The continent has long provided people and raw materials to dominant players in the global economy, but has seen only meager benefits in return. Westerners tend to blame Africans for many of the devastating problems they face today. Despite Africa’s importance in the history of the United States and Europe, the American public in particular lacks knowledge and curiosity about Africa. Many think of Africa as a “country,” a country beyond hope. (At present, there are 54 nations in Africa.) This course will challenge Western ideas of Africa by exploring its history and cultural diversity from pre-colonial times to the present day. Ethnography, archaeology, art, and history reveal how African peoples and lands have not only made the comforts of “the West” possible but have also contributed to our knowledge of human society and culture in general.

Through a variety of media and an emphasis on writing, we will learn about various regions on the continent and approaches to the anthropology of African people over time. We will gain a comparative, historical understanding of how Africans have confronted the interventions of outsiders, organized their familial relationships, made a living, defined gender, constructed morality and the afterlife, interpreted social and economic change, suffered and treated disease, conceptualized race, understood cultural difference, and responded to violence.

**GRADING CATEGORIES**

Weekly reading responses (in Blackboard): 15%
Midterm exam: 20%
Ethnology paper-rough draft: 10%
Ethnology paper: 20%
Oral presentation: 5%
Final exam (content since midterm): 20%
Class participation + current event: 10%

**READING RESPONSES**

Every week, students must write up approximately ½ page, double-spaced responses to each text assigned. (For the first weeks, Professor Sodikoff provides questions to guide the responses.) Please pay attention to your writing in terms of concision, grammar, spelling, and content. Each response will receive 1, 2, or 3 points (3 is the highest). Aim for thoughtful, well-written responses that offer examples of key points.
MIDTERM EXAM
The midterm will cover readings, films, and lectures. It will consist of a mix of short answers and objective (multiple choice, fill-in, true/false) questions.

FINAL EXAM
The final exam is non-cumulative and focuses on materials since the midterm. It will cover readings, films, and lectures and will consist of short answers and objective questions. Since it is relatively short, the final exam will be given in class before the oral presentations and NOT during the official time-slot for final exams.

ETHNOLOGY PAPERS
Students must write a 10-12 page paper on an anthropological topic that compares at least two cultural groups and uses at least five anthropological articles and/or books as references. The papers will be graded with a rubric (based on organization, coherency, prose, grammar and spelling, and content). A rough draft is required before the submission of the final paper. Fixing issues pointed out in the rough draft is not necessarily sufficient to get a higher grade on the final paper; it depends on whether my edits are flagging a pattern that needs to be addressed in the larger paper. Finally, plagiarism of any kind will result in an F for the paper.

You may choose one of these themes or another (in consultation with Prof. Sodikoff). Whatever theme you choose may be made more specific (for ex. “conservation” may be “marine conservation”; “rites of passage” may be “circumcision” or “funerals;” “marriage” might be “polygamy”). You can compare differences between two (or more) groups within one geographical region or very different regions. You can compare the topic at different historical periods. The papers must be more than mere summaries of authors’ works. It is up to you to point out the differences/similarities/changes.

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Kinship</th>
<th>Rites of passage</th>
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<td>Marriage</td>
<td>Funerary rights</td>
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<td>Anti-colonial resistance movements</td>
<td>Religion</td>
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<td>Human-animal relations</td>
<td>Pastoralism</td>
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<td>Child-raising practices</td>
<td>Witchcraft</td>
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<td>Health &amp; disease</td>
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<td>Conservation</td>
<td>Trade/Markets</td>
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<td>Commodity production</td>
<td>Medicine</td>
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<td>Art/Music/Dance/Theater</td>
<td>War</td>
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<td>Mining</td>
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<td>Caste or class system</td>
<td>Age grades</td>
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<td>Governance</td>
<td>Tourism</td>
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<td>Environmental Issues</td>
<td>Migration</td>
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<td>International development project</td>
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ORAL PRESENTATIONS
Student will present a short (10 minute) summary of their ethnology research paper to the class. The use of slides is encouraged.

CLASS PARTICIPATION + CURRENT EVENT
Please come prepared to discuss the readings in class and to ask questions related to lectures and films. Each week, two students will be selected to bring in and summarize for the class a current event article about Africa for the following week. Preferably, the article will address an event that has occurred within the month. We will also do various writing-related exercises in class to hone your skills.

COURSE POLICIES

**NO TECHNOLOGY:** The use of technology (laptops, phones, pads, etc.) is forbidden! Please instead take hand-written notes, which will help you retain information from lectures. It is too distracting to students, as well as impolite to speakers, to have students looking at phones and laptops.

**NO PLAGIARISM:** Copying other people’s work and passing it off as your own is wrong and against university policy. Professor Sodikoff takes plagiarism very seriously. If you do not use quotation marks around direct quotes, if you mish-mash scholarly works without attribution, if you submit partial or entire student papers as your own, if you fail to cite sources for information you use, you will be given a “0” on your assignment. This may well result in an F for the course. Prof. Sodikoff will stress what constitutes plagiarism in class to refresh everyone’s memories. Citing sources is easy and shows you did the research.

**NO CHEATING:** It goes without saying that having someone else submit work in your name is also against policy and will result in an F for the course. Also, using technology to look up answers or copying another’s work during exams is strictly forbidden; doing so will result in an F.

**YES-ATTENDANCE:** Attendance and punctuality are mandatory. Remember, this is a double-session course, so missing one class is equivalent to missing two sessions. Coming noticeably late or leaving noticeably early will also affect your attendance record. Missing more than two classes without documentation will result in 3 points being subtracted from your final grade percentage. Habitually missing class time will also result in points subtracted from final percentage.

**YES-COMMUNICATION WITH PROFESSOR:** The best way to reach Prof. Sodikoff is by email. If you’d like to schedule an appointment, please email. Most importantly, if you are struggling with the class in any way, please get in touch early so you do not risk getting a poor grade or failing. Do not wait until the semester is nearly over to explain absences or a hardship. At that point, it is too late to remedy the situation.

**NO & YES-EXTRA CREDIT:** Professor Sodikoff does NOT give opportunities for extra credit to individual students who want to boost their grades. However, extra credit opportunities may arise during the semester. They usually entail attending Africa-related events at Rutgers.
ASSIGNMENTS (Subject to change!! Please check Blackboard weekly)

WEEK 1 (1/24)-- INTRODUCTION – HOW DO AMERICANS ENVISION AFRICA TODAY?

WEEK 2 (1/31)– THE INVENTION OF AFRICA IN WESTERN IMAGINATIONS

WEEK 3 (2/7)– THE SCRAMBLE FOR AFRICA: A MADAGASCAR CASE

WEEK 4 (2/14)– SLAVERY

WEEK 5 (2/21)– THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICAN RELIGION
   1) Evans-Pritchard, E. “The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events.”

WEEK 6 (2/28)– WRITING THE COLONIAL EXPERIENCE

WEEK 7 (3/7)–MIDTERM + FILM
   Film: King Leopold’s Ghost

WEEK 8 (3/14)– MATERIAL CULTURE

*CHOOSE your theme for the Ethnology Paper. Think about what African societies you would like to compare. Come to class prepared to tell Professor Sodikoff your selections.*
WEEK 9 (3/21) -- SPRING BREAK  -- Begin collecting and reading articles for your Ethnology Papers.

WEEK 10 (3/28) — REFLEXIVE ANTHROPOLOGY
1) Kenyatta, Jomo. Facing Mount Kenya (Excerpts)


WEEK 11 (4/4) — GENDER
1) Askew, Kelly. 1999 “Female circles and male lines: Gender dynamics along the Swahili Coast Askew, Kelly M Africa Today; Summer 1999; 46, 3/4; Social Science Premium Collection pg. 67-102.


FILM: Zethu Matebeni, Black South African Lesbians

WEEK 12 (4/11) — DEVELOPMENT & UNDERDEVELOPMENT


WEEK 13 (4/18) — RACE IN AFRICA / FINAL EXAM


WEEK 14 (4/25) — STUDENT PRESENTATIONS
Rough draft due

WEEK 15 (5/2) — STUDENT PRESENTATIONS & WRAP-UP

FINAL ETHNOLOGY PAPERS DUE: FRIDAY, MAY 10 via TurnItIn.