

Modern Africa

HIAF 111
Fall 2007
Tu-Th, 12.30-1.50
WLH 2111

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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 pasts, 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.

Gerard Prunier, *Darfur: The Ambiguous Genocide*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 2005.

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. **Your responses to all essay questions must be drawn from the lectures, readings, and films.** The final exam must be submitted by 5pm on December 11.

The three exams, including the final, will consist of three or four essay questions from which you may choose two. 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. You will have the opportunity to earn extra credit by devising final exam questions. If your question is chosen, you will automatically receive full credit for one of the exam questions. Learning how to formulate questions is as important as learning how to answer them.

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 need not be a comprehensive outline of the film but should at least 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 did you not like?

EVALUATION:

Final grades will be calculated in the following manner

- 1) Exams: 90 percent (25% 1st, 30% 2nd, 35% 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: Colonialisms

10.25 Labor *Joys of Motherhood*, 1-55

10.30 Colonial Praxis: *Black and White in Color* *Joys of Motherhood*, 56-110

11.01 Race *Joys of Motherhood*, 111-150

11.06 Apartheid: *Catch A Fire* *Joys of Motherhood*, 151-197

11.08 Nationalisms *Joys of Motherhood*, 198-224

11.13 **SECOND EXAM** none

PART THREE: Postcolonialisms

11.15 Postcolonial Conflict *Matigari*, 1-60

11.20 Colonial Legacies: *Darwin's Nightmare* *Matigari*, 61-156

11.22 (holiday, no meeting)

11.27 HIV/AIDS *Matigari*, 157-210

11.29 Unequal Trade: *Black Gold* *Darfur*, 1-53

12.04 Genocide 1994 *Darfur*, 54-109

12.06 Genocide 2003 - present *Darfur*, 110-165

FINAL EXAM questions will be handed out at the end of class on December 6.
The essays must be submitted by 5pm on December 11.