

COURSE OUTLINE

PHIL-112

Introduction to African Philosophy

1 Semester Hour

HOWARD COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Description

An interdisciplinary introduction to African philosophy using the categories and methods of Western philosophy but including the historical and cultural milieu of Africa as well as African visual arts and proverbs, African drumming, dance, and song as repositories of and ways to express African philosophy. Prerequisite: Eligible to enroll in ENGL-121. (1 hour weekly)

Overall Course Objectives

Upon completion of this course, the student will be able to:

1. Describe traditional African philosophy in Western terms as expressed by Western-trained African philosophers.
2. Analyze worldview or metaphysics found in African philosophy with respect to human existence, the cosmos, and ultimate reality.
3. Analyze African epistemology or knowledge theory, especially the embodiment of wisdom and knowledge in proverbs and art motifs.
4. Analyze African philosophy's axiology or values system with respect to ethics and the moral life.
5. Compare and contrast African and Western philosophy under the categories of metaphysics, epistemology and axiology.
6. Define and explain the unique features of African philosophy and its potential contribution to the modern world.
7. Examine African literature, both formal and informal, by mastering its language.
8. Critically examine the influence of philosophy on African life and thought.

Major Topics

- I. African metaphysics
 - A. Creator and creation
 - B. A sacred cosmos
 - C. Ancestors and the chain of human life
 - D. Synthesis model of a human person
 - E. Death and the afterlife
- II. African knowledge theory
 - A. Symbols and proverbs as logic
 - B. The Ewe Creativity Test of truth
 - C. Relationship between the knower and the known

- III. African values theory
 - A. Political philosophy
 - 1. divine right and royal families
 - 2. consensus government and the social contract
 - 3. communitarianism
 - B. Ethics
 - 1. humanism and the communal nature of human society
 - 2. syntropy or creative synthesis
 - 3. autonomy of the life principle

- IV. African philosophy in the modern world
 - A. Influence on Western thinkers
 - 1. W.E.B. DuBois
 - 2. Negritude poets
 - B. An alternative to Western, technological culture

Course Requirements

Grading/exams: Grading procedures will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include the following:

Reflective or analytic papers based on African philosophy.

Final grades will be based on essay exams or papers in combination with informal writing assignments and active student participation in class discussions.

Writing: Specific writing assignments will be determined by the individual faculty member but will include at least 1000 words of formal writing.

Other Course Information

This course meets the College definition for **Cultural Diversity**.

This course is a Humanities elective and an Arts and Sciences elective.