

McGill University
African Studies Research Seminar
AFRI 598
(Winter 2020)

Mondays and Wednesdays, 8:35am to 9:55am
 Leacock Building 808

Instructor: Dr. Nii Addy

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Office Hours (236 Peterson Hall): Mondays 10-11am/Wednesdays 2-3pm

Prerequisite: An introductory course in any of the disciplines studying Africa

Restriction: Open to final year Program students, and to others by permission of Program Adviser

Course Description

This is an interdisciplinary graduate-style research seminar on Africa and its Diaspora. It is not a lecture course. It is important that all students participate fully in discussion and come prepared for class. The course material, writing, and participation requirements are designed for advanced undergraduate students interested in a survey of important themes in Africa's development, including history, politics, organizations and society. Starting from an institutional perspective, we will explore institutional change and inertia in Africa, and the role of individual and collective agency. We will draw on concepts such as *Sankofa* (Akan: return to the source and learn, for moving into the future) and *Ubuntu* (Bantu: I am because we are), in integration with other temporal perspectives on agency. We define agency as "an actor's engagement with the social world that, through the interplay of habit, imagination, and judgment, can both reproduce and transform an environment's structures" (Battilana and D'Aunno, 2009; Lawrence, Suddaby, and Leca, 2009). From the temporal approach that we take, students will have the chance to explore agency in Africa and its Diaspora over three periods – pre-colonial, colonial to present, and future – while also engaging with, and in research that draws on the perspectives of multiple generations (children/youth, adults, elderly). We use a framework that posits three dimensions of agency: iterative, oriented towards the past; projective, oriented towards the future; and practical-evaluative, oriented towards the present. The course will include presentations, individual and group exercises, as well as virtual interactions with students in at least one African university, and in-person interactions with multiple generations outside the classroom.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the course, students should:

- Have greater knowledge about the tools to analyse issues in Africa and its Diaspora from a temporal perspective (the past, present, and future), and from a range of disciplinary perspectives;
- Have had the chance to integrate their understanding of the temporal perspective on agency, by applying such perspectives to analysis of how institutional change and inertia occur in Africa and its Diaspora;
- Be more aware of multiple sources of data to develop diverse narratives about institutional change and inertia in Africa and its Diaspora;
- Have improved research skills so that they can design, conduct, write-up, and disseminate their own independent research; and
- Be better equipped to communicate research findings to a wide range of audiences, including children/youth, adults, and elders who are concerned with issues in Africa and its Diaspora.

Course Requirements

1. Attendance, Professionalism, Participation (APP) in Discussions: Students will be expected to keep up with assigned readings and to come to the seminar prepared to participate in discussion. Students are expected to lead and participate in discussion based on several assignments designed to encourage a deeper understanding of the course material. Participation will also include engaging in virtual interactions that the instructor will organize with students at least one African University. More details about the virtual interactions will be provided later. MyCourses will be used as a platform for initiating or following up on discussions in class as well. This will be 10% of final grade.

2. Reading Response Paper: Each student is required to write **4** reading response papers of the assigned readings for **4** different weeks. You can choose the weeks, but you must distribute the workload evenly. The paper should be between 2-3 double spaced pages. Do NOT summarize the week's readings, but rather focus on answering the following questions:

1. What is the author trying to convey to his/her audience?
2. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the argument or point of view he/she is presenting?
3. What is confusing or unsatisfying about the reading?
4. What themes emerge from the week's readings?
5. How do the arguments compare and contrast with the view of other authors you have read in the course or elsewhere?
6. Pose three discussion questions for the class to consider, including those related to (a) inertia or change in structures, and (b) agency of actors in the readings.

Each student will lead at least **four** class discussions based on his/her reading response papers. For each reading response paper, a draft must be developed a week before the relevant class, shared with a session partner assigned to critique (not criticize) the response, with final version due 11:59pm on the day before class, and must incorporate the relevant comments of the session partner. This will be 20% of final grade.

3. Outside Class Interactions and Journal: Each student will identify an audience outside of class with an interest in Africa and its Diaspora: children/youth (e.g. in a school or organization serving children/youth), adults (e.g. in an organization), and elderly (e.g. in a retirement residence), who are from, or have experience in Africa and its Diaspora. You will engage in interactions with the selected audience to pose questions and develop ideas for your topic of focus for the seminar. You will discuss with me at the beginning of the term which audience(s) you will engage. For students who are available from 11:45AM - 1:45PM on Wednesdays January 15, 22, 29, and February 5 & 12, this aspect of the course will be with an intergenerational study group that I will co-moderate at the McGill Community for Lifelong Learning (MCLL), in the School of Continuing Studies (SCS). The study group is entitled "Intergenerational Learning Initiative on Africa's Development." Participants are recently retired seasoned professionals, as well as students and recent alumni, including other African Studies and International Development Studies students, and MasterCard Foundation (MCF) Scholars/recent alumni entrepreneurs. I will work with students for who this schedule does not work to identify other audience(s) for their interactions. Students will submit a written journal about their interactions on MyCourses. This will be 10% of final grade.

4. In Class Group Oral Presentation: Students will present their individual research proposal along with their initial findings to groups of their peers, and then each group will work collectively to provide a group presentation that integrates various ideas in seminar sessions allocated between weeks 10/11 and 13/14. Presenters should circulate 1-2 relevant readings to their group members on the Friday before they are due to present. Each presentation itself should be 15-20 minutes in length. It will be followed by a discussion based on the presentations and the circulated readings. This will be 20% of final grade.

5. Research Project: A major objective of this course is to have students improve their research, analytical, writing and creative skills through the development of an original research output related to Africa and its Diaspora. The research question (or questions) must be narrow, but based on offering a deeper understanding of a theme/trend relevant to Africa and its Diaspora, with a focus on institutional change and inertia in Africa, and the role of agency in such change or inertia.

You will produce a research output on your topic, which can take the form of an essay, a publication to be submitted to a journal, letter, op-ed, story, or other form you will discuss with me to engage your audience for disseminating your research. The final research output should be 20 double spaced pages, including bibliography, 12 pt font, standard margins.

Note: The research project proceeds in 3 phases. First, each student must individually schedule a meeting with me at the beginning of the term to discuss a research topic and project (including target audience, potential sources of data, etc.), and type of research output planned. Second, you will engage in initial consultations as part of requirements 1 and 3 above, and you will turn in a short research design paper (1 to 3 pages), which sketches your research question, your tentative answer (or hypotheses), and what kind of evidence you will collect to evaluate your propositions/hypotheses. You should also include a working bibliography of sources you will investigate. Third, students will hand in an **initial draft** of the paper or project no later than the 10th week of class, and give an oral presentation of their findings to the class in groups (as part of requirement 4 above). The **final version** of the project is due during the exam period and must incorporate the relevant comments of a partner assigned to critique (not criticize) your project. This will be 40% of final grade.

Class Policies

Policy on Research Project: Late projects will be penalized at the rate of 1/3 grade per day (e.g. an A- will be downgraded to a B+). All papers should be titled. Papers must be typed, double spaced with one-inch margins, twelve point font, with approximately 250 words per page. Extensions will be granted **only** in cases of genuine emergency.

Office Hours: Students are strongly encouraged to come to office hours with or without specific questions. I am available at regular office hours as well as by appointment. Kindly schedule an appointment to discuss research paper proposals as soon as possible.

Final Grades: Students are required to complete all assigned course work in order to receive a passing grade. No incompletes will be given except in cases of genuine emergency.

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/integrity for more information).

About the Schedule:

Although it is my intent to cover the material outlined in the following schedule, it is possible that unforeseeable events will necessitate minor changes to, or deletions from, the schedule.

Please Note:

“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 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 réunissons aujourd'hui. »

Readings

All the journal articles and some excerpts of selected texts noted in the syllabus will be made available on MyCourses.

Course Schedule (To be updated)

	Week	Topic	Material (read/watch prior to class) Readings and videos in BOLD are REQUIRED. All others are supplemental.
I. Establishing a context			
1	6/8-Jan	Introductions and course overview	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Initial reflections • Course outline • African Union Commission (2015). Agenda 2063. The Africa we want. Addis Ababa: African Union. https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/36204-doc-agenda2063_popular_version_en.pdf
2	13/15-Jan	Africa in today's world: Inertia versus Change	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ndizera, Vedaste & Muzee, Hannah (2018). A critical review of Agenda 2063: Business as usual? <i>African Journal of Political Science and International Relations</i> Vol. 12(8), pp. 142-154, DOI: 10.5897/AJPSIR2018.1114 https://www.researchgate.net/publication/328639704_A_critical_review_of_Agenda_2063_Business_as_usual • Ferguson, J. (2006). <i>Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal Order</i>. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006. (Ebook at McGill Library, Ch. 1, 7) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/61731436 • Meagher, K. (2007). "Introduction to a Special Issue on 'Informal Institutions and Development in Africa'," <i>Africa Spectrum</i> 42, 3: 405-418. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40175202?seq=1 • Bratton, M (2007) "Formal versus Informal Institutions in Africa," <i>Journal of Democracy</i> 18,3: 96-110. http://oldwww.upol.cz/fileadmin/user_upload/PF-katedry/politologie/Afrika.pdf • Lawrence, T. B., Suddaby, R., & Leca, B. (2009). Introduction: theorizing and studying institutional work. In T. B. Lawrence, R. Suddaby, & B. Leca (Eds.), <i>Institutional work: Actors</i>

	Week	Topic	Material (read/watch prior to class) Readings and videos in BOLD are REQUIRED. All others are supplemental.
			<p><i>and agency in institutional studies of organizations</i>. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Thomas_Lawrence2/publication/50372078_Introduction_Theorizing_and_studying_institutional_work/links/54fc37b10cf2c3f52422a180/Introduction-Theorizing-and-studying-institutional-work.pdf</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Emirbayer, M. and Mische, A. 1998 ‘What is agency?’ <i>American Journal of Sociology</i>, 103: 962-1023. https://www.journals.uchicago.edu/doi/pdfplus/10.1086/231294
3	20/22-Jan	Agency in Africa and its Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nkrumah, K. (1973). <i>I speak of freedom</i>. London (243 Regent St., W1R 8PN): Panaf Books. (Preface & Chapter 1, pp. ix-5) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/16236424 Wilson, Kbonsura A. (2009). Sankofa, Concept. In Molefi K. Asante & Ama Mazama (Eds.), <i>Encyclopedia of African Religion</i>. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: SAGE Publications. (Ebook) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/233969367 Temple, C. (2010). The emergence of Sankofa practice in the United States. <i>Journal of Black Studies</i>, 41(1), 127-150. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/680717745 Ncube, L (2010) Ubuntu: Transformative leadership philosophy. <i>Journal of Leadership Studies</i> 4(3): 77–82. https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/abs/10.1002/jls.20182 Mnyaka, Mluleki & Motlhabi, Mokgethi (2005). The African Concept of Ubuntu/Botho and its Socio-Moral Significance, <i>Black Theology</i>, 3:2, 215-237, DOI: 10.1558/blth.3.2.215.65725 https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/4641182442 Battilana, J., & D’Aunno T. (2009). Institutional Work and the paradox of embedded agency. In T. B. Lawrence, R. Suddaby, & B. Leca (Eds.), <i>Institutional work: Actors and agency in institutional studies of organizations</i> (pp. 31-58). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/299718443
II. The “Past”			
4	27/29-Jan	Structures of the “Past”	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bell, Nawal Morcos (1972). The Age of Mansa Musa of Mali: Problems in Succession and Chronology, <i>The International Journal of African Historical Studies</i>. Vol. 5, No. 2. pp. 221-234. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5548571857 Adekola, Kolawole (2009). Early Urban Centres in West Africa. <i>African Diaspora Archaeology Newsletter</i> Volume 12 Issue 1 March 2009 Article 4. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/8093229291 Hafsaas-Tsakos, Henriette (2009). The Kingdom of Kush: An African Centre on the Periphery of the Bronze Age World System, <i>Norwegian Archaeological Review</i>, 42:1, 50-70, DOI: 10.1080/00293650902978590. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/4901187187 Adams, W.Y. (1995). The Kingdom and Civilization of Kush in Northeast Africa. <i>Civilizations of the Ancient Near East</i>. http://www.ericlevy.com/Revel/Intro2/Kingdom%20and%20Civilization%20of%20Kush%20and%20North%20Africa.PDF Armah, A. K. (2002). <i>KMT: In the house of life</i>. Popenguine, Senegal. Per Ankh Publishing Cooperative. (Chapters TBD) Podcast: Africa: Past and Present, Episode 67: ‘Africanizing History and Society.’ http://afripod.aodl.org/?s=Africanizing+History+and+Society
III. Practical-Evaluative Agency and the “Present”: Perspectives on What, Why, How			
5	3/5-Feb	What are some conundrums of the “present”?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Blake, William O. (1971). <i>The History of Slavery and the Slave Trade, Ancient and Modern</i>. Detroit: Negro History Press. (Ebook at McGill Library, Preface, Chapters 7, 36) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/638479879 Ekeh, P. (1975). Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement. <i>Comparative Studies in Society and History</i>, 17(1), 91-112. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5548851645 Cooper (2002). <i>Africa Since 1940: The Past and the Present</i>. (Ebook at McGill Library, Chapter 1, Introduction: from colonies to Third World) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/47930687 Carmody, Pádraig Ristead (2011). <i>The New Scramble for Africa</i>, Ch. 1 (pp.14-33). https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/669751128 U.S. Department of State (1965). Telegram from the Embassy in Ghana to the Department of State. Foreign Relations of the United States, 1964–1968, Volume xxiv, Africa. https://history.state.gov/historicaldocuments/frus1964-68v24/d252 Nugent (1996). ‘Arbitrary Lines and the People’s Minds: A Dissenting View on Colonial Boundaries in West Africa,’ in Nugent and Asiwaju eds., <i>African Boundaries: Barrier, Conduits and Opportunities</i>. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/33246144

	Week	Topic	Material (read/watch prior to class) Readings and videos in BOLD are REQUIRED. All others are supplemental.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Chinweizu (1987). <i>Decolonising the African Mind</i>, Lagos, Pero Press. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/17996605 Melber and Southall (2009). 'Introduction: A New Scramble for Africa,' in Melber and Southall (eds.), <i>A New Scramble for Africa?: Imperialism, Investment, and Development</i>. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/401141637
6	10/12-Feb	Why cycles of "reforms" in governance and development?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Zeilig, Leo (2009). The Student-Intelligentsia in Sub-Saharan Africa: Structural Adjustment, Activism and Transformation. <i>Review of African Political Economy</i>, 36(119), 63-78. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/7786233546 Williams, David (2010). Making a Liberal State: 'Good Governance' in Ghana. <i>Review of African Political Economy</i>, 37(126), 403-419. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/7787010759 Bayat, Asef (2013). The Arab Spring and Its Surprises. <i>Development and Change</i> 44(3), 587-601. doi:10.1111/dech.12030 https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5153081913 Vengroff and Magala (2001). 'Democratic Reform, Transition, and Consolidation: Evidence from Senegal's 2000 Presidential Election,' <i>Journal of Modern African Studies</i>, 39, 1 (2001). Van de Walle (2007). "Meet the New Boss, Same as the Old Boss? The Evolution of Political Clientelism in Africa," in Herbert Kitschelt and Steven Wilkinson, (eds.) <i>Patrons, Clients, and Policies</i>.
7	17/19-Feb	How about gender for change?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amadiume, Ifi & Caplan, Patricia (1987). Male Daughters, Female Husbands: Gender and Sex in an African Society, London: Zed Books (Ebook, Preface to the critique influence change edition, Introduction) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/905920507 Alidou, Ousseina (2005). <i>Engaging Modernity: Muslim Women and the Politics of Agency in Postcolonial Niger</i> (Madison, WI: University of Wisconsin Press) (Ebook, Introduction). https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/229439602 Bâ, Mariama. (1982). <i>So long a letter</i> (African writers series). London: Virago. (Chapters TBD) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/16610104 Mohanty, C.T. (2003), <i>Feminism without Borders: Decolonizing Theory, Practicing Solidarity</i> (Durham, NC: Duke University Press). Chapter 2: "Cartographies of Struggle: Third World Women and the Politics of Feminism" (43-84). Andrade, S.Z. (2007), "Rioting Women and Writing Women: Gender, Class, and the Public Sphere in Africa", in C.M. Cole, T. Manuh, and S.F. Miescher (eds.), <i>Africa after Gender?</i> (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press): 85-107. Abbey, Rose Teteki. (2001). "Rediscovering Ataa Naa Nyonmo — The Father Mother God." In <i>Talitha Cum! Theologies of African Women</i>, edited by Nyambura. J. Njoroge and Musa W. Dube, 140–57. Pietermaritzburg: Cluster Publications.
IV. Imaginations of the "Future"			
8	24/26-Feb	Projective Agency: Imaginations of the "Future"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bouhali, Chouaib El & Rwiza, Grace J. (2017). Post-Millennium Development Goals in Sub-Saharan Africa. In: Shizha E. & Makuvaza N. (Eds) <i>Re-thinking Postcolonial Education in Sub-Saharan Africa in the 21st Century: Post-Millennium Development Goals</i>. Sense Publishers, Rotterdam, Netherland. doi:10.1007/978-94-6300-962-1 https://link.springer.com/chapter/10.1007/978-94-6300-962-1_2 Tikly, Leon (2019). Education for Sustainable Development in Africa: A critique of regional agendas. <i>Asia Pacific Education Review</i>, 20:223–237 https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/8185165229 African Union Commission (2014). AUC Chairperson's E-mail from the Future: https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-02_email_from_the_future.pdf African Union Commission. Agenda 2063 Linkages with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). https://au.int/sites/default/files/documents/33126-doc-07_linkage_with_the_sdg.pdf
9	2/4-Mar	Study Break	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> No Sessions
V. Integration for overcoming Dichotomies of "Past" and "Future"			
10	9/11-Mar	Flows between generations in Africa and the Diaspora	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Muna, Wilson K., Stanton, Anne & Mwau, Diana M. (2014). Deconstructing intergenerational politics between 'Young Turks' and 'Old Guards' in Africa: an exploration of the perceptions on leadership and governance in Kenya, <i>Journal of Youth Studies</i>, 17:10, 1378-1394, DOI: 10.1080/13676261.2014.918248. https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/5692022379 Laye, Camara (1959). <i>The African Child</i> (Fontana books). London: Collins. (Excerpts TBD) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/3673130

	Week	Topic	Material (read/watch prior to class) Readings and videos in BOLD are REQUIRED . All others are supplemental.
			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dzidzienyo, Anani, & Oboler, Suzanne. (2005) <i>Neither Enemies nor Friends</i> (1st ed.). New York: Palgrave Macmillan. (Ebook, Chapter 1) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/55729828 • Kagwanja, Peter Mwangi (2005). "Clash of Generations? Youth Identity, Violence and the Politics of Transition in Kenya, 1997-2002", in Abbink, Jon & van Kessel, Ineke (eds.), <i>Vanguard or Vandals. Youth, Politics and Conflict in Africa</i> (Leiden: Brill): 81-109. (Ebook, Chapter 4) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/228171560 • Canning, D., Raja, S., & Yazbeck, A. (Eds.). (2015). <i>Africa's Demographic Transition: Dividend or Disaster?</i> (Africa development forum series). Washington, D.C.: World Bank. (Ebook, Overview) https://mcgill.on.worldcat.org/oclc/903812764
11	16/18-Mar	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations of their research projects.
12	23/25-Mar	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations of their research projects.
13	30-Mar/ 1-Apr	Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Student presentations of their research projects.
14	6/8-Apr	Interdisciplinary analysis of a case study	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Readings TBD