MPhil in African Studies 2013-14

Core Course Reading List

Lecturer: Ruth Watson, riw21@cam.ac.uk
Office hours: Mondays from 1600-1700 in Centre of African Studies (CAS) Meeting Room
Class time and location: Tuesdays, 14.00-16:00, Room S3, Alison Richard Building

Brief description of the course:
This interdisciplinary compulsory core course aims to introduce you to theoretical and methodological issues in African studies, whilst at the same time conveying substantive information about the histories, cultures, politics and economies of Africa. The course is taught for 12 weeks through Michaelmas term and the first half of Lent term via weekly two-hour seminar discussion classes. Readings and weekly topics are set in advance. Films and fictional works are set alongside academic literature, and you will also attend the African Studies Film Club, which runs fortnightly on Wednesday afternoons (1.30pm-3.30pm) during Michaelmas term. The films relate to some of the weekly topics; you are encouraged to compare how academic literature and film offer different perspectives on key issues and debates.

Teaching:
Teaching consists of a weekly seminar discussion class, lead by Dr Watson. You are expected to participate actively in the weekly discussions and to do the reading, of which there is a significant amount. All students will be required to offer at least one presentation on one of the weekly topics (a very short discussion paper of no more than 15 minutes (1,500-2000 words). Should you wish to further your knowledge, there are optional Africa-related lectures running in other faculties and departments across the University, including POLIS, History, Archaeology and Anthropology, and Geography. These lectures are intended mainly for undergraduates, but they will provide relevant context and background information to many of the topics we study.

Assessment:
You will submit one essay of 5,000 words (excluding references and bibliography) on 14 March 2014; this essay constitutes 100% of your final mark for the Core Course. The MPhil Office will provide you with a list of essay questions on 14 January 2014. Degree regulations require that you write your essay on one of these prescribed questions; you are not permitted to develop your own. Examples of past essay topics can be obtained from the MPhil Office. Your mark for the core course counts for 20% of the final mark in the MPhil African Studies.
Course Structure:
The debates and issues covered by this course are extremely broad and diverse, both in terms of chronological scope and geographical spread. African Studies is also by definition interdisciplinary, thus readings are drawn from a wide range of disciplines in the humanities and social sciences. To help you navigate this intellectual complexity, the reading list is structured into sections. A useful starting point is the list of General books, which offer an overview of some of the key themes.

Under each of the weekly topic descriptions you will find Seminar, Core and Supplementary readings. The Seminar readings, usually one or two journal articles, are essential reading. Ensuring we have all read something in common enables us to start our discussion ‘on the same page’ and gives us a shared base of ideas. The Core readings are useful for the seminar discussions and essays. The Supplementary reading lists are provided for those who want to dig deeper into particular issues. Included here are novels and films that may enhance your understanding and offer an alternative perspective from academic literature. You are of course encouraged to do your own bibliographic searches on specific topics, and you are required to do so for your essays.

The key library for this course is the Centre of African Studies Library, where most core texts are available, some on overnight loan. The library website is: http://www.african.cam.ac.uk/library/. You can also try other libraries across the University, including your College libraries, the UL, and the PPS, Haddon, Marshall, Seeley, and Geography libraries. Consult the ‘Cambridge Libraries Gateway’ for more information. Most of the journal articles listed are available on-line via either CamTools (see also weblinks folder) or through the UL eresources webpage. You are warmly encouraged to suggest additions to the reading list, and indeed to propose deletions.

List of weekly topics:
Week 1: Africa in the longue durée
Week 2: People, politics and power in precolonial Africa
Week 3: Colonialism in the history and historiography of Africa
Week 4: God, gods, missionaries and their African translators
Week 5: Imagining African futures
Week 6: From colonialism to postcolonialism
Week 7: Conflict in postcolonial Africa
Week 8: Popular culture in African history and politics
Week 9: Poverty and wealth in Africa
Week 10: Aid, development, power and knowledge
Week 11: Health and healing in Africa: past and present
Week 12: Population, environment and climate change
**General Books:**

These books are not textbooks for the core course or a substitute for the weekly readings. However, they will introduce you to key ideas and debates and provide useful context.


R.H. Bates, V.Y. Mudimbe, & J. O'Barr (eds.) *Africa and the disciplines: the contributions of research in Africa to the social sciences and humanities* (London, 1993)

Frederick Cooper, *Colonialism in question: theory, knowledge, history* (Berkeley, 2005)


Paul Nugent, *Africa since independence* 2nd ed (Basingstoke, 2012)


Crawford Young, *The postcolonial state in Africa* (Madison, 2012)


**Weekly Discussion Readings**

**WEEK ONE: Africa in the longue durée**

This class focuses on the importance of understanding something of Africa’s deeper past and longer cultural history, and the methodological challenges involved in that. For example, we will discuss the utility of linguistic and archaeological evidence in African history, debates about oral historical methodologies and the drawbacks of ‘presentism’ when studying Africa, and the shifting meaning of concepts such as ‘ethnicity’ and ‘motherhood’ when seen through the long distant past.

**Seminar Readings**


**Core Readings**

Nugent, P. ‘Putting the history back into ethnicity’ *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 50 (2008): 920-948


**Supplementary Readings**

Austen, R. *In search of Sunjata: the Mande oral epic as history, literature and performance* (Bloomington, 1999)
Kodesh, N. *Beyond the royal gaze: clanship and public healing in Buganda* (Charlottesville, 2010)
McIntosh, R.J. *The peoples of the Middle Niger: The island of gold* (Oxford, 1998)
Vansina, J. *How societies are born: governance in West Central Africa before 1600* (Charlottesville, 2004)

- **Novels and Films**
  Armah, A. K. *Two Thousand Seasons* (Ghana, 1973)
  Available in *The Yambo Ouologuem Reader* (Trenton NJ, 2008)
  *Keïta!* Directed by D. Kouyaté (Burkina Faso, 1994)
  *Sankofa* Directed by Haile Gerima (Ethiopia, 1993)
WEEK TWO: People, politics and power in precolonial Africa
In this class we will focus on debates on the nature of the state in precolonial Africa, of power relations and social organization. This will include discussions of the theory that pre-colonial Africa was a 'labour-constrained' continent, the character of labour regimes and domestic slavery, the relationship between gender, generation and power, as well as the role of violence and warfare in state formation.

Seminar Readings

Core Readings
Bay, E. Wives of the leopard: Gender, politics and culture in the kingdom of Dahomey (Charlottesville, 1998) Chapters 1-4
McCaskie, T.C. State and society in pre-colonial Asante (Cambridge, 1995) Chapter 2
Wilks, I. Forests of Gold: Essays on the Akan and the kingdom of Asante (Athens, 1993), Chapters 2-3

Supplementary Readings
Achebe, N. Farmers, traders, warriors, and kings: Female power and authority in Northern Igboland (Portsmouth, 2005)
Alpers, N. ‘Kingalu mwana Shaha and political leadership in nineteenth-century eastern Tanzania’ in G. Maddox & J. Giblin (eds), In search of a nation (Oxford, 2005): 33-54
Medard, H. and Doyle, S. Slavery in the Great Lakes Region of East Africa (Oxford, 2007)
Feierman, S. *The Shambaa Kingdom* (Madison, 1974)


Peires, J.B. *The house of Phalo: A history of the Xhosa people in the days of their independence*


Vansina, J. *Paths in the rainforest: toward a history of political tradition in equatorial Africa* (Madison, 1990)


- **Novels and Films**
  - Achebe, C. *Things Fall Apart* (Nigeria, 1958)
  - Condé, M. *Segu* (Mali, 1987)
  - Mofolo, T. *Chaka* (South Africa, 1931)
  - *Wend Kuuni: God’s Gift* Directed by Gaston Kaboré (Burkina Faso, 1982)
  - *Tilai* Directed by Idrissa Ouedraogo (Burkina Faso, 1990)
  - *Buud Yam* Directed by Gaston Kaboré (Burkina Faso, 1997)
  - *Taafé Fanga* ‘Skirt power’ Directed by Adama Drabo (Mali, 1997)

**WEEK THREE: Colonialism in the history and historiography of Africa**

This class focuses on the place of colonialism in the history and historiography of Africa. In the light of revisionist work on empire, and new work on African history that stresses African ‘agency’, how do we assess the impact of colonialism? How convincing is the argument that colonialism was simply an ‘episode’ in African history versus the contention that experiences of living under colonial rule were completely transformative for Africans?

**Seminar Readings**


White, L. *Speaking with vampires: Rumor and history in colonial Africa* (Berkeley, 2000) Chapter 5

**Core Readings**


Ranger, T ‘The invention of tradition revisited: The case of colonial Africa’ in T Ranger & O Vaughan (eds.) *Legitimacy and the state in twentieth century Africa* (Basingstoke, 1993)


**Supplementary Readings**


Cooper, F. *Colonialism in question: Theory, knowledge, history* (Berkeley, 2005)

Gray, C J. *Colonial rule and crisis in equatorial Africa* (Rochester, 2002)

Feierman, S. *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and history in Tanzania* (Madison, 1990)


Lindsay L. & Miescher, S. *Men and masculinities in modern Africa* (Portsmouth, 2003)

Memmi, A. *The colonizer and the colonized* (Corrêa, 1957)

Mamdani, M. *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism* (Princeton, 1996), chs 1-3


wa Thiong’o, N. *Decolonising the mind* (London, 1986)

**Novels and Films**

*Chocolat* Directed by Claire Denis (France, 1988)

*Nowhere in Africa* Directed by Caroline Link (Germany, 2001)
**WEEK FOUR: God, gods, missionaries and their African translators**

This class examines the rich literature on the history of Islam and Christianity in Africa and their relationship to pre-existing cosmologies and systems of thought. The class also examines the politics of religion in colonial and postcolonial Africa.

**Seminar Readings**


**Core Readings**


Englund, H. Pentecostalism beyond belief: trust and democracy in a Malawian township’ *Africa* 77 (2007), pp. 477-500


Meyer, B. 'If you are a devil, you are a witch and, if you are a witch, you are a devil.' The integration of ‘pagan' ideas into the conceptual universe of Ewe Christians in southeastern Ghana, *Journal of Religion in Africa* 22 (1992): 98-13


**Supplementary Readings**

Becker, F. ‘Rural Islamism during the ‘war on terror’: a Tanzanian case study’ *African Affairs* 105 (2006): 583-603

Comaroff, J & J Of revelation and revolution: Christianity, colonialism, and consciousness in *South Africa* Vols 1 and 2 (Chicago, 1991)

Fields, K. *Revival and rebellion in colonial central Africa* (Princeton, 1985)

Geschiere, P. *The modernity of witchcraft* (Charlottesville, 1997)
Loimeier, R. *Muslim societies in Africa: A historical anthropology* (Bloomington, 2013)
Masquelier, A. *Prayer has spoiled everything: possession, power, and identity in an Islamic town of Niger.* (Durham, 2001)
Meyer, B. *Translating the devil* (Edinburgh, 1999)
Moore, H L and Sanders, T. *Magical interpretations, material realities: modernity, witchcraft and the occult in postcolonial Africa* (London, 2001)
Peel, J. D.Y. *Religious encounter and the making of the Yoruba* (Bloomington, 2000)

• **Novels and Films**
  
  *Ceddo* Directed by Ousmane Sembène (Senegal, 1978)
  *Guelwaar* Directed by Ousmane Sembène (Senegal, 1992)
  Bâ, M. *So Long a Letter* (Senegal, 1991)

**WEEK FIVE: Imagining African Futures**
This class considers the contribution of African political thought and intellectual history to our understanding of twentieth-century Africa. Especially during the decolonisation period, African nationalists and their constituents articulated various theories of liberation and developed different visions of African futures. We will explore these impassioned debates by focusing especially on the writings of Amilcar Cabral, Kwame Nkrumah and Julius Nyerere, among others.

**Seminar Readings**

**Core Readings**

Fanon, F. *The Wretched of the Earth* (Harmondsworth, 1967)


Martin, G. *African political thought* (Basingstoke, 2012), Chapters 4-6


**Supplementary Readings**

Biney, A. *The political and social thought of Kwame Nkrumah* (Basingstoke, 2011)

Cabral, A. *Unity and struggle: speeches and writings* (London, 1980)

Chabal, P. *Amilcar Cabral: Revolutionary leadership and people’s war* (Cambridge, 1983)

Falola, T. *Nationalism and African intellectuals* (Rochester NY, 2001)


T. Mkandawire (ed.), *African intellectuals: rethinking politics, language, gender and development* (Dakar, 2005)

Mazrui, A. *Towards a Pax Africana: a study of ideology and ambition* (Chicago, 1967)

Chapter 3. See also Mazuri’s 1979 BBC Reith Lecture series on ‘The African condition’: [http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00h4n4v](http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00h4n4v)

Nyerere, J. *Freedom and unity* (Dar es Salaam, 1966)

Nyerere, J. *Freedom and socialism* (Dar es Salaam, 1968)

Nkrumah, K. *Africa must unite* (London, 1963)

Peterson, C.F., *Dubois, Fanon, Cabral: The margins of elite anti-colonial leadership* (Lanham, MD, 2007)

Senghor, L. *On African socialism* (New York, 1964)

- **Novels and Films**

  *The Battle of Algiers* Directed by Gillo Pontecorvo (Algeria, 1966)

  *Lumumba* Directed by Raoul Peck (Congo, 2000)

  Césaire, A. *Notebook of a return to my native land* (Martinique, 1939)

**WEEK SIX: From colonialism to postcolonialism**

This class examines the extent to which the postcolonial politics of Africa can be seen as a legacy of the colonial period. Has ethnicity become more politically significant in postcolonial Africa? Are African states simply predatory on their people? What has been the impact of structural adjustment and political ‘re-democratization’ in Africa? To what extent have political solutions to Africa’s problems been imposed from outside, rather than formulated on the continent?

**Seminar Readings**

**Core Readings**
Bayart, J F *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly* (London, 1993)
Reno, W. ‘Congo: from state collapse to ‘absolutism’ to state failure’, *Third World Quarterly* 27 (2006), pp. 43-56

**Supplementary Readings**
Bratton, M & Van de Walle, N. *Democratic experiments in Africa* (Cambridge, 1997)
Chabal, P & Daloz J. *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument* (Oxford, 1999)
Englebert, P. ‘The contemporary African state: Neither African nor state’ *Third World Quarterly* 18, no. 4 (1997), 767-775
Ferguson, J. *Global Shadows: Africa in the neo-liberal world order* (Durham, 2006)
WEEK SEVEN: Conflict in postcolonial Africa
This class explores conflict and civil wars in Africa after independence, assessing the role of colonial legacies, Cold War politics, competition for natural resources, the significance of ethnic and religious divisions within African states, and the manipulation of 'youth'. We will compare conflicts in different regions of Africa, including Rwanda and the DRC, Sudan and Darfur, as well as Somalia and West Africa.

Seminar Readings

Core Readings
Lemarchand, R. The dynamics of violence in central Africa (Philadelphia, 2009)
Reno, W. Warfare in independent Africa (Cambridge, 2011)
Young, C. ‘Contextualizing Congo conflicts’ in J.F. Clark, The African stakes of the Congo war (Basingstoke, 2002)
Supplementary Readings

- **Democratic Republic of Congo / Rwanda**
  Prunier, G. *Africa’s world war* (Oxford, 2009); also published as: *From genocide to continental war* (London, 2009)
  Straus, S. *The order of genocide* (London, 2006)

- **Darfur / Sudan**
  Daly, M.W. *Darfur’s sorrow* 2nd ed. (Cambridge, 2010)
  Johnson, D.H. *The root causes of Sudan’s civil wars* 2nd ed. (Oxford, 2011)
  Mamdani, M. *Saviours and survivors: Darfur, politics and the war on terror* (London: 2009).
  See also ‘commentaries’ in *African Affairs* 108 (2009): 655-77

- **Somalia**

- **Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d’Ivoire**
  Abdullah, I. (ed.) *Between democracy and terror: The Sierra Leone civil war* (Dakar, 2004)
  Chauveau, J-P. & Richards, P. *West African insurgencies in agrarian perspective: Côte d’Ivoire and Sierra Leone compared* *Journal of Agrarian Change* 8 (2008): 515-52
  Ferme, M. *The underneath of things: Violence, history, and everyday life in Sierra Leone.* (Berkeley, 2001)
  McGovern, M. *Making war in Côte d’Ivoire* (Chicago, 2011)

- **Novels and Films**
  Adichie, C.N. *Half of a yellow sun* (Nigeria, 2006)
  Andrzejewski, B.W. & Lewis, I.M. *Somali poetry: an introduction* (Somalia, 1964)
  Beah, I. *A long way gone: memoirs of a child soldier* (Sierra Leone, 2007)
  Farah, N. *Maps* (Somalia, 1986)
  Hari, D. *The Translator* (Sudan, 2008)
  Kourouma, A. *Allah is not obliged* (Côte d’Ivoire, 2006)
  *Sometimes in April* Directed by Raoul Peck (Rwanda, 2005)
  *Ezra* Directed by Newton I. Aduka (Nigeria, 2007) [About Sierra Leone]
  *Johnny Mad Dog* Directed by Jean-Stéphane Sauvage (Liberia, 2008)
WEEK EIGHT: Popular culture in African history and politics

This class engages with African popular culture, drawing especially on the cultural output of Nigeria and South Africa. We will consider the myriad forms of African cultural expression both past and present, and ask to what extent popular culture in Africa has offered a political critique of state and society and challenged or perpetuated negative stereotypes of Africans.

Seminar Readings

Core Readings
Barber, K. Readings in African popular culture (London, 1997) Introduction and Chapters by Hannerz & Horn
Waterman, C.A. ‘Our tradition is a very modern tradition: Popular music & the construction of pan-Yoruba identity’ Ethnomusicology 34 (1990)

Supplementary Readings
Ansell, G. Soweto blues: jazz, popular music and politics in South Africa (New York, 2005)
Barber, K. The generation of plays: Yoruba popular life in Theater (Bloomington, 2000)
Chapman, M. The Drum decade: stories from the 1950s (Pietermaritzburg, 2001)
Cole, C. Ghana’s concert party theatre (Bloomington, 2001)
Coplan, D. In township tonight! South Africa’s black city, music and theatre (Johannesburg, 1985)
Edmondson, L. Performance and politics in Tanzania: the nation on stage (Bloomington, 2007).
Weiss, B. Street dreams and hip hop barbershops: Global fantasy in urban Tanzania (Bloomington, 2009)
White, B.W, Rumba rules: The politics of dance music in Mobutu’s Zaire (Durham, 2008)
• **Novels and Films**

*Living in bondage* Directed by Chris Opi Rapu (Nigeria, 1992)


*Benda Bilili!* Directed by R. Barret & F. de La Tullaye (Congo, 2010)