

African Ethnographies  
ANT192-01  
Union College  
Winter 2006  
Social Sciences 012  
1:55PM-3:40PM  
<http://minerva.union.edu/fayd/africa/>

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or by appointment

## African Ethnographies

This is a course on the peoples and cultures of Africa south of the Sahara. The course begins by considering the effects and legacies of colonialism, but the focus is on contemporary Africa. No course can reasonably cover all of the rich variety of Africa's peoples and cultures, but this course begins to explore the diversity of the continent, through a series of case studies which examine the interconnection of politics, religion, kinship, economics, ecology, ethnicity and history. The course retains anthropology's traditional interest in small-scale communities, but looks also at the links between them and wider contexts. We will also ask how representations of Africa shape our understanding, and consider how African realities may differ from the common stereotypes of the continent.

### Requirements

*Read this syllabus.* Understand the policies stated here. If anything is unclear, contact me for clarification. Always bring your syllabus to class in case changes are announced. *Check it frequently* to be sure you are aware of upcoming assignments and due dates. *Manage your time effectively:* if you start reading for a Tuesday class on Monday night, chances are you won't have time to get through it all and write your review. The syllabus is *subject to change*. I will announce all changes in class and post an updated version on the course web site.

*Attend class.* Absences will be taken into account in determining the participation component of your grade. If you expect to miss class due to an athletic event or other commitment please let me know at least a week in advance.

*Participate in class discussions.* This class is a group effort, and will include much dialogue and discussion. The more members of the class contribute and are actively engaged in our discussions, the better the class will be. Participation also counts towards your grade (see below).

Do the readings listed *prior to class*, preferably in the order listed. For example, you should read the selections listed from Bohannon and Curtin, Grinker and Steiner, Comaroff and Comaroff, and Cooper prior to class on January 9. The readings be necessary in order to write your reviews, and for adequate class participation. You may be called on if you are not an active participant.

*Bring your texts to class.* This should be obvious. Carrying Grinker and Steiner around for ten weeks will make you strong.

*In the classroom:* Please turn off all cel phones, laptops, etc. Drinks are fine – if you want to eat, we'll take a short break midway through the class most days.

*If you plan to take the course pass-fail,* you must contact the Registrar within the first three weeks of the term.

### ADA Requirements

It is Union College policy to make accommodations for individuals with disabilities. If you have any

disability or special concern, please let me know what your needs are in order that they may be accommodated. All discussions will remain confidential to the extent permissible by law.

Students with disabilities needing academic accommodations must also:

1. *Register* with and provide documentation to the Dean of Students Office.
2. *Bring a letter* to the instructor from the Dean of Students Office indicating you need academic accommodations. This must be done within the first two weeks of the term .

### **Assignments and Grading**

1. There will be two short **map quizzes** (2 x 5% of grade). The first will be on January 16. The second will be unannounced. As you do the reading for the course, you should get in the habit of identifying unfamiliar place names on a map.

2. **Reading reviews** (50% of grade). For each class you will write a short (1-2 page) response to a question or questions on the assigned reading. At times you will have the option of writing on topics of your choice, as long as they relate to the reading. Either way, you are expected to think about and to write out your answers prior to class. I will collect and grade your answers (on a plus, check, minus scale) on *seven dates during the term*. The dates will be *selected at random*. There is no way to predict which dates your work will be collected. Reviews cannot be turned in late; I will collect them at the start of class only. If you can not come to class, you may turn in your questions in advance. The purpose of the written questions is to get you to complete the reading and think about the material before coming to class. *At the end of the term*, you will submit *all* of your reviews, and identify three more which you would like to have considered for your grade – so, in total, you will be graded on 10 of these, worth 5% of your grade each.

3. **Final paper**, due *during the exam period* (25% of grade). This will be a 6-8 page paper based on original research in on-line editions of African media sources conducted over the course of the term. It will involve following a news story and/or a theme or topic in one or more African newspapers, and analyzing it in relation to ideas and materials covered in the course. There will be several opportunities to present and discuss your news stories over the course of the term. The assignment will probably require some additional background reading to put the news stories in context. A brief guide to locating African media sources is available on the course web site at <http://minerva.union.edu/fayd/africa/african-media.html> , and I will provide more advice on strategies for searching as the term goes on.

4. **Attendance and participation** are essential parts of the course (15% of grade).

### **Academic Honesty**

If you cheat in this course, I will refer the case to the Dean for Undergraduate Education and recommend that, at minimum, you receive a failing grade for the course. I expect that you are all familiar with the college statement on plagiarism and academic honesty

( <http://www.union.edu/library/refroom/statement.htm> ) and will abide by the guidelines stated there. If you have any questions on how to cite material, please consult with me.

### **Required Texts**

Roy Richard Grinker and Christopher B. Steiner, eds. *Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation* (GS).

Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940*.

Alma Gottlieb and Philip Graham, *Parallel Worlds: An Anthropologist and a Writer Encounter Africa* (GG).

James A. Pritchett, *The Lunda-Ndembu: Style, Change, and Social Transformation in South Central Africa*.

Jon Holtzman, *Nuer Journeys, Nuer Lives: Sudanese Refugees in Minnesota*.

Zakes Mda, *The Heart of Redness*

## Course Schedule

### **Introduction to Africa: Geography, Representation and Colonialism**

- Thurs. January 04 Film: Afro@Digital  
Tues. January 09 P. Bohannon and P. Curtin, "Myths and Facts" (reserve)  
Grinker and Steiner (GS) intro., 680-683  
Comaroff and Comaroff (GS 689-700)  
Cooper, ch. 1  
Thurs. January 11 Cooper, ch. 2  
Lugard (GS 574-584)  
Southall (GS 38-50)  
Vail (GS 52-68)  
Tues. January 16 Cooper, ch. 3-4  
Rodney (GS 585-596)  
Senghor (GS 629-636)  
Berman (GS 653-669)  
Map Quiz

### **Anthropology in Africa: Fieldwork in Côte d'Ivoire**

- Thurs. January 18 SF Moore, "The Middle Colonial Period" (reserve)  
Etienne (GS 518-535)  
Gottlieb and Graham (GG) Preface, ch. 1-2  
Tues. January 23 GS 294-297  
Livingstone (GS 299-302)  
Evans-Pritchard (GS 303-311)  
GG ch. 3-6  
Thurs. January 25 GG ch. 7  
Horton (GS 327-339)  
Geschiere (GS 340-358)  
Tues. January 30 Barber (GS 392-411)  
Kopytoff (GS 412-420)  
GG ch. 8-10

### **Experiencing Continuity and Change in Zambia**

- Thurs. February 01 Cooper Interlude (85-90), ch. 5  
Pritchett, Intro-ch. 2  
Tues. February 06 A. Richards, "Matrilineal Systems" (reserve)  
Pritchett, ch. 3-5  
Thurs. February 08 Pritchett, ch. 6  
J. Ferguson, "Global Disconnect" (reserve)  
J. Ferguson, "Back to the Land?" (reserve)  
Tues. February 13 Pritchett, ch. 7-9  
J. Ferguson, "Chrysalis: The Life and Death of the African Renaissance" (reserve)

### **Transnational Africa: The Nuer and the Crisis in Sudan**

- Thurs. February 15 Cooper, ch. 7  
Evans-Pritchard, "Interest in Cattle" (reserve)  
Evans-Pritchard (GS 24-37)

- Tues. February 20 Ferguson, "Governing Extraction" (reserve)  
de Waal, "Sudan 1972-93: Privatizing Famine" (reserve)  
Hutchinson, "Prologue" (reserve)  
Hutchinson (GS 190-210)
- Thurs. February 22 Holtzman 1-70  
Finnegan "New in Town" (reserve)
- Tues. February 27 Holtzman 71-135

**South Africa's Political Transition: Beyond the "Rainbow Nation"**

- Thurs. March 01 Cooper ch. 6  
Wilmsen (GS 246-268)  
Solway and Lee (GS 269-288)
- Tues. March 06 Krog, *Country of my Skull* ch 8 and 15 (reserve)  
Wilson, *The Politics of Truth and Reconciliation* ch 5-6 (reserve)
- Thurs. March 08 Mda ch. 1-4
- Tues. March 13 Mda ch. 5-end