What do works of the artistic imagination from the African continent reveal about the world in which we live today? What does Africa and its history tell us about contemporary tendencies of globalization—the world economy, and the global but uneven spread of culture? After gaining an overview of the history and geography of the African continent in relation to the rest of the world, we will explore selected instances of African literature, film, and music. Instead of addressing each in piecemeal fashion, our emphasis will be on the intersections between the respective art forms, and on trans-cultural adaptations and borrowings. Although some of these art forms relate to the African past, and reinvent “tradition,” because they were elaborated in the large, globally connected urban centers that grew and proliferated over the past 100 or so years, the city will be our guiding framework. We will, in other words, attempt to gauge how the experience of life in particular African cities shaped and influenced modern African cultural production—with a view to seeing African cities as exemplifying and differently elaborating more widely experienced dynamics of modernity.

Books
David Conrad, ed. Sunjata: A West African Epic of the Mande Peoples (Hackett)
Frederick Cooper, Africa since 1940 (Cambridge)
Basil Davidson, Africa in History (Simon & Schuster)
Phaswane Mpe, Welcome to Our Hillbrow (University of Kwazulu-Natal Press)
Stephanie Newell, ed. Readings in African Popular Fiction (James Currey)
Tejumola Olaniyan, Arrest the Music! Fela and His Rebel Art and Politics (Indiana)
Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds (Broadview)

Other readings will be made available in xerox form at Advanced Copy on La Guardia Place near the corner of West 3rd St.

Requirements & Deadlines:
1 quiz (week 3) (10% of final grade)
6 reading responses -- 2 pages each (weeks 4-14) (50% of final grade)*
1 final examination (30% of final grade)
class participation (10% of final grade)

* Reading responses are due at the beginning of the first recitation session of each week during which the reading is covered, unless otherwise indicated. Late assignments may be penalized. The 6 reading responses are spread out over 11 weeks in order to give you a choice in what you
write about. You will have the opportunity, should you wish to do so, to revise one response paper during the semester.

**Attendance:**
Regular attendance at lectures and recitation sessions is required. If you accumulate more than three unexcused absences from recitation sessions, your final grade will be lowered progressively for the fourth and each successive class that you miss without a valid excuse.

**Academic Honesty:**
You may not represent someone else’s work as your own. If you do, you will be given zero for the relevant assignment/s, and you may receive a failing grade for the course. It is your responsibility to ensure that you properly acknowledge all sources you use. If you have any questions about how properly to cite outside sources, your recitation session instructor will be pleased to answer them.

**Recitation sessions:**
V55.0505 002 (recitation) W 8:00AM  
(Love)  
V55.0505 003 (recitation) W 9:30AM  
(Love)  
V55.0505 004 (recitation) W 3:30PM  
(Waldron)  
V55.0505 005 (recitation) W 4:55PM (Waldron)

**SCHEDULE**

1. **History and Geography — Africa and the World — Worlds of the Imagination**

**Week 1**
January 17  
Introduction

January 19  
Africa in the news — How has Africa featured in the New York Times in the last two or three weeks?  
Homework (for first recitation session): locate 2 or 3 Times articles on Africa from the past few weeks — What has been reported? How has it been reported?

**Week 2**
January 24  
Early history and geography: Dawn of Humanity, African Civilizations, Connections in Antiquity  
Reading: Davidson, Africa in History, ch’s 1-3

January 26
Later developments: Atlantic Slave Trade, European Colonization, Modern World Economy

**Reading:** Davidson, *Africa in History*, ch’s 5-7

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**Week 3**

January 31 & February 2
Decolonization & the Postcolony

**Reading:** Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*, ch’s 1-2, Interlude, 5, 7-8

**QUIZ:** Feb. 2 (at Thurs. lecture)

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**II. Theories of the City and Modernity**

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**Week 4**

February 7 & 9

**Reading:**

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**Week 5**

February 14 & 16
(Recitation sessions only)

**Reading:**

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**III. African Cities: Literature, Film, Theatre, Music, Art**

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**Week 6**

February 21 & 23

Tradition and Modernity/ Country and City — African Epic in Performance and Film

**Reading:**
- Sunjata: A West African Epic of the Mande Peoples
- Manthia Diawara, *In Search of Africa*, excerpt (xerox)

**Viewing:**
- Dani Kouyaté, director. *Keita! Heritage of the Griot*

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**Week 7**
February 28 & March 2
The colonial city
Reading:
Frantz Fanon, “Algeria Unveiled”; The Wretched of the Earth (excerpt) (xerox)
Paul Rabinow, French Modern: Norms and Forms of the Social Environment, ch. 9 (xerox)
Viewing:
Gillo Pontecorvo, director, Battle of Algiers

Week 8
March 7 & 9
Apartheid and the City — Johannesburg (South Africa)
Reading:
Modisane, Blame Me on History (xerox)
Newell, ed. Readings in African Popular Fiction (excerpts on Drum)
Viewing/Listening:
Lionel Rogosin, director, Come Back, Africa
Popular Music of the 1950s and after — selected kwela and mbaqanga music
Lee Hirsch, director, Amandla! A Revolution in Four-Part Harmony

SPRING BREAK

Week 9
March 21
Apartheid and the City, ctd. — Life on an Instalment Plan
Reading:
Miriam Tlali, Between Two Worlds

March 23
Music and the independence struggle in Zimbabwe
(Guest lecture by Martin Scherzinger, Eastman School of Music)
Reading:
David Lan, Guns and Rain: Guerrillas and Spirit Mediums in Zimbabwe, excerpt (xerox)
Alec Pongweni, Songs that Won the Liberation War, excerpt (xerox)

Week 10
March 28 & 30
Imagining the Market — Onitsha (Nigeria)
Reading:
Newell, ed. Readings in African Popular Fiction (excerpts on Onitsha chapbooks)
Chinua Achebe, “Onitsha” (in Morning Yet on Creation Day) (xerox)

**Week 11**
April 4 & 6
The City after Independence — Lagos (Nigeria) in the 1960s
**Reading:**
Cyprian Ekwensi, Jagua Nana
(reading on history/ geography of Lagos — to be determined)

**Week 12**
April 11 & 13
The City after Independence — Lagos, ctd
Tejumola Olaniyan, Arrest the Music! Fela and His Rebel Art and Politics (excerpts)
**Listening:**
Fela Kuti — selected songs

**Week 13**
April 18 & 20
The African City as Global City (1) — Lagos in the 1990s
(Guest lecture by Awam Amkpa, Tisch School of the Arts, NYU)
**Reading:**
Awam Amkpa, “Nigeria: The Art of Neocolonial Dystopia and Postcolonial Utopias” (Black Renaissance/ Renaissance Noire 5.2 [2003]: 26-30) (xerox)
Femi Okiremuete Shaka, “Nigeria’s Emergent Video Film Industry” (Black Renaissance/ Renaissance Noire 5.2 [2003]: 51-64) (xerox)
Onookome Okome, “Writing the Anxious City: Images of Lagos in Nigerian Home Video Films” (Black Renaissance/ Renaissance Noire 5.2 [2003]: 65-75) (xerox)

**Viewing:** Nigerian home videos

**Week 14**
April 25 & 27
The African City as Global City (2) — Johannesburg and Cape Town after apartheid
**Reading:**
Phaswane Mpe, Welcome to Our Hillbrow
K. Sello Duiker, The Quiet Violence of Dreams (excerpts)
Sarah Nuttall, “City Forms and Writing the ‘Now’ in South Africa” (Journal of Southern African Studies 30.4 [2004]: 731-748) (xerox)
Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, eds., special issue of Social Text on Johannesburg (excerpts) (xerox)