

Africa Today: Contemporary Issues and Concerns

INTL 345

Fall 2015

Instructor: Dr. Stephen Wooten

Office: 354 Prince Lucien Campbell (PLC) Hall

Phone: 346-5299

Email: swooten@uoregon.edu

Office Hours: Mondays 9-10 am and Wednesdays 1-2 pm, or by appointment

Graduate Teaching Fellow (GTF): Philippe Lazaro, Email: plazaro@uoregon.edu, Office: 306 PLC, Office Hours: Mondays 12:30-1:30 pm and Wednesdays 11:30 am-12:30 pm, or by appointment

Course Description:

This course is designed to help you develop an informed perspective on contemporary African peoples' negotiation of an important set of current challenges. The class is conceived of as a complement to more traditional survey type courses on Africa. Thus, rather than casting a wide net to cover a broad array of topics and contexts, we will only engage a few particularly significant case studies. However, the cases we explore certainly have broader resonance across the continent and – for that matter – across the globe.

We will examine in close detail: 1) the subtleties of cultural heritage issues in Mali; 2) the complex issues surrounding sexual minority identity in northern Nigeria; 3) the local and global dimensions of HIV/AIDS in Uganda and 4) the relationship between technology, ritual and friendship in Kenya.

In addition to providing a window into these key issues and themes in contemporary Africa, the course is designed to help you develop critical reading, writing, and oral presentation skills.

Texts: There are four required books for this course: The Politics of Heritage Management in Mali: From UNESCO to Djenne by Charlotte Joy; Allah Made Us: Sexual Outlaws in an Islamic African City by Rudolf Gaudio; Scrambling for Africa: AIDS, Expertise and the Rise of American Global Health Science by Johanna Crane; and Email from Ngeti: An Ethnography of Sorcery, Redemption, and Friendship in Global Africa by James Smith. These titles are available for purchase at the UO Bookstore and will be on reserve at Knight Library.

Class Format: Class sessions will center on close analysis and discussion of the issues and concepts raised in our readings. You are required to complete your assigned readings in advance of each class meeting and to play an active and engaged role in each class session.

Evaluation: Requirements include regular “minute papers” and a series of essay exams.

• Minute Papers

At the beginning of each class you will complete a “minute paper” in which you jot down at least one comment/observation you can make in class based on the day’s reading assignment. Your contribution should be specific (no “loose musings” allowed) and something you could share if called on. The minute paper technique has been shown to be a very effective mechanism for

helping students engage with readings and to be ready to participate in class discussions. You will be rewarded well for taking this aspect of the course seriously – you will learn more and you can earn easy points toward your final grade! All papers will be collected at 10:05 am and no late contributions will be accepted. If needed arrive early and complete your paper. You may miss up to 2 of these assignments without penalty.

- Essay Exams

At the close of each case study you will write an essay format response to a set of focus questions. These questions will assess your understanding of key themes or concepts addressed in the case study. To do well on these assignments you will need to read each case study carefully, and to listen and contribute to our class discussions. In each essay you will need to provide an effective mixture of case specific subject matter and analysis.

- Grading

Minute Papers (20%)

Exams I, II, III and IV (80%)

Final grades will be assigned using a straight scale: e.g., 90-100 = A, 80-89 = B, etc. and pluses and minuses will be used where appropriate.

Policies:

- Missed Assignments

No make ups will be offered for minute papers or exams EXCEPT in the case of a significant illness, injury, or family emergency. If you should run into one of these exceptional situations, you are required to notify me by email BEFORE the scheduled exam or assignment. We will discuss your situation and any possible accommodations that might be warranted.

- Attendance and Participation

In order to engage the assigned material thoroughly you must be present in class. Also, 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.

- Classroom Culture

In order to create and maintain a focused and productive learning environment we need to agree on some basic elements of classroom etiquette. Ideas for things to include or address?

_____;

- Cheating and Academic Dishonesty

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 and will be reported to the proper University contacts as required. I do not expect to encounter any problems in this area, but feel you should be forewarned.

- Diversity and Equity

The University is a place where people from different cultures and experiences learn together; understanding and respecting these differences are critical for the University to be a place of open-minded inquiry where, in challenging the boundaries of knowledge, we include and value all members of our community. If you should ever feel that we are falling short on this goal, please let me know or contact the Office of the Vice President for Equity & Inclusion (1 Johnson Hall; Telephone: 541 346 3175; Email: vpinclusion@uoregon.edu).

- Accessible Education

If you have a condition that inhibits learning or evaluation under customary circumstances, please let me know. In addition, please request a letter from the Accessible Education Center (346-1155, 164 Oregon Hall) that verifies your disability and states the accommodations that I can make. I will make any reasonable adjustments necessary to improve your learning environment.

CLASS OUTLINE AND SCHEDULE

(This program is subject to change depending on the extent of our case study discussions. We may move more quickly than expected or we may move more slowly. Remain informed and update this schedule as necessary.)

“Politics of Heritage Management”

Sept 28: Introductions and Syllabus
Sept 30: Read/Cover: p. 13-50
Oct 5: Read/Cover: p. 51-92
Oct 7: Read/Cover: p. 95-146
Oct 12: Read/Cover: p. 147-210
Oct 14: Exam

“Allah Made Us”

Oct 19: Read/Cover: p. ix-28
Oct 21: Read/Cover: p. 29-88
Oct 26: Read/Cover: p. 89-142
Oct 28: Read/Cover: p. 143-205
Nov 2: Exam

“Scrambling for Africa”

Nov 4: Read/Cover: p. ix-20
Nov 9: Read/Cover: p. 21-79
Nov 11: Read/Cover: p. 80-144
Nov 16: Read/Cover: p. 145-182
Nov 18: Exam

“Email from Ngeti”

Nov 23: Read/Cover: p. ix-32
Nov 25: Read/Cover: 33-84
Nov 30: Read/Cover: p. 85-137
Dec 2: Read/Cover: p. 138-211
Exam for “Email from Ngeti” available Dec 3 and due via upload to Canvas by 10:15 am on Wednesday, Dec 9.