

English 474 – Studies in Contemporary Literature

Women Who Refuse to Keep Quiet: Fiction by African Women

M/W/F: 12:00-1:00 Sept-Dec 2011

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“The woman writer in Africa is a witness, forgiving the evidence of the eyes, pronouncing her experience with insight, artistry, and a fertile dexterity.” (Yvonne Vera)

Writing by African women may be a relatively recent development, but as Ama Ata Aidoo reminds us, “African women struggling both on behalf of themselves and on behalf of the wider community is very much a part of . . . [African] heritage. . . . So when we say that we are refusing to be overlooked we are only acting as daughters and grand-daughters of women who always refused to keep quiet.” The readings we will explore in this course, drawn from a range of countries, are entertaining, disturbing and disruptive, challenging the status quo and engaging with the socio-political impact of colonization as well as the difficulties facing post-colonial African societies.

This section of English 474 may be used as a credit towards a minor in African Studies.

Reading List:

- Flora Nwapa, *Efuru*
- Mariama Bâ, *So Long a Letter*
- Tsitsi Dangarembga, *Nervous Conditions*
- Ama Ata Aidoo, *Changes*
- Sindiwe Magona, *Mother to Mother*
- Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *The Thing Around Your Neck*
- Custom Course Package including short stories and theoretical/critical readings

Course Requirements:

- In-class essay – 25%
- Term paper – 35%
- Participation – 10%
- Final examination – 30%

The participation grade will be based on regular attendance, preparation for class and contributions to discussion. You are expected to carefully read the assigned texts before class and come prepared to ask questions and share your responses to individual works. For some classes you will be asked to respond to a particular question or focus on one aspect of a text.