Sociology 39
African World Perspectives

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Course Description

This course examines some of the key events in African history from colonialism through apartheid in South Africa, genocide in Rwanda, the conflict in Northern Uganda, HIV/AIDS, the impacts of globalization and economic development, and contemporary intervention in Africa.

As a core course, the class will include the following:

Perennial Questions: We begin the course by examining the nature of colonial rule and its impact on African societies. We then move to examine apartheid in South Africa and ask the question: How have Africans managed to maintain cultural integrity and build societies in spite of the impact of racism? 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 on to look at genocide in Rwanda. We will seek to understand the impact of history on culture and behavior. Specifically we will be trying to understand what impact politics and economics have on how identities are created, re-created, and destroyed.

We then move into looking at the conflict in Northern Uganda, trying to understand both the global and local forces that create and perpetuate such situations of poverty and violence. In particular, we will ask the questions: How do societies rebuild their communities after such extended periods of violence? What measures are appropriate for holding human rights violators accountable? We will also engage comparative inquiries of how Northern Uganda addresses questions of justice post-conflict in contrast to South Africa and Rwanda.
We will then spend time on the issue of HIV/AIDS, assessing its impact economically, politically, and culturally. We also examine the challenges of accessing treatment and care in Africa, as well as forms of social mobilization that strive to combat the epidemic.

We will also examine the related topics of globalization and development, considering how models of economic integration have helped and hindered growth and prosperity in Africa. We will critically examine the influence of regional and international development institutions (such as the World Bank and IMF), trade treaties and organizations, and corporations on the continent, and will consider the following questions: What are the motivations behind the economic development of Africa and what is the appropriate role of institutions, communities, and individuals? How is development related to colonialism?

Finally, we will turn to a discussion about contemporary intervention and Western-held perceptions of Africa. Through our analysis, we will attempt to identify critical elements for constructive engagement with Africa.

**Cultural Diversity:** Many of the readings and perspectives of this course come from 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 conflict in Northern Uganda) 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 two papers 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; and the ways in which the world has responded to Africa’s challenges through various models of engagement and intervention.

**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. You will be encouraged to reexamine your role as an individual and what societal challenges help and hinder you own efforts to create change.

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**Required Texts**

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- Grace Akallo. Girl Soldier.
- S.Kiguli and V. Barungi. I Dare to Say.
- P. Gourvetich. We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda.
- Clicker

Grading

Midterm: 25%
Final: 25%
Creative Paper (#1): 20 %
Analytical Paper (#2): Analysis of an NGO/Organization: 20%
Attendance/Participation: 10%*

* (Attendance will be taken every day. We will use the ‘Clicker’ to take attendance. Please bring the clicker to every class. Several times during the course of the semester we will give an impromptu in-class assignment. You will complete the assignment using the clicker. If you have an unexcused absence and miss the assignment you miss the points for the day. No makeup will be granted.

You are also required to attend one evening session on Wednesday, November 19, 7:30-9:30pm where we will do an exercise called Urban Survival. The session will last two hours. An unexcused absence for this session will count as two missed class sessions.

Due Dates:

Midterm: October 21st
Creative Paper: November 6th
Original Analysis: December 4th
Final: Dec 16th

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TOPIC I: HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON AFRICA AND COLONIZATION

September 2: Film: “This Magnificent African Cake” (60 min.)

September 4: Lecture/Discussion: Colonialism

TOPIC II: PERSPECTIVES ON APARTHEID

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September 9: Lecture/Discussion: South Africa

September 11: Lecture/Discussion: South Africa

September 16: Lecture/Discussion: South Africa
- Part X, “Talking With The Enemy,”, 88, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99

TOPIC III: THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISION

September 18: Film: “Facing the Truth” (part 1)
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. A Human Being Died That Night (Ch. 2-4)

September 23: Lecture/Discussion: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Film “Facing the Truth: (part 2)
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. A Human Being Died That Night (Ch. 5-7)

September 25: Discussion: Truth and Reconciliation Commission
- Antjie. Country of My Skull. “Reconciliation: The Lesser of 2 Evils (Ch. 10) [Electronic Reserve]

TOPIC IV: GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

September 30:
- Film: Ghosts of Rwanda (part 1)
- P. Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You, Ch. 4-8

October 2:
- Film: Ghosts of Rwanda (part 2)
- P. Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You, Ch. Ch. 11

October 7: Discussion: Genocide in Rwanda

THE CONFLICT IN NORTHERN UGANDA
October 9: Lecture/Discussion: The Conflict in Northern Uganda
- Tim Allen. Trial Justice: The International Criminal Court and the Lord’s Resistance Army. (Ch. 2 & 3) [Electronic Reserve]
- Sverker Finnstron. “For God & My Life: War and Cosmology in Northern Uganda” in No Peace, No War: An Anthropology of Contemporary Armed Conflicts (Chpt 6) [Electronic Reserve]

October 14: In-Class Film: Uganda Rising
- Faith J. H. McDonnell & Grace Akallo. Girl Soldier. (Intro, Chs. 1,3,5,7,9,11,13,14,15,17,19,21)
- Matthew Green. The Wizard of the Nile. “A Strange Kind of Wizard” (Chapter 13) [Electronic Reserve]

October 16: Lecture/Discussion: Justice/Reconciliation in Northern Uganda
- Rosalba Oywa, “Women’s Contribution to Peacebuilding in Northern Uganda” [Electronic Reserve]
- Barney Afako: Reconciliation & Justice: Mato Oput and the Amnesty Act” [Electronic Reserve]

October 21: **Mid-Term Exam**

TOPIC V: THE HIV/AIDS EPIDEMIC IN AFRICA

October 23: Lecture/Discussion: Social & Economic Effects of the HIV/AIDS Epidemic
- Tony Barnett and Alan Whiteside. “Individuals, Households, and Communities.” In AIDS in the Twenty-First Century. [Electronic Reserve]
- Susan N. Kiguli and Violet Barungi. I Dare to Say. Foreword, Preface & “The Second Twin.”

October 28: In-Class Film: A Closer Walk
- Susan N. Kiguli and Violet Barungi. I Dare to Say. “Key to a New Life” and “Looking for Home.”

October 30: Lecture/Discussion: Access to Prevention, Treatment and Care
- Melissa Faye Greene. There Is No Me Without You. (Ch. 28) [Electronic Reserve]
• Additional reading to be announced.

November 4: In-Class Film: The State of Denial
• Susan N. Kiguli and Violet Barungi. I Dare to Say. “In God’s Palm.”

November 6: Lecture/Discussion: Social Movements (TAC) **Creative Paper Due**
• Alex De Waal. AIDS and Power, (Ch. 3) [Electronic Reserve]

TOPIC VI: GLOBALIZATION AND DEVELOPMENT

November 11: Lecture/Discussion: Globalization, Development, & Key Global Institutions
• Maggie Black. “The History of an Idea.” In The No-Nonsense Guide to International Development. (Ch. 1) [Electronic Reserve]
• Stiglitz, “Another World is Possible.” In Making Globalization Work. (Ch. 1)

November 13: Lecture/Discussion: Debt and Structural Adjustment
• Wayne Ellwood. “Debt and Structural Adjustment” The No-Nonsense Guide to Globalization. (Ch. 3) [Electronic Reserve]

November 18: Lecture/Discussion: Trade and Corporations
• Monique Maddy. Learning to Love Africa, (Ch. 4) [Electronic Reserves]
• Stiglitz, “The Multinational Corporation.” In Making Globalization Work. (Ch. 7) [Electronic Reserves]
November 20: Lecture/Discussion: Rethinking Globalization and Development
- Jeffrey Sachs. *The End of Poverty*. (p. 302-328) [Electronic Reserve]

**TOPIC VII: CONTEMPORARY INTERVENTION AND PERCEPTIONS IN AFRICA**

November 25: Guest Lecture: Western Representations and Perceptions of Africa
- Paul Farmer. “Pathologies of Power.” In *Pathologies of Power*. (Ch. 5) [Electronic Reserve]

December 2: Lecture/Discussion: Western Perceptions & Contemporary Interventions
  Available on-line at: [http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mamd01_.html](http://www.lrb.co.uk/v29/n05/mamd01_.html)
- Uzodinma Iweala. “Stop Trying to Save Africa.” [Electronic Reserve]
- Additional reading to be announced.

December 4: Lecture/Discussion: Models of Intervention **Organizational Analysis Due**

Final Exam: Tuesday, December 16th, 9:00 AM