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. 17th. 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).

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.


Weeks 2 & 3: Language and Historical Reconstruction

Course Package, pp. 51-107.


Week 4: Language, Culture and Thought/Philosophy

Course Package, pp. 108-170.


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

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


**Week 6: Language and Literary Authenticity**

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


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

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


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**Week 8: Language and Gender**

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


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

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


**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, proving a background to the community and the relevant literature review on the subject.