

## **ANG 4354 'ANTHROPOLOGY OF MODERN AFRICA'**

### **Section: 1634**

Mondays: Period 6. 12:50 to 1:40. Bat. Tur. Room: 2306

Wednesdays: Periods 5 and 6. 11:45 to 1:40. Bat. Tur. Room: 2306

John Hames

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### **Course description**

Modern Africa is facing substantial challenges during the beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Africans negotiate these challenges by drawing from familiar cultural practices, as well as by creatively adapting to new opportunities and problems. In this class, students will be introduced to modern Africa from an anthropological perspective that focuses on notions of tradition, modernity and modernization and how they affect social, cultural, and economic practices. The ethnographies we will be using in this class address the following questions, though in different ways:

- How are Africans coping with changing circumstances while continuing to express differently their thoughts, beliefs, and values?
- How are they managing to combine “tradition” and change through worship, work, celebration of social events, and pop culture?
- What is meant by the concept of “tradition”, and how might its use do violence to Africans’ histories and intellectual contributions to the world by posing the West as the main reference point for all social, cultural and political change that occurs on the Continent?
- How are Africans “the same, but different”, today?

This course offers students some fundamental principles that are necessary for a proper understanding of the anthropological perspective on African societies and cultures as they are imagined, portrayed and practically experienced. The hope is to have students engage with the idea of “Africa” as it is popularly portrayed in the Western media, as well as the complicated realities that those portrayals gloss over. Our main objective is to help students develop a demystified perspective on Africa, recognizing the real influences that the colonial experience, globalization and Western standards of modernity have had on life in African societies, while understanding Africa on its own terms.

### **Required Books**

1. Charles Piot (1999). *Remotely Global: Village Modernities in West Africa*. The University of Chicago Press.
2. James Ferguson (1999). *Expectations of Modernity. Myths and Meaning of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. University of California Press, Berkeley, Los Angeles, London,
3. Edward Bruner (2005). *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*. The University of Chicago Press.

These books can be purchased at the University Bookstore.

### **Complementary readings:**

1. Peter Geschiere. *The modernity of Witchcraft. Politics and the Occult in Postcolonial Africa*. University of Virginia Press.
2. Heike Behrend: "Images of an African Modernity. The Likoni Ferry Photographers of Mombasa, Kenya". In Jan-Georg Deutsch, Peter Probst & Heike Schmidt (ed.) (2002). *African Modernities*. James Currey, Oxford, pp. 85-106.

These books will be available in the course reserve associated with this class at the Library West. Please make copies of relevant chapters ahead of time.

### **Requirements**

1. Attendance and participation (40 points)

After the first day of class I will pass around an attendance sheet for each student to sign. You are allowed 3 absences without penalty. After 3 absences, 10 points will be subtracted from your attendance and participation grade for each additional absence. Exceptions to this rule will only be granted under **extreme circumstances** (as judged by the instructor).

2. Quizzes ( 60 points)

Three Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. They'll probably be short answer format. No make up quizzes will be given.

3. Midterm Test (100 points)

The midterm exam will be given out in-class on Tuesday, October 19. The exam will cover all material from the readings, films and in-class discussions from week one to week 7.

4. Book Review (60 points)

Each student should pick up one chapter from the three required books and write a 3-page double-spaced review. You are required to notify me in advance of which chapter you will review. The chapter review should be organized as follows: On page 1 you should summarize the chapter. On page 2 you should explain how the chapter helps you better understand one of the main topics discussed in this course. On page 3 you should offer criticisms and/or compliments for the author's arguments.

#### 5. Final Test (150 points)

Just like the midterm exam but covering all material from week 8 to week 15. The final will be given out in-class on Tuesday 30 (November).

**Grades:** Final grades will be based on the following scale: A (90-100), A- (87-89), B+ (84-86), B (80-83), B- (77-79), C+ (74-76), C (70-76), C- (67-69), D+ (67-69), D (60-63), D- (57-59), E (<57).

### **Academic Honesty:**

Unless it is specifically connected to assigned collaborative work, all work should be individual. Evidence of collusion (working with someone not connected to the class or assignment), plagiarism (use of someone else's published or unpublished words or design without acknowledgment) will lead to the Department's and the University's procedures for dealing with academic dishonesty. All students are expected to honor their commitment to the university's Honor Code (available online at: [www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html](http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/students.html)).

### **Accommodation for Students with Disabilities**

Students requesting classroom accommodation must first register with the Dean of Students Office. The Dean of Students Office will provide documentation to the student who must then provide this documentation to the Instructor when requesting accommodation. *Please make any requests by the second week of class.*

### **UF Counseling Services**

Resources are available on-campus for students that feel like they are struggling in their personal or academic life. These resources include:

- University Counseling Center, 301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575, personal and career counseling
- Student Mental Health, Student Health Care Center, 392-1171, personal counseling
- Sexual Assault Recovery Services (SARS), Student Health Care Center, 392-1161, sexual counseling
- Career Resource Center, Reitz Union, 392-1601, career development assistance and counseling.

## **Course outline (Readings are subject to change)**

### **Week 1: Introduction**

Wednesday, January 5:

- Orientation, course overview.

### **Week 2: Anthropology and Africa**

Monday, January 10:

- Donald L. Donham (2001). "Thinking Temporally or Modernizing Anthropology." *American Anthropologist* 103(1):134-149.

Wednesday, January 12:

- Saly Falk Moore (1994). Anthropology and Africa: Changing Perspective on a Changing Scene

### **Week 3: Representing Africa: The Illusion of a Shared Identity Based on Race**

Monday, January 17:

- **NO CLASS: Martin Luther King Day**

Wednesday, January 19:

- Jean F. Bayart (2004). *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. The University of Chicago Press. Chapters 1, 2 and 3.

### **Week 4: 'Small and timeless' societies versus those of the Remotely Global.**

Monday, January 24:

- Jean F. Bayart (2004). *The Illusion of Cultural Identity*. The University of Chicago Press. Conclusion, pp. 233-252.

Wednesday, January 26:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 1 and 2.
- Film: *Toubab bi*

### **Week 5: Kabre Social Life: Living Traditions.**

Monday, January 31:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 3

Wednesday, February 2:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 4, pp. 76-104.
- Film: *Seven days and Six Nights*

### **Week 6:**

Monday, February 7: **Quiz #1**

Wednesday, February 9:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 5, pp. 105-130.

### **Week 7: Alternative Modernities**

Monday, February 14:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 6 and 7, pp. 131-171.

Wednesday, February 16:

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Ch. 7-8.

### **Week 8: Modernization and disillusionment**

Monday, February 21: **Quiz #2**

Wednesday, February 23:

- Edward Bruner (2005). *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*. The University of Chicago Press.

### **Week 9: Modernization and disillusionment (Cont.)**

Monday, February 28:

- Edward Bruner (2005). *Culture on Tour. Ethnographies of Travel*. The University of Chicago Press.

Wednesday, March 2:

- **Midterm Test**

### **Week 10: Spring Break No Class**

### **Week 11: Africa in the New World Order**

Monday, March 14:

- Film on Structural Adjustment Plans in Zambia.
- James Ferguson (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Chapter 1 and 2.

Wednesday, March 16:

- James Ferguson (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Chapter 2, 4 and 5.
- Magubane R “The “Xhosa” In Town, Revisited Urban Social Anthropology: A Failure of Method and Theory.” In *American Anthropologist*. 1972, pp 1701-1715.
- Shannon M. Jackson (2003). *Being and Belonging: Space and Identity in Cape Town*. In *Anthropology and Humanism* 28(1):61-84.

### **Week 12: Rural/Urban logics**

Monday, March 21:

- Eric Gables (2006). “The Funeral and Modernity in Manjaco.” In *Cultural Anthropology*, Vol. 21, Issue 3, pp. 385–415.

Wednesday, March 23:

- Film: *Keita*

### **Week 13: Occult Economies**

Monday, March 28:

- Jean and John Comaroff (1998). “Occult economies and the violence of abstraction: notes from the South African postcolony” *American Ethnologist* 2b(2):279-303.

Wednesday, March 30:

- **Quiz #3**
- Film: *Xala*

### **Week 14: Beliefs and Modernity**

Monday, April 4:

- Todd Sanders (2003). “Reconsidering Witchcraft: Postcolonial Africa and Analytic (Un)Certainties.” *American Anthropologist* 105(2):338-352.

Wednesday, April 6:

- Peter Geschiere: The modernity of Witchcraft. Chapter 2: A Full Belly: The Maka and the Djambe.

### **Week 15:**

Monday, April 11:

- Peter Geschiere: The modernity of Witchcraft. Chapter 3 and chapter 4

Wednesday, April 13:

- Maia Green Simeon Mesaki “The birth of the “salon:” Poverty, “modernization,” and dealing with witchcraft in southern Tanzania. *American Ethnologist*, Vol. 32, No. 3, pp. 371– 388

### **Week 16:**

Monday, April 18:

- Heike Behrend: “Images of an African Modernity. The Likoni Ferry Photographers of Mombasa, Kenya”. In African Modernities.

**FINAL EXAM:      Thursday, April 28, 2011: 12:50-3:50 PM**