

Essay #2: *Things Fall Apart*

WORLD HISTORY 1500–PRESENT
HIST 112 WILSON FALL 2009

DUE: FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11

May be handed in in class or submitted by email in a DOC or RTF format. Note: Your email submission only “counts” if you receive a reply back from me saying I got it. As stated in the syllabus, any late submissions are marked down 10 points per class meeting.

Please format your essay as follows. Your essay should

- ▶ Be typed, double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times or Arial, with one-inch margins on all sides. Please spellcheck and, if you’re not sure about your writing, have a friend read it. I will not mark down for grammar, but clarity is very important.
- ▶ Have a cover page with the title, your name, my name, and the date, and have page numbers on each page after the cover page.
- ▶ Run 2½–3 full pages, not including the cover page.
- ▶ Have all direct quotations, indirect quotations, and ideas from other sources footnoted according to a standard citation style. This is extremely important and failure to do this will seriously affect your grade.

In this case your source will be the novel itself; but you may use secondary sources that discuss this novel as additional resources if you want to. Whether you use additional sources will have no effect on your grade, since I am interested in your interpretations and how well you support them with evidence. (See the Citations section of the research project handout.)

ASSIGNMENT

Choose ONE of the following topics.

1. It has been argued that the conflict relating to the supernatural world drives *Things Fall Apart*. How does Achebe describe the beliefs and traditions of the Igbo differently from those the white man brings with him? **Cite specific examples** of how these beliefs are depicted and used by Achebe. How does his use of the supernatural reflect the author’s message about the contact between Europeans and Africans?

OR

2. Examine Okonkwo’s relationship with any other major character from the story. How does this relationship change over the course of the novel, and how does this change in the relationship reflect what’s happening to the Igbo people? **Cite specific examples** from different sections of the book. Also, does the relationship change because Okonkwo changes, and do his changes reflect what’s happening to Okonkwo’s people?

Remember that, as always, I am looking for your opinion and how well you support it with evidence; this essay is less about “right answers” than it is about well-supported ideas. Feel free to praise or complain about the author’s style, techniques, or attitude, as long as you cover the points of the assignment described above.