those formats, they use a variety of styles. Ask your instructor for guidance on a uniform system of citations—and follow that advice.
2. Take notes carefully. Whenever you copy a direct quotation, protect yourself by putting quotation marks around it. Attach a full, accurate citation to any borrowed passage, whether quoted or paraphrased, and keep it attached as you write.
3. Although borrowed ideas must be fully acknowledged in a citation, you do not need to provide a citation for information that your reader can reasonably be expected to know. When in doubt, include a citation.
4. You can avoid plagiarism by learning how to paraphrase. It is much easier to avoid plagiarism that involves verbatim copying or handing in the same paper twice than it is to avoid plagiarism that involves paraphrase, probably the trickiest area of all. Certainly it is the area where most instances of plagiarism occur. Plagiarism includes taking direct quotes or ideas from a source without giving the original author credit through citation.

CLASS POLICIES:

Make-Ups: Make-ups will be granted only in the case of medical illness or university-related conflict. Make-ups will only be given when a request is made prior to the date of the exam or assignment except for documented medical emergencies.

Assignments: All assignments must be submitted on due dates. Half a letter grade per day is deducted thereafter. Failure to read the assigned materials will incur negative grading and treated as an evidence of cheating. Answers to questions will be used to reveal the failure to read.

University of Texas Honor Code: The core values of The University of Texas at Austin are learning, discovery, freedom, leadership, individual opportunity, and responsibility. Each member of the university is expected to uphold these values through integrity, honesty, trust, fairness, and respect toward peers and community. Any student found guilty of scholastic dishonesty may receive an "F" in the course and be remanded to the appropriate University of Texas authorities for disciplinary action. For more information, view Student Judicial Services at <http://deanofstudents.utexas.edu/sjs>.

Course Flags:

Writing—This course carries the Writing Flag. Writing Flag courses are designed to give students experience with writing in an academic discipline. In this class, you can expect to write regularly during the semester, complete substantial writing projects, and receive feedback from your instructor to help you improve your writing. You will also have the opportunity to revise one or more assignments, and you may be asked to read and discuss your peers' work. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from your written work. Writing Flag classes meet the Core Communications objectives of Critical Thinking, Communication, Teamwork, and Personal Responsibility, established by the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board.

Independent Inquiry—This course carries the Independent Inquiry flag. Independent Inquiry courses are designed to engage you in the process of inquiry over the course of a semester, providing you with the opportunity for independent investigation of a question, problem, or project related to your major. You should therefore expect a substantial portion of your grade to come from the independent investigation and presentation of your own work.

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Use of Class Materials: No material presented in lecture may be directly or indirectly published, posted to the Internet, or rewritten for publication or distribution in any medium. Neither these materials nor any portion thereof may be stored in a computer except for personal and non-commercial use. All information derived from the internet must be adequately cited.

Student Privacy: The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA) require that student privacy be preserved. Thus the posting of grades, even by the last four digits of the social security number, is forbidden. All communication will remain between the instructor and the student, and the instructor will not be able to share details of the student's performance with parents, spouses, or any others.

Documented Disability Statement: The University of Texas at Austin provides upon request appropriate academic accommodations for qualified students with disabilities. For more information, contact Services for Students with Disabilities at 471-6259 (voice) or 232-2937 (video phone).

Grades: Course grades will be evaluated on a +/- scale. Refer to grading scale below for the letter grade that will be given for the original numerical grade.

GRADING SCALE:

93-100: A	90-92: A-	
87-89: B+	83-86: B	80-82: B-
77-79: C+	73-76: C	70-72: C-
67-69: D+	63-66: D	60-62: D-
0-59: F		

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