

## Syllabus

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Office hours: Thursday 2:00pm to 4:00 pm

### **ANT4354 (213F)/AFS 4935 (21CG) “Anthropology of Modern Africa”**

Tuesday, Period 5-6 (11:45AM to 1:40PM), TUR 2333

Thursday, Period 6 (11:45AM to 12:35PM), TUR 2334

## **COURSE DESCRIPTION**

This course examines the recent essays and ethnographies written by Anthropologists on what has been presented as alternative African modernity. Early on in the historical trajectory of Anthropology as a discipline Africa has been represented as the perfect object of analysis for western scholars interested in understanding human evolution and progress. Africa was not just presented by early anthropologists as a different space or place but as the real Other to Western civilization and progress. To put it bluntly the present of Africa was seen and presented as being the past of Western societies. The logical conclusion drawn by modernizing theorists was that Africans and the Third World societies in general could follow in the steps of the Western world to achieve the same level of material, technological, and scientific advancement. But with the obvious failure of modernization policies it has been quite clear that the differences between the West and the rest could not be reduced to their economic and material dimensions. Anthropologists - whose discipline was first to label African societies as primitive – were first to think of African alternative modernity. Africa and Africans were modern in their own terms and should not be evaluated with a Western centered concept of modernity.

The discipline of Anthropology has been also the first one to engage in critical evaluation of western scholarship on Africa. Most of the postcolonial ethnographies have been invested in proving and defending what Johannes Fabian called the co-evalness of African societies vis-à-vis the western societies. The attitude is to claim modernity for African societies without systematically taking the West as the model of reference. This course will, through the use of essays, ethnographies, and films, focus on the major debates and discussions among Anthropologists and Africanists at large regarding the representation of “modern Africa” in western scholarship.

## **OBJECTIVES**

The main objectives of this course are:

- To expose students to anthropological perspective in the representation of Africa and African societies and cultures by examining the wider historical processes that has set the stage for the transformation of the anthropological views on the African object/subject.
- To help students cultivate a greater command over current trends in social analysis and theorization about modernity, postcolonial subject, and the changing perspective on African realities.

- To enhance students' critical thinking and analytical writing skills.

## **READING MATERIAL**

### **Required Reading**

James Ferguson (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham: Duke University Press.

James Howard Smith (2008). *Bewitching Development: Witchcraft and the Reinvention of Development in Neoliberal Kenya*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Bob White (2008). *Rumba Rules: The Politics of Dance Music in Mobutu's Zaire*. Durham: Duke University Press.

Sasha Newell (2012). *The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Côte d'Ivoire*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Charles Piot (). *Nostalgia for the Future*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press

These books are available for purchase at the UF bookstore. Additional reading material is available at Library West in the course reserve section of this class. Please consult them at the library or make copies of relevant chapters ahead of time.

## **REQUIREMENTS**

### **Readings and Participation (10 points)**

Each student will be expected to participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated for their familiarity with required readings and their productive contributions to class debate. Attendance is compulsory. Any absence has to be justified to the satisfaction of the instructor. Any unjustified absence will seriously undermine your final grade. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the end of each session and students are required to sign it.

### **Précis's of Reading: 25 points**

Each student is required to write a précis for five sessions. A précis is a relatively brief (500 words) summary of critical thought that arise during your reading. It should include: (1) the primary argument of the text (s); (2) note on the object of analysis and kinds of evidence; (3) the intellectual, disciplinary, and /or political context of the work. These should be sent to me by e-mail at the latest on Monday by noon.

### **Questions on readings: 15 points**

Each student will be expected to write 3 questions that he or she found important about the required readings. The questions have to be sent by e-mail to the instructor on Monday afternoon at 5:00 PM.

**Midterm Test (20 points)**

A midterm test will be given to Students. The midterm test will be over the themes covered in the first seven weeks of the class. It will consist of short answer questions, multiple choices, and a short essay. The midterm Test will be given on March 8<sup>th</sup>.

**Final Test (30 points)**

A final Test will be administered at the end of the semester. It will consist of a series of short answer questions, multiple choices, and a short essay. It will cover the reading material from the 8<sup>th</sup> week to the end of class. The date of the final Test is April 20.

**Academic Honesty:**

All work submitted by a student for a grade must be completed by that student and free from unauthorized assistance or deliberate misrepresentations. The penalty for plagiarism or cheating is a grade of zero points on the assignment in question; in such cases an incident form will also be sent to the Office of the Dean of Students. If you have questions about what constitutes academic misconduct, please consult the UF Honor Code as well as the UF Policies on Academic Honesty, Student Rights and Responsibilities. These are available online at:

<http://www.dso.ufl.edu/studentguide/studentrights.php-academichonestyguidelines>.

**ADA Statement:** “Students with disabilities, who need reasonable modifications to complete assignments successfully and otherwise satisfy course criteria, are encouraged to meet with the instructor as early in the course as possible to identify and plan specific accommodations. Students will be asked to supply a letter from the Disability Resource Center to assist in planning accommodations.”

**Grading Scale:** The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing). Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html>. You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

**Health and Counseling:** The University offers the following health and counseling services for students in the event personal problems threaten to hinder academic performance: University Counseling Center (301 Peabody Hall, 392-1575), Student Mental Health (Student Health Care Center, 392-1171), and Sexual Assault Recovery Services (Student Health Care Center, 392-1161).

**Please note:** The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

# Course Schedule (I reserve the right to add films and documentaries in the Schedule)

## Week 1

Tue, Jan 5: Course Overview

Thu, Jan 7: Lecture on Modernity and Modernization in the African context

## Week 2

Tue, Jan 12: Representing Africa over time: History of Anthropology in Africa

Lecture: Sally Falk Moore on the relationship between Anthropology in Africa.

Thu, Jan 14: Film Mad Masters

## Week 3

Tue, Jan 19: The place of Africa-in-the-World

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chapter 1 and 2

Thu, Jan 21

James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chapter 3

## Week 4

Tue, Jan 26

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chap 4 and 5

Thu, Jan 28

James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chapter 6 to end

## Week 5

Tue, Feb 2: Neoliberalism and African Belief Systems

Reading: James H. Smith: Bewitching Development. Chap 1 and 2.

Thu, Feb 4

James H. Smith: Bewitching Development. Chap 3

## Week 6

Tue, Feb 9

Reading: James H. Smith: Bewitching Development. Chap. 4 and 5.

Thu, Feb 11

James H. Smith: Bewitching Development. Chap 6 to end

### **Week 7**

Tue, Feb 16: The use of tradition in postcolonial identity politics

Reading: Bob White: Rumba Rules. Chap. 1 and 2.

Thu, Feb 18

Reading: Bob White: Rumba Rules. Chap. 3.

### **Week 8**

Tue, Feb 23

Reading: Bob White: Rumba Rules. Chap 4 and 5.

Thu, Feb 25

Reading: Bob White: Rumba Rules. Chap. 6 to end

### **Week 9**

Tue, Mar 1: Spring Break

Thu, Mar 3: Spring Break

### **Week 10**

Tue, Mar 8: Midterm Test

Thu, Mar 10: The African Youth and Performance of Modernity

Sasha Newell: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 1.

### **Week 11**

Tue, Mar 15:

Reading: Sasha Newell: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 2 and 3.

Thu, Mar 17:

Reading: Sasha Newell: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 4 and 5

### **Week 12**

Tue, Mar 22: Prospect of the past and nostalgia of the future

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Chap. 1 and 2

Thu, Mar 24

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Chap 3.

**Week 13**

Tue, Mar 29:

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Chap 4.

Thu, Mar 31:

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Chap 5.

**Week 14**

Tue, Apr 5:

Reading: Brad Weiss: Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops. Chap 1 and 2

Thu. Apr 7:

Reading: Brad Weiss: Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops. Chap 3

**Week 15**

Tue, Apr 12

Reading: Brad Weiss: Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops. Chap 4 and 5

Thu, Apr 14

Reading: Brad Weiss: Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops. Chap 6 to end

Week 16:

Tue, Apr 19: Final Test