African Poetry, Classic and Contemporary

February 16, 23 and March 2, 2023
6:30 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. @ The Fox Center

Moderated by Nathan Suhr-Sytsma, Associate Professor of English

This seminar will discuss a selection of important, memorable poems by African writers working in English from the 1960s through the present. Focusing on poets from Nigeria and Uganda, the seminar will feature work by the great mid-twentieth-century poet Okot p’Bitek, eminent poets of today such as Niyi Osundare, Susan N. Kiguli, and Juliane Okot Bitek, and a younger luminary, Saddiq Dzukogi. As we read their poems - and in Osundare’s case, watch part of a documentary about the poet – the seminar will ask questions including the following: How have African poets engaged in dialogue with both local and world literary traditions? In what ways does their work confront political injustice and personal loss? What forms of creativity do we discover in their poems? We will be joined by one of the poets via Zoom.

Nathan Suhr-Sytsma is an Associate Professor of English at Emory University and was a 2021-2022 Senior Fox Fellow. He specializes in the intersections of postcolonial literary studies with twentieth- and twenty-first-century poetry. He is a core faculty member of the Institute of African Studies at Emory.

This Great Works Seminar will meet at The Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry @ Emory University from 6:30 p.m. - 8:15 p.m. on the following Thursday evenings during the 2023 Spring semester: February 16, 23, and March 2. Participants are expected to attend all three sessions. For further information and to reserve a spot on a “first-come basis,” email the Fox Center at foxcenter@emory.edu. Everyone from the Atlanta community is welcome and invited to join us for this free seminar.

We are grateful to the National Endowment for the Humanities for its support of this program. Any views, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed in these seminars do not necessarily reflect those of the National Endowment for the Humanities.