

ANTHROPOLOGY AND AFRICA

African and African American Studies 105x / Fall 2016

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Class meets Thursdays between 1:00
and 3:00pm in the Locke Room in
Barker Center.

Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:00-
3:00pm in Tozzer 213 (please sign
up in advance) or by appointment.

This undergraduate course explores the links between race, empire, and the production of anthropological knowledge about Africa. Africa has occupied a central place in the making of anthropology as a discipline. Ethnographic studies of African contexts generated leading theories of kinship and society, money and economy, ritual and religion, violence, law, and political order. And, while anthropologists have often used their work to critique racism and social injustice, the discipline of anthropology has been, at times, accused of being the “handmaiden of colonialism”—its discourses complicit in the making of dominant ideologies of racial alterity and imperial power. In this course, students revisit moments of intersection between the history of modern Africa and the history of anthropology in order to examine the role of knowledge production in the politics of world-making. We interrogate “Africa” as an ideological category, a source of identity and collective consciousness, and a geo-political context of social life. We ask: What is the political potential of various forms of knowledge production? What do ethnographic engagements with African contexts offer by means of understanding the world at large? And what may anthropological thinking offer by way of envisioning better futures in Africa and beyond?

Course Requirements

Grades will reflect the student’s level of engagement with the readings, lectures, and other assignments of the course as well as the extent to which the student acquired critical knowledge and skills throughout the semester.

- ❑ *Attendance, Participation, and Review Questions (30%).* Students are expected to participate in class discussions by formulating questions, responses, and critiques relevant to the assigned readings. Attendance is mandatory. Please note that you will not earn any points for attending classes without participating. But you will lose points for absences. More than two absences will result in the loss of 5% from the final grade and more than four absences in the loss of 10%. To help you participate actively in class discussions, I would like you to write as you read. For each class, please prepare a short review question concerning one or more of the assigned readings. A good review question should very briefly sum up a selected argument of the reading(s). Then, it should unpack the argument critically, either by treating it on its own terms or by comparing it to issues emerging in discussions, lectures, and other readings covered for this class. Every class, I will call on two students to begin discussion by reading their review questions. I might also ask that you submit all your review questions at the end of the semester.

- ❑ *Take-home exams: Mid-term (35%) and Final (35%).* Each exam consists of two types of questions. First, students have to provide short definitions for five key terms encountered in the readings, lectures, and films of the course. These can be both analytical anthropological concepts and vernacular concepts encountered in ethnographic case studies. Second, students are required to respond to one out of a choice of two essay questions. The essay must draw on the readings, lectures, and films of the course exclusively. It must have a clear thesis statement, a well-constructed argument, and sufficient evidence to support your position. The essay must be no longer than five pages. Students have a week to write each exam. The mid-term will focus on the materials covered in the first half of the semester, while the final exam will emphasize primarily the materials covered in the second half of the course. The mid-term take-home exam is due **October 13** and the final take-home exam is due **December 1**. Note that late submissions will be penalized with 5% from the final grade per day.

Required Texts

The following texts are available for purchase at the Coop Bookstore and for consultation on a three-hour reserve in the Tozzer Anthropology Library.

- ❑ Buchi, Emecheta. *The Bride Price*. New York: George Braziller.
- ❑ Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mt. Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*. New York: Vintage Books.
- ❑ Richards, Audrey. 1956. *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. London: Faber & Faver Ltd.

Class Courtesy

In order to engage most efficiently with the lectures and discussions of this course, to develop active listening skills and to maintain a productive and respectful learning environment for everyone in class, you may not use any electronic communication devices such as laptops, tablets and cell phones for the duration of the class.

Weekly Schedule

WEEK 1
September 1

INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

- ❑ Wainaina, Binyavanga. 2008. "How to Write About Africa?" *Granta* 92: *The View From Africa*. Link: <http://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>

WEEK 2
September 8

ANTHROPOLOGY & AFRICA: THE POLITICS OF AN "AFFAIR"

- ❑ Harries, Patrick. 2007. "From Alps to Africa: Swiss Missionaries and Anthropology." In H. Tilley and R. Gordon (eds) *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge*. Pp. 201-224. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- ❑ Mbembe, Achille. "Time on the Move." In A. Mbembe *On the Postcolony*. Pp. 1-23. Berkeley: University of California Press.
- ❑ Trouillot, Michel-Rolph. 1991. "Anthropology and the Savage Slot: The Poetics and Politics of Otherness." In Fox, R. (ed.) *Recapturing Anthropology: Working in the Present*. Pp.17-44. Santa Fe: School of American Research Press.
- ❑ Fabian, Johannes. 2006. "Forgetting Africa?" In Ntarangwi M., D. Mills, and M. Babiker (eds) *African Anthropologies: History, Critique and Practice*. Pp. 139-153. London: Zed Books.

PART I

CLASSIC DEBATES IN AFRICANIST ANTHROPOLOGY

WEEK 3
September 15

HOW DO AFRICAN SOCIETIES WORK? A QUESTION OF STRUCTURE

- ❑ Evans-Pritchard, E. E. 1940. "The Nuer of Southern Sudan." In Fortes, M. and E. E. Evans-Pritchard (eds). *African Political Systems*. Pp. 272-296. London: Oxford University Press.
- ❑ Wilson, Monica. 1949. "Nyakyusa Age-Villages." *Journal of the Royal Anthropological Institute* 79: 21-25.
- ❑ Gulliver, Phillip H. 1955. "Marriage and Bridewealth." In P. H. Gulliver *The Family Herd: A Study of Two Pastoral Tribes in East Africa; The Jie and Turkana*. Pp. 223-243. London: Routledge.

Film: "A Wife among Wives: Notes on Turkana Marriage" (1981) by David & Judith MacDougall [66 min]

- WEEK 4
September 22
- WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF CONFLICT? A QUESTION OF PROCESS
- ❑ Spencer, Paul. 1965. *The Samburu: A Study of Gerontocracy*. London: Routledge. (Chapters 1, 3, 4 and 6).
- WEEK 5
September 29
- HOW IS CULTURE LEARNED? A QUESTION OF MEANING
- ❑ Richards, Audrey. 1956. *Chisungu: A Girl's Initiation Ceremony among the Bemba of Northern Rhodesia*. London: Faber & Faver Ltd. (Chapters 1, 2 and 3)
- WEEK 6
October 6
- HOW DO ANTHROPOLOGISTS KNOW? A QUESTION OF HISTORY
- ❑ Marsland, Rebecca. 2013. "Pondo Pins and Nyakyusa Hammers: Monica and Godfrey in Bunyakya." In A. Bank and L. Bank (eds) *Inside African Anthropology: Monica Wilson and Her Interpreters*. Pp. 129-161. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
 - ❑ Ahmed, Abdel Ghaffar M. 1973. "Some Remarks from the Third World on Anthropology and Colonialism: the Sudan." In T. Asad (ed.) *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Pp. 259-270. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press.
 - ❑ James, Wendy. 1973. "The Anthropologist as Reluctant Imperialist." In T. Asad (ed.) *Anthropology and the Colonial Encounter*. Pp. 41-70. Atlantic Highlands, N.J.: Humanities Press.

PART II MODERNITY, AFRICANITY, AND THE CUSTOMARY

- WEEK 7
October 13
- COLONIAL POWER & THE POLITICS OF ETHNOGRAPHY
- ❑ Kenyatta, Jomo. *Facing Mt. Kenya: The Tribal Life of the Gikuyu*. New York: Vintage Books. (Chapters 1, 2, 5, 6 and 7)
- Mid-term Take-home Exam Due in Class*
- WEEK 8
October 20
- "THE INVENTION OF TRADITION?" CUSTOMS, KNOWLEDGE, & BODILY REFORMS
- ❑ Berman, Bruce and John Lonsdale. 2007. "Custom, Modernity, and the Search for Kihoto: Kenyatta, Malinowski, and the Making of *Facing Mount Kenya*." In H. Tilley and R. Gordon (eds) *Ordering Africa: Anthropology, European Imperialism, and the Politics of Knowledge*. Pp. 173-198. Manchester: Manchester University Press.

- ❑ Shaw, Carolyn Martin. 1995. "Kikuyu Women and Sexuality." In C. Shaw *Colonial Inscriptions: Race, Sex, and Class in Kenya*, Pp. 60-94. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- ❑ Thomas, Lynn. 1997. "Ngaitana (I Will Circumcise Myself): The Gender and Generational Politics of the 1956 Ban on Clitoridectomy in Meru, Kenya." In Hunt N. et al. (eds) *Gendered Colonialisms in African History*. Pp. 16-41. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.

WEEK 9
October 27

LABOR MIGRATION, ETHNICITY, AND URBAN CULTURE

- ❑ Mitchell, Clyde. 1956. *The Kalela Dance: Aspects of Social Relationships among Urban Africans in Northern Rhodesia*. Pp. 1-44. Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- ❑ Schumaker, Lyn. 2001. "Atop the Central African Volcano." In L. Schumaker *Africanizing Anthropology: Fieldwork, Networks, and the Making of Cultural Knowledge in Central Africa*. Pp. 152-189. Durham: Duke University Press.

Film: "Les maîtres fous" (1955) by Jean Rouch [36 min]

WEEK 10
November 3

MODERNITY, DEVELOPMENT & THE PREDICAMENTS OF BELONGING

- ❑ Buchi, Emecheta. 1988. *The Bride Price*. New York: George Braziller.

PART III ANTHROPOLOGICAL IMAGINATION IN/FOR GLOBAL AFRICA

WEEK 11
November 10

RETHINKING SOVEREIGNTY, LAW, & THE STATE FROM AFRICA

- ❑ Roitman, Janet. 2006. "The Ethics of Illegality in the Chad Basin." In J. Comaroff and J. Comaroff (eds) *Law and Disorder in the Postcolony*. Pp. 247-272. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- ❑ Comaroff, Jean and John L. Comaroff. "Figuring Democracy: An Anthropological Take on African Political Modernities." In J. Comaroff and J. L. Comaroff *Theory from the South: Or, How Euro-America Is Evolving Toward Africa*. Pp. 109-131. Boulder: Paradigm Publisher.
- ❑ Mbembe, Achille. 2001. "The Aesthetics of Vulgarly." In A. Mbembe *On the Postcolony*. Pp. 102-133. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WEEK 12
November 17

RETHINKING GENDER, SEXUALITY, & RACE FROM AFRICA

- ❑ Oyěwùmí, Oyèrónké. 1997. "Visualizing the Body: Western Theories and African Subjects." In Oyěwùmí, O. *The Invention of Woman: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*. Pp. 1-30. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- ❑ Hoad, Neville. 2007. "African Sodomy in the Missionary Position: Corporeal Intimacies and Signifying Regimes." In Hoad N. *African Intimacies: Race, Homosexuality, and Globalization*. Pp. 1-20. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press
- ❑ Pierre, Jemima. 2013. "Race across the Atlantic... and Back: Theorizing Africa and/in the Diaspora." In J. Pierre *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*. Pp. 185-216.

November 24

No Class. Thanksgiving Recess.

WEEK 13
December 1

ANTHROPOLOGICAL FUTURES IN THE NEW GLOBAL ORDER

- ❑ Obbo, Christine. 2006. "But We Know It All! African Perspectives on Anthropological Knowledge." In M. Ntarangwi, D. Mills and M Babiker (eds) *African Anthropologies: History, Critique, and Practice*. Pp. 154-169. London: Zed Books.
- ❑ Mafeje, Archie. 1996. "Anthropology and Independent Africans: Suicide or End of an Era?" *Codesria* 8: 1-40.
- ❑ Comaroff, John. 2010. "The End of Anthropology, Again: On the Future of an In/Discipline." *American Anthropologist* 112(4): 524-538

Final Take-home Exam Due in Class

Map of Contemporary Africa



Capital Cities

Algeria - Algiers / Angola - Luanda / Benin - Porto-Novo / Botswana - Gaborone / Burkina Faso - Ouagadougou / Burundi - Bujumbura / Cameroon - Yaounde / Cape Verde - Praia / Central African Republic - Bangui / Chad - N'Djamena / Comoros - Moroni / Congo, Republic of the - Brazzaville / Congo, Democratic Republic of the - Kinshasa / Cote d'Ivoire - Yamoussoukro; Abidjan / Djibouti - Djibouti / Egypt - Cairo / Equatorial Guinea - Malabo / Eritrea - Asmara / Ethiopia - Addis Ababa / Gabon - Libreville / The Gambia - Banjul / Ghana - Accra / Guinea - Conakry / Guinea-Bissau - Bissau / Kenya - Nairobi / Lesotho - Maseru / Liberia - Monrovia / Libya - Tripoli / Madagascar - Antananarivo / Malawi - Lilongwe / Mali - Bamako / Mauritania - Nouakchott / Mauritius - Port Louis / Morocco - Rabat / Mozambique - Maputo / Namibia - Windhoek / Niger - Niamey / Nigeria - Abuja / Rwanda - Kigali / Senegal - Dakar / Seychelles - Victoria / Sierra Leone - Freetown / Somalia - Mogadishu / South Africa - Pretoria; Cape Town; Bloemfontein/Mangaung / Sudan - Khartoum / South Sudan - Juba / Swaziland - Mbabane / Tanzania - Dar es Salaam; Dodoma / Togo - Lome / Tunisia - Tunis / Uganda - Kampala / Zambia - Lusaka / Zimbabwe - Harare