

# Community and Social Development

AFR 374C  
Maymester 2019

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*Changes in the syllabus are expected and necessary.*

“... globalization and immigration make Africans the subjects of an indescribable suffering. For many Africans, immigrating signifies ameliorating their material conditions. *A contrario*, filmmakers from the continent insist on the fact that the West’s economic performance is made possible by the exploitation of immigrant and clandestine labor...”

Frieda Ekotto, Cameroonian Professor/Novelist, University of Michigan

What is Africa to me:

Copper sun or scarlet sea,  
Jungle star or jungle track,  
Strong bronzed men, or regal black  
Women from whose loins I sprang  
When the birds of Eden sang?  
From the scenes his fathers loved,  
Spicy grove, cinnamon tree,  
What is Africa to me?

“Heritage,” Countee Cullen, Harlem Renaissance Poet

“Cultural identity is... a matter of ‘becoming’ as well as ‘being.’

Stuart Hall

## Course Description

In this Maymester course, students will participate in social change strategies that Ghanaians employ to strengthen their individual lives, their communities, and their environment. These strategies include the work of art for social justice institutions, non-governmental organizations (NGOs), and social service agencies. The course involves both experiential and classroom learning, with an international-based service learning component that intentionally integrates theatre for social change, community service, academic learning, and civic engagement. Key concepts include diaspora, Africa, identity, enslavement, “development,” and critical ethnography.

## **Course Objectives**

As a result of this course, students should know the rudiments of ethnographic research, understand the political construction of Africa by Western nations, and be able to implement art as social change strategies. This course is particularly relevant for students interested in critical race theory, identity formation, in service learning, and art for social change.

## **Texts**

*Homegoing*, Yaa Gyasi

All Other Course Readings Available On Canvas

## **Assignments**

**Reading Reports** (30 points)

In small groups you will make 20-minute reports on course readings.

Each student in the group can take on one of the following tasks:

1. Identify the argument or major idea that the writer is exploring. Cite a passage from the reading that encapsulates this idea.
2. Identify and explain an important concept from the reading.
3. Suggest how the reading specifically relates to identity formation.
4. Connect the reading to a theory or idea discussed in class.
5. Create an embodied way for the class to understand some aspect of the essay.

### **Reading Report, Group 1**

**Azia, Amie, Frances, Mbayi**

### **Reading Report, Group 2**

**Peyton, Deja, Tia, Natalie**

### **Reading Report, Group 3**

**Jacob, Kiaria, Chris, Latoya**

**Field Work Notebook** (30 points)

In a notebook that you can carry with you throughout the day, you will document your experiences using the following guidelines:

1. citational data: date, time, location, event, people present, attitude,
2. observant participation details,
3. reflections on your positionality,
4. challenges and discoveries encountered during fieldwork, and
5. questions you want to pursue.

*Each entry should include each of these five items. Number each entry. There must be at least two entries each week, for a total of six entries.*

**Art as Social Change Presentation** (30 points)

Each student will create a 15-30-second performance that includes 1) an excerpt from *Homegoing*, 2) an excerpt from at least one of the readings on Canvas, and 3) some reflections from their fieldwork notebook. In small groups under the direction of a graduate student, you will present a synthesis of their individual performances. Each ensemble member must contribute text and specific embodiments to the presentation.

As the individuals become an ensemble, consider the relationship between art, identity, and social change. Explore both verbal text, movement, and silence. What questions did you arrive in Ghana with? What questions will you take home? These performances do not have to be memorized. Be creative! Try something new! Allow the experience of Ghana to inspire you!

**Participation** (10 points)

Students are expected to study readings carefully, be prompt for all activities, support the success of the other students, bravely create presentations, and engage actively on each day of the program. In addition, there may be pop quizzes over the reading material that will contribute to your participation grade.

## Course Schedule

- May 28 Leave U.S.
- 29 Arrive Accra, Ghana
- 30 Orientation: HLG Coordinator  
Discussion: Syllabus/Agreements  
Tour: Accra  
Exercise: Family Tree  
**Read:** *Homegoing*, Yaa Gyasi
- 31 Guest Lecture: Professor from the University of Ghana  
Discussion: "Art, Activism, and Ethnographic Protocols"  
Tour: Walking Tour of the University of Ghana
- June 1 Scavenger Hunt; Welcome Dinner
- 2 Excursion: Kumasi
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- 3 Return to Accra
- 4 Visit: Abibigroma National Theatre of Ghana
- 5 Guest Lecture: Professor from the University of Ghana  
**Read:** "Race Across the Atlantic: Theorizing Africa and/in the Diaspora," in *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*, Jemima Pierre  
**Reading Report, Group 1**
- 6 Visit: Botanical Gardens
- 7 Guest Lecture: Professor from the University of Ghana  
**Read:** "Reverse Diaspora: Dissonance of Memory, Voyages of Hope, and Degrees of Return," in *Brazilian-African Diaspora in Ghana: The Tabom, Slavery, Dissonance, Memory, and Locating Home*. Kwame Essien.  
**Reading Report, Group 2**  
Visit: African Women's Development Fund
- 8 Excursion: Torgorme
- 9 Return to Accra
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- 10 Film Night
- 11 Work with Ghanaian Groups
- 12 Work with Ghanaian Groups  
**Read:** "Lose Your Mother." Saidiya Hartman (begins on p. 84)  
Discussion Leader: Angelica Allen
- 13 Excursion: Elmina and Cape Coast
- 14 Excursion Continued
- 15 Excursion: Kakum  
Return to Accra
- 16 **Read:** "Ewe Music and Dance," in *An African Music and Dance Curriculum Model: Performing Arts in Education*, Modesto Amegago  
**Reading Report, Group 3**  
**Individual Performances Complete**
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- 17 Art as Social Change Rehearsal
- 18 Tour: Accra Markets/Fieldwork Sites
- 19 **Fieldwork Notebooks Due**
- 20 **Art as Social Change Presentations**  
Farewell Ceremony
- 21 UT Students Leave Accra
- 22 All UT students in U.S.
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