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**ANTHROPOLOGY 322 – SOCIAL CHANGE IN MODERN AFRICA
DEPARTMENT OF ANTHROPOLOGY
MCGILL UNIVERSITY, CANADA
FALL 2020**

**MONDAYS AND WEDNESDAYS
2:35PM – 3:55PM
ENGMC 304**

START: 2ND September 2020

END: 3RD DECEMBER 2020

Course Instructor: Kariuki Kirigia
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Course Description

Africa has historically played, and continues to play, a central role in the making and re-making of Anthropology as a discipline. While providing a site for critical reflection on, and understanding of, cultural, socio-economic, and political issues within anthropology, Africa continues to be misrepresented and misunderstood in the popular media both outside and within the continent. This course aims to foster critical understanding of, and thinking about, the social changes occurring on the continent and beyond by focussing on important global-historical processes and topics that include, but not limited to, colonialism and postcolonialism, modernity, development, governance, globalization, urbanization, and technology. In pursuit of these goals, we shall engage with scholarship within and beyond the field of anthropology. We shall therefore traverse multiple ethnographic and non-ethnographic texts, films, places, times, and African scholarship to reveal how the field of anthropology enhances understanding of African life by engaging with varied forms of knowledge and realities.

Learning Objectives

Students in this course will gain essential anthropological knowledge and skills, including:

- Appreciation of the complex relations between anthropology and Africa;
- Representations and misrepresentations of Africa within and outside anthropology;
- Analyzing social change in Africa through understanding of history, institutions, and everyday lives of Africans;
- Ability to relate the local and the global, Africa and the world;
- Appreciation of the roles and value of African voices telling African stories.

Course Pre-Requisites

This course is intended for students who have already taken an Anthropology course at the 200 level. If you are a UO student, or have no background in anthropology, you must make your case individually to the course instructor for admission into the class.

Evaluation Criteria

- A. **Africa profile – 20 %.** You are required to develop a profile for the African continent. You may incorporate as much information about Africa as you can, but at the least you should incorporate the following:
- | | |
|--|------------------------------|
| a. List of all African countries | f. Key natural features |
| b. Former colonial powers and year of independence | g. Major economic activities |
| c. National and official languages | h. GDP |
| d. Number of ethnic groups | i. Gini co-efficient |
| e. Population and geographical area | j. Percentage of youth |
| | k. Capital city |
- a. **Due date:** 26th September 2020 by 11.00pm (EDT).
- B. Take-home **mid-term exam – 20%.**
- a. **Due date:** 17th October 2020 by 11.00pm (EDT).
- C. **Essay – 20%.** This essay will focus on the local and global media coverage of COVID-19 crisis in African countries. You are required to choose a theme such as health, gender, education, governance, indigenous knowledge, globalization, technology, neo-colonialism, conservation, food security, and discuss what has transpired in a country of your choice in the face of the COVID-19 crisis. You are required to demonstrate your knowledge and skills of writing and speaking about Africa taking into account the history of the country you have chosen.
- a. Length: 4 pages
- b. **Due date:** 14th November 2020 by 11.00pm (EDT).
- D. **Country Essay– 40%.** This assignment will be carried out in pairs. Students will identify their country of choice which will be approved by the TA's. The essay will address social change that has occurred in the chosen country since the colonial period (as applicable), and the assignment will be graded as follows:
- a. Final essay (8 pages): 20%.
- b. **Due date:** 6th December 2020 by 11.00PM (EDT).

Citation and Formatting Style

Assignments must conform to the formatting and citation guidelines specified in the American Psychological Association (APA), 6th edition (an APA Guide is available through the McGill library website). All written assignments must be double-spaced, in 12 pt. Times New Roman font, left justified, with 1-inch margins and pages numbered in the upper right-hand corner.

Late and Missing Assignments

Late submission of any assignment will be penalized 1% of the final grade per day. Students who provide a valid doctor's note in the event of an illness, or similar evidence in case of serious crisis will not be penalized.

Classroom Etiquette

Mobile phones may not be used in class.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF TOPICS AND READINGS

SECTION I – ANTHROPOLOGY AND COLONIAL AFRICA

WEEK 1 (SEP 2): INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE

Africa, upon its mention, evokes divergent views and reactions. But, who speaks for Africa and, whose reality counts? Drawing inspiration from Gayatri Spivak's words "Can the Subaltern Speak?", we further ask "Can the Subaltern Be Heard?" In this introductory lecture we discuss how to write and speak about Africa, and the position of Anthropology in the study of Africa.

- a. Wainaina, B. (2019, May 02). *How to Write About Africa*. (The Wylie Agency (UK) Ltd. Retrieved August 14, 2019, from GRANTA: <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>
- b. Jegede, A. S. (2015). From Gateway to Gatekeeper: Anthropology: Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow. In P. N. Nkwi (Ed.), *The Anthropology of Africa: Challenges for the 21st Century*. Mankon, Bamenda, Cameroon: Langaa Research & Publishing Common Initiative Group.
- c. Adichie, C. N. (2009, July). The danger of a single story [Video file]. URL: https://www.ted.com/talks/chimamanda_ngozi_adichie_the_danger_of_a_single_story

WEEK 2 (SEP 7 & 9): ANTHROPOLOGY AND AFRICA

Anthropology has a profound and, often, a problematic history in relation to the African continent. From its role in the colonial project to the present day ostensibly emancipatory role of the discipline in Africa, the conduct of the anthropologist vis a vis the research participants, the observer and the observed, necessitates critical review. We critically discuss Anthropology's relationship with Africa by engaging with the concepts of reflexivity, positionality and representation within anthropology.

- a. Drake, S.C. (1980). Anthropology and the black experience. *The Black Scholar*, 11(7), 2-31.
- b. Ntarangwi, M. (2010). Imagining Anthropology, Encountering America. In M. Ntarangwi, *Reversed gaze: An African ethnography of American anthropology*, 1-23. University of Illinois Press.

Suggested reading(s)

- a. Jacobs-Huey, L. (2002). The natives are gazing and talking back: Reviewing the problematics of positionality, voice, and accountability among "native" anthropologists. *American Anthropologist*, 104(3), 791-804.

WEEK 3 (SEP 14 & 16): COLONIALISM IN AFRICA

Colonialism marks a defining experience in the African context. To comprehend present day Africa, it is imperative to understand colonial history and the continued presence and manifestation of colonialism on the continent. How was the colonial project conducted? What institutional approaches were used to rule over Africa? How was colonialism experienced by Africans? By addressing these and other related questions, we shall further our understanding of why colonialism was not simply an event, but rather an experience that continues to have far and wide repercussions in Africa.

- a. Mamdani, M. (1996). Introduction: Thinking through Africa's Impasse. In *Citizen and Subject: Contemporary Africa and the Legacy of Late Colonialism*. Princeton Studies in Culture/Power/History, 3-34. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.

Suggested reading:

- b. Fanon, F. (1963). Concerning Violence. In *The Wretched of the Earth*, 35-106. Translation: Constance Farrington. New York: Grove Press.

WEEK 4 (SEP 21 & 23): COLONIAL VIOLENCE AND STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE

What forms of violence characterised colonialism in Africa? By engaging with first-hand accounts of Kikuyus who experienced British colonial violence in Kenya, we shall learn and discuss how the colonial machinery engaged with local Africans to assert and maintain colonial rule.

- a. Elkins, C. (2005). The World behind the Wire. In *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*. 1st ed.: 154-191. New York: Henry Holt.
- b. In-Class Film: Elkins, Caroline. "Kenya: White Terror, British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) documentary, 2002." (1945): 1945-1953. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XV0udfKrzTQ>

SECTION II – POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA AND THE WORLD

WEEK 5 (SEP 28 & 30): INDEPENDENCE STATES AND POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA

The independence of African states was widely viewed as the new dawn for the continent. Beyond usurping the colonial apparatus, Africans could now take charge of their destiny that articulated with the interests of African people. However, how has the postcolonial era transpired for African states and Africans on the continent?

- a. Lal, P. (2015). A Postcolonial Project in the Cold War World. In *African Socialism in Postcolonial Tanzania: Between the Village and the World*. 27-77. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. doi:10.1017/CBO9781316221679

WEEK 6 (OCT 5 & 7): MODERNIZATION, POVERTY AND DEVELOPMENT

Decades after the independence of many African states, the African continent continues to be labelled as still 'developing'; a convivial term for indicating that Africa lags behind the world's developed areas. How was the imagined progress envisioned at independence not attained, how did the optimism peter out, and what pathways have been pursued and to what ends?

- a. Ferguson, J. (1999). The Copperbelt in Theory. In J. Ferguson *Expectations of Modernity: Myths and Meanings of Urban Life on the Zambian Copperbelt*. Perspectives on Southern Africa, 57:1-37. Berkeley: University of California Press. Available as e-book via the McGill University library.
- b. Moyo, D. (2009). Why foreign aid is hurting Africa. *The Wall Street Journal* 21, 1-2.
- c. Sachs, J. (2008). The end of poverty: economic possibilities for our time. *European Journal of Dental Education* 12, 17-21.

- d. Fisher, J. (November 2016). "Is Aid Killing Africa? Dambisa Moyo talks about Dead Aid on ABC." YouTube video, 17 min. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1zaPXT2R19g&t=190s>

OCTOBER 12, 2020 - THANKSGIVING DAY – NO CLASS

WEEK 7 (OCT 14): GLOBALIZATION: AFRICA AND THE WORLD

What happens when the world meets Africa, and Africa meets the world? How do local African experiences relate to the global occurrences and, how is the global localized within Africa? In this session we discuss the nature of the linkages between Africa and the world and the resultant impacts on African lives and livelihoods.

- a. Ferguson, J. (2006). Globalizing Africa? Observations from an inconvenient Continent. In J. Ferguson *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. 25-49. Duke University Press.
- b. Mensah, J. (2008). Cultural Dimensions of Globalization in Africa. In: J. Mensah (Ed.), *Neoliberalism and Globalization in Africa*, 33-54. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

WEEK 8 (OCT 19 & 21): THE AFRICAN BODY AND (DE)COLONIZATION

The African body is a complex site of global history and politics. Its presence is not simply a presence but, an over-presence. Its oppression stands in juxtaposition to what has been termed progress. Thus needed but unwanted, the African body conjures up numerous paradoxes of our time. In this unit, we reflect on how the African body functions as a site of both colonization and decolonization in the 21st century.

- a. Pierre, J. (2013). The Fact of Lightness: Skin Bleaching and the Colored Codes of Racial Aesthetics. In *The Predicament of Blackness: Postcolonial Ghana and the Politics of Race*, 101-122. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
- b. Williams, J. (2017). Performing Trauma: The Body as Site of (De)colonization in Tsitsi Dangarembga's *Nervous Conditions*. In T. Falola and Christian Jennings (Eds.), *African Knowledge: African Studies Across the Disciplines*, 273-288. New York: Routledge.

WEEK 9 (OCT 26 & 28): MIGRATION AND DEVELOPMENT

Human mobility is a primary feature of human existence. The creation of boundaries regulates mobility and, in this unit we look at how social boundaries delimit the mobility of Africans within and outside of the continent.

- a. Ikuteyijo, L. & Olayiwola, P. (2018). Migration and Xenophobia in Africa. In Oloruntoba S. O. and Toyin Falola (Eds.) *The Palgrave Handbook of African Politics, Governance and Development*, 307-319. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- b. Danewid, I. (2017). White innocence in the Black Mediterranean: hospitality and the erasure of history. *Third World Quarterly*, 38(7), 1674-1689.

SECTION III – MODERN AFRICA

WEEK 10 (NOV 2 & 4): GOVERNANCE AND THE AFRICAN STATE

The transition from colonial to independent states was anticipated to usher in a new dawn around the African continent. However, as numerous scholars have argued, many of the institutions in the post-independent African states remain encased within colonial institutions. How did this happen? We shall engage with the work of Achille Mbembe to critically discuss institutions and governance in the African state.

- a. Mbembe, A. (2001). On Private Indirect Government. In A. Mbembe *On the Postcolony*, 66-101. Berkeley: University of California Press.

WEEK 11 (NOV 9 & 11): LAND AND NATURAL RESOURCES

In many African countries, land constituted the locus of the struggle for independence from colonial powers. The centrality of land and resources in everyday life in Africa has continued in the post-independence period. Rather than being solely a domestic resource, land, despite its seemingly geographical fixity, has become a global commodity. What are the implications of the commodification of land and other natural resources for local livelihoods?

- a. Li, T. M. (2014). What Is Land? Assembling a Resource for Global Investment. *Transactions of the Institute of British Geographers*, 39(4): 589–602.
- b. Manji, A. (2006). Paying for law: the World Bank and bilateral donors. In A. Manji *The Politics of Land Reform in Africa : From Communal Tenure to Free Markets*, 51-77. London: Zed Books.
- c. Galaty, J. (2014). 'Unused' Land and Unfulfilled Promises: Justifications for Displacing Communities in East Africa. *Nomadic Peoples* 18(1), 80–93.

WEEK 12 (NOV 16 & 18): ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION IN AFRICA

Conservation efforts in Africa date back to the colonial period, and conservation models and approaches have continually evolved over the decades. In this session we look at the evolution of conservation in Africa, the global politics of conservation, and scholarly views on what has been generally termed “conservation in the neoliberal age.”

- a. Igoe, J., & Brockington, D. (2007). Neoliberal Conservation: A Brief Introduction. *Conservation and Society*, 5(4), 432–449.
- b. Büscher, B., & Fletcher, R. (2015). Accumulation by Conservation. *New Political Economy* 20(2), 273–98.
- c. Department of Human Dimensions of Natural Resources. “Mordecai Ogada, Director of Conservation Solutions Afrika – The Big Conservation Lie.” YouTube video, 89 min. (March, 2017). URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=3 YuC29wS0c&t=3219s>

WEEK 13 (NOV 23 & 25): URBANIZATION AND YOUTH UNEMPLOYMENT

Africa is characterized by a wealth of youth that represents on the one hand, the current challenges faced by Africans and, on the other hand, the hope for the future of the continent. With the youth occupying such polarised positions, we discuss how existing institutional structures engage with the youth, and how the youth themselves engage with the present not only to address everyday challenges, but also to carve out a positive future.

- a. Dolan, C., & Rajak, D. (2016). Remaking Africa's Informal Economies: Youth, Entrepreneurship and the Promise of Inclusion at the Bottom of the Pyramid. *Journal of Development Studies* 52(4), 514–29.
- b. Muchadenyika, D. (2015). Slum Upgrading and Inclusive Municipal Governance in Harare, Zimbabwe: New Perspectives for the Urban Poor. *Habitat International*, 48,1–10.
- c. In-class film: Gitonga, D. T. (Director). (2012). *Nairobi Half Life* [Video file]. 96 minutes. Germany. URL: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZmLHUF0uPds>

WEEK 14 (NOV 30 & DEC 2): TECHNOLOGY AND SOCIAL MOVEMENTS

From cultural innovations, interventions to improve smallholder agriculture, to the entry of the mobile phone, technological advancement has widely impacted daily social life in Africa. In some areas, this technological advancement has evoked discussions about a 4th industrial revolution. In this session we discuss the impacts of technology on Africa especially the entwinement with social movements around the continent.

- a. Carty, V. & Barron F. G. R. (2019). Social Movements and New Technology: The Dynamics of Cyber Activism in the Digital Age. In B. Berberoglu (Ed.) *The Palgrave Handbook of Social Movements, Revolution, and Social Transformation*. 373-395. Cham, Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- b. Kibere, F. N. (2016). The Paradox of Mobility in the Kenyan ICT Ecosystem: An Ethnographic Case of How the Youth in Kibera Slum Use and Appropriately the Mobile Phone and the Mobile Internet. *Information Technology for Development*, 22(1), 77-47.
- c. Oxlund, B. (2016). #Everythingmustfall: The Use of Social Media and Violent Protests in the Current Wave of Student Riots in South Africa." *Anthropology Now* 8(2), 1–13.

Suggested reading(s):

- d. Gibson, Nigel C. (2017). The Specter of Fanon: The Student Movements and the Rationality of Revolt in South Africa. *Social Identities* 23(5), 579–99.

WEEK 15 (DEC 3): COURSE REVIEW AND LOOKING AHEAD

As Paul Nchoji Nkwi (2015) writes, “As long as Africa continues to transform its young socially through an education process that is not African, the emergence of an indigenous development, or development with an African face, is still many decades away” (ix). Following these concerns, how is education today perceived in Africa, what constitutes an Afrocentric education and, in what ways is education being ‘Africanized’ on the continent?

- a. Chika, A. Ezeanya-Esiobu (2018). Research, Innovation and Higher Education in Sub-Saharan Africa. In S. O. Oloruntoba & Toyin Falola (Eds.), *The Palgrave Handbook of African Politics, Governance and Development*, 829-839. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Territorial Acknowledgement

McGill University is located on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. McGill honours, recognizes and respects these nations as the traditional stewards of the lands and waters on which we meet today.

L'Université McGill est sur un emplacement qui a longtemps servi de lieu de rencontre et d'échange entre les peuples autochtones, y compris les nations Haudenosaunee et Anishinabeg. McGill honore, reconnaît et respecte ces nations à titre d'intendant traditionnel des terres et de l'eau sur lesquelles nous nous réunissons aujourd'hui.

The McGill Policy Statement, Student Rights, and Responsibilities

"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 www.mcgill.ca/students/srr/honest/ for more information).

"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/)."

"In accord 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."

"Conformément à la Charte des droits de l'étudiant de l'Université McGill, chaque étudiant a le droit de soumettre en français ou en anglais tout travail écrit devant être noté (sauf dans le cas des cours dont l'un des objets est la maîtrise d'une langue)."

McGill Counselling Service

"University can be a difficult experience for many of us. Stress, depression and difficulty in coping with schoolwork are not uncommon. However, neither the instructor nor the T.A.s are qualified to give counselling or psychological advice. We can most certainly help you with academic matters but for more personal concerns, we urge you to contact McGill Counselling Services. Students experiencing a crisis situation will be seen by a counsellor or psychologist at the first available opportunity and no appointment is required. The McGill Counselling Service is located on the fourth floor of the Brown Student Services building. The focus of the service is to assist students in dealing with personal, academic, and vocational concerns. The service is confidential and free of charge to eligible students (see <http://www.mcgill.ca/counselling/> for more information or call 514-398-3601)."

Disabilities Office

"As the instructor of this course I endeavour to provide an inclusive learning environment. However, if you experience barriers to learning in this course, do not hesitate to discuss them with me and the Office for Students with Disabilities, 514-398-6009."

Academic Accommodation of Pregnant Students and Students Caring for Dependants

"McGill acknowledges the particular challenges facing you as a pregnant student and as a student caring for a dependant. McGill supports you in your desire to further your education while meeting your family obligations. Wishing to provide an environment in which you may be able to continue in your program of study and fulfil your university commitments when faced with exceptional circumstances related to particular family commitments, these guidelines aim to set out how, and in what exceptional circumstances, you may request academic accommodation: https://www.mcgill.ca/study/2018-2019/university_regulations_and_resources/graduate/gi_accommodation_pregnancy_caring_dependants."

Course Evaluations

[End-of-course evaluations](#) are one of the ways that McGill works towards maintaining and improving the quality of courses and the student's learning experience. You will be notified by e-mail when the evaluations are available. Please note that a minimum number of responses must be received for results to be available to students.

Useful Resources

- Africa is a country. Available here: <https://africasacountry.com/>
- Council for the Development of Social Science Research in Africa (CODESRIA). Available here: <https://codesria.org/>
- Ufahamu Africa podcast. Available here: <https://ufahamuafrika.com/>