

**DEPARTMENT OF AFRICAN AMERICAN AND AFRICAN  
STUDIES**  
**AAAS 750: LANGUAGE AND SOCIETY IN AFRICA**

INSTRUCTOR: Alamin Mazrui.

**COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course is a survey of the interplay between language and society in the African context. It takes off from the premise that an imbalance in the global flow of languages has created in Africa a complex linguistic constellation that has had a multiplicity of implications on its societies. Specific emphasis is placed on the analysis of local policies and practices as well as on global forces as they have shaped the African linguistic landscape and how this condition impacts on the continent's governance and development, education and intellectual (re)production, philosophical renewal and historical reconstruction, literature and cultures, and articulations of linguistic bridges across gender and ethnic divides, and between it and its Diaspora. A question that will constitute an important background to the course is whether Africa can achieve that elusive goal of capacity building under the prevailing configuration of power relationships that foster a state of linguistic and cultural dependence.

**COURSE TEXT**

Course Package (Available at Grade A Notes on E. 17<sup>th</sup>. Avenue).

**EVALUATION**

The final grade for the course will be based on the following requirements and activities:

Classroom Presentations on assigned readings	15%
Book Review (Book must be approved)	15%
A Take-Home Midterm Examination	30%
Final Paper based on a Community Study	40%

(SEE APPENDIX FOR DETAILS OF THE COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT)

*Academic Misconduct: It is the responsibility of the Committee on Academic Misconduct to investigate or establish procedures for the investigation of all reported cases of student academic misconduct. The term "academic misconduct" includes all forms of student academic misconduct wherever committed, illustrated by, but not limited to, cases of plagiarism and dishonest practices in connection with examinations. Instructors shall report all instances of alleged academic misconduct to the Committee (Faculty Rule 33356-5-487). For additional information see the Code of Student Conduct ([http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info\\_for\\_students/csc.asp](http://studentaffairs.osu.edu/info_for_students/csc.asp)).*

*Disability Services: Students with disabilities that have been certified by the Office of Disability Services will be appropriately accommodated, and should inform the*

*instructor as soon as possible of their needs. The Office of Disability Services is located in 150 Pomerene Hall, 1760 Neil Avenue; telephone 292-3307, TDD 292-0901; <http://www.ods.ohio-state.edu/>.*

## **COURSE OUTLINE**

### **Week 1: Language in Africa: An Overview**

**Course Package, pp. 1-50.**

Vic Webb and Kembo-Sure, *The Languages of Africa*. Vic Web and Kembo-Sure, eds. *African Voices: An Introduction to Languages and Linguistics in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000: 27-53.

H. Ekkhard Wolff, *Language and Society*. Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse, eds. *African Languages: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 298-347.

Gerda Mansour, *Language Diversity in Africa: Myth or Reality? Multilingualism and Nation Building*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters Ltd., 1993: 11-25.

### **Weeks 2 & 3: Language and Historical Reconstruction**

**Course Package, pp. 51-107.**

Christopher Ehret, *Language and History*. Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse, eds. *African Languages: An Introduction*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000: 272-297.

P. Diagne, *History and Linguistics*. J. Ki-Zerbo, ed. *General History of Africa I: Methodology and African Prehistory*. UNESCO, 1981: 233-269.

D. Olderogge, *Migrations and Ethnic and Linguistic Differentiations*. J. Ki-Zerbo, ed. *General History of Africa I: Methodology and African Prehistory*. UNESCO, 1981: 271-286.

Nicholas Faraclas, *They Came Before the Egyptians: Linguistic Evidence for the African Roots of Semitic Languages*. Silvia Federici, ed. *Enduring Western Civilization*. Westport: Praeger, 1995: 175-196.

### **Week 4: Language, Culture and Thought/Philosophy**

**Course Package, pp. 108-170.**

John A. Lucy, Chapter 1 and Chapter 2. *Linguistic Diversity and Thought: A Reformulation of the Linguistic Relativity Hypothesis*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992: 11-68.

Kwasi Wiredu, Formulating Modern Thought in African Languages. *Cultural Universals and Particulars: An African Perspective*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1996: 81-104.

D.A. Masolo, Language and Reality. *African Philosophy in Search of Identity*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1994: 84-102

Barry Hellen, African Meanings, Western Words. *African Studies Review*, 40.1, April 1997: 1-11.

### **Week 5: Language, Nation and Governance**

**Course Package, pp. 171-251.**

Ayo Bamgbose, Language and National Integration. *Language and Nation: The Language Question in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991: 10-35.

Christopher Stroud, Portuguese as Ideology and Politics in Mozambique: Semiotic (Re)Constructions of a Postcolony. Jan Blommaert, ed. *Language Ideological Debates*. Berlin: Mouton, 1999: 343-380.

Michael Meeuwis, Flemish Nationalism in the Belgian Congo Versus Zairian Anti-Imperialism: Continuity and Discontinuity in Language Ideological Debates. Jan Blommaert, ed. *Language Ideological Debates*. Berlin: Mouton, 1999: 381-423.

Daryl McLean, Guarding Against the Bourgeois Revolution: Some Aspects of Language Planning in the Context of National Democratic Struggle. Robert K. Herbert, ed. *Language and Society in Africa: The Theory and Practice of Sociolinguistics*. Johannesburg: Witwatersrand University Press, 1992: 151-161.

Paulin G. Djite, Language and Development in Africa. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 100/101, 1993: 146-166.

Ali A. Mazrui and Alamin Mazrui, Africa's Linguistic Legacy: Between Expansionism and Nationalism. *The Power of Babel: Language and Governance in the African Experience*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998: 1-9.

### **Week 6: Language and Literary Authenticity**

**Course Package, pp. 252-315.**

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, The Language of African Literature. *Decolonizing the Mind: The Politics of Language in African Literature*. London: James Currey, 1986: 4-33.

Daniel P. Kunene, African-Language Literature. *Research in African Literatures*, 23.1, 1999: 7-15.

Mazisi Kunene, Problems in African Literature. *Research in African Literatures*, 23.1, 1999: 27-44.

Ken Saro-Wiwa, The Language of African Literature: A Writer's Testimony. *Research in African Literatures*, 23.1, 1999: 153-157.

Chinua Achebe, The African Writer and the English Language. *Morning Yet on Creation Day*. New York: Doubleday, 1975: 91-103.

Simon Gikandi, Ngugi's Conversion: Writing and the Politics of Language. *Research in African Literatures*, 23.1, 1992: 131-144.

Abiola Irele, African Literature and the Language Question. *The African Experience in Literature and Ideology*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981: 43-65.

#### **Week 7: Language, Education and the Construction of Knowledge**

**Course Package, pp. 316-366.**

Ayo Bamgbose, Language and Education. *Language and Nation: The Language Question in Sub-Saharan Africa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1991: 62-108.

Alamin Mazrui, The English Language in African Education: Dependency and Decolonization. James W. Tollefson, ed. *Language Policies in Education: Critical Issues*. London: Lawrence Earlbaum, 2002: 267-281.

Daryl McLean, Neocolonizing the Mind?: Emergent Trends in Language Policy for South African Education. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 136, 1999: 7-26.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, Europhonism, Universities and the Magic Fountain: The Future of African Literature and Scholarship. *Research in African Literatures*, 31.1, 2000: 1-11.

#### **Week 8: Language and Gender**

**Course Package, pp. 367-405.**

Ole Togeby, Is There a Separate Women's Language? *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 94, 1992: 63-73.

Adam Jaworski, How to Silence a Minority: The Case of Women. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 94, 1992: 27-41.

Guy Massart, Gender and Politics Through Language Practices Among Urban Cape Verde Men. Victoria Ana Goddard, ed. *Gender, Agency and Change: Anthropological Perspectives*. Routledge, 2000: 142-164.

Ruth Mukama, Women's Discourses as the Conservators of Cultural Values in Language. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 129, 1998: 157-165.

Ali A. Mazrui and Alamin Mazrui, Language Planning and Gender Planning: Some African Perspectives. *The Power of Babel: Language and Governance in the African Experience*. London: James Currey, 1998: 85-94.

### **Week 9: Language, Race and Diasporic Connections**

**Course Package, pp. 406-483.**

Alexander Crummell, The English Language in Liberia. *The Future of Africa: Addresses, Sermons etc.* New York: Negro University Press, 1862: 9-54.

Frantz Fanon, The Negro and Language. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press, 1967: 17-40.

Ali Mazrui and Alamin Mazrui, Language and Race in the Black Experience: An African Perspective. *The Power of Babel: Language and Governance in the African Experience*. Chicago: Chicago University Press, 1998: 13-29.

John Russell Rickford and Russell John Rickford, History. *Spoken Soul: The Story of Black English*. New York: John Wiley & Sons, 2000: 129-160.

Mervyn C. Alleyne, The Linguistic Continuity of Africa in the Caribbean. Henry J. Richards, ed. *Topics in African American Studies*. Buffalo: Black academy Press, 1971: 119-134.

### **Week 10**

**Project Presentations and Conclusion.**

## APPENDIX

### COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECT

1. Select a study group of African immigrants from a particular country now living in Columbus
2. Read about the socio-linguistic situation of the group in its AFRICAN setting
  - a) The socio-linguistic profile of their home region in Africa
  - b) Language attitudes
  - c) National/Institutional/Individual multilingualism etc
  - d) Patterns of linguistic variation and distribution
3. Determine size of the group within the Columbus metropolis and how long its members have been living in the USA, in general, and in Columbus, in particular? (Contact Office of Refugee Services)
4. Do a sampling of the community and design a questionnaire that elicits the following information:
  - a) What kinds of linguistic skills -- number of languages, how they are used -- did they bring to the USA, and how useful were these skills to their adaptation in the USA?
  - b) What new linguistic skills have they acquired in the USA?
  - c) What languages/varieties do they use to speak to whom, when, where etc?
  - d) Determine what kinds of linguistic shifts -- especially inter-generationally --are taking place in the community.
  - e) What new language attitudes have developed in the community since arrival in the USA?
  - f) Are members of the community concerned about maintenance of their African language(s)?
  - g) If so, why and what are they doing about it?
5. Analyze the above information in a paper of 15-20 pages, providing a background to the community and the relevant literature review on the subject.