3418: ANTHROPOLOGY OF AFRICA

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COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course provides an introduction to anthropological approaches to the study of African societies through the exploration of three issues: indigenous people, wildlife conservation, and the AIDS epidemic. The goal of the course is to come to an understanding of how anthropologists study and write about the complexity of contemporary Africa and how this is different from conventional representations of Africa and Africans in, for example, National Geographic Magazine.

DISABILITY SERVICES

Any student who feels s/he may need an accommodation based on the impact of a disability should contact me privately to discuss their specific needs. Please contact the Office for Disability Services at 614-292-3307 in room 150 Pomerene Hall to coordinate reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities.

COURSE GOALS

Students will be able to compare anthropological perspectives with mainstream media perspectives in order to come to a better understanding of issues in contemporary Africa, and this entails that students will be able to do the following:

1. Understand and appreciate anthropological perspectives of contemporary issues in Africa (anthropological approach);
2. Recognize the difference between scholarly and non-scholarly sources and appreciate the value of scholarly sources (information literacy);
3. Draw from multiple disciplinary approaches to come to a better understanding of current issues in contemporary Africa (disciplinary perspectives);
4. Effectively contribute to discussions, including facilitating the participation of others and inclusion of other points of view (productive interaction with other students);
5. Recognize how mainstream media creates stereotypes about Africa and how this shapes our perceptions of the continent (critical literacy, reflexivity);
6. Effectively communicate anthropological understandings of contemporary issues in Africa in writing and oral presentations without recreating stereotypes (writing skills, representation).
READINGS

The following books are required reading and available in the OSU Book store or through various online vendors. Additional required readings are made available through Carmen.


All assigned readings are mandatory. You are expected to have read the assigned readings once or twice before you come to class. As you read, highlight, take notes, summarize, look up new words or concepts, and come with questions for me and/or your classmates. In short, be prepared to discuss the readings in class and bring the readings to class. I also recommend you to go over the readings once more after class.

COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION

1. Attendance and participation. You are expected be actively engaged in class; that is, coming to class prepared, paying attention, and contributing to discussions and problem solving, both by making comments and by facilitating other people’s participation. Because it is difficult to do well in the course if sessions are missed attendance at every class meeting is required. Late arrival and early departure are considered poor participation; they are disruptive to others and make it likely to miss essential information. Please contact me if there is an emergency situation. If you are ill and must miss a class, you are responsible for getting the notes and assignment information from your classmates.

2. Quizzes. There will be regular pop quizzes throughout the course about the assigned readings for that particular day. The quizzes will focus on critical concepts that are central to the course. You will be asked to describe, explain and apply these concepts. There will be 12 quizzes and 2 of the quizzes with the lowest scores will be dropped.

3. Class Discussions. Students will be responsible for leading one in-class discussion and providing a minimum of three discussion questions for the readings for that particular day. In the discussions we will critically compare and contrast mainstream and anthropological perspectives on Africa as well as whether and how anthropological perspectives give us a better understanding of contemporary Africa. The discussion questions should be aimed at these overall goals. Students will be leading discussion in pairs or groups (depending on class enrollments). Everyone will sign up for a discussion date in the beginning of the semester. The discussion leaders will submit their discussion questions to the class by
posting them to the discussion section on Carmen two days before the discussion. All students must print out (or write out) the discussion questions and bring them to class, along with talking points or responses to those questions.

4. Research Project: The main assignment is a research project in which you examine one thematic issue in Africa. The research project is divided in a number of smaller assignments over the course of the semester that will prepare you for writing a thorough and thoughtful research paper. The goal of the paper is to come to an anthropological understanding of your particular topic. The final papers will be edited for a special issue of the National Anthropological Magazine (NAM) dedicated to Africa.

   i) Annotated bibliographies. You will write two annotated bibliographies on your topic. The first bibliography should include only anthropological scholarly sources. The second bibliography can include non-scholarly and non-anthropology sources. The bibliography should follow the guidelines of the American Anthropological Association (AAA). In your annotation you should: 1) identify the source, 2) summarize the source, 3) evaluate its strengths and weaknesses, and 4) reflect on its usefulness for your project. The AAA guidelines and a model of an annotated bibliography are posted on Carmen. The annotated bibliographies are due on Thursday September 20th and Thursday October 4th.

   ii) Article outline. The outline consists of a title, abstract, and list of references. The abstract should include your research question and a brief description of your topic. The outline should be no more than two pages long. You are encouraged to meet me during office hours to discuss your choice of topic before you submit your paper outline. The paper outline is due on Thursday October 18th.

   iii) First draft. The first draft should be about 10 pages long (double-spaced, one-inch margins) and follow the AAA style guide. You should cite appropriately and integrate course readings in your paper. The first draft is due on Thursday November 1st.

   iv) Final article. The final article should be about 10 pages long. In the magazine article for the National Anthropological Magazine (NAM) you have to effectively communicate your anthropological understanding of a contemporary issue in Africa in writing. You will do this by effectively explaining and supporting your arguments by providing evidence and illustrations; presenting ideas and evidence clearly and concisely; and organizing your article with an introduction with a problem statement, data discussion and a conclusion. You should cite appropriately and integrate course readings in your paper. As in the National Geographic articles you should include pictures and captions; however, these pictures should not reinforce mainstream views about Africa. The final magazine article is due Tuesday November 20th.
5. **Review essay.** Students will write a review essay in which they compare and contrast our special issue of the National Anthropological Magazine (NAM) with the special issue of National Geographic Magazine (NGM) dedicated to Africa. It is critical that students reflect in the essay on what they have learned and unlearned about Africa. Detailed instructions will be posted on Carmen.

**Evaluation:** Course responsibilities will be weighted in the following way:

1. Participation and attendance 10%
2. Quizzes 20%
3. Class discussion 10%
4. Research project
   - Paper outline 5%
   - Annotated bibliographies 10%
   - First draft 5%
   - Final article 25%
5. Review essay 15%

**Total** 100%

Final grades are based on the OSU Standard Scheme. A general guide to how you are doing is: A 93; A- 90-92; B+ 87-89; B 83-86; B- 80-82; C+ 77-79; C 73-76; C- 70-72; D+ 67-69; D 60-66; E< 60.

**Special notes from the instructor:**

- Except in cases of properly documented illness or personal emergency will late assignments be accepted; they will progressively lose value and will be evaluated and returned as time allows.
- I strive to make this a paper-less course. All assignments are to be submitted as .doc or .docx documents in the Carmen dropboxes, not in hard copy or by email.
- I will use Carmen to post assignments and other information for the class (e.g., cancelled office hours, changes in reading assignments). Check it regularly.
- All students should become familiar with the rules governing academic misconduct (e.g., cheating, plagiarism). Ignorance of these rules is not an acceptable defense. Anyone violating said rules will be reported to the Board of Academic Misconduct. If you have any questions, please see me.
- Please note that the schedule below is tentative and that the instructor reserves the right to make changes.

**SCHEDULE AND TOPICS**

**INTRODUCTION: LEARNING ABOUT AFRICA**

**WEEK 1: INTRODUCTION**
**August 23: Learning about Africa**
Tracing the human footprint (Quammen 2005)
WEEK 2: THE VIEW FROM NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC
August 28: Making National Geographic
Into the machine (Lutz and Collins 1993:47-85)
* Film: Scenes from National Geographic: Africa
August 30: Reading National Geographic
Reader’s imagination (Lutz and Collins 1993:217-258)
* Film: Scenes from National Geographic: Africa

WEEK 3: HOW ANTHROPOLOGISTS THINK
September 4: How to write about Africa
How to write about Africa (Wainana 2005), reflecting on NGM (Moseley 2005)
* Film: Danger of the single story (2009)
September 6: Anthropological approaches
Weird people (Henrich et al. 2010), Introduction (Peoples and Bailey 2011)

WEEK 4: SOURCES FROM AND ABOUT AFRICA
September 11: Finding scholarly and non-scholarly sources
♦ Library workshop: finding & evaluating sources (Nancy Courtney)
September 13: Finding sources from and about Africa
Read posts on ThinkAfricaPress.com and/or GlobalVoices.org
♦ Library workshop: finding African sources (Miriam Conteh-Morgan)

THEME 1: IDENTITIES IN THE FOREST

WEEK 5: THE FOREST PEOPLE
September 18: The forest people
Introduction (Rupp 2011:1-18)
* Film: scenes from Africa: Voices of the Forest
September 20: The forest and its peoples (D)
Paradigms (Rupp 2011:19-54), who rules the forest (Salopek 2005)
* Film: Caterpillar moon (1996)
▶ First annotated bibliography is due

WEEK 6: DYNAMICS OF IDENTITY
September 25: Ethnicity
Belonging (Rupp 2011:55-92)
September 27: Identity
Spaces (Rupp 2011:93-121)
WEEK 7: IMPACT OF IDENTITY CATEGORIZATION
October 2: Contradictions
Contradictions (Rupp 2011:214-247)
October 4: Problems with indigeneity (D)
▶ Second annotated bibliography is due

THEME 2: AIDS

WEEK 8: THE NEW PLAGUE
October 9: Meaning and structure
Introduction (Thornton 2008:1-32)
☀ Film: The HIV superhighway
October 11: Networks of sex and relations (D)
Social determinants (Thornton 2008:56-82), living with AIDS (Mendel 2005)

WEEK 9: CULTURAL MODELS
October 16: Cultural models of AIDS in Uganda
AIDS in Uganda (Thornton 2008:100-129)
October 18: Cultural models of AIDS in South Africa
Flows of sexual substance (Thornton 2008:195-219)
☀ Film: Where are you taking me? (2010)
▶ Paper outline is due

WEEK 10: INTERVENTIONS
October 23: Governance in public health
Indigenization (Thornton 2008:130-148)
October 25: Preventing AIDS (D)
Preventing AIDS (Thornton 2008:220-234), engaging healers (Green 1999:63-83)

THEME 3: CONSERVATION

WEEK 11: PASTORAL SYSTEMS
October 30: The ecology of pastoral systems
Turkana pastoralism (McCabe 1990:81-103)
* Film: scenes from Africa: Love in the Sahel
November 1: Conservation in a global perspective
Seeing conservation (Igoe 2004:36-68)

WEEK 12: CLASH OF CONSERVATION MODEL
November 6: Conservation models (D)
Conservation models (Igoe 2004:1-35), Return to Zambia (Fuller 2005)
November 8: Fortress conservation
Fortress conservation (Igoe 2004:69-102)
▶ First draft is due
WEEK 13 CONSERVATION AND GLOBALIZATION
November 13: Globalization of NGOs
Maasai NGO movement (Igoe 2004:104-132)
November 15: Community conservation (D)
Community Bambi (Fortmann 2005:1-18)
☀ Film: Milking the Rhino (2009)

WEEK 14: COMMUNITY CONSERVATION?
November 20: Milking the rhino
☀ Film: Milking the Rhino (2009)
November 22: Thanksgiving
No class

WRAPPING UP: REPRESENTING AFRICA

WEEK 15: WRITING ABOUT AFRICA
November 27: Writing as an anthropologist
Pastoral security (Moritz and Scholte 2011:12-17)
November 29: Showing Africa
Intersection of gazes (Lutz and Collins 1993:187-216)
► Magazine article is due

WEEK 16 REFLECTIONS
December 4: Reflections on representing Africa
Read National Anthropological Magazine (NAM)

FINALS WEEK
► Review essay is due before 12 noon on Friday December 7th in the Carmen dropbox
REQUIRED READINGS


