

Modern Africa

**HIAF 111, Fall 2012
Peterson Hall 102
Tues-Thurs, 12.30-1.50**

**Jeremy Prestholdt
Office Hours, Tues. 2-3
HSS rm. 6085 x4.1996**

Our perceptions of Africa have been shaped by stereotypes of the continent as historically isolated and naturally prone to famine, disease, and war. 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 important, 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 interpretations of Africa.

Required readings: available at the UCSD 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.

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

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

NOTE: *I do not respond to email*

If you have any questions, please ask me before class, in class, after class, or during office hours. I am happy to answer any and all questions you have.

EXAMS & ASSIGNMENTS:

EXAMS: Three exams will be administered over the course of the quarter. The first two exams, October 23 and November 13, 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 December 6. The final exam must be submitted by 4pm on December 14 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 essay questions from which you may choose two. **Your responses to all essay questions must be drawn from the lectures, readings, and films.** 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. **The final will be cumulative, so you will be responsible for bringing material from throughout the semester to bear in your responses.**

ASSIGNMENTS: We will watch several 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 responses (approx. 300-400 words) to 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. For example, 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? **Film responses are due one week from the date the film is shown in class.**

EVALUATION:

Final grades will be calculated in the following manner:

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

SCHEDULE OF CLASS MEETINGS

Meeting	Reading
9.27 Introductions	none
PART ONE: Global Interfaces	
10.02 Perceptions	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 1-60
10.04 Diasporas	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 61-114
10.09 Global Economies	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 115-181
10.11 Belief Systems	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 185-224
10.16 Invasions	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 225-274
10.18 Making Tribes	<i>King Leopold's Ghost</i> , 275-318

10.23 **FIRST EXAM** none

PART TWO: Colonialism

10.25 Labor *Joys of Motherhood*, 1-55

10.30 Apartheid *Joys of Motherhood*, 56-110

11.1 Film: *Black and White in Color* *Joys of Motherhood*, 111-150

11.06 Nationalisms *Joys of Motherhood*, 151-197

11.08 Film: *Catch a Fire* *Joys of Motherhood*, 198-224

11.13 **SECOND EXAM** none

PART THREE: Postcoloniality

11.15 Postcolonial Conflict *Matigari*, 1-60

11.20 Film: *Taking Root* *Matigari*, 61-156

11.22 Thanksgiving Holiday Film: *Blood Coltan*

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=in0A8SFL3XM>

11.27 HIV/AIDS *Matigari*, 157-210

11.29 Film: *Black Gold* *An Ordinary Man*, 1-70

12.04 Genocide in Rwanda *An Ordinary Man*, 71-140

12.06 Petroleum Futures *An Ordinary Man*, 141-224

FINAL EXAM questions will be handed out at the end of class on December 6. The essays must be submitted by 4pm on Friday, **December 14** to the file bin opposite the elevators, HSS floor 5. Place your essay in the bin labeled "HIAF 111".