

ANG 5354 - sec 3943

Anthropology of Modern Africa: Genealogies of Contemporary Africanist Ethnography

Spring 2011

Tues per. 3-5, 9:35a-12:35p

Norman Hall rm. 342



Image courtesy of Bodys Isek Kingelez, AFRICA REMIX

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Drawing on an array of recently published ethnographies as well as a host of classic mid-century studies and a number of works in progress, the class charts the major theoretical turns and topical preoccupations of contemporary ethnographic research in Africa. The seminar specifically utilizes the lens of ethnography to probe the promises and perils, mystiques and mistakes of what are variously termed modernity, modernization and modernism along with their latter day alters and iterations: post-modernism and late-modernity.

With an eye on method and theory as well as topical content, the course material covers a variety of themes at the fore of contemporary ethnographic inquiry regarding African modernity. Course readings address the defining modernist touch-stones of economic development and capitalist expansion, urbanization, globalization, state sovereignty, national citizenship, world-religious conversion, scientism and rationalism, and reflexive subjectivity and selfhood.

Moving beyond the consideration of whether or not Africa measures up to supposed modernist benchmarks, we take a critical perspective and use African evidence to redress

and rework received theories, pathways and categories of modernization and its successes, failures, alternatives and aftermaths. Demonstrating the relevance of the African case to social theory and comparative analysis more generally, course materials are used to consider how the inclusion of Africa in the modernist narrative rewrites the theoretical and empirical script of modernity by enlarging the universe of evidence, complicating received understandings of prime movers, and revealing otherwise hidden outcomes and relationships on a local as well as grand scale.

In the course of reading and evaluating the varied textual representations of modern Africa, we will additionally look closely at the conventions of ethnographic training, investigation, writing and analysis informing each work: that is, how authors move from theory and data to explanatory claim and narrative illustration. This will include consideration of the histories of our chosen authors and texts to consider the intellectual and interpersonal milieu from which they emerged. Course assignments include review essays, intellectual genealogies, and a final research proposal.

Course Requirements:

Required Texts:

SF Moore, Anthropology and Africa, Virginia, 1994.

J. Ferguson, Expectations of Modernity, California, 1999.

Jean Comaroff, Body of Power, Spirit of Resistance, Chicago, 1985

VK Nyugen, Republic of Therapy, Duke, 2010

C. Bledsoe, Contingent Lives, Chicago, 2002

D. Donham, Marxist Modern, California, 1999.

P. Geschiere, Perils of Belonging, Chicago, 2009.

F deBoeck and MF Plissart, Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City, Ludion, 2004. (out of print, will provide copies)

Optional: Bruce Knauff, Critically Modern: Alternatives, Alterities, Anthropologies. Indiana, 2002.

Required texts may be purchased on-line. Texts are also on reserve through Library West. Other required readings will be available on the course email anthro5354@gmail.com through the google.docs option.

Required Assignments:

Bibliographic Brief: Regional Ethnographic Conventions: 10%

Intellectual Genealogy: 20%

Final Project: Research Proposal 30%

3 Review Essays: 10% each

Participation & Attendance: 10%

At the beginning of the course (second class meeting) each student will present a brief on **early 20th century Ethnographic Conventions** from an African region of choice based on their search of the UF Library Stacks. Report on a sample of works

from spanning the first half of the 20th century, mentioning the titles, preoccupations, background of authors and how your findings relate to SF Moore's claims in Anthropology and Africa. 2-3 pages. List and annotate 5 works, one from each decade. Bring material to class to circulate post write-up on email.

Each student will be responsible for researching, preparing and presenting an **Intellectual Genealogy** of a given author discussing their intellectual milieu and academic training and professional output and impact. A brief biography should be compiled and circulated in class along with a brief annotated bibliography of the author's major works including relevant reviews and commentaries. 5-7pp.

Review Essays should evaluate the major reading(s) for a given course meeting, providing a brief summary of content, central research questions, theoretical orientation, and conclusions. The character and effectiveness of the analytic and narrative conventions employed in the given text(s) should be discussed. Comment on what you consider the most significant comparative claims and findings as well as the possible relevance of the work to your own research pursuits and share any questions or criticisms of the works at hand. Alternative formats, such as mini-research proposals, may be turned in upon consultation with Dr. Chalfin. 3 pp. Due in-class on date of reading.

Drawing on but not exclusive to the concerns raised in the course, the **Final Project** consists of a research proposal on a problem of your choice discussing research problem and hypothesis, background, methods, theoretical orientation, comparative significance of research question and any preliminary findings. 10-15pp.

Final Letter Grades: Grades will be assigned according to the following percentile breakdown.

100-93=A, 92-89=A-, 88-85=B+, 84-81=B, 80-77=B-, 76-73 =C+, 72-69= C, 68-65= C-, 64-61= D+, 60-57= D, 56-55= D-, < 55 = E (failing grade)

For scholastic assistance, contact the the [Reading & Writing Center](#), Broward Hall, 392-0791. Students struggling with personal issues are encouraged to contact the UF [Counseling Center](#) located in P301 Peabody Hall at (352) 392-1575 or [Student Mental Health Services](#) in Room 245, Infirmary Bldg. at (352) 392-1171 for individual and group sessions or [Sexual Assault Recovery Services](#) (SARS) in the Student Health Care Center at (352) 392-1161.

Academic Honesty: All students are required to abide by the Academic Honesty Guidelines and Honor Code, which have been accepted by the University. Violations of the Honor Code will be handled according to the guidelines set by Student Judicial Affairs.

Course Schedule:

Class 1 January 11: Introduction

Library Stack Search

Class 2 January 18: Anthropologies of African Modernity

SF Moore, Anthropology and Africa, 1994 (or S.F. Moore, Changing Perspectives on a Changing Africa, in Africa and the Disciplines, Chicago, 1993, pp. 3-57)

B Knaft, "Introduction," in Critically Modern, Indiana, 2002, pp. 1-21 (pp. 1-57 posted)

Discussion and Comparison of Regional Ethnographic Traditions due

Class 3 January 25: The Rhodes Livingston Institute & the Invention of the Modern Ethnographic Tradition in Africa

L. Schumaker, Africanizing anthropology: fieldwork, networks, and the making of cultural knowledge in central Africa. Duke. 2001. Selections.

M. Gluckman, Analysis of a Social Situation in Modern Zululand, Rhodes-Livingston Institute, 1958.

D. Spitulnik, "Accessing Local Modernities: Zambia," in Knaft, Critically Modern, pp. 194-218.

Student choice of one representative works from:

Max Gluckman, Joseph Epstein, Hilda Kuper, Elizabeth Colson, Issac Schapera

Class 4 February 1: Rethinking Modernization and Development through the Work of James Ferguson

J. Ferguson, Expectations of Modernity, California, 1999, selections

J. Ferguson, The Anti-politics Machine, Minnesota, 1991, selections

SF Moore, "Explaining the present: theoretical dilemmas in processual ethnography," American Anthropologist, 1987, 14/4, pp. 727-37.

J. Friedman, "Modernity and other traditions," in Knaft, Critically Modern, pp. 287-313.

Class 5 February 8: Political Culture and Transformation

Donham, Marxist Modern, California, 1999. Selections

C. Piot, Ch. 1 "States of emergency," in Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa After the Cold War, Chicago 2010.

BARAZA Fri, Feb 11 : Mike McGovern, Yale University, Understanding Conflict in Cote d'Ivoire. 3:30pm, Grinter 404.

Class 6: February 15 Cosmopolitanism, Nativism and Violence

P. Geschiere, Perils of Belonging, Chicago, 2009. selections.

M. McGovern, Making War in Cote d'Ivoire, Chicago, 2011 selections

Class 7: February 22 Political Economy and Cultural Production/Modernity, Anti-modernity, Post-modernity - The Contributions of the Comaroffs

J. Comaroff, Body of power, Spirit of Resistance, Chicago, 1985 selections
J. and J. Comaroff, Of Revelation and Revolution vol 1, Chicago, 1991. selections
J. and J. Comaroff, "Millennial capitalism: First thoughts on a second coming." Public Culture, 12/2, 2000.
J. and J. Comaroff, "Alien-nation," in CODESRIA Bulletin 3&4, 1999.
J. and J. Comaroff, Chs. 2 & 5, Ethnicity, Inc., Chicago, 2010.

CENTER FOR AFRICAN STUDIES CARTER CONFERENCE

Feb. 25-26. Reitz Union rm. 282 see CAS website for details

Class 8: March 1 Economies Formal and Informal

J. Ferguson, "Governing Extraction," in Global Shadows, California, 2006.
J. Roitman, Power is not sovereign : the pluralisation of economic regularity authority in the Chad Basin, in Privatizing the State, B. Hibou ed., Columbia, 2004, 120-146.
A. Mbembe, "Politics as Expenditure," in J&J Comaroff eds, Law and Disorder in the post-colony. Chicago, 2006.
C. Nordstrom, "Culture of the Shadows," in Shadows of War: Violence, Power, and International Profiteering in the Twenty-First Century. California, 2004
B. Maurer, "Incalculable Payments: Money, Scale, and the South African Offshore Grey Money Amnesty," African Studies Review 50/2, 2007, pp. 125-138.
J. Guyer, "Formalities," in Marginal Gains, Chicago, 2004.

BARAZA, Friday, Mar. 4, Rahmane Idrissa, Princeton, "State, Market and Society: Mali and Nigeria," 3:30pm, Grinter 404

March 8 Spring Break

Class 9: March 15 Reformatting the Female Body

C. Bledsoe, Contingent Lives, Chicago, 2004. selections.
B. Latour, We have never been modern, Harvard, 1993. selections.

Class 10: March 22 Science Studies Comes to Africa

Vin kim Nyugen, The Republic of Therapy, Duke, 2010. selections.
C. Wendland, "Research, Therapy, and Bioethical Hegemony: The Controversy over Prenatal HIV Research in Africa." African Studies Review 2008, 51/3, pp.1-23
K. Peterson, 2005, AIDS policies for markets and warriors, unpublished paper

BARAZA, Friday, March 25, Ruth Marshall, U Toronto, "African Pentecostalism and Politics to come." 3:30pm, Grinter 404.

GUEST LECTURE, Monday, March 28 J & J Comaroff, UF Center for Humanities and the Public Sphere

Class 11 March 29 Urban Emergences and Emergencies

F deBoeck and MF Plissart, Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City, Ludion, 2004. selections. Mbembe and S. Nutall, eds. Intro, Ch. 1, and selections, Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis. Duke. 2008.

A. Maliq Simone, Introduction, For the City yet to come. Duke, 2004.

BARAZA, Friday, April 1. Claire Wendland, U Wisconsin, “Bodies and Stories: Expert Explanations of Unsafe Motherhood in Malawi,” 3:30pm, Grinter 404.

Class 12 April 5 Ethnographies of Infrastructure

A. Maliq Simone, Ch. 6, For the City yet to come. Duke, 2004.

J. Elyachar, *Phatic labor*, infrastructure, and the question of empowerment in Cairo. *American Ethnologist*, 37/3, pp. 452–464

B. Larkin, Ch. 1 Colonial & Ch. 7 infrastructure of Piracy, in Signal and Noise, Duke, 2008.

A. Tomas, “Infrastructure of the Invisible Economy in Luanda, Angola,” unpub. paper.

M. Degani, “Parting Time and the Infrastructures of Daily Life in Dar es Salaam,” unpub. paper.

B. Chafin, No more free shitting: Public Toilets and Public Life in Ghana’s city of Tema,” unpub. paper.

BARAZA, April 8, Zekaria Salem, “Knowledge, Social Inequality and Muslim Politics in Mauritania,” 3:30 pm, Grinter 404.

Class 13 April 12 Cultural Productions: Anthropologies (and archaeologies?) of the future

J. Cole, Chs. 1,2,5,8, Sex and Salvation, Chicago, 2010.

C. Piot: Arrested Development Youth Nostalgia for the Future: West Africa After the Cold War, Chicago 2010.

A. Masquelier, “Negotiating Futures. Islam, Youth and Development” in B. Soares ed., and Z. Salem, “Islam in Mauritania,” in Islam and Modern Politics on Contemporary Africa. Palgrave, 2008.

Class 14 April 19 Design Studio: Proposal Sharing

Final Proposal Due April 25. noon.