

Anthropological Perspectives on Africa

Syllabus and Course Policy Statement

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Course Description: This course has two main objectives: 1) to introduce you to the contours of life as experienced by the diverse peoples of Africa and 2) to help you develop a critical historical perspective on the anthropology of Africa. By examining a series of key concepts and debates involved in the anthropological study of the continent, you will gain an increased appreciation for and understanding of socio-cultural unity as well as diversity in the African context. In addition, you will develop an awareness of the impact Africa-based field studies have had on the discipline of anthropology. In terms of format, we will take a thematic approach: addressing such realms as colonization, kinship & social organization, politics & ethnicity, economics, modes of thought, religion and art & aesthetics. As a complement to the course's thematic and comparative focus, you will also gain a detailed understanding of the complexity of life in a specific socio-cultural setting by reading an award-winning contemporary ethnographic narrative. The objective here is for you to see how members of a given society engage/negotiate some of the general themes you learn about in the course. Through lectures, close reading of the assigned materials, classroom discussion and various writing assignments, you will enhance your knowledge of both Africa and anthropology.

Learning Outcomes: To gain insight into the lives and experiences of the diverse peoples of sub-Saharan Africa; To develop a critical historical perspective on the anthropology of sub-Saharan Africa; To develop an understanding of key anthropological themes and analysis of them as they relate to sub-Saharan Africa; To gain an appreciation for how anthropology can help us better understand complex issues; To enhance writing and speaking skills, including the ability to compose critical responses to readings and to participate in thoughtful classroom discussions.

Class Schedule and Format: Class sessions will include lecture material but will also center on close analysis and discussion of the issues and concepts raised in the assigned readings. Thus, you are expected to complete the appropriate readings in advance of each class meeting and to play an active and engaged role in each class session. From time to time I will start class with a pop quiz on the readings in order to reward you for your efforts to stay engaged and up to date. Your GTF may also do this in your discussion sessions.

Course Materials:

There are two required texts for this course.

1. The core text is *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History and Representation*, 2nd edition, Roy Grinker and Christopher Steiner, editors. This volume presents classic articles in anthropology and African studies, as well as more recent influential contributions. It provides both ethnographic and theoretical material.
2. The second text is *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa*, by Alma Gottlieb and Philip Graham. This work is an example of a newer style of ethnographic writing in which the anthropologist and her spouse (a novelist) are clearly visible in the research, as well as the narrative. Both texts are available for purchase at the UO Bookstore.
3. You will also need to purchase a 'composition notebook' that will be turned in twice during the term where you keep your notes on the ethnography.

Grading Overview:

25% Discussion Section (you will receive a separate syllabus in section)

8% Parallel Worlds Reading Journal (weekly, 10 entries total)

*DUE week 6 and finals

67% Essay Exams:

20% due week 4, in lecture

22% due week 7, in lecture

25% due Tuesday of finals week

Requirements:1) *Take-Home Essay Exams*

You will have two take-home essay exams during the course. For these assignments, I will provide a series of focus questions on topics or themes addressed in lectures, discussion, readings and/or video presentations. Using knowledge and information gleaned from your readings and our class discussion, you will prepare a 2-3 page (about 1200 words) response for each assignment. Please note the dates for these exams in the schedule below and mark them on your calendars now.

2) *Final Essay Exam*

This will largely revolve around the second text: *Parallel Worlds*, though it will also incorporate the readings from weeks 7-10. The final will require that you integrate general themes covered in lectures, readings and discussions with specific ethnographic material presented in *Parallel Worlds*. As with the previous essays, I will assign a series of focus questions for this exam. To do well on this exam you will need to draw on the knowledge and insights you gained during the course and integrate insights from *Parallel Worlds*.

3) *Parallel Worlds Reading Journal*

Throughout the course your reading assignments will include sections of *Parallel Worlds*. As you progress through the book, you should take notes on what you encounter in a standard **composition notebook**. In this exercise you will record your thoughts about the Beng lifeways depicted in the narrative, as well as your reflections on the nature of the interactions between the

authors and the people they live among. Your notes will be graded but not evaluated. They are simply meant to help you process the material you read and to remember the thoughts you have while reading. You should complete the first FIVE chapters and notes by week 6. Please organize your notes by chapter; you may also include notes from other readings as long as the Parallel Worlds notes are obvious. If you do a good job with your notes, it is very likely that you will do a good job on the final.

4) *Participation*

In order to engage each day's material thoroughly you must be current on your reading and be present in class. As noted above, to encourage your engagement and reward you for your dedication, your GTF and I will give pop quizzes from time to time. Also, as mentioned above, I view this course as a joint venture. Thus, I expect you to contribute to our discussions on a regular basis. Your comments need not be extensive – but they need to be relevant and informed. Tip: By creating “reading notes” on an ongoing basis, you will always have something to work from in our discussions.

Assignment Policies: Late assignments will not be accepted except in the case of a severe illness, injury, or family emergency. If you should run into one of these exceptional situations, you are required to notify me by email or in person **BEFORE THE DUE DATE FOR THE ASSIGNMENT.** We will discuss your situation and any possible accommodations that might be warranted. To approve alternative arrangements, you will need to provide a letter from a staff member at the Office of Academic Advising documenting your situation. Academic Advising is located 364 Oregon Hall.

Academic Misconduct: All assignments in this class are designed to assess your individual knowledge and understanding of the material covered/presented in the course. Thus, cheating or plagiarism -- in any form -- will not be tolerated. The work you present must be entirely your own. All individuals involved in an act of academic dishonesty will fail the course. Please take the time to review the definitions of academic misconduct, available at: <http://uodos.uoregon.edu/StudentConductandCommunityStandards/AcademicMisconduct/tabid/248/Default.aspx>. I do not expect to encounter any problems in this area, but feel you should be forewarned.

Discrimination: The University of Oregon is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity institution. Discrimination on the basis of any of the categories covered in the University's anti-discrimination policy will not be tolerated in this class. If you have a concern in this regard, please contact the Office of Affirmative Action and Equal Opportunity at 346-3123 or visit them at 677 East 12th Ave., Suite 452.

Physical or Learning Disabilities: If you have a condition that inhibits learning or evaluation under customary circumstances, please let me know. In addition, please request a letter from Disability Services that verifies your disability and states the accommodations that I can make. I will make any reasonable adjustments necessary to improve your learning environment.

Respect: Please be respectful of other students, your GTF and the instructor. Please do not interrupt when someone else is speaking, do not use computers for social networking or *youtubing*, do not text-message in class—these things are disruptive and rude and will not be tolerated!

Course Outline and Reading Schedule
 Please be sure to keep posted on updates.

<u>Week #</u>	<u>Reading Assignments</u> All readings come from the Grinker & Steiner textbook unless otherwise noted. This schedule is subject to change.	<u>What's Due?</u>
1	<p align="center"><u>Africa Through the Anthropological Lens</u></p> <p>-Mon. 9/29: <u>Review of Syllabus and Course Intro</u> Read: "Introduction: Africa in Perspective" pp 1-15</p> <hr/> <p>-Wed. 10/1: <u>Representation and Discourse</u> Read: Part I "Introduction" pp 21-29; "Africa Observed" by Jean and John Comaroff pp. 31-43; "Discourse of Power and Knowledge of Otherness" by Mudimbe pp. 55-60 (Begin reading <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	
2	<p><u>From Tribe to Ethnicity: Kinship and Social Organization</u></p> <p>-Mon. 10/6: <u>Descent and Lineage</u> Read: Part II "Introduction" pp. 63-70, "The Nuer: Time and Space" by E.E. Evans-Pritchard pp. 71-82</p> <hr/> <p>-Wed. 10/8: <u>The Tribe</u> Read: "The Illusion of Tribe" by Aidan Southall pp. 83-94; "Ethnicity in Southern African History" by Leroy Vail pp. 95-107 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	
3	<p align="center"><u>Europe in Africa: Colonization</u></p> <p>-Mon. 10/13: <u>Colonization</u> Read: Part IX "Introduction" pp. 425-430; "The Dual Mandate in British Tropical Africa" by Frederick Lugard pp. 431-438</p> <hr/> <p>-Wed. 10/15: <u>Colonization, cont'd</u> Read: "How Europe Underdeveloped Africa" by Walter Rodney pp. 439-449; "The Invention of Tradition in Colonial Africa" by Terence Ranger pp. 450-461 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	*Essay #1 Assigned Wed. 10/15
4	<p align="center"><u>Nations and Nationalism: Identity Politics</u></p> <p>-Mon. 10/20 <u>Identity Politics</u> Film: <i>Black Skin, White Mask</i></p> <hr/> <p>-Wed. 10/22 <u>Nationalism</u> Read: Part XI "Introduction" pp. 473-476; "Negritude" by Leopold Sengor pp. 477-483; "On National Culture" by Frantz Fanon pp. 484-497 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	Essay Exam #1 DUE Mon. 10/20 at beginning of lecture

<p>5</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Arts, Aesthetics, and Heritage</u></p> <p><u>-Mon. 10/27: Art and Politics</u> Read: "The Invisible Face" by C. Steiner pp. 514-519; Part VII "Introduction" pp. 325-333; "Humorous Masks and Serious Politics" by S. Ottenberg pp. 335-347</p> <hr/> <p><u>-Wed. 10/29: Tourism and Heritage</u> Read: (On Blackboard) "The Maasai and the Lion King" by Edward Bruner; "Tourism, Conservation, and Culture in the Kalahari Desert, Botswana" by Hitchcock and Brandenburg (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	
<p>6</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Witchcraft, Science, and Rationality</u></p> <p><u>Mon. 11/3 Modes of Thought and the Translation of Culture</u> Read: Part V "Introduction" pp. 239-243; "Conversations on Rain-making" by D. Livingstone pp. 245-248</p> <hr/> <p><u>Wed. 11/5: Film: Zande "Witchcraft"</u> Read: "The Notion of Witchcraft" by E. E. Evans-Pritchard pp. 249-256; "Understanding a Primitive Society" by P. Winch pp. 257-269 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	<p>Parallel Worlds Journal for chapters 1-5 DUE: Monday 11/3</p> <hr/> <p>*Exam 2 assigned Wed. 11/5</p>
<p>7</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Religion and Ritual</u></p> <p><u>-Mon. 11/10: Two Markets in Mali</u> Guest Lecture by Ian Edwards, PhD "Two Markets in Mali"</p> <hr/> <p><u>-Wed. 11/12: Religion and Ritual</u> Read: Part VI "Introduction" pp. 285-290; "Conversations with Ogotemmel" by M. Griaule pp. 291-301; "Ancestors as Elders" by I. Kopytoff pp. 314-322 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p>	<p>Essay Exam #2 DUE: Mon. 11/10 at beginning of lecture</p>
<p>8</p>	<p style="text-align: center;"><u>Gender, Power and Autonomy</u></p> <p><u>-Mon. 11/17: Sexuality and Gender</u> Read: Part VIII "Introduction" pp. 381-387; "Virginity Testing in a Maturing HIV/AIDS Epidemic" by S. Leclerc-Madlala 411-422</p> <hr/> <p><u>-Wed. 11/19 Gender, Politics and the Economy</u> Read: "The Economics of Polygamy" by E. Boserup pp. 389-398; "Sitting on a Man" by J. Van Allen pp. 399-410 (Continue <i>Parallel Worlds</i>)</p> <hr/> <p><u>-Friday 11/21: Film: "Femmes Aux Yeux Ouverts" (Women with Open Eyes)</u></p>	

<p>9</p>	<p align="center"><u>Economics, Development, and Globalization</u></p> <p>-<u>Mon. 11/24: Economics</u> Read: Part III “Introduction” pp. 111-122, “Lele Economy” by M. Douglas pp. 123-138</p> <hr/> <p>-<u>Wed. 11/26: Development and the State</u> Read: Part XII “Introduction” 585-594; “Expectations of Modernity” by J. Ferguson pp. 595-608; “The State in Africa” by J-F. Bayart pp. 629-643</p> <hr/> <p>-<u>Friday 11/28: No Discussion</u> (Thanksgiving Weekend) FINISH <i>Parallel Worlds</i></p>	
<p>10</p>	<p align="center"><u>Parallel Worlds</u></p> <p>-<u>Mon. 12/1:</u> Discuss <i>Parallel Worlds</i></p> <hr/> <p>-<u>Wed. 12/3:</u> Review for Final</p> <hr/> <p>-<u>Friday 12/5</u> No Discussion Work on Final Essay Exam</p>	<p>*Final Exam Assigned Wed. 12/3</p>
<p>Finals</p>	<p>-<u>Tuesday 12/9 10:15 (Official Final Exam Time).</u> Turn in Final Essay Exam and <i>Parallel Worlds</i> Reading Journal. You may pick up your exams and journal the following week or Winter term in my office. Please make a note on your final exam if you want feedback comments.</p>	<p>Final Essay Exam and Journal DUE: Tues. 12/9 by 3:00 p.m. in Condon 365</p>