

Sociology 39
African World Perspectives
Spring 2007
T/TH 3-4:15
Gasson 205

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 1-3pm and by appointment

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Office Hours: Wed. 10: 20 a.m-noon

Course Description

This course examines some of the key events in African history, told through the means of African autobiographies. Each of the readings is written by an African person, who intertwines the events of their own lives with major historical events such as apartheid, the genocide in Rwanda, civil war in the Sudan, and political corruption in Nigeria. As a core course the class will include the following:

Perennial Questions: We begin the course by examining apartheid in South Africa and asking the question: How have Africans managed to maintain cultural integrity and build societies in spite of the impact of racism? We also use apartheid as a way of asking what is the relationship between faith and social action? We move on to look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in South Africa with an aim to understand what is the nature of human freedom and what are the limits of our ability to withstand oppression and forgive?

We then move into looking at survivors of civil war in Sudan and genocide in Rwanda and ethnic conflict in Nigeria in order to ask what is the impact of culture on behavior and what is the relationship between our basic needs as human beings and the societies we create. What strategies, both personal and political, have individuals used to withstand hardship?

Finally we look at the issue of HIV/AIDS assessing its impact economically, politically, and culturally.

Cultural Diversity: The majority of the readings for the course were written by African people—rich and poor, urban and rural, male and female, black and white, old and young, gay and straight. Through engaging with their words and their lives you will come to appreciate the incredible diversity of opinions, experiences, and perspectives that African people have.

Historical Perspective: No study of Africa can proceed without looking at the historical events that produced the wars, famines, and poverty that are such an intrinsic part of life on the

Continent today. We will look at the relationship between larger socio-historical events such as the slave trade, colonialism, and the Cold War and the trajectory of individual African lives. We will also look at specific events (e.g. the Truth and Reconciliation Commission and the Rwandan genocide) as manifestations of larger socio-historical trends.

Methodology: The books we will read represent a variety of sociological perspectives and research methodologies. We will examine the ways in which various theoretical perspectives (Marxist, liberal, free market) shape the worldviews of our authors.

Writing component: During the course of the semester you will write a paper through which you will be encouraged to compare and contrast the different ways in which African peoples have dealt with the challenges posed by colonialism, racism, poverty, and underdevelopment.

Creating a personal philosophy: The aim of this course is to help you develop a greater awareness of and appreciation for how diverse life in Africa really is. You will be challenged to examine what stereotypes you previously held about life in Africa and to begin to think about Africans differently and appreciate the many ways in which Africans hold values that are both similar to and different from the values you hold.

Required Texts:

- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela **A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid.**
- Charlayne Hunter-Gault. **New News Out of Africa: Uncovering Africa's Renaissance.**
- Philip Gourevitch. **We Wish To Inform You That Tomorrow We Will Be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda.**
- Nelson Mandela. **Long Walk to Freedom**
- Jennifer Marlow, Aisha Bain and Adam Shapiro. **Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival.**
- Paul Rusesabagina. **An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography**
- Ken Wiwa. **In the Shadow of a Saint: A Son's Journey to Understand His Father's Legacy.**

Grading:

Attendance and participation (5%)
Test 1: (15 %) ON **FEB 22**
Test 2 : (15 %) ON **APRIL 3**
Paper: (25 %) due **APRIL 26**
Final: 40 % (May 11 @ 12:30 p.m)

JAN 16: INTRODUCTION

TOPIC I: PERSPECTIVES ON APARTHEID

JAN 18: LECTURE ON S. AFRICAN HISTORY

- William Beinart. *Twentieth Century South Africa* (Chapter 1) [electronic reserve]
- Nigel Worden. *The Making of Modern South Africa* (Chapter 4) [electronic reserve]

JAN 23: LECTURE ON S. AFRICAN HISTORY

- Nigel Worden. *The Making of Modern South Africa* (Chapter 5) [electronic reserve]

JAN 25: LECTURE ON S. AFRICAN HISTORY

- William Beinart. *Twentieth Century South Africa*. (Chapter 4) [electronic reserve]

JAN 30: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

- Nelson Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom*. (Ch. 11-14)

FEB 1: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

- Nelson Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom*. (Ch. 15-22)

FEB 6: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

- Nelson Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom*. (Ch. 23-39)

FEB 8: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

- Nelson Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom*. (Ch. 42 and 45-58)

FEB 13: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF LONG WALK TO FREEDOM

- Nelson Mandela. *Long Walk to Freedom*. (Ch. 86-98)
- Allister Sparks. *Tomorrow is Another Country* [electronic reserve]

TOPIC II: THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

FEB 15: VIDEO SHOWN IN CLASS: FACING THE TRUTH

- Ken Christie. *The South African Truth Commission*. (Ch. 5 & 6) [electronic reserve]

FEB 20: VIDEO SHOWN IN CLASS: FACING THE TRUTH

FEB 22: FIRST TEST

FEB 27: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *A Human Being Died That Night*. (Ch. 1-4)
- Charlayne Hunter-Gault. *New News Out of Africa*. (pp. 1-30)

MARCH 1: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *A Human Being Died That Night*. (Ch. 5-Epilogue)
- Charlayne Hunter-Gault. *New News Out of Africa*. (pp. 42-69)

MARCH 6: SPRING BREAK

MARCH 8: SPRING BREAK

TOPIC III: THE GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

MARCH 13: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON HISTORY OF RWANDA

- Philip Gourvetich. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we will be Killed with Our Families*. (Ch. 4-8)

MARCH 15: IN CLASS FILM: GHOSTS OF RWANDA

- Philip Gourvetich. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we will be Killed with Our Families*. (Ch. 11 & 12)

MARCH 20: IN CLASS FILM: GHOSTS OF RWANDA

- Paul Rusesabagina. *An Ordinary Man*. (Ch. 3-6)

MARCH 27: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON FILM AND ORDINARY MAN

- Paul Rusesabagina. *An Ordinary Man*. (Ch. 7-10)

MARCH 29: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON POST GENOCIDE RWANDA & FORGIVENESS AND JUSTICE

- Philip Gourvetich. *We Wish to Inform You that Tomorrow we will be Killed with Our Families*. (Ch. 22)
- Paul Rusesabagina. *An Ordinary Man*. (Ch. 11)
- Tim Allen. *The International Criminal Court and the Lord's Resistance Army*. (Chapter 6) [electronic reserve]
- A. Finnegan. *Memorable Process in a Forgotten War*. [electronic reserve]

APRIL 3: SECOND TEST

APRIL 5: NO CLASS

TOPIC IV: CONFLICT IN THE SUDAN

APRIL 10: LECTURE ON HISTORY OF THE SUDAN

APRIL 12: IN CLASS FILM: ALL ABOUT DARFUR

- Jen Marlowe. *Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival*. (Ch. 4 & 5)

APRIL 17: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON DARFUR & CONFLICT IN HORN OF AFRICA

- Jen Marlowe. *Darfur Diaries: Stories of Survival* (Ch. 6, 7, 9)

TOPIC V: ETHNIC CONFLICT IN NIGERIA

APRIL 19: IN CLASS FILM: KEN SARO WIWA: AN AFRICAN MARTYR & LECTURE

- Ken Wiwa. *In the Shadow of a Saint*. (Ch. 2, 4, 6, 8)

APRIL 24: LECTURE/DISCUSSION OF KEN SARO WIWA

- Ken Wiwa. *In the Shadow of a Saint*. (Ch. 9-14)

TOPIC VI: HIV/AIDS IN AFRICA

APRIL 26: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON HIV/AIDS AND ECONOMIC IMPACT

- Barnett and Whiteside. "Individuals, Households, Communities." (Ch. 7) [electronic reserve]
- "The Global HIV/AIDS Epidemic." [electronic reserve]
- "The HIV/AIDS epidemic in Sub-Saharan Africa [electronic reserve]

PAPER DUE IN CLASS ON APRIL 26

MAY 1: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON HIV/AIDS AND GLOBAL CONFLICT

- Barnett and Whiteside. "Why Africa." (Ch. 5) [electronic reserve]
- Nancy Mock. "Conflict and HIV." [electronic reserve]

MAY 3: LECTURE/DISCUSSION ON HIV/AIDS AND GLOBAL POLICY

- Paul Farmer. "Pathologies of Power." (Ch. 5) [electronic reserve]
- Stephen Lewis. *Race Against Time* (Ch. 5) [electronic reserve]
- Charlayne Hunter-Gault. *New News Out of Africa* (pp. 30-42)

FINAL EXAM MAY 11 AT 12:30

