**Peoples and Cultures of Africa**  
50:070:356:01

Spring 2018

Tuesdays & Thursdays, 2:00-3:20pm

405-407 Cooper Street (Sociology building), Basement classroom

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Office hours: Tuesdays, 3:30-4:30pm and Thursdays, 10-11am or by appointment

**Course Description**

This course is a broad topical survey course on the peoples and cultures of Africa south of the Sahara. This course begins by considering the effects and legacies of colonialism, but the focus is on contemporary Africa. No course can reasonably cover all the rich variety of Africa’s peoples and cultures, but this course introduces you to the diversity of the continent and the interconnectedness of politics, religion, kinship, economics, ecology, ethnicity, and history. This course retains anthropology’s traditional interest in how ordinary people experience everyday life, but looks also at the links between those experiences and the wider contexts shaped by history, politics, and globalization. We will also explore how representations of Africa affect our understanding of what is happening on the continent. In the media and global imagination, Africa is often characterized as a backward land of failure, dependence, poverty, and violence. We will consider how African realities may differ from the contemporary stereotypes of the continent through anthropological research, documentary and fictional films, and a memoir/comic book.

**Learning Goals**

By the end of this course, students should be able to:

* Summarize an argument and evidence presented in a text and analyze/critique it through writing and class participation;
* Appreciate the diversity of societies and peoples across the African continent;
* Understand the key social, political, and economic issues African people face, including the global context; and
* Analyze the processes by which cultural change and continuity occur.

**Global Communities**This course fulfills the new general education requirement in Global Communities.

Taking a variety of disciplinary approaches to the examination of societies, economies, and political systems, as well as ideas and beliefs and how they are formed, courses in Global Communities should introduce students to the diverse ways in which humans have organized their social relations.

Upon completing a course in this category, students should be able to do at least two of the following:

1. Describe ways in which communities around the globe have been interconnected and interdependent historically and/or in the present in terms of the movement of ideas, culture, people, money, and goods.
2. Identify central practices, institutions, and ideas of regions, nations, or peoples outside the U.S. as well as how the representations of those regions, nations, or peoples have been used and contested.
3. Recognize how issues of difference (racial, religious, gender, etc.) have been treated in non-U.S. cultures and societies and/or in a global context.
4. Analyze a cultural, economic, environmental, geographic, historical, political, linguistic or literary, scientific and/or sociological issue facing one or more countries, or globally.
5. Explore issues that transcend national borders and their implications for policy and practice.
6. Describe the point of view of peoples from outside the U.S. on specific issues.

The course fulfills all these goals.

**Resources**

There are five books available at the campus bookstore and all but *Aya* are on reserve at the circulation desk of Robeson library:

1. Curtis Keim. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the American Mind*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009.
2. Helen A. Regis. *Fulbe Voices: Marriage, Islam and Medicine in Northern Cameroon*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2003.
3. Marguerite Abouet and Clément Oubrerie. *Aya: Life in Yop City*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2012.
4. Daniel Mains. *Hope is Cut: Youth, Unemployment, and the Future in Urban Ethiopia.* Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012.
5. Adam Ashforth. *Madumo: A Man Bewitched*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.

There are also several readings on electronic reserve at Robeson Library.

In general, where possible, more reading will be assigned for Tuesday classes than for Thursday classes, to account for the difference in available preparation time.

The Rutgers course catalog states that students are expected to spend a minimum of two hours of out-of-class coursework for each hour in the classroom. To do well in this course, you will have to meet this minimum standard. Please plan accordingly.

Schedule of Topics and Readings

**PART ONE: MISPERCEPTIONS OF AFRICA AND THE GEOGRAPHY AND HISTORY OF AFRICA**

**Tuesday, January 16**

In class: “U.S. Shocked Andorra not in Africa” from *The Onion* (2008)

To do by **Wednesday, January 17** at the latest:

* **Get a NetID** if you don't already so that you can access library resources online and from home: <http://oit.rutgers.edu/services/account/quick.html>
* **Make sure you can access your Rutgers scarletmail email address** as I will send important course information to this email address.
* **Get a Student Photo ID** (available from the [Impact Booth](http://campuscenter.camden.rutgers.edu/impact) in the Campus Center) if you don't already have one.
* **Get the books** through the University District [Bookstore](http://universitydistrict.bncollege.com/webapp/wcs/stores/servlet/TBWizardView?catalogId=10001&langId=-1&storeId=65132) at 6th and Cooper Streets or through other means. The books are available through the reserve desk at Robeson Library. You will need *Mistaking Africa* immediately.
* **Print out all the readings on** [**reserve**](http://www.libraries.rutgers.edu/course_reserves) through the library so that you have them for the whole semester.
* **Review** Rutgers's [policy on academic integrity.](http://sociology.camden.rutgers.edu/student-resources/)

**Thursday, January 18**

*Reading:* Keim, Curtis. *Mistaking Africa: Curiosities and Inventions of the African Mind*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2009. Chapters 1-2, pp. 3-34.

*In class:* Discussion of Geography, ICTZ, Race and Human Variation

**Tuesday, January 23**

*Reading:* Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, Chapters 3-6, pp. 35-102.

*In class:* William Kamkwamba on TED talks; discussion of history (colonialism)

**Thursday, January 25**

*Reading:* Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, Chapters 7-9, pp. 105-146.

*In class:* Discussion of Independence, Tribes/Ethnicity

*Assignment:* Map quiz

**Tuesday, January 30**

*Reading:* Keim, *Mistaking Africa*, Chapters 10-12, pp. 147-187.

*Assignment:* Bring in an item or image that illustrates one of the myths Keim discusses, and present to the class how it illustrates that myth.

**PART TWO: LIFE ON THE GROUND IN ONE RURAL COMMUNITY**

**Thursday, February 1**

*Reading:* Regis, Helen A. *Fulbe Voices: Marriage, Islam, and Medicine in Northern Cameroon*. Boulder: Westview Press, 2003. Chapters 1-2, pp. 1-40 [note glossary in back of the book].

*Film:* “Awa: A Mother in West Africa” (2006) by Alexis Curtis

**Tuesday, February 6**

*Reading:* Regis, *Fulbe Voices*, Chapters 3-4, pp. 41-88.

*In class:* Discussion of Islam in Africa; first paper assignment given.

**Thursday, February 8**

*Reading:* Regis, *Fulbe Voices,* Chapters 5-6, pp. 89-134.

*In class:* Discussion of witchcraft and health

**Monday, February 12th, 6-9pm: Extra Credit Opportunity**

Film screening of “Timbuktu” and then discussion of a project to link the city of Timbuktu, Mali with a New Jersey town of free African-Americans named Timbuctoo after the city in Mali.

**Tuesday, February 13**

*Reading:* Regis, *Fulbe Voices*, Chapter 7 and Conclusion, pp. 135-154.

**PART THREE: URBAN LIFE**

**Thursday, February 15**

*Reading:* Abouet, Marguerite and Clément Obrerie. *Aya: Life in Yop City*. Montreal: Drawn and Quarterly, 2012. Be sure to read the Preface as well as the Interview with Marguerite Abouet in the back of the book, before proceeding to the book itself, pp. 14-151.

**Tuesday, February 20**

*Reading:* Abouet and Obrerie, *Aya*, pp. 152-345.

**Thursday, February 22**

*Reading:* Mains, Daniel. *Hope is Cut: Youth, Unemployment, and the Future in Urban Ethiopia*. Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2012. Introduction and Chapter 1, pp. 1-42.

**Tuesday, February 27**

*Reading:* Mains, *Hope is Cut*, Chapters 2-4, pp. 43-112.

**Thursday, March 1**

*Reading:* Mains, *Hope is Cut*, Chapter 5, pp. 113-134.

**Tuesday, March 6**

*Reading:* Mains, *Hope is Cut,* Chapter 6 and Conclusion, pp. 135-169.

**Thursday, March 8**

*In class:* “Faat Kine” (2000) by Ousmane Sembène.  
Due: First paper

SPRING BREAK

**PART FOUR: HEALTH AND HEALING**

**Tuesday, March 20**

*Reading*: Adam Ashforth. *Madumo: A Man Bewitched*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000. Chapters 1-6, pp. 1-70.

*Film:* “Sir Edward Evans-Pritchard: Strange Beliefs” by Bruce Dakowski (1985)

**Thursday, March 22**

*Reading:* Ashforth, *Madumo*, Chapters 7-9, pp. 70-120.

*Film:* “Healers of Ghana” (1996) by J. Scott Dodds

**Tuesday, March 27**

*Reading:* Ashforth, *Madumo*, Chapters 10-16, pp. 120-203.

**Thursday, March 29**

*Reading:* Ashforth, *Madumo*, Chapters 17-20, pp. 204-255.

*Assignment:* Bring in evidence of a non-biomedical practice available in the United States.

**PART FIVE: DEVELOPMENT, DEBT, AND GLOBAL TRADE**

**Tuesday, April 3**

*Reading:* Ferguson, James. “Globalizing Africa? Observations from an Inconvenient Continent.” *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order,* pp. 25-49. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. [on reserve]

*In class:* Discussion of development and debt

**Thursday, April 5**

*Reading:* Uvin, Peter. “Development Aid and Structural Violence: The Case of Rwanda.” In *Perspectives on Africa*, edited by Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner, pp. 609-615. Malden: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010. [on reserve]

**Tuesday, April 10**

*Reading:* Ferguson, James. “GoverningExtraction: New Spatializations of Order and Disorder in Neoliberal Africa.” *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order,* p. 194-210. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. [on reserve]

**Thursday, April 12**

*Film to be viewed prior to class:* “Zambia: Good Copper/Bad Copper” by Alice Odiot and Audrey Gallet (2012) [on youtube]

*In class:* Discussion of film

**PART FIVE: AFRICAN MIGRATION TO THE UNITED STATES**

**Tuesday, April 17**

*Reading:* Capps, Randy, Kristen McCabe and Michael Fix. “New Streams: Black African Migration to the United States.” In *Young Children of Black Immigrants in America: Changing Flows, Changing Faces*, pp. 45-73. Edited by Randy Capps and Michael Fix. Washington DC: Migration Policy Institute, 2012. [on reserve]

*In class:* Discussion of African migration; second paper assignment given.

**Thursday, April 19**

*Reading:* Clark, Msia Kibona. “Questions of Identity among African Immigrants in America.” In *The New African Diaspora*, p. 255-270. Edited by Isidore Okpewho and Nkiru Nzegwu. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2009. [on reserve]

**Tuesday, April 24**

*Reading:* Coe, Cati. “Translations in Kinscripts: Child Circulation among Ghanaians Abroad.” In *Affective Circuits: African Migrations to Europe and the Pursuit of Social* Regeneration, pp. 27-53. Edited by Jennifer Cole and Christian Groes. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2016. [on reserve]

**Thursday, April 26**

*Reading:* Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. “The Arrangers of Marriage.” *The Thing Around Your Neck*, pp. 167-187. New York: Knopf Doubleday, 2009. [on reserve]

**Thursday, May 3rd, noon:** Second paper due.

Assignments

**Reading responses: Every class** (40%)

For each class you will write a 500-750-word response to a question or questions on the assigned reading. Late papers will not be accepted, except in cases of documented sickness or crisis.

Your responses should be printed in 12-point font, double-spaced, and are due in every class.  Please note your name and the reading to which you are responding, as your responses may help you write the papers.

You may miss three or fewer reading responses over the course of the semester and still receive an A; six or less and receive a B; nine or less and receive a C; twelve or less and receive a D, and pro-rated thereafter. Incomplete or insufficient critical response papers will receive no or partial credit, at the discretion of the instructor. Papers will receive a check (satisfactory), check plus (very good), check minus (bordering on insufficient), or no credit (insufficient).  The check marks will be used to determine your grade within the grade range (e.g., A= 90-100, B =80-89, etc).

Over the course of the semester, you will write 26 reading responses.

**Attendance and Participation: Every class** (10%)

I expect you to come to class prepared by having done the reading and participate in class discussions on the basis of that preparation. Participation involves not only sharing your opinion and perspective, but also listening carefully to what others have to say, asking questions about things that puzzle or confuse you, synthesizing or summarizing various comments that have been made, and saying where you think the conversation is going. These ways of participating will require your attention and concentration in class. Your thoughtful attention and disciplined concentration will benefit you and the class as a whole.

Those students who miss few classes tend to learn more, which is reflected in their grades. If you are not able to make it to class, please inform me by phone or email as soon as you know you will be unable to come, as a courtesy to me. A definition of an excused absence is that 1) I am informed *prior* to class by phone or email that you will be unable to make it and 2) on the day that you return, you provide me with documentation for your absence.

**Map quiz: Thursday, January 25th** (6%)

The short map quiz given at the beginning of class. You will be responsible for filling in a map with the names of:

* + The countries of Algeria, Angola, Benin, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Côte d’Ivoire, Djibouti, Egypt, Equatorial Guinea, Eritrea, Ethiopia, Gabon, the Gambia, Ghana, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Kenya, Lesotho, Liberia, Libya, Madagascar, Malawi, Mali, Mauritania, Morocco, Mozambique, Namibia, Niger, Nigeria, Rwanda, São Tomé & Principe, Senegal, Sierra Leone, Somalia, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Swaziland, Tanzania, Togo, Tunisia, Uganda, Western Sahara, Zambia, Zimbabwe
  + The rivers: The Kongo (Congo), the Niger, the Nile, the Sambesi (Zambezi)
  + The lakes: Lake Chad, Lake Tanganyika, Lake Victoria
  + The oceans: the Atlantic Ocean, Gulf of Guinea, the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean, and the Red Sea.

For practice on African countries, try <http://lizardpoint.com/geography/africa-quiz.php>. The map at the end of the syllabus indicates where they are and can be used as a study aid.

**Illustration of a Myth about Africa: Tuesday, January 30th** (2%)

Bring an image or news item which illustrates one of the American myths Keim discusses, and present how it illustrates that myth in class.

**First paper: Thursday, March 8th** (20%)

Policy brief on marriage, gender or youth based on *Fulbe Voices*, *Hope is Cut*, and *Aya*.

**Illustration of a non-biomedical belief practiced in the United States: Thursday, March 29th** (2%)

Bring an image or news item which illustrates a non-biomedical practice or belief available in the United States and present how medicine or the malady is thought of differently than it is bio-medicine.

**Second paper: Thursday, May 3rd, noon** (20%)

Policy brief on African migration to the United States based on a visit to a local African establishment or an interview with an African migrant

