

HUM 2420: African Humanities

Sections 04G6 & 16G4

Spring 2017

Tue 11:45 – 1:40 [NRN 0331] & Thurs 12:50-1:40 [FLG 0245]

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1. Course Description

This course engages the **human landscape** of contemporary Africa, through an attentive screening of a selection of films (mostly documentaries) from diverse cultural and geographical areas. The films are discussed against a backdrop of information about forms of socio-political organization, economic strategies, cultural expressions, and challenges facing modern African women and men. **Relevant reading materials to combine with and contextualize the films are scanned and sent to students accordingly.** We will **explore** and **discuss** rural and urban settings, the educated/ruling elites and poor masses, men and women, and the forces that draw all of these together. Encompassing themes include African politics, the economies of Africa, urbanization and related pop culture, family and kinship, women and development, as well as religion in Africa. Nevertheless, it should be noted that this course does not attempt to survey all peoples and their circumstances in modern Africa, but rather to use the **selected cases** to distill and feature certain themes of especially wide relevance.

2. Course Objectives

Students should be able to formulate their own **informed views** on the complex realities pertaining to modern Africa. As the course progresses students are expected to **demonstrate evidence that they can freely and confidently express their new views on Africa** – participate in a group dialogue and articulate what they found compelling, strange, or even appalling or ‘worthless’ about Africa’s human landscape.

3. Instructional Approach

Class meetings in this course are **exploration** and **reflection** sessions. They are NOT lecture sessions. They are modeled along the traditional African storytelling format. This is what I call “sustainable learning” approach. I come in the classroom to guide or facilitate students to explore, discover new ideas, analyze, synthesize information and eventually formulate their own views on contemporary Africa. This will involve a close reading of selected articles, reading quizzes, in-class screening of feature films and documentaries (stories on modern Africa), conversations, written discussions, observation of current events in Africa, and working in groups on a specific topic of your interest. Active interaction among students is strongly encouraged.

4. Text

There is NO specific textbook. Scanned articles will be sent to students

5. Films

5.1 POLITICS & ECONOMICS

Extra Bitter: the Legacy of the Chocolate Islands (52 min.), DVD 1490

Dying to be Free: Zimbabwe's Struggle for Change (51 min.), DVD 1496

Liberia: A Fragile Peace (60 min.), DVD 1978/

Nigeria's Oil war (23min), DVD 2095

5.2 WOMEN, SOCIETY, & DEVELOPMENT

Africa Rising: the grassroots movmt to end FGM (62 min), DVD 4546

I have a Problem, Madam (59 min), DVD 5258

Savanna Homecoming (National Geographic: Africa), DVD 6667 (Vol.1)

5.3 URBANIZATION & POPULAR CULTURE

The evolution of African music

5.4 RELIGION IN AFRICA

Wonders of the African World (The Swahili Coast, 60 min.), DVD 1482

Man, God, and Africa (51 min.) VID 3390

Senegal: The Power to Change (29 min.), DVD 1489

All films are available on reserve - Library West

6. Responsibilities, Assignments, and Grading

Reading assigned articles and close screening of selected films, as well as attending class are, of course, the **keys to the success** of this course. Please have the readings done by the day they are assigned below - they constitute the foundation for what goes on in the course. Films will be screened during class time and discussed thereafter alongside relevant readings or new experiences. Every individual's active participation is expected including active screening. The material discussed in this course guides us to **how to learn and rethink the way we think about Africa**

Please note: occasionally, I will recommend lectures or films/performances outside of class time. Some of you may have schedule conflicts, but do try to attend whenever your schedule allows you.

Your course grade will be based on a combination of a map quiz, class attendance, participation, reading quizzes, keeping an African country journal (current events), three (3) short discussion papers, and group presentation (Roundtable). The breakdown of the grading is as follows:

Map quiz [MQ] (1)	5%
Class attendance [CA]	5%
Participation [P]	10%
Reading quizzes [RQ] (4)	20%
MyAfricancountry journal [J]	15%
Short Discussion papers [SDP] (3)	30%
Roundtable [RT] (group presentations)	15%

Total	100%

The authorized letter grades (A, B, C, D, E) are as follows:

A = 92-100; **A-** = 90-91; **B+** = 87-89; **B** = 83-86; **B-** = 80-82; **C+** = 77-79; **C** = 73-76; **C-** = 70-72; **D+** = 67-70; **D** = 63-66; **D-** = 60-62; **E** = 59 and below.

Grade Points:

A = 4.0; **A-** = 3.67; **B+** = 3.33; **B** = 3.0; **B-** = 2.67; **C+** = 2.33; **C** = 2.0; **C-** = 1.67; **D+** = 1.33; **D** = 1.0; **D-** = 0.67; **E** = 0.0

6.1 A Map Quiz (MQ) [5%]

Only one map quiz will be administered. This will take place in the 3rd week (1/19). This quiz is intended to encourage you to put as much effort as possible from early on in the course in understanding **important physical features** and **political setting of the African continent**. A blank map of Africa with country boundaries drawn in will be provided, as well as main rivers, lakes, and islands. We will look at these maps and do some practice (1/10, 12 & 17).

6.2 Class attendance (CA) [5%]

Given the instructional approach elaborated above (3), attendance is **REQUIRED**.

6.3 Class Participation (CP) [10%]

Active participation is expected. The more you read assigned articles thoroughly and watch films actively and think about them seriously, the greater chances are for you not only to **participate productively** in this exploration, but also to **enjoy the class**. For every discussion session, 3-4 students will be selected to be **lead discussants**, and you will be graded accordingly.

6.4 Reading Quizzes (RQ) [20%]

A total of four (4) reading quizzes (RQ) will be administered as indicated in the schedule below. Each RQ will have either five or ten items of multiple choice, fill in the blanks, matching item or true/false types.

6.5 My African country Journal (J) [15%]

You will keep a journal on your **adopted African country** pertaining to current events for two months – February and March. A minimum of two events every week (starting February 1 to March 31). **Minimum entries: 14**. For each entry you will write a brief summary, indicate a source, and dates, and write your comments why you find the event interesting. You may relate them to issues discussed in class or the readings. **DUE APRIL 6.**

Although you are not restricted as to the source of the material, the following sources would be useful:

The New York Times: www.nytimes.com (look in international news, Africa section)

CNN: www.cnn.com (look in international news, Africa section)

BBC: www.bbc.com (look in international news, Africa section)

All Africa <http://allafrica.com>

Country's official websites (if any exists)

6.6 Discussion Papers (DP) (three) [30%]

You will write three (3) short discussion papers (minimum: 2 pages and max: 3 pages, typed double space, font 12 pt), each discussing a specific course theme. This will be a chance for you to write about aspects of the readings and films in the context of your new way of viewing at Africa's human landscape. Each paper carries 10%.

6.7 'Roundtable' discussion on Africa (RT) (group assignment) [15%], **April, 6, 11, & 13**

Members in each region (west, central, eastern, southern Africa, the Indian Ocean Rim, & Horn of Africa) will select a topic, explore it and design their own way of presenting it. 15-20 minutes will be allocated for presentation and 10 minutes for Q&A. Each group in the audience will be expected to ask at least one question or make a constructive remark, all of which will be graded.

7.0 Academic Honesty

The University of Florida's honor code requires all students to be honest in their academic work. University policies on cheating, plagiarism, and related issues are available at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/procedures/academicguide.html>

8.0 Students with disabilities

Students with disabilities will be accommodated accordingly. Those requesting such accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office which will provide them with documentation.

9.0 Minor in African Studies

Please note that this course (in combination with others) can count towards a Minor in African studies, an ideal complement to your disciplinary major. Contact Dr. Todd Leedy for more information: tleedy@ufl.edu

Proposed Schedule and Assignments

R 1/05 Introductions & Review of syllabus

T 1/10 The contemporary map of Africa
McNulty: The Contemporary Map of Africa
Syllabus Quiz (extra credit)

R1/12 Map quiz of Africa (in-class practice, eg. www.sheppardsoftware.com)

T 1/17 The impact of colonialism
Gordon: African politics – the Impact of Colonialism
EXTRA BITTER: in-class screening

R 1/19 *EXTRA BITTER*: conversation
Map Quiz

T 1/24 Gordon: African politics - Beyond Autocracy
DYING TO BE FREE: in-class screening

R 1/26 *DYING TO BE FREE*: conversation

T 1/31 **Reading Quiz -1**

Gordon: African politics - Prospects for Democracy in Africa

LIBERIA: in-class screening

PICK your African country (for myafricancountry journal assignment)

R 2/02 *LIBERIA*: conversation

T 2/07 **Reading Quiz -2**

DeLancey: The economies of Africa - Deforestation & environment degradation, the marginalization of women, SAPs, etc

NIGERIA's OIL WAR: screening & conversation

R 2/09 Conclusion: Africa's political landscape

T 2/14 Wangila: Religion and Female Circumcision

AFRICA RISING: THE GRASSROOTS MOVMT TO END FGM: screening

R 2/16 *AFRICA RISING: THE GRASSROOTS MOVMT TO END FGM*: conversation

T 2/21 **DISCUSSION PAPER -1 due**

Reading quiz-3

Gordon, A: Women in Devlpt - Dependency and inequality of women

Kimani: Taking on violence against women in Africa Women struggle to secure land rights (*African Renewal* April 2008)

I HAVE A PROBLEM, MADAM: screening

R 2/23 *I HAVE A PROBLEM, MADAM*: conversation

T 2/28 Robertson: Social Change in Contemporary Africa – gender roles

SAVANNA HOMECOMING: screening

R 3/02 *SAVANNA HOMECOMING* : conversation

**** 3/04-3/11 SPRING BREAK****

T 3/14 **Reading quiz- 4**

Moyo: Religion in Africa - Christianity in Africa

MAN, GOD, AND AFRICA: screening

R 3/16 *MAN, GOD, & AFRICA*: conversation

T 3/21 Moyo: Religion in Africa - Islam in Africa

WONDERS OF THE AFRICAN WORLD, THE SWAHILI COAST: screening

R 3/23 *THE SWAHILI COAST*: conversation

DISCUSSION PAPER -2 Due

RT – 1st meeting (planning)

T 3/28 Q & A, RT mock presentations
R 3/30 **RT – 2nd & final meeting** @ finalize preparation for RT sessions.

T 4/04 General Review
R 4/06 ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS -1 (X groups)
T 4/11 ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS –2 (Y groups)
R 4/13 ROUNDTABLE PRESENTATIONS -3 (Z groups)
T 4/18 **RT Reports** – Due
DISCUSSION PAPER -3 Due
CONCLUSION.

***** *ENJOY* *****