AFS4935/ANG 4354 ‘ANTHROPOLOGY OF MODERN AFRICA’
Sections: 6719/7797
Tuesday: 2-3 periods. 8:30 to 10:25. Bat. Tur. Room: 1315
Office hours: Wednesdays, 10AM-12AM

Course description

Modern Africa is facing substantial challenges as it enters the 21st century. The responses that Africans are elaborating to meet these challenges are drawn from their rich cultures. In this class students will be introduced to modern Africa from an anthropological perspective that focuses on tradition, modernity and modernization and how they affect social, cultural, and economic practices. The ethnographies we will be using in this class address in different ways the following questions: How Africans are coping with changing circumstances while continuing to express differently their thoughts, beliefs, and values? How are they managing to combine “tradition” and change through worship, work, celebration of social events, and pop culture? How are Africans “the same but different” today?

The course offers students some fundamental principles that are necessary for a proper understanding of the anthropological perspective on actual African societies and cultures. The main objective is to help students to develop a more analytical perspective on Africa and its place in the world.

Required Books


These books can be purchased at the University Bookstore.
Complementary readings:


These books will be available in the course reserve associated with this class at the Library West. Please make copies of relevant chapters ahead of time.

Requirements

1. **Attendance and participation** (40 points)

   After the first day of class I will pass around an attendance sheet for each student to sign. You are allowed 3 absences without penalty. After 3 absences, 10 points will be subtracted from your attendance and participation grade for each additional absence. Exceptions to this rule will only be granted under extreme circumstances (as judged by instructor).

2. **Quizzes** (60 points)

   Three Quizzes will be administered throughout the semester. They’ll probably be short answer format. No make up quizzes will be given.

3. **Midterm Test** (100 points)

   The midterm exam will be given out in-class on Tuesday, October 19. The exam will cover all material from the readings, films and in-class discussions from week one to week 7.

4. **Book Review** (60 points)

   Each student should pick up one chapter from the two required books and write a 3-page double-spaced review. You are required to notify me in advance of which chapter you will review. The chapter review should be organized as follows. On page 1 you should summarize the chapter. On page 2 you should explain how the chapter helps you better understand one of the topics discussed in this course. On page 3 you should offer your criticisms and compliments of the text.

5. **Final Test** (150 points)
Just like the midterm exam but covering all material from week 8 to week 15. The final will be given out in-class on Tuesday 14 (December).

**Academic Honesty:**

Please visit: [http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm](http://www.dso.ufl.edu/judicial/honestybrochure.htm) for University of Florida Policy on Academic Honest Guidelines.

**Course outline**

Week 1: Tuesday, August 24:
- Orientation, course overview.

**Anthropology and Africa**

Week 2: Thu, Aug 26
- Lecture on Anthropology and Africa

Week 2: Tu, Aug 31
- Lecture on Anthropology and Africa

**Representing Africa: The Illusion of a Shared Identity Based on Race**

Week 3: Th, Sep 2

Week 3: Tu, Sep 7

**Anthropology of small and timeless societies versus that of Remotely Global communities**
Week 4: Th, Sep 9


Week 4: Tu, Sep 14

- Film: Toubab bi

The Kabre social life: traditions alive.

Week 5: Th, Sep 16

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 3

Week 5: Tu, Sep 21

- Charles Piot: Remotely Global: Village Modernity in West Africa, Chapter 4, pp. 76-104.
- Film Seven days and six nights

Week 6: Th, Sep 23

Quiz No1

Week 6: Tu, Sep 28


Alternative Modernity

Week 7: Th, Sep 30


Week 7: Tu, Oct 5


Week 8: Th, Oct 7
Quiz no 2

Modernization and disillusions

Week 8: Tu, Oct 12


Week 9: Th, Oct 14


Week 9: Tu, Oct 19

Midterm Test

Africa in the New World Order

Week 10: Th, Oct 21

- Film on Structural Adjustment Plans in Zambia.

Week 10: Tu, Oct 26


Rural/Urban logics

Week 11: Th, Oct 28


Week 11: Tu, Nov 2.

- Film Keita,
Week 12: Th, Nov 4

- Film: Xala

Week 12: Tu, Nov 9


Week 13: Th, Nov 11

Quiz no 3.

**Beliefs and Modernity**

Week 13: Tu, Nov 16


Week 14, Th, Nov 18


Week 14, Tu, Nov 23

- Peter Geschiere: The modernity of Witchcraft. Chapter 3 and chapter 4

Week 15: Th, Nov 25: Thanksgiving

Week 15: Tu, Nov 30

**Final test**

Week 16: Th, December 2