

ANTHROPOLOGY 3708 .10
Culture and Society in Africa: Anthropological Perspectives
GWU-Fall 2011

Meeting Time/ Location:

Mondays and Wednesdays 12h45-2h00 pm (Funger 221)

Instructor Contact Information:

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Instructor's Office Hours:

Lubkemann: Mondays 3h30-5h00 pm; Wednesdays:

Class Description

This course is one in the series of "People and Cultures" courses offered by the Department of Anthropology. Generally speaking, anthropology as a discipline has emphasized the contextualized study of difference by encouraging the close examination of other people's lives and of the terms they themselves use in living those lives. However, anthropology has pursued the study of difference in different ways at different times with specific consequences for the way Africa and Africans are understood. "Africa" has hundreds of societies with widely varying cultures, forms of social organization, and languages. "Africa" is also an idea that has shaped global relations and fundamental ways of imagining "difference" for over a millennium. This course will introduce students to some of the continent's social and cultural variation and while exploring how the anthropological study of Africa has changed over time, paying close attention to how broader historical and political conditions have influenced theoretical frameworks and the description and depiction of social life in Africa. The course will also examine important contemporary challenges that are confronted throughout Africa including development, diasporization, armed conflict, reproduction, displacement, and governance. We will use ethnographies that provide a sample of these aspects of everyday African social experience while critically examining how those aspects are studied and represented by anthropologists.

Expected Learning Outcomes:

As a result of completing this course students will be able to:

1. Describe how views of Africa and anthropological approaches to the study of Africa have changed over time
2. Provide examples that demonstrate the immense diversity in African forms of social organization and cultural systems
3. Demonstrate an understanding of the role that several key processes (including conflict, displacement, globalization, migration and diasporization) play in shaping the everyday social reality of many Africans.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of how global and local forces have interacted to produce those realities;
5. Demonstrate the ability to critically relate arguments and data from different sources to each other, in order to analyze an overarching question to which all of these sources are relevant.
6. Review and synthesize an argument from a major fieldwork-base study and --in collaboration with peers--present that argument in public based on a distillation and critical review of its essential points;
7. Use the key anthropological concepts (such as "culture") and analytical approaches to critically explore a particular aspect of social, political, or economic reality in one or more African societies, based on a review of articles or other studies that are based upon and report data from fieldwork.

Requirements:

Pre-requisites: This is an upper level course that requires at least one prior course in Socio-Cultural Anthropology.

Reading: This is a reading intensive course (ranging from 150-250 pages per week). To do well students must do all the reading by the class period in which they are assigned. Students are expected to come prepared to discuss the readings in class if they are called upon by the instructor. Plan carefully for time to complete reading and their assignments so that you do not fall behind. Students who regularly miss class will quickly find themselves unable to do the assignments.

Assignments

Short Reading Reflection and Synthesis Papers (3): Three times during the semester, students will be required to submit a short paper (approximately 1000-1250 words) that shows careful consideration of how assigned readings relate to each other. The topic for each paper will be provided by the instructor. Each paper is worth 15% of your grade.

Short Test: administered in class during the first half of the course. This test will account for 10% of your grade.

Student Group Presentation: In the first two weeks of class students will be assigned to groups of 5-6. Each group will be responsible for jointly preparing a 30 minute presentation of a particular book that addresses an important topic in the contemporary anthropology in Africa. Teams must prepare an outline of their presentation and select an excerpt from the book (approximately 30 pages) to assign as reading to the class. The excerpt must be scanned into a pdf and provided to the Instructor no less than one week prior to your presentation. Creative presentation formats are encouraged. (15% of grade).

Annotated Bibliography and Review Essay: Each student will prepare a final project for the class that will focus on a contemporary African social process or topic of interest to them. Each student will then be responsible for creating an annotated bibliography of at least 15 different articles, at least 12 of which must be by anthropologists or in anthropology journals or publications that are relevant to the topic or question they have chosen and for writing a short essay (no less than 2000 words) that addresses a question they have posed. This assignment will be worth 30% of your grade.

Grading: 3 Critical Reading Reflection and Synthesis papers -----45% (15% each)
In Class Test: -----10%
Student Team presentation/outline-----15%
Annotated Bibliography and short essay-----30%

Grading Scale Scale: 90-100 (A); 80-89 (B); 70-79 (C); 65-69 (D); 64> (F)

Class Policies:

On Attendance: Students are expected to regularly attend classes. Throughout the semester attendance will be verified on an occasional basis. After two absences are noted the student will receive a warning that a 2% markdown in their overall course grade will be tallied for each additional absence. Absence for religious holidays is allowed, providing you notify the instructor by e-mail (request return confirmation) of those intended absences during the first week of classes.

On Submitting Assignments:

1. All papers are due at the start of class on the day they are due in **HARDCOPY** format. Papers will NOT be accepted by e-mail. Papers sent by e-mail will not be read and will receive a failing grade.

2. Late papers will not be accepted. If you have a conflict that prevents you from being in class on the day a paper is due it is your responsibility to make sure the paper reaches the instructor in hard copy format by the beginning of class. Late papers will receive a failing grade.

Required Texts:

Hoschild, Adam. 1999. King Leopold's Ghost. NY: Mariner Books.

Evans-Pritchard, E. 1968. The Nuer. Oxford: Clarendon Press.

West, Harry. 2005. Kupilikula: Governance and the Invisible Realm in Mozambique. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Lubkemann, S. 2007. Culture in Chaos: An Anthropology of the Social Condition in War. Chicago: U. of Chicago Press..

Uvin, Peter 1998. Aiding Violence: The Development Enterprise in Rwanda. Bloomfield, CT: Kumarian Press.

Mercer, Claire, B. Page and M Evans. 2008. Development and the African Diaspora. London: Zed

Grinker, Lubkemann and Steiner (eds.) 2010. Perspectives on Africa (2nd Edition) Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell

NOTE: Readings marked below with an * are in the Grinker, Lubkemann and Steiner reader

--AND--

Texts from Which to Choose (only 1) for Group Assignment

Group 1: Democratization/Governance

Ashforth, Adam. 2005. Witchcraft, Violence and Democracy in South Africa. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Moran, Mary. 2006. Liberia: The Violence of Democracy. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Group 2: Displacement and Social Transformation

Malkki, L. H. 1995. Purity and Exile: Violence, Memory and National Cosmology Among Hutu Refugees in Tanzania. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Abusharaf, Rogai. 2009. Transforming Displaced Women in the Sudan. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Turner, Simon 2010. Politics of Innocence: Hutu Identity, Conflict and Camp Life. NY: Berghahn Books.

Group 3: Diasporization:

MacGaffey, J, 1999. Congo/Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margin of the Law. Portsmouth, NH: Heineman.

Hepner, Tricia R. 2009. Soldiers, Martyrs, Traitors and Exiles: Political Conflict in Eritrea and the Diaspora. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Lindley, Anna 2010. The Early Morning Phone Call: Somali Refugees' Remittances. New York: Berghahn Books

Group 4: Cultural aspects of Globalization in and of Africa

Weiss, Brad. 2009. Street Days and Hip Hop Barbershop: Global Fantasy in Urban Tanzania. Indiana university Press.

Clarke, Kamari Maxine. 2008. Mapping Yoruba Networks. Durham: Duke University Press.

Group 5: Rights and Justice

Hellweg, Joseph. 2011. Hunting the Ethical State: The Benkadi Movement of Coite d'Ivoire. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

1 to be added

Group 6: Gender, Health, and Reproduction:

Bledsoe, Caroline. 2002. Contingent Lives: Fertility, Time, and Aging in West Africa. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

Johnson-Hanks, J. 2006. Uncertain Honor: Modern Motherhood in an African Crisis. Chicago: Univ. of Chicago Press.

1 to be added

Schedule:

Week 1: Introduction

8/29: Introductory Remarks –Scope Class and Mechanics

8/31: Lecture: African Anthropology and the Forging of Key Concepts in the Discipline
Hoschild, Adam. (King Leopold's Ghost.) (Chapters 1-7)
Lubkemann Culture in Chaos chapter 1

Week 2: The Colonial Imprint on Africa

9/5 Labor Day-no class

9/7 Hoschild, Adam. (King Leopold's Ghost.) (Chapters 8-19)
Lugard, Frederick , “The Dual Mandate...”
Rodney, Walter, “How Europe Underdeveloped Africa...”

Week 3: Classic Anthropology in Historical Context

9/12 The Nuer-E.E. Pritchard (Intro, Chapters 1,4,5,6)

9/14: *Film-E.Evans-Pritchard*
The Nuer-E.E. Pritchard (Chapters 2, 3)

Week 4: Cosmological Belief and Rationality: Logic in Historical and Cultural Context

9/19 * E.Evans- Pritchard (Notion of Witchcraft)
* David Livingstone (Conversations on Rainmaking...)
* Peter Winch (Understanding a Primitive Society)
* Ralph Austen (The Moral Economy of Witchcraft...)

9/21 Harry West Kupilikula pg 1-190
*Stephen Lubkemann (Where to Be an Ancestor)

Week 5: Cultural Specificity and Historical Production of Social Relations and Identity

9/26 * Kopytoff (Ancestors as Elders...)
* Van Allen (Sitting on a Man...)
* Grinker (Houses in the Rainforest...)
* Boserup (The Economics of Polygamy...)

9/28/ * Ranger (The Invention of Tradition...)
* Vail (Ethnicity in Southern African History...)
* Southall (The Illusion of Tribe)
Lubkemann Culture in Chaos chapter 2

READING SYNTHESIS PAPER 1 DUE IN CLASS

Week 6: Culture, Value and Exchange

10/3 *Hutchinson (The Cattle of Girls...)
*Mary Douglas (Lele Economy...)

10/5 **IN CLASS TEST**

Week 7: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Modernity, Development and Structural Violence

10/10 James Ferguson (Expectations of Modernity...) COLUMBUS DAY
Peter Uvin Aiding Violence Chapters 1-5

10/12 Peter Uvin Aiding Violence Chapters 6-11
Lubkemann Chapter 3-4

Week 8: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Governance and Democratization

10/17: Harry G. West-Kupilikula (pp191-273)

* J. Francois Bayarat (The Politics of the Belly...)

10/19: STUDENT GROUP 1 PRESENTATIONS: M. Moran (Liberia: the Violence of Democracy);
A. Ashforth (Witchcraft and Democracy...)

Week 9: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: "Local" and "Global" Dimensions of Conflict

10/24 *Gluckman (Rituals of Rebellion)
*Paul Richards (Fighting for the Rainforest...)
*Christopher Taylor (Sacrifice as Terror...)
Lubkemann Culture in Chaos Chapters TBA

10/26 *Film: Cry Freetown*
READING SYNTHESIS PAPER 2 DUE IN CLASS

Week 10: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Displacement and Violent Social Transformation

10/31: Lubkemann, S. 2008. Culture in Chaos (pp 161-303)

11/2: STUDENT GROUP 3 PRESENTATIONS: Abusharaf (Transforming Displaced Women);
Malkki (Purity&Exile)
Turner (Politics of Innocence...)

Week 11: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: The New Diasporas

11/7 *D. Shandy (Nuer American Passages)
Mercer, Claire et al Development and the African Diaspora

11/9 STUDENT GROUP 3 PRESENTATIONS: J.McGaffey (Congo/Paris);
Hepner, (Soldiers, Martyrs, Traitors...)
Anna Lindley (The Early Morning Telephone Call...)

Week 12: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Cultural Aspects of Globalization in and of Africa

11/14: *Holsey
*Daniel J. Smith (culture of Corruption...)

11/16: STUDENT GROUP 4 PRESENTATIONS: Weiss (Street Days...)
Kamari Clarke (Mapping Youruba Networks)

Week 13: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Diaspora and African Development

11/21: Mercer, Claire, B.Page and M Evans. 2008. Development and the African Diaspora. London: Zed

11/23: TBA

Week 13: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Rights and Justice in Conflict Contexts

11/28 Isser, Lubkemann, and N'Tow...."Looking for Justice in Liberia" (on Blackboard).

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READING REVIEW PAPER 3 DUE at start of class

11/30 STUDENT GROUP 5 PRESENTATIONS: Hellweg (Hunting the Ethical state...); TBA

Week 15: The Contemporary Anthropology of Africa: Gender, Health and Reproduction

12/5 STUDENT GROUP 6 PRESENTATIONS: Bledsoe (Contingent Lives);

Johnson-Hanks (Uncertain Honor).

TBA

12/12 (NO CLASS) FINAL ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY/REVIEW ESSAY due:
in Instructor's box (at 2110 G Street) by NOON on Monday 12/12

OTHER NOTES:

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY: The GW Code of Academic Integrity will be upheld in this class. It specifically states: "Academic dishonesty is defined as cheating of any kind, including misrepresenting one's own work, taking credit for the work of others without crediting them and without appropriate authorization, and the fabrication of information." For the remainder of the code see: <http://www.gwu.edu/~ntegrity/code.html>

SUPPORT FOR STUDENTS OUTSIDE THE CLASSROOM:

DISABILITY SUPPORT SERVICES (DSS)

Any student who may need an accommodation based on the potential impact of a disability should contact the Disability Support Services office at 202-994-8250 in the Marvin Center, Suite 242, to establish eligibility and to coordinate Reasonable accommodations. For additional information please refer to <http://gwired.gwu.edu/dss/>

UNIVERSITY COUNSELING CENTER (UCC) 202 994-5300

The University Counseling Center offers 24/7 assistance and referral in order to address students' personal, social, career, and study skills problems. Services for students include:

--crisis and emergency mental health consultations

--confidential assessment, counseling services (individual and small group) , and referrals

<http://gwired.gwu.edu/counsel/CounselingServices/AcademicSupportServices>

SECURITY:

In the case of an emergency, if at all possible, the class should shelter in place. If the building that our class is in is affected we will follow evacuation procedures for the building. After evacuation seek shelter at the predetermined rendezvous location.