

V55.0505
WORLD CULTURES/AFRICA
SPRING 2008
PROFESSOR RICHARD HULL
Office Hours: Tuesdays/Thursdays, 2:15-3:15 PM.
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Morse Preceptors: Seth Markle, Trina Hogg, Wei-Chi Chen

Course Structure

This lecture and recitation course focuses on sub-Saharan Africa from the late 19th century to the present. The two weekly lectures attempt to view the development of African cultures and societies through a fascinating and intellectually challenging series of themes. In the complementary once-weekly recitations, or colloquia, the themes are broken down into key issues which will be posited by the preceptor and debated by you. The themes and issues will grow out of the lectures, readings, and films.

Course Objectives

It is hoped that you will acquire a keen awareness and understanding of the vital issues facing contemporary African cultures through an exploration of their genesis. Students will critically examine each issue by utilizing the tools used by scholars and other professionals in the various disciplines. Thus, students will come to appreciate the rich and exciting diversity of African societies and cultures through exposure to a wide array of leading authorities and eyewitnesses in the field. You will develop skills at exploring issues widely, deeply, critically and, hopefully, with passion and empathy. Thus, the course will introduce you to various modes and methods of inquiry and analysis rather than to survey a vast corpus of material. Africa is simply too large and complex to cover everything in the space of a few months. You will gain skills in identifying and critically analyzing issues and how different people approach them.

Requirements

Energy, motivation, intellectual curiosity, an appreciation of cultural diversity, and an adventuresome mind. You'll have opportunities to express your thoughts and theories in the recitations orally and through four recitation **quizzes**, a **mid-semester in-class exam**, and a **final essay examination**. There will also be a brief **map quiz** at the start of the semester to acquaint you with the political contours of the continent.

Attendance in the recitations and lectures is extremely important and more than **four** unexcused absences will carry a penalty. Class participation constitutes approximately **20%** of your course grade. You must receive at least an **80%** on the map quiz or re-take it until you do. The mid-term exam counts **30%** and the final **30%**. The recitation quizzes collectively count **20%**.

Readings and Screenings

The following books are **required** and are available for purchase at the NYU Bookstore or online. Occasional additional readings of articles in journals or newspapers will either be passed out in class, found on Jstor or in Bobst Library Reserve. Films can be accessed from Bobst's Avery Fisher Center for Music and Media.

Mariama Ba. *So Long A Letter*.

Joseph Conrad. *Heart of Darkness*.

April & Donald L. Gordon (ed) *Understanding Contemporary Africa (4th edition, 2007)*.

Adam Hochschild. *King Leopold's Ghost*.

John Iliffe. *The African AIDS Epidemic: A History*.

William Moseley (ed) *Taking Sides: Clashing Views on African Issues*.

Okey Ndibe. *Arrows of Rain*.

Sembene Ousmane. *God's Bits of Wood*.

Schedule of Lecture Topics and Readings

January 22	The African Landscape: Imaginations and Constructions Readings: Conrad. Gordon, 1,2.
January 24	Antiquity: The Emergence of Humanity and Culture Readings: Map study, Hochschild. Gordon, 3. Moseley issues 1,2. Hand-out
January 29	Imperialism: Motives and Means Readings: Hand-out
January 31	European Intentions and African Responses Readings: Moseley, issue 3.
February 5	The Legacy of Imperialism
February 7	Colonialism: Mentalities and Methods Readings: Sembene. Moseley, issue 4.
February 12	Colonialism: Development & Underdevelopment
February 14	Mid-term Examination
February 19	Sustainable Development: The Debt Trap Readings: Moseley, issues 6&7.
February 21	Sustainable Development: Strategies Readings: Moseley, issue 5. Gordon, 5.
February 26	Sustainable Development: Agriculture Readings: Moseley, issues 8&9.
February 28:	Sustainable Development: The Environment Readings: Gordon, 8. Moseley, 12.
March 4:	Urbanization and Demographics Readings: Gordon, 7. Moseley, 10
March 6	The Family in Transition

- Gordon, 9. 10.
- March 11** **Women and Men in Economic and Cultural Development**
Readings: Moseley, 13, 14.
- March 13** **Disease in African History**
Readings: Iliffe.
- March 18 & 20** **Vacation**
- March 25** **Film on AIDS**
- March 27** **The Elusive Quest for African Unity**
Readings: Bobst Reserve Room
- April 1** **Empowering the People: Political Culture**
Readings: Gordon, 4. Moseley, issues 17, 18, 19.
- April 3** **Leadership and Civil Society**
- April 8** **The Individual and the State**
Readings: Ndibe.
- April 10** **Islam and Islamism**
Readings: Gordon, 11. Bobst Reserve Room
- April 15** **Christianity in Transition**
- April 17** **Warfare, Genocide and Human Rights**
Readings: Moseley, 20. Bobst Reserve.
- April 22** **Restoring Peace and Security: Truth and Reconciliation**
Readings: Moseley, 20.
- April 24** **Africa and the World: The New Globalism**
Readings: Gordon, 6, 13.
- April 29** **Africa and the Great Powers: Asia, Europe, America**
Readings: Bobst Reserve Room
- May 1** **Africa's Future**