

Modern Africa

HIAF 111
Winter 2010
Tu-Th, 12.30-1.50
CSB 001

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Office Hours, Thurs. 2-3
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Our perceptions of Africa have been shaped by stereotypes of the continent as historically isolated and naturally prone to famine, disease, and savage wars. This course challenges these images by outlining (1) how such myths of Africa have taken shape, and (2) alternative ways of perceiving African realities. Since common stereotypes have filtered through the lenses of racism, imperialism, and colonialism, the course will interrogate each of these topics in multiple contexts. Just as importantly, as a means to dispel presumptions of African isolation we will investigate Africa's historical relation to other world regions before, during, and after colonization. Though we will stress the uniqueness of specific local, national, or regional circumstances, we will address each through themes such as spirituality, nationalism, and economy that affected people across the continent and drew them into larger spheres of relation. In this way we can appreciate common circumstances across Africa as well as divergences of experience.

In order to draw connections between Africa's precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial histories, the course spans the late nineteenth century to the present. We will not uncouple Africa's colonial history from the present but instead recognize the legacies of colonialism for contemporary Africa. Though not rigidly chronological, the lectures and readings follow a rough chronology that can help map large-scale changes over nearly a century and a half. Interconnectivity, foreign intervention, and the politics of identity will be unifying themes as we consider the complexities of Africa's recent past and assemble a tool-kit to more critically appraise contemporary images of Africa.

Required readings: available at Groundworks bookstore

Buchi Emecheta, *The Joys of Motherhood*. Heinemann: London, 1994.

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. New York: Mariner Books, 1999.

Ngugi wa Thiong'o, *Matigari*. Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1998.

Paul Rusesabagina, *An Ordinary Man: An Autobiography*. New York: Penguin, 2007.

EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS:

EXAMS: Three exams will be administered over the course of the quarter. The first two exams, January 28 and February 18, will be in the form of in-class essays. The final will be a take-home exam. You will be given the questions for the final exam at the end of class on March 11. **Your responses to all essay questions must be drawn from**

the lectures, readings, and films. The final exam must be submitted by 4pm on March 16 to the file bin opposite the elevators, HSS floor 5. Place your essay in the bin labeled "HIAF 111".

The three exams, including the final, will consist of three or four essay questions from which you may choose two. The first two exams will not be cumulative, i.e. you will only be responsible for the material covered in the unit immediately preceding each exam. Unlike the first two exams, **the final will be cumulative, so you will be responsible for bringing material from throughout the semester to bear on your responses.**

ASSIGNMENTS: We will watch multiple films over the course of the quarter. Since one of the goals of the course is to develop a more critical eye for popular representations of Africa, you are required to write **one-page reviews of two of the films.** *You may decide which two films you would like to review.* The review should not be a comprehensive outline of the film but should instead be a reflection on the themes, ideas, and messages of the movies. What did the film attempt to convey? In what ways was it successful? What were its faults? What did you like? What didn't you like?

EVALUATION:

Final grades will be calculated in the following manner, which is designed to reward improvement:

- 1) Exams: 90 percent (25% 1st, 30% 2nd, 35% Final)**
- 2) Film reviews: 10 percent**

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

| Meeting | Reading |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1.05 Introductions | none |
| PART ONE: Global Interfaces | |
| 1.07 Perceptions | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 1-60 |
| 1.12 Diasporas | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 61-114 |
| 1.14 Global Economies | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 115-181 |
| 1.19 Belief Systems | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 185-224 |
| 1.21 Invasions | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 225-274 |
| 1.26 Making Tribes | <i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 275-318 |
| 1.28 FIRST EXAM | none |

PART TWO: Colonialism

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|-------|--|-------------------------------------|
| 2.02 | Labor | <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , 1-55 |
| 2.04 | Colonial Praxis: <i>Black and White in Color</i> | <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , 56-110 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2.09 | Race | <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , 111-150 |
| 2.11 | Apartheid: <i>Catch A Fire</i> | <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , 151-197 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 2.16 | Nationalisms | <i>Joys of Motherhood</i> , 198-224 |
| 2.18 | SECOND EXAM | none |
| <hr/> | | |

PART THREE: Postcoloniality

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|-------|--|----------------------------------|
| 2.23 | Postcolonial Conflict | <i>Matigari</i> , 1-60 |
| 2.25 | Colonial Legacies: <i>Darwin's Nightmare</i> | <i>Matigari</i> , 61-156 |
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| 3.02 | HIV/AIDS | <i>Matigari</i> , 157-210 |
| 3.04 | Unequal Trade: <i>Black Gold</i> | <i>An Ordinary Man</i> , 1-70 |
| <hr/> | | |
| 3.09 | Genocide 1994 | <i>An Ordinary Man</i> , 71-140 |
| 3.11 | Petroleum Futures | <i>An Ordinary Man</i> , 141-224 |

FINAL EXAM questions will be handed out at the end of class on March 11. The essays must be submitted by 4pm on March 16 to the file bin opposite the elevators, HSS floor 5. Place your essay in the bin labeled "HIAF 111".