

AFS 4935 / SSA 4930 Popular Cultures

Section 276 F

T 3 (9:35 AM - 10:25 AM)
R 2 - 3 (8:30 AM - 10:25 AM)
MAT 0102

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Office hours: T- R 2-3.30pm or by appointment

Course Description

This course is concerned with African popular cultures and is devoted to the examination of different cultural forms including visual arts, cinema, music, literature and social media. The course is interdisciplinary and its aim is to understand better the contributions and relevance of popular cultural forms in the engagement with and understanding of African realities.

Course Objectives

- To acquire a broad knowledge of African popular cultures,
- Understand the multiplicity and complexity of African popular cultural forms,
- Discuss critically the popular forms and their relevance for the understanding of African societies,
- Be able to compare African popular cultural forms with other Western cultural forms

Course Requirements

Your final evaluation is based on the following components (with correspondent points):

- Presence, participation and presentation (30 points)
- Assignment 1 & 2 (40 points)
- Research Paper (30 points)

Total points will be calculated, and the final grade will be assigned according to the table:

Grade	A	A-	B+	B	B-	C+	C	C-	D+	D	D-	E
Tot pts.	93-100	90-92	87-89	83-86	80-82	77-79	73-76	70-72	67-69	63-66	60-62	<60

Information on current UF grading policies for assigning grade points can be found at:

<https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/grades.aspx>.

- PRESENCE, PARTICIPATION AND PRESENTATION: Attendance is mandatory and will be taken at the start of each class. Participation in class discussions is crucial, and you are expected to actively contribute to debates if you want to obtain full score in this component. Un-respectful class demeanor (e.g. talking and texting during the class, using lap-tops for anything else than taking class notes, and studying for other classes) is NOT TOLERATED.

- **ASSIGNMENTS:** Topics will be posted on line.
- **RESEARCH PAPER:** you have a semester to write a research paper based on all course readings, videos and lectures covered during the semester as well as personal research.

Students are expected to provide feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing online evaluations at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu>. Summary results of these assessments are available to students at <https://evaluations.ufl.edu/results/>.

Make-up policy: Requirements for class attendance and make-up exams, assignments, and other work in this course are consistent with university policies that can be found at: <https://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/regulations/info/attendance.aspx>. Excuses for missing a class test or deadline for assignments will only be accepted for proven and acceptable reasons. You should give me prior notice whenever possible.

Academic Honesty: UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor.

Plagiarism: Plagiarism is a serious violation of the Student Honor Code. The Honor Code prohibits and defines plagiarism as follows: A student shall not represent as the student’s own work all or any portion of the work of another. Plagiarism includes (but is not limited to):

- a. Quoting oral or written materials, whether published or unpublished, without proper attribution.
- b. Submitting a document or assignment, which in whole or in part is identical or substantially identical to a document or assignment not authored by the student. (University of Florida, Student Honor Code, <https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>).

University of Florida students are responsible for reading, understanding, and abiding by the entire Student Honor Code.

Important Tip: Do not copy text verbatim from any source (including your own previous work) unless you show the text as a quote with complete attribution.

If a student plagiarizes all or any part of any assignment, University policy suggests that instructors should impose a course grade penalty and report any incident of academic dishonesty to the Office of the Dean of Students. You should know that your work might be tested for its “originality” against a wide variety of databases by anti-plagiarism guardian sites to which the University subscribes, and negative reports from such sites constitute proof of plagiarism.

Software Use:

All faculty, staff, and students of the University are required and expected to obey the laws and legal agreements governing software use. Failure to do so can lead to monetary damages and/or criminal penalties for the individual violator. Because such violations are also against University policies and rules, disciplinary action will be taken as appropriate.

Campus Helping Resources

Students experiencing crisis or personal problems that interfere with their general wellbeing are encouraged to utilize the university's counseling resources. The Counseling and Wellness Center provides confidential counseling services at no cost for currently enrolled students. Contact information: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575.

Other useful contacts are also the University Police Department: 392-1111.

Students with Disabilities Act

Students with disabilities requesting accommodations should first register with the Disability Resource Center (352-392-8565, www.dso.ufl.edu/drc/) by providing appropriate documentation. Once registered, students will receive an accommodation letter, which must be presented to the instructor when requesting accommodation. Students with disabilities should follow this procedure as early as possible in the semester.

Opportunities / Africa related courses:

- The Center for African Studies offers many courses with an African content. You can pick up a free booklet with details from 427 Grinter, and ask for more information.
- Many stimulating opportunities exist, such as Semester and Summer Study Abroad Programs (including the prestigious Lombardi Program). For more info contact the CAS deputy director Todd Leedy (427 Grinter; email tleedy@afrika.ufl.edu).
- Foreign language requirement in a different and exciting way? For more information contact Dr C. Bwenge at cbwenge@afrika.ufl.edu.
- Are you taking, or planning to take, other courses in African Studies? If so, you may qualify for a Minor in African Studies. Make sure you declare it: in the past, some students who qualified failed to declare it! Dr Leedy will be happy to help you make the process even easier: he will send the form for you!

Reading and course material

- There is no textbook for this course. Course readings consist of journal articles, book chapters, which are available on the Canvas course site in E-Learning or through their websites. Material including lecture, powerpoints are also available on Canvas. The course site on Canvas can be accessed through <http://elearning.ufl.edu/>, by entering your Gatorlink username and password. Through this site you can also: read assignment instructions, post your assignments, and check grades.
- Keep update with African affairs: useful internet sources include www.bbc.co.uk/afrika, <http://africasacountry.com/> among others

CLASS SCHEDULE

Please note: the instructor reserves the right to make minor changes to the following schedule during the semester

You are required to do the relevant reading before each class.

Week 1 (Aug. 23-25) Introduction

“How to write about Africa”

Byniavanga Wainaina

Week 2 (Aug. 30 – Sept 1)

“Introduction” by Karin Barber

“Popular Culture in Africa: Findings and Conjectures” by Johannes Fabian

Week 3 (Sept. 6-8)

Popular Culture: politics in the streets

“Kanga: Popular Cloths with Messages” by Elisabeth Linnebuhr

Week 4 (Sept. 13-15)

African popular cultures in African Cinema

Neil Blomkamp, *District 9*

Assignment 1 due

Week 5 (Sept. 20-22)

Popular cultures: African Photography (Seydou Keita and Malick Sidibé)

“The Sixties in Bamako: Malick Sidibé and James Brown” by Manthia Diawara

See also posts at <http://africasacountry.com/2016/05/malick-sidibe-directing-light/>

Week 6 (Sept. 27-29)

From social media to comics: Child soldier and popular culture

Joshua Dysart: *Unknown soldier*

Week 7 (Oct. 4-6)

“Guinness gets stylish”: “Les Sapeurs” Transnational fashion

Thomas, Dominic, “Fashion Matters: La Sape and Vestimentary Codes in Transnational Contexts and Urban Diasporas,” In Thomas, Dominic, *Black France. Colonialism, Immigration, and Transnationalism*, 2007, 155- 184

Week 8 (Oct. 11-13)

Youth and popular culture 1

Dance

Week 9 (Oct. 18-20)

Visual Arts and popular cultures

Cheri Samba

“Painting in Zaire” by Bogumil Jewsiewicki
(Thursday session should take place in the Harn Museum. To be confirmed)

Assignment 2 due

Week 10 (Oct. 25-27)

Popular Culture and soap operas

“An African City” (web serie)

“Happiness is a Four letter Word”

Jane Bryce, “Women and Modern African Popular Fiction,” In Karin Barber (Ed.), *Readings in African Popular Cultures*, 1997, 118-125.

Week 11 (Nov. 1-3)

African comics 2: political opposition and expression

Africa I will fleece you (excerpts)

Achille Mbembe “The Thing & Its Double in Cameroonian Cartoons.”

Week 12 (Nov. 8-10)

Religion and popular culture

Presentation and discussion with Dr Kane (TBC).

Week 13 (Nov. 15-17)

Youth and popular culture 2

African popular music

Eric Charry “A capsule history of African Rap”

Week 14 (Nov. 22)

“From Opera to Karmen Gei”.

Karmen Gei, Joe Ramaka

Week 15 (Nov 29-Dec 1)

Class presentations

Week 16 (Dec. 6)

Conclusions

Research paper due