GLOBAL AFRICA

Wesleyan University—Spring 2017

ANTH 225
Prof. Jacob Doherty
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Office: Anthro, 22

Mon/Weds  10:50am-12:10pm
Room: SCIE 351
Office Hours: Thurs 1-4pm

Despite being forged over centuries of trans-oceanic movement, colonization, slavery, and structural adjustment, the single story we hear about Africa is too often one of disconnection, distance, and backwardsness. This course moves Africa from the margins to the center of histories of globalization to understand how Africa and Africans have shaped the emergence of modern world systems and global cultural economies. Equally, it puts world-spanning movement and connection at the center of African cultural studies to understand how global circulations of people and things, images and sounds, narratives and styles have shaped African cultural production and everyday life. Students will critically examine the images, narratives, and representations of Africa that circulate globally. Students will become familiar with the diversity of connections through which Africa has gone global, study how African artists and other cultural producers have shaped and responded to these connections, and cultivate a critical perspective on Africa’s contemporary place in the world.
REQUIRED TEXTS

- Available for purchase from Broad Street Books. All other readings are available for print from Moodle and in a two-volume Course Pack—order through your student portfolio by clicking “course pack” under Academic Resources. Films and books are available on reserve at Olin.

ASSIGNMENTS & GRADING

Participation 15%
- In-class discussion & workshop participation 50%
- Pre-class discussion questions 50%

Discussion Leading 10%
- Map Quiz (Feb 8) 5%
- Debate paper (Mar 1) 20%
- Final research paper 50%
  - Prospectus (Apr 17) 10%
  - Presentation (May 8 & 10) 30%
  - Final paper (Final Exam) 60%

All written assignments should be turned in through Moodle.

How have Africa and Africans made, and been made by, histories of global connection? What do the labels “global” and “Africa” mean? When? How? And for whom?

Participation
This class is a collaborative learning environment and your participation is crucial! It is your responsibility to come to class prepared. This means having read the assigned materials carefully, taking time to reflect on them, selecting key concepts and passages you would like to discuss – this should include ideas you found especially exciting, irritating, or confusing. You are required to post a short two open-ended discussion questions on Moodle by 9am the day of class. You are expected to pose questions on 14 of the 17 forums.

Remember that quality is more important that quantity in class discussion and that listening to and responding to your peers is vital for successful discussion. Class discussion will refer frequently and closely to the readings, so bring your paper copies of the readings to class.

Discussion Leading
Once during the semester, you will give a short opening presentation and lead the first 10-15 minutes of course discussion. These presentations should not summarize the readings. Instead, discussion leaders should (1) elaborate the main themes in the texts that the presenter believes should be the focus of class discussion and bring in the questions posted on Moodle, and (2) distribute a one-page handout for all students in the class outlining the main points and keywords/terms in the texts.
Map Quiz
Africa is not a country, and countries are not the only important unit of geography. In Week 2, you will take a map quiz focusing on Africa’s physical geography, largest cities, contemporary national borders, and colonial empires.

Debate Paper
5 pages (1,500 – 1,700 words)
The first major writing assignment requires you to critically read the classic debate about African languages, literatures, and decolonization between novelists Chinua Achebe and Ngūgĩ wa Thiong’o. A successful paper will a) summarize Ngūgĩ and Achebe’s main arguments, b) critique their arguments by identifying and analyzing the key concepts that underpin them, citing and interpreting important passages, c) compare the two author’s arguments by identifying points of commonality and disagreement, and d) conclude by evaluating the merits of each argument (ie. do you buy it?) This paper is due March 1st.

Style Guide for all assignments
Format 12 point, times new roman font, double spaced, 1” margins, paginated
Citations Use in-text citations following the Chicago Manual of Style
http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org/tools_citationguide.html
Your works cited should be listed at the end of the text, it does not count towards the page/word limit
Files Submit your work as .pdf files only

African Worlds in Three Objects
Final Research Paper 12-15 pages (4,000 - 5,000 words)
The topic of this paper is up to you, but your paper must be structured around three distinct objects. Your paper should speak to the main question of this course: “How have Africa and Africans made, and been made by, global connections?” Pick three objects that allow you to tell a story and make an argument about a particular episode in African history, issue in African politics, trend in African cultural production that interests you. Objects can also include pieces of cultural production such as a song, music video, painting/photograph, a speech, essay, poem etc. The objects you select should be part of the argument you make about what is important to know and understand about the phenomena in question, they will force you to think like an anthropologist and to be concrete and specific as you explore ‘big’ questions through ‘small’ things. Imagine that you are mounting an exhibit about your chosen topic and can only display and interpret these three objects to illustrate your main ideas.

For example: If I were to write about the early Apartheid Era in South Africa, I would pick a passbook, the Afrikaner Flag, and a mini-bus. Together, these objects illustrate how mobility was differentially used and regulated by the Apartheid regime and the connections to European fascism that informed the political theory of Apartheid.
Prospectus

Your prospectus should identify the topic you would like to explore, the objects you plan to include (at this point you can have more than 3), and a list of at least 5 additional sources from anthropology, history, geography, literature, or African Studies journals. We will have an in-class workshop to brainstorm ideas prior to turning in the prospectus. Prospectuses are due April 17th.

Presentation

The final week of class you will give a presentation in which you stage your paper as an exhibit, describing your objects, explaining your rationale in choosing them, and sharing the main argument you make in the paper.

Final Paper

Final papers are due by the end of the time scheduled for the course final exam.

COURSE SCHEDULE

Monday, Jan 29

**Introduction to the course**

Wednesday, Feb 1

**Framing Africa**

- “How to Write About Africa” - Binyavanga Wainaina (in *Granta*, 2006)
- Watch: “The Danger of a Single Story” - Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie (TED Talk, 2009)

Monday, Feb 6

**Precolonial Cosmopolitans**

- “Chinese Porcelain and Muslim Port Cities Mercantile Materiality in Coastal East Africa” - Sandy Meier (In *Art History*, 2015)
- Explore online: “Sailors and Daughters: Early Photography and the Indian Ocean” Smithsonian National Museum of African Art

Wednesday, Feb 8

**Mapping Africa**

- “The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa” - Terence Ranger (From *The Invention of Tradition*, 1983)
- MAP QUIZ

LATE WORK

If you turn in work late without approval, you will lose one letter grade for every 24-hour period beyond the deadline. If you contact me at least 48 hours prior to a deadline it may be possible to find a new timeframe. Deadlines for assignments with in-class workshops, however, are not flexible.
Monday, Feb 13  
**Colonial Knowledge**
- "The Diseased Heart of Africa: Medicine, Colonialism, and the Black Body" - Jean Comaroff (from *Knowledge, Power, and Practice*, 1993)
- *The Wretched of the Earth*, selections pg 1-8 – Franz Fanon (1963)
- Watch: "The Magnificent African Cake" - Basil Davidson (*Africa Episode 6, 1984*)

Wednesday, Feb 15  
**Gendering Colonialism**

Monday, Feb 20  
**Decolonization and Disappointment**
- "Ujamaa: the Basis of African Socialism" Julius Nyerere (1962)
- "On National Culture" – Franz Fanon (from *The Wretched of the Earth*, 1963)
- Film: *Xala* – Ousmane Sembene (1975)
- recommended: “Freedom Time” Interview with Gary Wilder (link on Moodle)

Wednesday, Feb 22  
**The Language of Decolonization**
- "The Language of African Literature" - Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o (from *Decolonizing the Mind*, 1981)
- "African Speech...English Words" - Gabriel Okara (from *Rotten English*, 1963)
- supplemental background readings available on Moodle

Monday, Feb 27  
**Memory & Solidarity Across the Atlantic**
- "Revisiting Richard Wright in Ghana: Black Radicalism and the Dialectics of Diaspora" (from *Social Text*, 2001)

Wednesday, Mar 1  
**Abolition & Colonization**
- "Abolitionism" - Ahmed Shawki (from *Black Liberation and Socialism*, 2006)
- In Class: Visit Olin Library Special Collections
- **DEBATE PAPER DUE**

Monday, Mar 6  
**Humanitarianism**

Wednesday, Mar 8  
**Structural Adjustment**
- Film: *Bamako* - Abderrahmane Sissako, 2006
March 11-26  
**Spring Break**

Monday, Mar 27  
**Global Outbreak, Local Knowledge**  
*Ebola: How a People’s Science Helped End an Epidemic* (Chapters 1-4) Paul Richards (2016)

Wednesday, Mar 29  
. **Global Outbreak, Local Knowledge**  
*Ebola* (Chapters 5-end) Paul Richards (2016)

Monday, Apr 3  
**Youth in and out of Time**  

Wednesday, Apr 5  
**In Class Workshop—Final Project Brainstorming**

Monday, Apr 10  
**Love and Money**  

Wednesday, Apr 12  
**Global Sexualities, Global Phobias**  
- "Dismantling Reified African Culture Through Localised Homosexualities in Uganda” - Stella Nyanzi (in *Culture, Health & Sexuality*, 2013)  
- Film: *Call me Kuchu* - Katherine Wright (2013)  
- Additional materials available on Moodle

Monday, Apr 17  
**Urban Fictions**  
- In Class Screening: *Nairobi Half-Life* - David Tosh Gitonga (2012)  
- **FINAL PAPER PROSPECTUS DUE**

Wednesday, Apr 19  
**Racial Fictions**  
- Listen: Lagos Soundscape (link on Moodle)

Africa in memes: #m7 Challenge, “The Rules of the League of our Childhood”, Skeptical boy, Igbo Adidas
Monday, Apr 24  
**Environmental Politics**  
- "Vermin Beings: On Pestiferous Animals and Human Game" - Clapper-ton Mavhunga (In *Social Text*, 2011)  
- "Game Lodges and Leisure Colonialists" – Njabulo Ndebele (from *Fine Lines from the Box*, 2007)

Wednesday, Apr 26  
**Contesting the Planet of Slums**  
- "Planet of Slums" - Mike Davis (in *The New Left Review* 2004)  
- Film: *Dear Mandela* - Christopher Nizza (2011)

Monday, May 1  
**Musical Worlds**  
- Listen: Spotify playlist “Global Africa”

Wednesday, May 3  
**World Audiences**  
- “Thug Realism: Inhabiting Fantasy in Urban Tanzania" - Brad Weiss (from *Cultural Anthropology*, 2002)

Monday, May 8  
**Final Project Presentations**

Wednesday, May 10  
**Final Project Presentations**

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“Someone told me, he says ‘if you are African, why are you wearing European dress?’ I say to him, you cannot say it is European dress because that is a matter of history, and that is only for a symposium discussion in the future”

-Fela Kuti “V.I.P. (Vagabonds in Power)” 1979
COURSE POLICIES

Attendance and Punctuality
You are expected to come to class on time and ready to contribute to class discussion in a positive, relevant, and respectful way. You may miss two classes without explanation or penalty. Each unexcused absence after two will lower your final grade by half a grade (ie. B+ to B, A to A-). If you think you have a valid reason for missing class (emergency, health problem etc) please contact your class dean/other relevant Wesleyan official and have that person contact me. Excused absences are only granted when a Wesleyan official contacts me on your behalf (not when you send me an email).

Screens
Electronic devices (laptops, phones, tablets etc) may not be used in class without express permission. This means you must print course readings or use a course pack. Printed readings make it easier to mono-task, reading with fewer distractions and focusing on argumentation.

Academic Integrity
Wesleyan’s values and standards of academic conduct are embodied and detailed by the Honor Code. Violations of the Honor Code, such as giving or obtaining assistance without acknowledgement, plagiarism, and the willful falsification of data, information, or citations, are reported to and dealt with by the Honor Board. We will cover using citations in researched work during class on November 1. For details regarding the Honor Code, Honor Board, and judicial procedures, see: http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/studentconduct.html
For details about what constitutes plagiarism and illustrative examples, see: http://www.wesleyan.edu/studentaffairs/studenthandbook/standardsregulations/plagiarism.html

Accessibility
I am committed to making the course inclusive for all students. Please let me know if you are experiencing barriers to learning that may be overcome through a modification of the course design or other accommodation. In addition, for those with a documented disability, here’s the official Wesleyan disability statement:

Wesleyan University is committed to ensuring that all qualified students with disabilities are afforded an equal opportunity to participate in and benefit from its programs and services. To receive accommodations, a student must have a documented disability as defined by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the ADA Amendments Act of 2008, and provide documentation of the disability. Since accommodations may require early planning and generally are not provided retroactively, please contact Disability Resources as soon as possible.
If you believe that you need accommodations for a disability, please contact Dean Patey [patey@wesleyan.edu] in Disability Resources located in North College, room 021, or call 860-685-5581 for an appointment to discuss your needs and the process for requesting accommodations.