**Growing Up in Africa**

Spring 2010

56:163:654:01, 56:606:541:03, 50:163:380, 50:070:385:01

Professor Cati Coe

Associate Professor of Anthropology

405-407 Cooper Street, Room 214

phone: (856) 225-6455

email: ccoe@camden.rutgers.edu

Office hours: Mondays, 4:15-5:45pm; Wednesdays 2:00-2:30 or by appointment, in my office

This course explores the diversity of African childhoods, in different communities and contexts. The course will explore a number of different themes: how child development and expectations for children vary in African communities, how children experience Western schooling and socialization by their communities, and how children contribute to cultural continuity at times but also ruptures such as in war, popular culture, urban migration, and challenges to authority. We will also examine the roles of children at a variety of different ages---from babyhood to youth.

Much that we read will challenge visions of childhood and expectations and roles of children learned in contemporary US communities.

This course is open to graduate students (Masters and Ph.D.) and upper-level undergraduates. The requirements for the readings will be somewhat different: work required for graduate students will be designated by a “G” and for undergraduates with a “UG”. The course will primarily be a seminar, with much time for discussion. Articles are available through the online reserves at Robeson Library under the course number 56:163:654:01.

Undergraduate and graduate students should gain access to the following books:

1. Dangarembga, Tsitsi. 1989. *Nervous Conditions.* Seattle: Seal Press.
2. Gottlieb, Alma. 2004. *The Afterlife is Where We Come From*: *The Culture of Infancy in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
3. Honwana, Alcinda. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

These books are on reserve at the Robeson library and can be checked out for an hour at a time.

In addition, graduate students should gain access to the following books:

1. LeVine, Robert A. et al. *Child Care and Culture: Lessons from Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996
2. Margaret Read. 1968. *Children of their Fathers: Growing up among the Ngoni of Malawi*. Holt, Reinhart, and Winston. [this book is no longer in print and is not in the bookstore, but it is available on one-hour reserve from the library or you can purchase it through Amazon or another bookseller]
3. Riesman, Paul. 1992. *First Find Your Child a Good Mother: The Construction of Self in Two African Communities*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.
4. Stambach, Amy. 2000. *Lessons from Mt. Kilimanjaro: Schooling, Community, and Gender in East Africa*. New York: Routledge.
5. Reynolds, Pamela. 1991. *Dance Civet Cat: Tongan Children and Labour in the Zambezi Valley*. Athens: Ohio University Press.
6. Kilbride, Philip, Collette Suda, and Enoa Njeru. 2000. *Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.

All the books are available for purchase at the University District Bookstore under the course number 56:163:654:01.

Schedule of Readings

**January 25**

Introductions. What do we know about Africa & Children? Introduction to Africa. Maps and Geography

**February 1 What is a Child? What is Africa?**

Introduction to African History and Social Life.

*Reading (G & UG)*:

1. Montgomery, Heather. 2009. “What is a Child?” in *An Introduction to Childhood: Anthropological Perspectives on Children’s Lives*. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell. [on reserve]
2. Bohannan, Paul and Philip Curtin. 1988. Chapters 1, 2 and 20 in *Africa and Africans.* Fourth edition. Long Grove: Waveland Press. Pp. 1-32, pp. 254-269. [on reserve]

*Critical response paper:* Find a children’s book which portrays Africa in some way and write about “the image of Africa” or “image of childhood,” as presented in this children’s book, drawing on the readings to reflect on the book. Please bring the children’s book to class with you.

**February 8 African Childhoods in Comparison to Other Childhoods: Goals, Practices, Values**

*Reading (G)*: LeVine, Robert A. et al. *Child Care and Culture: Lessons from Africa*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996.

*Reading (UG)*: Introduction, Part I, & Chapter 8 from *Child Care and Culture,* pp. 1-53, pp. 196-223 [on reserve]

**February 15 Studies of Socialization from the 1960s and 1970s**

*Reading (G)*: Margaret Read. 1968. *Children of their Fathers: Growing up among the Ngoni of Malawi*. Holt, Reinhart, and Winston. [available on one-hour reserve from the Robeson library]

*Reading (UG):* Introduction, Chapters 1, 2, 5, and 6 from *Children of their Fathers,* pp. 11-48, pp. 88-121 [on reserve]

**February 22 The Effect of Socialization on Personality: A Perspective from Psychological Anthropology**

*Reading (G)***:** Riesman, Paul. 1992. *First Find Your Child a Good Mother: The Construction of Self in Two African Communities*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press.

*Reading (UG)*: Introduction, Chapters 2, 5, 6, 7 & 8 from *First Find Your Child a Good Mother*, pp. 7-29, pp. 130-195 [on reserve]

**March 1 Babies and Child Development**

*Reading (G, UG):* Gottlieb, Alma. 2004. *The Afterlife is Where We Come From*: *The Culture of Infancy in West Africa*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

**March 8 Should Parents Raise their Children?**

*Readings (G, UG)* [on reserve]:

1) Alber, Erdmute. 2003. “Denying Biological Parenthood: Fosterage in Northern Benin.” *Ethnos* 68(4): 487-506.

2) Bledsoe, Caroline. 1990. “‘No Struggle without Success’: Social Mobility and Hardship for Foster Children in Sierra Leone.” *Man* 25(1): 70-88.

3) Renne, Elisha P. 2005. “Childhood Memories and Contemporary Parenting in Ekiti, Nigeria.” *Africa* 75(1): 63-82.

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**March 22 Fictional Childhoods**

*Reading (G, UG):* Dangarembga, Tsitsi. 1989. *Nervous Conditions.* Seattle: Seal Press.

**March 29 Schooling**

*Reading (G):* Stambach, Amy. 2000. *Lessons from Mt. Kilimanjaro: Schooling, Community, and Gender in East Africa*. New York: Routledge.

*Reading (UG)*: Chapter 1, 2, and 6 in *Lessons from Mt.* Kilimanjaro, pp. 1-47, pp. 134-160 [on reserve]

**April 5 Youth and Elders**

*Readings (G, UG):*

1) Durham, Deborah. 2000.“Youth and the Social Imagination in Africa: Introduction to Parts 1 and 2.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 73(3): 113-120.

2) Rasmussen, Susan J. 2000. “Between Several Worlds: Images of Youth and Age in Tuareg Popular Performances.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 73(3): 133-144.

3) Burke, Charlanne. 2000. “They Cut Segametsi Into Parts: Ritual Murder, Youth, and the Politics of Knowledge in Botswana.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 73(4): 204-214.

4) Bastian, Misty L. 2000. “Young Converts: Christian Missions, Gender and Youth in Onitsha, Nigeria, 1880-1929.” *Anthropological Quarterly* 73(3):145-158.

**Film:** “Ça twiste à Poponguine/Rocking Poponguine” by Mousa Sene Absa (California Newsreel, 1993)

**April 12 Challenges to Childhood? Child Labor**

*Reading (G):* Reynolds, Pamela. 1991. *Dance Civet Cat: Tongan Children and Labour in the Zambezi Valley*. Athens: Ohio University Press.

*Reading (UG):* Introduction, Chapters 3 and 4 in *Dance Civet Cat,* pp. xv-xxxi, pp. 97-158 [on reserve]

**April 19 Challenges to Childhood? Street Children**

*Reading (G):* Kilbride, Philip, Collette Suda, and Enoa Njeru. 2000. *Street Children in Kenya: Voices of Children in Search of a Childhood*. Westport: Bergin and Garvey.

*Reading (UG)*: Introduction, Chapters 6-9 in *Street Children in Kenya*, pp. 1-9, pp. 67-125 [on reserve]

**April 26 Challenges to Childhood? Child Soldiers**

*Reading (G, UG):* Honwana, Alcinda. 2006. *Child Soldiers in Africa*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

**May 3 African Children and Immigration to America**

*Readings (G, UG)* [on reserve]:

1) D’Alisera, JoAnn. 2009. “Images of a Wounded Homeland: Sierra Leonean Children and the New Heart of Darkness.” In *Across Generations*. Edited by Nancy Foner. New York: New York University Press. Pp. 114-134.

2) Holtzman, Jon. 2008. “Gender, Generation, and Family Change,” in *Nuer Journeys, Nuer Lives: Sudanese Refugees in Minnesota.* Boston: Pearson. Pp. 71-108.

3) Coe, Cati. 2008. "The Structuring of Feeling in Ghanaian Transnational Families," *City & Society*, 20(2): 222-250

**May 10** Concluding paper due (G & UG)

Assignments

**Critical Response Papers**

Critical response papers are due every class period, at the beginning of class, so that our seminar discussion is fruitful and lively. Please use the critical response papers to think about and raise points that you would like to discuss in class. Undergraduates are expected to write papers that are 3-4 pages in length; graduate students 5-8 pages.

Questions to guide your critical response papers:

* What is the argument of the book? Is the argument ultimately convincing? Why or why not?
* How did the author study this topic? What were the strengths and weakness of his or her methodology?
* Where did you find your own conception of childhood, child development, or children being challenged? Why? How would you refine your conceptions to take the new information into account?
* What are the practical or applied implications of this information? How would you change your interactions with children on the basis of this information? How would you best protect children’s welfare or children’s rights on the basis of this information?

**Critical response paper for Week #2 (February 1)**

Find a children’s book in the library or a bookstore which portrays Africa in some way and write about “the image of Africa” or “image of childhood,” as presented in this children’s book. Use the readings by Montgomery and Bohannan & Curtin to reflect on the accuracy of these images or the assumptions behind them. Please bring the children’s book to class with you and be prepared to discuss your analysis.

# Examples of children’s books about Africa include *A is for Africa*, by Ifeoma Onyefulu; *Honey, Honey, Lion!: A Story From Africa* by Jan Brett; *Lions at Lunchtime*, by Mary Pope Osborne; *On a Road in Africa*, by Kim Doner; *Wangari’s Trees of Peace: A True Story from Africa*, by Jeanette Winter. And there are many more from which you can choose: any one will do!

**Final paper due May 10th**

Reflect on the major insights from the class and the readings on your understanding of children, childhood, and Africa.