We were trained to be inferior copies of Englishmen, caricatures to be laughed at with our pretensions to British bourgeois gentility, our grammatical faultiness and distorted standards betraying us at every turn. We were neither fish nor fowl. We were denied the knowledge of our African past and informed that we had no present. What future would there be for us?


The impact of colonialism on African societies; changing families, religion, arts; political and economic transformation; migration, urbanization, new social categories; social stratification; the social setting of independence and neo-colonialism; continuity, stagnation, and progressive change.

COURSE DESCRIPTION:

Social change on the African continent today is complex, even more so when it is examined through the lens of anthropology, in an era of scholarly focus on ‘postmodernity’. The Eurocentric bias of anthropology has created damaging perceptions of Africa and its peoples. The historical relationship between anthropology and imperialism makes it difficult for the discipline to analyse social change in modern Africa. Africa, despite slavery and colonisation, has never fully lost its own identity and agency. Its adaptation to modernity, in which its own contribution is underestimated, gives us a multidisciplinary and holistic approach to understanding peoples and cultures from the roots of their contemporary condition. Social change in modern Africa stretches from pre- and post Judaeo-Christian and Arab –Islamic eras to the postcolonial neo-liberal period.

Modernity and its dissatisfied masses stand opposed to progress, economic development, freedom, and secularization. From the colonial era to the neo-colonial period, accumulation by dispossession and exploitation has generated social collaboration and resistance of all kinds. Examples of this are visible everywhere in kaleidoscopic realities, from truncated markets and modes of production to wealth and poverty, hybrid nationalisms, mixed ideologies, state building, governance and chieftaincy, informal sectors, violence and wars, acculturation and cultural obliteration, religious tensions, emerging classes and elites, rural labour relations, post-independence cities, intergenerational problems, issues of gender equality, technological gaps, migrations and diaspora, or environmental changes. This web of crisis, rarely captured by prevailing theories and afro-pessimistic models, affects every collective and individual. Societies and individuals are therefore torn between alternatives drawn from the so-called tradition or the so-called modernity.
Introduction to Africa: on modernity and social change


Colonial discourses creating perceptions of Africa and its peoples


Colonisations, resistances and collaborations, independances, panafricanisms, nations and citizenship; territorial authority and institutions


Decolonisation, neocolonialism, imperialism, alienation and comprador regimes


Davidson B., The Black Man’s Burden, Africa and the Curse of the Nation State, Nairobi, EAEP, 1992: 197-242

**Materialist and individualistic values ; wealth and behaviors ; Development, technology, and its malcontents**


**Social stratification, urban and rural Africa**


**Cultural synthesis, anthropology of religion and beliefs ; values, customs, traditions family structures and kinship**


**Gender in Africa**


**Migrations, diasporas**


**Violence, the « renewed scramble for Africa », revolutions, disobedience and youth**


Assignments and Evaluation

Evaluated course work will consist of the following:

**A two-page draft essay plan of research paper on an issue that is either drawn from the course themes or one that is otherwise approved. This should include a summary overview and introduction of topic, problem statement, plan and bibliography - due Oct 5, 2011.**

20%

**Essay, research paper, 7 to 10 pages maximum** 30%

**Final examination; course pack allowed** 50%

Assignments will be evaluated according to the following criteria:
Abstracts will be evaluated as an integral part of the research paper. Style (grammar, spelling, etc.); clarity of thought; organization; understanding of the material; and original, critical engagement with the material.

Any assignment submitted after the due date without a documented medical excuse or family/personal emergency will be penalized by a 5% deduction per day. No final grades of “K” (incomplete) will be assigned without a documented excuse.

1) Students have the right to submit their written work and assignments in English or French [approved by Senate on 21 January 2009]:

In compliance with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

This right applies to all written work that is to be graded, from one-word answers to dissertations.

This statement is not needed for courses in which acquiring proficiency in a language is one of the objectives or for courses in which students do not submit written work that is to be graded.

2) Academic Integrity statement [approved by Senate on 29 January 2003]:

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see for more information:

www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest

L'université McGill attache une haute importance à l'honnêteté académique. Il incombe par conséquent à tous les étudiants de comprendre ce que l'on entend par tricherie, plagiat et autres infractions académiques, ainsi que les conséquences que peuvent avoir de telles actions, selon le Code de conduite de l'étudiant et des procédures disciplinaires (pour de plus amples renseignements, veuillez consulter le site www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/<http://www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/>