I. General Framework

This course is exploratory, perhaps best captured by the analogy that serious scholars are often viewed as bookworms. While bookworms eat books, consuming the physical properties of knowledge communication, we are bookworms of a different sort, eating knowledge without knowing in advance just exactly how it will taste, where it will be located, or how deeply it will satisfy. As we eat our way through the readings in this course, certain pages and volumes will more deeply satisfy than others. Some may taste rather dry, and yet others be peppered with the excitement that follows a wonderful meal.

Postcolonial Studies have interpenetrated anthropological thinking for some time. Anyone who has worked in a postcolonial setting has inevitably delved into the literature to some degree. The older, now classical literature such as Fanon’s *Wretched of the Earth*, Achebe’s *Things Fall Apart*, and Cesaire’s *Discourse on Colonialism* are but a few of the signposts that have lighted the way for anthropologists. It is only natural that possibly the most highly nuanced postcolonial thinking in anthropology has emerged in Africa, where there is a complex the thick legacy of colonialism and now, an extended postcolonial experience. Because this is so, many of our readings are drawn from Africa because it offers the richest tableau of postcolonial thinking.

The greater body of postcolonial theory arises out of literature studies, not out of anthropology. This school of thought deeply informs scholarship in many humanities and other social science departments, especially those disciplines devoted to literature (English, Comparative Literature, French/Italian, and History). Ironically much of this scholarship comes from those who have had little or no contact with the former colonial world and the postcolonial experience. Yet as the intellectual leaders, these scholars have set many of the agendas and themes of postcolonial studies while operating in the restricted domain of literature. Thus, anthropologists by working widely in postcolonial settings can do much to better ground what is unfolding in postcolonial settings these days, particular in regard to relationships between the state and intellectuals, disenchantment with governance, economic development, greed and corruption, and the loss of interest in the pre-colonial past.

Because anthropology has been reclaiming an interest in historical studies, witness the contributions of scholars such as Jean and John Comoroff, one of the key trajectories is how history of colonized peoples have been written. This focus has used the concept of essentialized histories, histories that reduce the complexity of dominated peoples to homogenized
representations. These hegemonic metahistories have captured the interest of archaeologists, who have potent counter-arguments to make using the materiality of the past. The tension that arises between materiality and historical representation is a key locus of interest. When we ask: how do we counter false representations in the colonial library and in a postcolonial world that is the birth child of colonialism?, then we must turn to anthropology and archaeology. Both provide insights into how to penetrate behind masks that obscure power relationships today, keeping alive colonial ways of thinking and acting.

This course is designed to expose you to key readings that will form a foundation for further thinking and exploration. In that respect, it is only a beginning. But as a beginning, it is critical that each participant understand what informs the point of view of each author, how each piece of scholarship influenced thinking in the academic world, how postcolonial thought has come to inform the more practical work, say, of economic development, how postcolonial thinking has opened alternative ways to think about the past and present, and how postcolonial perspectives free us from orthodoxy—no matter what our disciplinary orientation.

II. Expectations

This is a seminar and as such it is based on discussion. This means that you must attend the weekly seminar and be prepared by doing the assigned readings. Do not try to bluff your way through discussions if you have not done the readings. You are expected to participate actively in the seminar discussion.

Because of the diversity of background in the course, not everyone will find every text “right up their alley”. This does not justify however any critique that dismisses work. Such a perspective simply betrays an absence of sufficient in-depth reading and thought.

By their very nature, seminars are exploratory and designed to encourage intellectual inquiry. This means that you should feel free to think and speak freely, without fear of misspeaking. Such provisional discourse is the rule and you should expect others in the course to be patient and supportive while you explore ways to relate the readings to your personal view of scholarship and research. Not everyone is equally verbal and sufficient space must be left to make those who are less so feel comfortable in expressing their thoughts. On the flip side, some will speak at length and may be asked by the instructor to complete their thoughts, not as a critique but as a way of opening room for others to speak.

III. Mechanics

Students will be asked to select several topics during the first meeting on January 8 from the weekly reading lists for class presentations. Each student will make one presentation that will examine the positive contributions and issues raised in the readings for that particular week. Papers from which these presentation will be made will be 6-10 pages in length. The oral presentation will focus on key issues that arise in the readings, particular how such issues intersect with the presenter’s thinking and research. The presentations will run between 10 and 15 minutes. Questions submitted (next paragraph) by each student will be used by the presented
to organize the discussion. The short papers will be distributed via email attachment to the instructor at schmidtp@ufl.edu by 6 PM of the Tuesday before the Wednesday evening seminar. Late submissions inconvenience both instructor and fellow students. Please be considerate.

Each student (except those presenting) will also write two probing, critical questions about the readings for each week and submit these questions via email no later than Tuesday evening 6 PM to the instructor at schmidtp@ufl.edu. These questions will then be compiled and distributed late Tuesday evening to the class as focus questions to guide discussions during the seminar during Wednesday evening. It is expected that you will take ownership of these questions in class and will use them to guide discussion and to explore topics of significance. If there is only one reading, then the two questions will be derived from that single book. If there are multiple readings, then the instructor will outline a division of labor among class members. Please note that 20% of the course grade derives from the quality of questions submitted and their timely submission. Late question submissions will be graded down by 50%.

Other Assignments: Seminar will not meet on March 25.

Final Paper: A final paper of 15—25 pages (longer by instructor’s permission) will be due at the end of the semester. Use the American Anthropological Association formatting (see http://aaanet.org/pubs/style_guide.htm) and include full bibliographic references. Each seminar member will be expected to read and comment on the distributed papers. Paper topics must be selected by Feb.12 at the latest. Hopefully, seminar members will select for discussion a paper topic that complements their research interests. You may schedule a meeting with the instructor to discuss paper topics and presentation topic if you wish. We will discuss your progress on the research topic at the end of the Feb. 28 meeting and again at the end of the April 2 meeting.

IV. Grading Summary

Final Paper: 35%
Class presentations on reading topics: 25%
Weekly Questions: 20%
Class Discussion: 20%

V. 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.

VI. Texts: Important Note: you may want to purchase these, new or used, for your permanent library. However, some readings taken from readers and chapters taken from books will be made available to seminar participants via electronic means. * = recommended purchase ** = Recommended for purchase ASAP.

Readers:


Others:

** Fanon, F. Wretched of the Earth. 2004. New York, Grove Press.


VII. Schedule of Meetings and Readings.

January 8: Organizational Meeting; Selection of Topics, Expectations.

January 15: Inquiries into the intellectual roots of postcolonial studies; Conceptualizations of Postcolonial Studies; The intellectual, alienation, and the state.

- Porter, D. Orientalism and Its Problems. Chapter 7 in Williams and Chrisman reader. Website
- Ahmad, A. Orientalism and After. Chapter 8 in Williams and Chrisman reader. Website

January 22: Sampling the Classics.


January 29: Sampling the Classics: The following are both short books.


Feb. 5: An Overview of Postcolonial Thought


Feb. 12: Subaltern Studies


• Spivak, G. C. Can the Subaltern Speak? In Williams and Chrisman reader, Chapter 4.


• Fee, M. Who Can Write as Other? In Ashcroft reader, chapter 36. Website


Feb. 19: The Subaltern and Cultural Studies


Feb. 26: Diverse Postcolonial Perspectives on Africa

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March 5: Spring Vacation

March 12: Decolonizing the Practice of Anthropology (and archaeology)


March 19: Colonial and Postcolonial Silencing; Indigenous Voices


March 26: Research Week
April 2: Representation and Essentialized Histories


- Schmidt, P. R. 2006. Historical Representations of the Cwezi “Dynasty”: How Oral Traditions and Historical Archaeology Came to Support a Historical “House of Cards”. In Historical Archaeology in Africa: Representation, Social Memory, and Oral Traditions, pp. 225-245. AltaMira Press. Website

April 9: Revising Archaeological Practice to Fit Postcolonial Sensibilities


April 23: Presentation of Papers


_____ 2007, eds. *Collaboration in Archaeological Practice: Engaging Descendant Communities*. Walnut Creek: AltaMira Press.


Columbia University Press.


_____. 2004. From “Traditional” Archaeology to Public Archaeology to Community Action:


The Preservation of Great Zimbabwe—Your Monument Our Shrine. Rome: ICCROM.


_____. 2008a. Decolonizing Methodologies as Strategies of Practice: Operationalizing the Postcolonial Critique in the Archaeology of Rajasthan. In Archaeology and the


_____ . 2006. Historical Archaeology in Africa: Representation, Social Memory, and Oral Traditions. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press.


Cambridge: Harvard Univ Press.


Cambridge University Press.


Historical Archaeology 38(1):50-65.


London: Unwin Hyman.


London: Routledge.


