



**KIBABII UNIVERSITY COLLEGE**  
**DEPARTMENT OF LANGUAGES, LITERATURE, JOURNALISM & MASS**  
**COMMUNICATION**

**Masters of Arts in Comparative Literature – 1<sup>st</sup> Semester 2014/2015 Academic Year**

**Course Code: LIT 816**

**Course Title: Tragedy in Drama**

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**COURSE OUTLINE**

**Broad Objective:** The students should be able to comprehend the nature and dramatic practice of the sub-genre of tragedy in drama; specifically appreciate the historical evolution of the sub-genre and the different epochal and regional variations

**Course Objectives**

The course aims to achieve the following:

- i. Define tragedy and contextualize its manifestation in terms of its artistic and socio-historical role over time
- ii. Ground the students into the nature and practice of African tradition drama focusing on examples of dramatization of tragic themes
- iii. Interrogate how tragedy relates to other forms of drama and the interface between tragedy and comedy

**Expected Learning Outcome:**

It is expected that at the end of the course, the learner should be able to:

- i. Demonstrate critical understanding of the historical evolution of tragedy and a dramatic form
- ii. Appreciate the role of tragedy in dramatizing significant human experiences and social concerns such as the celebration of heroism and grappling with the role of fate in human life
- iii. Critically explain the way in which and why tragic and comic vision have some times been yoked together by dramatists

**Course Content:**

**Introduction**

**Week 1: Background**

- What is tragedy and its artistic role
- Historical perspectives on manifestation of tragedy
- Classical roots of staging and critiquing tragedy
  - Traditional Tragedy
  - The Greek practice and Aristotelian theory of tragedy

- Perspectives on Roman Practice and Criticism
- The European practice before the Renaissance Period

**Week 2:            Shakespearean /Elizabethan materialization of tragedy**

**Week 3:            The Neo-classical up-to the Modern/Postmodern Era in Europe and America:**

- The idea of serious drama
- Heroic Drama
- Tragicomedy
- Theatre of the absurd
- Postmodern trends

**Week 4:            African Drama and the place of tragedy**

- African traditional drama and the dramatization of tragic themes
- The history and practice of tragic vision in drama in contemporary Africa

**Week 5:            Textual analysis and related discussions**

*Oedipus the King* - Sophocles

**Week 6:            Textual analysis and related discussions**

*Hamlet, Prince of Denmark* – William Shakespeare

**Week 7:            Textual analysis and related discussions**

*Death of a Salesman* – Arthur Miller

**Week 8:            Textual analysis and related discussions**

*Riders to the Sea* – John Synge

**Week 9:            Textual analysis and related discussions**

*Serious Money* – Caryl Churchill

**Week 10:           Textual analysis and related discussions**

*The Strong Breed* – Wole Soyinka

**Week 11:           Textual analysis and related discussions**

*The Black Hermit* – Ngugi wa Thiong'o

**Week 12:           Textual analysis and related discussions**

*The Floods* – John Ruganda

**Mode of Delivery:**

The course will be conducted through lectures, tutorials, individual presentations, and interactive learning sessions.

**Course Evaluation:**

Assignment I	10%
Assignment II	15%
Assignment II	15%
Final Examinations	60%
Total Score	100%

**Grading:**

70% and Above	A
60% - 69%	B
56% - 59%	C
50% - 55%	D
Below 50%	E -Fail

**Key Reading Material:**

Shakespeare, William. (1951). *Shakespeare: The Complete Works*. London: Collins.

Churchill, Caryl. (1987). *Serious Money*. London: Methuen Books.

Miller, Arthur. (1968). *Death of a Salesman*. New York: Diesterweg.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o. (1968). *The Black Hermit*. Oxford: Heinemann Educational Publishers.

Ruganda, John. (1988). *The Floods*. Nairobi: EAEP.

Sophocles. (1994). *Antigone, Oedipus the King, and Electra*. Oxford: Oxford UP.

Soyinka, Wole. (1964). *The Trials of Brother Jero and The Strong Breed*. London: Dramatists Play Service Inc.

Synge, J. (1993). *The playboy of the western world and Riders to the sea*. New York: Dover Publications.

**Suggested References**

Gilbert, H. & Tonkins, J. (1996). *Post-colonial drama: theory, practice, politics*. NY: Routledge.

Igweonu, K. (2011). *Trends in twenty-first century African theatre and performance*. NY: Editions Rodopi.

Jeyifo, B. (ed) (2002). *Modern African drama*. New York: Norton and Company, Inco.

Kasule, S. (2013). *Resistance and politics in contemporary East African theatre: trends in Ugandan theatre since 1960*. London: Adonis and Abbey Publishers.

Perkins, K. Ed. (2012). *African women playwrights*. Campaign-Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Gainor, J. et.al, eds (2010). *The Norton anthology of drama. shorter version*. New York: Norton and Co.

Innes, C. (2002). *Modern British drama: the Twentieth Century*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Luckhurst, M. (2010). *A companion to Modern British and Irish drama 1880 – 2005*. London: Blackwell Publishing.

Pinter, H. (1994). *The homecoming*. New York: Grove Press.

Walker, G. (2000). *Medieval drama: an anthology*. London: Blackwell Anthologies.

Stoppard, T. (1994). *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern are dead*. New York: Grove Press.

Banham, M. (2004). *History of theatre in Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Brockett, O. (1999). *History of the theatre*. 8th Ed. Boston: Allyn and Bacon.

Innes, C. (1999). *Twentieth-century British and American theatre: a critical guide to archives*.

Aldershot: Ashgate.

Amegago, M. (2013). *African drumming: the history and continuity of African drumming Traditions*. Trenton : Africa World Press.

Harding, F. (2002). *The performance arts of Africa: a reader*. London: Routledge.