

## SYLLABUS FOR UNIVERSITY OF KOBLENZ-LANDAU COURSE

(Landau Campus)

[May-June 2012]

**Instructor:** Ntongela Masilela, Professor of English and World Literature, Pitzer College, Los Angeles, California

The course will consist in reading *modern* South African literary texts written in both the English language and in the African languages.

### **Course description:**

The violent entrance of European modernity into African history resulted in the marginalization of oral literature and the bifurcation of written literature into two major branches: African literature in the African languages and African literature in the African languages. Both written literary forms of expression were enabled by European missionaries. One of the major literary and cultural projects of the twentieth century in Africa was the struggle to transform European modernity into New African modernity. This complicated undertaking generated an enormous amount literary theorizing and production of distinct forms of literary representation. Since this course will focus on South African literature written by Africans (or blacks), it will argue the position that the literature written in the African languages (i.e., Sesotho, isiXhosa, isiZulu and other indigenous languages) is as strong if not better than that written in the European languages (mainly English). The course will focus on three or four great South African poets who wrote in the African languages: S. E. K. Mqhayi (1875-1945), Mazisi Kunene (1930-2006), Benedict Wallet Vilakazi (1906-1947), Nontsizi Mggwetho (?-?). The theoretical and historical context of this secret literary war between African literature in the African languages and African literature in the European languages in South Africa will be provided by the literary essays of H. I. E. Dhlomo (1903-1956). The readings in the original African languages and their translated form in English will be facilitated by the instructor through the Internet.

**Readings:** Reading material for the course posted on the **New African Movement** *website*.

### **First Week: Readings**

---*Language, Literature and Intellectual History in South Africa: A Conversation about*

*the New African Movement between Ntongela Masilela and Sandile Ngidi* (please read only Chapter 3 from page 25 to page 99). The link is on the first page of the website.

---“A Historical Purview of the New African Movement” by Ntongela Masilela. The link is on the first page of the website.

---“The Crisis of African Languages in the Context of the Formation of Modernity in South Africa” by Ntongela Masilela. Click on ESSAYS link on the first page of the website to the essay itself which is located towards the end of the page.

### **Second Week: Readings**

#### NEW AFRICAN MOVEMENT

\*\*\*Click on INDEX link on the first page of the website and then click on H. I. E. DHLOMO to locate all his posted writings. Click on SELECTED WRITINGS.

---Click on LITERARY THEORY AND LITERARY CRITICISM to access these short essays: “Drama and the African”, “Language and National Drama”, “African Drama and Research” and “Why Study Tribal Dramatic Forms”.

---Click on UMTETELI WA BANTU to access these journalistic essays: [No. 38] “The African Yearly Register”; [No. 39] “The Evolution of the Bantu”; [No. 40] “The Period of Evangelisation”; [No. 42] “Bantu Writers and Their Work”.

---Click on THE WRITINGS AND PROSE POEMS to access these Prose Poems: [No. 14] “The Falling Leaf”; [No. 15] “The Path: Its Message”; [No. 30] “Remembering”; [No. 34] “The Romance of Bells”; [No. 35] “Soap Means Culture”; [No. 42] “The Light is Fading”.

#### SOPHIATOWN RENAISSANCE

\*\*\*Click on ESSAYS link on the first page of the website and then scroll down on the page marked ESSAYS until reaching the link designated SOPHIATOWN READER REAL. Click on it to get the PDF form of a big anthology of writings designated *Sophiatown Renaissance: A Reader*.

---Scroll down to SECTION II: ESSAYS (page 356 to 776). Please read the following Essays: Chapter 25 (“The Meaning of Bantu Education” by Duma

Nokwe, pp. 372-387); Chapter 27 ("Freedom Charter" by The Congress of the People, pp. 394-400); Chapter 37 ("The African Journalist" by Tom Hopkinson, pp. 482-495); Chapter 38 ("What is Apartheid?" by Nadine Gordimer, pp. 506-515); Chapter 41 ("Short Story Writing in Black South Africa" by Bloke Modisane, pp. 571-582); Chapter 43 ("The Fabulous Decade: The Fifties" by Lewis Nkosi, pp. 596-630).

---Scroll down to SECTION IV: SHORT STORIES (page 809 to 1005). Please read the following Short Stories: Chapter 54 ("The Dignity of Begging" by Bloke Modisane, pp. 833-845); Chapter 55 ("The Urchin" by Can Themba, pp. 846-858); Chapter 56 ("Mita" by Casey Motsisi, pp. 859-866); Chapter 57 ("The Park" by James Matthews, pp. 867-883); Chapter 65: ("The Bench" by Richard Rive, pp. 996-1004).

### Third and Fourth Weeks: Readings

#### NEW AFRICAN MASTERS WRITING IN THE AFRICAN LANGUAGES

##### **MAZISI KUNENE (1930-2006)**

---Click on ESSAYS link on the first page of the website and then scroll down on the page marked ESSAYS until reaching the link designated POETRY OF MAZISI KUNENE. Click on it to get the PDF document. About 100 short poems in isiZulu and English translation from the original isiZulu publication of 450 short poems.

---Also on this page two of Mazisi Kunene's crucial essays are assembled: "Problems in African Literature" and "Some Aspects of South African Literature".

On this same page are two documents I have written on Mazisi Kunene: "The Return of Mazisi Kunene to South Africa: The End of an Intellectual Chapter in Our Literary History " (2003) and "Mazisi Kunene (1930-2006): An Appreciation".

##### **NONTSIZI MGQWETHO (?-?)**

A great South African poet! She published about ninety poems throughout the decade of the 1920s in *Umteteli wa Bantu* (The Mouthpiece of the People) newspaper and tragically disappeared from South African history without

leaving any biographical trace. She wrote in *isiXhosa* language. Fortunately, her poetry have been assembled in a recently published book: *The Nation's Bountry: The Xhosa Poetry of Nontsizi Mgqwetho* (2007).

---Click on ESSAYS link on the first page of the website and then scroll down on the page marked ESSAYS until reaching the link designated SIX XHOSA POEMS OF NONTSIZI MGQWETHO AND TRANSLATION. Click on it to get the PDF document.

### **S. E. K. MQHAYI (1875-1945)**

A major poet by any measure who initiated a renaissance in Xhosa literature and a cultural revolution in South Africa in the first half of the twentieth century by writing all of his work in *isiXhosa*: poems, novels short stories, biographies, hymns, journalism.

---Click on ESSAYS link on the first page of the website and then scroll down on the page marked ESSAYS until reaching the link designated THE COLLECTED POEMS OF S. E. K. MQHAYI. Click on it to get the PDF document. About nine of his poems in original language and translation are assembled here.