Sociology 39
African World Perspectives
Fall 2010
T/TH 9-10:20
Campion 300

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Course Description

This course examines some of the key events in contemporary African society such as apartheid in South Africa, genocide in Rwanda, and the conflict in Darfur, Sudan.

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

Perennial Questions: We begin the course by examining 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 conclude by looking into looking at the conflict in Sudan, trying to understand both the global and local forces that create and perpetuate such situations of poverty and violence.

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 Darfur) 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: Your essay will be an opportunity 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.

Required Texts

- P. Gourvetich. *We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed With Our Families: Stories From Rwanda.*
- Daoud Hari. *The Translator*
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid.*
- Mamdani, Mahmood. *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror.*
- Tom Zoellner and Paul Rusesabagina. *An Ordinary Man.*

Grading

- Test 1: 25%
- Test 2: 25%
- Paper: 25%
- Final: 25%

Due Dates:

- Test 1: September 21-23
- Test 2: November 9-11
- Paper: December 9
- Final: December 15
TOPIC I: APARTHEID IN SOUTH AFRICA

September 7:
- Introduction
- Lecture on South African History 1652-1947
- Film Clip “Hold Up the Sun—Enter the Masses”

September 9:
- Film clip (shown in class) “Hold Up the Sun—Enter the Masses”

September 14:
- Film clip (shown in class): “The Long Walk of Nelson Mandela”

September 16:
- Part X, “Talking With The Enemy,”, 88, 89, 90, 92, 93, 94, 96, 97, 98, 99
- Film clip (shown in class): “Long Walk of Nelson Mandela”

September 21:
- First Test (Test will only cover material from topic 1). Test is take home. Test should be picked up in class on September 21 by 9:30 a.m and returned to class (typed) at the end of class on September 23 by 10:20.

September 23:
- Test should be returned in class by 10:20 (typed)

TOPIC II: THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISION

September 28:
- Film: “Facing the Truth” (Part 1) [shown in class]
- A. Krog. Country of My Skull: Introduction, Chapters 2, 3, 5,
September 30:
- Film “Facing the Truth” (Part 2) [shown in class]

October 5:
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. A Human Being Died That Night (Ch.2-4)

October 7:
- Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. A Human Being Died That Night (Ch.5-7)

TOPIC III: GENOCIDE IN RWANDA

October 12:
- P. Gourevitch, We Wish to Inform You: Ch. 4-9 and Chapter 11

October 14:
- M. Mamdani. When Victims Become Killers, p. 34-39, 73-76, and Chapter 3

October 19:
- M. Mamdani. When Victims Become Killers: Chapter 7

October 21:
- Film: Ghosts of Rwanda (part 1) [shown in class]

October 26:
- Film: Ghosts of Rwanda (part 2) [shown in class]

October 28
- P. Rusesabagina. An Ordinary Man: Ch. 1-5
- J. Hatzfield. Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak:
  - “The Killers” (p. 245-253)
  - “How it was organized” (p. 10-16)
  - “The First Time” (p. 21-27)
  - “A Gang” (p. 28-35)
  - “Apprenticeship” (p. 36-40)
  - “Taste and Distaste” (p. 47-51)

November 2:
- P. Rusesabagina. An Ordinary Man: Ch. 6-11
- J. Hatzfield. Machete Season: The Killers in Rwanda Speak:
  - “Field Work” (p. 60-65)
  - “Punishment” (p. 71-76)
  - “Looting” (p. 82-87)
  - “Acquaintances” (p. 119-124)
November 4:
- Film: “As We Forgive: Stories of Reconciliation from Rwanda” [shown in class]

November 9:
- Second Test: Take home test. Pick up Test in class by 9:30 and return on November 11 by 10:20 (typed).

November 11:
- Second Test: Due in class by 10:20 (typed).

TOPIC IV: THE CRISIS IN DARFUR, SUDAN

November 16:
- Video: “Sand and Sorrow” (Part 1) [shown in class]

November 18:
- “Sand and Sorrow” (Part 2) [shown in class]
- M. Mamdani. Saviors and Survivors: Introduction, Ch. 1, 2

November 23:
- M. Mamdani. Saviors and Survivors: Pp. 104-108, Ch. 5

November 30:
- M. Mamdani. Saviors and Survivors: Part III “Rethinking the Darfur Crisis”

December 2:
- D. Hari. The Translator: Pp. 3-61

December 7:

December 9: Paper Due. Final wrap up/discussion comparing South Africa, Rwanda, and Sudan

Final Exam, December 15 at 9 AM!!!