COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is structured around the study of several African literary texts (and films, time permitting). For most African authors, literature is not a stylized exercise in the exploration of an imaginary with no connection to a material reality. Rather, their artistic production is constantly nourished by the quotidian experiences of men and women in African villages and cities. To paraphrase the celebrated Nigerian author Chinua Achebe, the author is the most sensitive member of his community, and it is the author’s responsibility to speak to the constraining factors that handicap the growth, development, and well-being of the men, women, and children who live there.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

This course aims to help students better understand:

1. The historic handicap that continues to weigh on African development.
2. The economic, political, social, and cultural problems that currently confront African countries and thwart their progress and development.
3. Individual and collective responsibility in the present situation.
4. Possible alternative perspectives

Keeping these objectives in mind, we will try to better understand development questions in the context of Senegalese society through the study of the following works:

2. Cheikh Hamidou Kane’s *L’Aventure amiguë*. This novel dramatizes the roots of incomprehension between Africa and the rest of the world and the calcification of inequality that followed.
3. Aminat Sow Fall: *La Grève des Battu*, which illustrates the injustices and inequalities at the heart of Senegalese society, as well as efforts by the “wretched of the earth” to make themselves heard and find a place in the community.

At the conclusion of the course, students should be capable of conducting deep and cross-disciplinary readings of African literary works, taking into consideration the political, economic, social, religious, and cultural forces that frame this corpus.

METHODOLOGY

Group discussions and active participation are the central to this course. Works will be studied through a series of presentations and textual explications.

Readings will be distributed to students in advance.

COURSE INSTRUCTOR

Dr. Ousmane Sène

Prof. Sène is the Director of the MSID-Senegal program. He chaired the Department of English at the University Cheikh Anta Diop, Dakar for 10 years. He received his Ph.D in literature from Ecole Normale Supérieure of St. Cloud and the University Paris III-Sorbonne. He has taught and done research on Francophone and Anglophone literature at several North American and European universities. He has been a visiting professor at several institutions including Michigan State, Oxford, Wofford, Converse, Florida-Gainesville, Loyola-Marymount, Beloit and Minnesota. Dr. Sène is especially interested in the portrayal of African social, cultural and development issues through literature. He is currently the
Director of the West African Research Center. He has been involved with MSID since 1995.

### GRADING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Range</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>93-100</td>
<td>Achievement that is outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>90-92</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B+</td>
<td>87-89</td>
<td>Achievement that is significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>83-86</td>
<td>Achievement that meets the course requirements in every respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>B-</td>
<td>80-82</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C+</td>
<td>77-79</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>73-76</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C-</td>
<td>70-72</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D+</td>
<td>67-69</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>60-66</td>
<td>Achievement that is worthy of credit even though it fails to meet fully the course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>F</td>
<td>0-59</td>
<td>Represents failure (or no credit) and signifies that the work was either (1) completed but at a level of achievement that is not worthy of credit or (2) was not completed and there was no agreement between the instructor and the student that the student would be awarded an I.</td>
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### SUMMARY OF HOW GRADES ARE WEIGHTED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Weight</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Exposés en classe</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Présence et participation</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dissertation finale ou examen oral final</td>
<td>60%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall grade</td>
<td>100%</td>
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### ASSESSMENT DETAILS

**EXAMENS**
The only work students will hand in is the final essay, which students will submit following their internships. Students will select a subject that responds to a question or theme related to development in at least two or three of the works studied. Students have the option of replacing the essay with an oral exam that will take place following the internship period. Examples of essay topics include:
- Social transformation and development in *L’Aventure ambiguë* and *La Grève des Battù*
- Development modes in *L’Aventure ambiguë* and *La grève des Battù*

### COURSE CONTENT

**WEEK 1**
- Readings on Leopold Sedar Senghor.

**WEEK 2**

- Introduction to Senghor’s œuvre and a study of “Femme noir”; “Nuit de Sine”; and “Joal.”

**WEEK 3**

- Continued study of Senghor’s poetry.
- Instruction to the religion and colonial history of Senegal
- *L’Aventure ambiguë* (preface, poem chapters).

**WEEK 4**

- Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L’Aventure ambiguë*
- Textual explication (instructor); presentations (students).

**WEEK 5**

- Cheikh Hamidou Kane, *L’Aventure ambiguë*
- Student presentations and concluding study of the novel.

**WEEK 6**

- Aminata Sow Fall, *La Grève des Battu*
- General analysis of the novel.

**WEEK 7**

During the final seminar of December:
- Final course on Sow Fall’s *La Grève des Battu.*
- Cultural Studies and Development
- The final (oral) exam will take place during the seventh week. A list of questions will be given to students during their internships.
ATTENDANCE POLICY

Students are expected to be on time and attend all classes while abroad. Many instructors assess both attendance and participation when assigning a final course grade. Attendance alone does not guarantee a positive participation grade; the student should be prepared for class and engage in class discussion. See the onsite syllabus for specific class requirements.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Academic integrity is essential to a positive teaching and learning environment. All students enrolled in University courses are expected to complete coursework responsibilities with fairness and honesty. Failure to do so by seeking unfair advantage over others or misrepresenting someone else’s work as your own can result in disciplinary action. The University Student Conduct Code defines scholastic dishonesty as follows:

SCHOLASTIC DISHONESTY:

Scholastic dishonesty means plagiarizing; cheating on assignments or examinations; engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work; taking, acquiring, or using test materials without faculty permission; submitting false or incomplete records of academic achievement; acting alone or in cooperation with another to falsify records or to obtain dishonestly grades, honors, awards, or professional endorsement; altering forging, or misusing a University academic record; or fabricating or falsifying data, research procedures, or data analysis.

Within this course, a student responsible for scholastic dishonesty can be assigned a penalty up to and including an “F” or “N” for the course. If you have any questions regarding the expectations for a specific assignment or exam, ask.

STUDENT CONDUCT:

The University of Minnesota has specific policies concerning student conduct. This information can be found on the Learning Abroad Center website.