

PEOPLES AND CULTURES OF AFRICA (070:316:Q1)

SPRING 2019

Thursdays 2:30-5:20 PM, BRD 311 – Newark

FINAL PAPERS DUE: Friday, May 10

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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.

Kinship	Rites of passage
Marriage	Funerary rights
Anti-colonial resistance movements	Religion
Human-animal relations	Pastoralism
Child-raising practices	Witchcraft
Gender	Refugees
Genocide	Food
Agriculture	Health & disease
Conservation	Trade/Markets
Commodity production	Medicine
Art/Music/Dance/Theater	War
Slavery	Mining
Caste or class system	Age grades
Governance	Tourism
Environmental Issues	Migration
International development project	

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

- 1) Kingsley, Mary. *Travels in West Africa*. – excerpt, Pp. ix-25.
- 2) Newkirk, Pamela. "Spectacle: The Astonishing Life of Ota Benga." Excerpt: Preface-p. 23.

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

- 1) Hunt, W. H. 1900. "The Ethnology of Madagascar." Pp. 297-303 only (Geography section not required). *Journal of the American Geographical Society of New York*, Vol. 32, No. 4: 297-307.
- 2) Woods, Randall. 1976. "Blackamerica's Challenge to European Colonialism: The Waller Affair, 1891-1895." *Journal of Black Studies* 7(10): 57-77.

WEEK 4 (2/14)– SLAVERY

- 1) Adu-Boahen, Kwabena. 2012. "The Impact of European Presence on Slavery in the Sixteenth to Eighteenth-Century Gold Coast." *Transactions of the Historical Society of Ghana, New Series*, No. 14, pp. 165-199.
- 2) Fall, Wendy Wilson; Sow, Charles. "Kimoh, dar you are!" *Journal of Pan African Studies*, Nov, 2007, Vol.1(10), p.19-22.

WEEK 5 (2/21)– THE ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICAN RELIGION

- 1) Evans-Pritchard, E. "The Notion of Witchcraft Explains Unfortunate Events."
- 2) Kopytoff, Igor. 1971. "Ancestors as Elders in Africa." *Africa: Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 41, No. 2, pp. 129-142.

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

- 1) Byerly, Ingrid Bianca. 1990. "Mirror, Mediator, and Prophet: The Music Indaba of Late-Apartheid South Africa." *Ethnomusicology*, Vol. 42, No. 1, pp. 1-44.
- 2) Wa Thiong'o, Ngugi. "Detained: A Writer's Prison Diary." Pp. 613-622.

WEEK 7 (3/7)–MIDTERM + FILM

Film: King Leopold's Ghost

WEEK 8 (3/14)– MATERIAL CULTURE

- 1) Udvardy, Monica L; Giles, Linda L; Mitsanze, John B. 2002. "The Transatlantic Trade in African Ancestors: Mijikenda Memorial Statues (Vigango) and the Ethics of Collecting and Curating Non-Western Cultural Property." *American Anthropologist* 105 (3): 566-580.

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)

2) Nyamnjoh, Francis B. 2012. "Blinded by Sight: Divining the Future of Anthropology in Africa." *Africa Spectrum* 47(2-3): 63-92.

WEEK 11 (4/4)— GENDER

1) Askew, Kelly. 1999 "Female circles and male lines: Gender dynamics along the Swahili Coast" *Africa Today*; Summer 1999; 46, 3/4; Social Science Premium Collection pg. 67-102.

2) Wiley, Katherine Ann. 2014. "Joking market women: Critiquing and negotiating gender and social hierarchy in Kankossa, Mauritania." *The Journal of the International African Institute* 84(1): 101-118.

FILM: Zethu Matebeni, *Black South African Lesbians*

WEEK 12 (4/11)— DEVELOPMENT & UNDERDEVELOPMENT

1) Magubane, B. 1973. "The 'Xhosa' in Town, Revisited Urban Social Anthropology: A Failure of Method and Theory." *American Anthropologist* 75(5): 1701-1715.

2) Dua, Jatin & Menkhaus, Ken. 2012. "The Context of Contemporary Piracy: The Case of Somalia."

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

1) Benton, Adia. 2016. "Risky Business: Race, Nonequivalence and the Humanitarian Politics of Life." *Visual Anthropology* 29:2, 187-203,

2) Pierra, Jemima. 2013. "Race in Africa Today: A Commentary." *Cultural Anthropology* 28(3): 547-551.

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.



- Algeria
- Angola
- Benin
- Botswana
- Burkina Faso
- Burundi
- Cameroon
- Central African Republic
- Chad
- Democratic Republic of the Congo
- Republic of the Congo
- Cote d'Ivoire
- Djibouti
- Egypt
- Equatorial Guinea
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Gabon
- Gambia
- Ghana
- Guinea
- Guinea-Bissau
- Kenya
- Lesotho
- Liberia
- Libya
- Madagascar

- Malawi
- Mali
- Mauritania
- Morocco
- Mozambique
- Namibia
- Niger
- Nigeria
- Rwanda
- Senegal

- Sierra Leone
- Somalia
- South Africa
- Sudan
- Swaziland
- Tanzania
- Togo
- Tunisia
- Uganda
- Zambia
- Zimbabwe