



AFRI 598
Research Seminar in African Studies
WINTER 2015
McGill University
African Studies Program

Mondays & Wednesdays, 1:05-2:25 PM
Sherbrooke 688, Rm 451

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Desmond Tutu recently wrote,

I have always had hope in humankind. I know what marvellous things people can accomplish. I have also seen what mistakes they can make. Worse, they can be guilty of corruption and wickedness. In my lifetime, Africa has had its share of all of these. Its recent history is a mixed record of both achievement and disappointment. I have no doubt that this is true of every continent as well, which serves to make the point that in the end, we Africans are like everyone else. We are capable of the best and the worst (in Ellis, 2011).

The purpose of this class is to reflect on Tutu's exclamation, exploring some of the 'best' and 'worst' – the marvellous and the mistakes – that characterize Africa's history and contemporary 'place in the world'. We will explore many of the key issues facing the continent, historicizing them and understanding them in political economic context. Stephen Ellis' (2011) comprehensive book, *Season of Rains: Africa in the World* will provide a general framework for discussion. Drawing on Ellis' work, each class will draw out several key topics that underlie persisting patterns of power and politics in Africa.

A few things to keep in mind about the nature/design of this class:

- i. As a "capstone", this course is intended to offer African Studies degree students the opportunity to meet together and discuss a general array of issues related to Africa in an integrated, interdisciplinary context. We will discuss a breadth of issues, incorporating various disciplines, including economics, political science, anthropology, sociology, geography and environment studies.
- ii. As a "seminar", the course is designed to promote high degrees of student participation, and student-led discussions. This is not a conventional, lecture-based class, and, hence, will require different levels of engagement and participation. Most importantly, students will be required to complete readings before class, and be prepared to participate fully in discussions.
- iii. As a "research seminar", one of the class' key aims is to provide a constructive space for students to explore, present, and discuss their specific research interests related to the topic of "Africa in the World" and corresponding issues. With this in mind, up to 4 weeks of class time will be dedicated to student-designated research topics. Every student will be expected to identify a topic, submit a proposal, select a few core readings to share with the class, conduct a presentation (20 min), and help facilitate a discussion. This will provide an opportunity to begin framing your research topic and engage in critical discussion, which will provide a basis for your Final

Research Paper. While such responsibility may seem intimidating for some, you will be well-supported through the process, and we will ensure a constructive, supportive environment.

Learning Outcomes:

The primary goal for the class is to further develop understanding and critical engagement with contemporary issues in African studies. This will be underpinned by the following three core objectives: (1) Students will gain confidence in presenting their critical analyses of given readings in informal class discussions. Picking out key themes, making connections and comparisons between different texts, and responding to differing or opposing viewpoints in a clear and constructive manner will be practiced in each class; (2) Presentations will allow students to improve their formal presentation skills, as well as further develop their ability to give constructive and insightful feedback; (3) students will improve their analytical skills and academic writing skills in the preparation of an original and critical research paper.

Books and Readings:

There is one required book, which is available for purchase at Paragraph Bookstore – also note that electronic versions can be purchased online. All other readings are available for download on myCourses, or found online. Students should complete all assigned readings prior to each class.

Book to purchase:

Ellis, S., & Tutu, D. (2012). *Season of rains: Africa in the world*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

EVALUATION:

Students will be evaluated on two mainstays of a “research seminar”: (1) participation, engagement & contribution to discussion fora (2) the development, articulation, and analysis of a research topic.

This will be broken down as follows:

i. Participation 30%

Because this is a small seminar, participation is crucial, and a substantial portion of each student’s mark will be based on in-class and online participation. The participation grade will consist of four components:

- a. **Class Attendance:** Class attendance is *MANDATORY*. All absences must be approved in advance by the instructor or justified with a doctor’s note or other proper documentation.
- b. **Class Participation:** Students are expected to come to class having done the assigned readings and prepared to offer specific insights or ask specific questions. Students should be attentive in class and participate actively in class discussions.
- c. **Contribution to ‘myCourses Discussion Forum’:** Students are also expected to participate in the class through the myCourses discussion board. Students can use the discussion board to share links to interesting articles or other resources with their classmates, as well as to comment on one another’s posts and discussion questions.
- d. In accordance with ISID conventions, students are required to participate in the ISID conference being held in March (20-21st??) as part of the class. Specific expectations will be discussed in class.

ii. Research Proposal 10%

Each student will be required to identify a key research interest, which will form the basis of their class presentation as well as final paper. The topic of research should be relevant to the themes of the class, and be approved by the instructor. A 2-3 page paper proposal must be submitted by email to the instructor before class on Wednesday, February 11th. The proposal should provide a clear statement of the problem/issue you intend to discuss, pertinent research questions, aims and objectives, the relevance/importance, some background, and the strategy/methods that will be employed. The proposal should also include a preliminary bibliography of at least eight academic sources.

iii. Research Presentation 25%

Students will conduct a short presentation pertaining to their proposed research topic. Presentations should provide background and explanation of the issue, and then undertake a detailed analysis. Presentations should be 15-20 minutes maximum in length. **It is important to practice timing the presentation beforehand to ensure you can fit everything into the allotted time.** Students are encouraged to use visual aids (e.g. power point, prezi, etc.) and media clips (if feasible) to enhance their work. Beyond the actual presentation, students will also be assessed on how well they field questions from classmates and facilitate critical discussion following their presentations.

NOTE: students are required to submit 1-2 readings one week prior to their presentations. This will serve to orient classmates to your research topic and foster critical discussions following your presentation.

iv. Final Paper 35%

Students will submit a final, 4000-5000 word paper that critically engages their proposed research topic. The final paper and paper proposal must conform to APA formatting and citation guidelines. Final papers must be submitted by email to the instructor by *11:59 p.m. on Monday, April 13th*. Late papers will be docked one third of a letter grade per day or portion of a day late unless prior arrangements are made with the instructor. For example, an A paper becomes an A- if it was submitted one day late.

Academic Integrity: *"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."*

Language of Assignments: *"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."

Resources for news on African Current events (and relevant course topic):

- African Arguments Blog: <http://africanarguments.org/>
- AfroBarometer: national public attitude surveys on democracy and governance in Africa.
<http://www.afrobarometer.org> (State Power in Africa)
- *Africa is a Country* (blog). <http://africasacountry.com/> (Representations of Africa)
- This is Africa: Africa for a New Generation. Blog. <http://www.thisisafrica.me/> (African Youth)
- www.allafrica.com (General current events news)
- <http://www.africanews.com/>
- <http://www.world-newspapers.com/africa.html>
- BBC Africa News: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world/africa/>
- <http://afripod.aodl.org/> (History and current events pod-casts)

SYLLABUS

**A note on the syllabus design:*

- i. As mentioned in the Summary, the class is designed around Ellis' book, *Season of Rains*. Readings for each week include, first, a chapter of Ellis' book (listed as "Primary Reading" each week); and, second, readings pertaining to one or two selected key topics (listed under "Key Topics & Readings") that will be investigated more thoroughly.
- ii. In several cases, the reading list is too large and/or some readings are "Too Be Determined" (TBD). In these cases, specific required readings will be identified and posted on a weekly basis.

Week 1 (Jan 5 & 7): Introduction

NOTE: NO CLASS ON Monday, JAN 5.

Primary Reading:

Ellis, S., & Tutu, D. (2012). Foreword & Introduction. In *Season of rains: Africa in the world*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.

Key Topics & Readings:

- i. Africa in the World
 - Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Durham [N.C.: Duke University Press. READ: Introduction: Africa & the World.

Week 2 (Jan 12 & 14): Africa in Time

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Chapter 1: Africa in Time

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Teaching & Learning Africa

NOTE: in preparation for this class, students will be expected to bring to class an images or excerpts from popular media that convey, for one, popular, negative images of Africa; and second, positive images that should be more conveyed. We will build two collages in class that respect these opposing images.

This class may also include a panel of African diaspora representatives who will contribute to our discussion about Teaching & Learning Africa.

- Dei, G. J. S. (2009). *Teaching Africa: Towards a transgressive pedagogy* (Vol. 9). Springer. Introduction
- Ellis, Chapter 6: Development for the Twenty-first Century. READ: the section on Decolonizing the Western Mind
- Wainaina, "How to write about Africa.": <http://www.granta.com/Archive/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1>
- Wainaina, "Why Africa's image is unfair": <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-africa-17814861>

Recommended:

- In Middleton, J., & In Njogu, K. (2009). . Chapter 6: Representations of Africa in the Western Media: Challenges and Opportunities. In *Media and identity in Africa*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press for the International African Institute.
 - Video: Rusty Radiator Awards. <http://www.rustyradiator.com/#home>
- ii. Colonialism & its legacies
- Video (documentary): Nash, M., Julien, I., Salmon, C., Nedjari, A., Ramalho, A., Kellgren, N., Gladstone, P., Arts Council of England. (1996). *Frantz Fanon: Black skin, white mask*. San Francisco, CA: California Newsreel.
 - Fanon, F., Sartre, J.-P., & Farrington, C. (1965). *The wretched of the earth*. New York: Grove Press, Inc. READ: Chapter 1: Concerning Violence. p.35-53; p.95-106

Recommended:

- Nkrumah, K. (1966). *Neo-colonialism: The last stage of imperialism*. New York: International Publishers. READ: Introduction
- Mamdani, M. (1996). *Citizen and subject: Contemporary Africa and the legacy of late colonialism*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press. READ: Introduction.
- Cooper, F. (2002). *Africa since 1940: The past of the present*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press. READ: Selections TBD
- Chazan, N. (1988). *Politics and society in contemporary Africa*. Boulder, Colo: L. Rienner Publishers. READ: “The Diversity of African Politics: Trends and Approaches”

Week 3 (Jan 19-21): A World of Light & Shade Part I

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Chapter 2: A World of Light & Shade

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Encountering Development & the ‘Aid Debate’
- Sachs, W. (1992). *The Development dictionary: A guide to knowledge as power*. London: Zed Books. READ: Intro and Ch1 ‘Development’
 - Audio Resource: Truman’s Inaugural Address 1949: <http://www.trumanlibrary.org/educ/inaug.htm>
 - Video: The Munk Debates: Foreign Aid does more harm than good

Recommended:

- Escobar, A. (1995). *Encountering development: The making and unmaking of the Third World*. Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press. READ: Introduction
 - Gulrajani, N. (March 01, 2011). Transcending the great foreign aid debate: Managerialism, radicalism and the search for aid effectiveness. *Third World Quarterly*, 32, 2, 199-216.
- ii. Globalization, neoliberalism & its discontents
- Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Durham [N.C.: Duke University Press.
 - READ Ch 1: Globalizing Africa? Ch 4: Transnational Topographies of Power

Recommended:

- Harvey, D. (2005). *A brief history of neoliberalism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. READ: Ch 1 “Ch1 “Freedom is just another word...”.
- Collier, P. (2007). *The bottom billion: Why the poorest countries are failing and what can be done about it*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. READ: Ch 6. Globalization to the rescue?

Week 4 (Jan 26-28): A World of Light & Shade Part II

Primary Reading:

n/a

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Dependency, corruption & its allies
 - Chabal, P., & Daloz, J.-P. (1999). *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*. London: International African Institute in association with James Currey, Oxford.
 - READ: Ch.8 (ab)use of corruption; Ch.9 The bounties of dependence

Recommended:

- Bayart, J.-F. (March 31, 2000). Africa in the world: a history of extraversion. *African Affairs*, 99, 395, 217.
- Ferguson, J. (2006). *Global shadows: Africa in the neoliberal world order*. Durham [N.C.: Duke University Press. READ Ch 8 Governing extraction: New Spatializations of Order and Disorder in Neoliberal Africa.
- Bayart, J.-F., Ellis, S., Hibou, B., & International African Institute. (1999). *The criminalization of the state in Africa*. London: International African Institute in association with J. Currey, Oxford. READ: selections TBD
- Video (documentary): Stealing Africa OR Congo: Oil-gotten gains

ii. China at large!

- Mohan, G., & Power, M. (January 01, 2008). New African Choices? The Politics of Chinese Engagement. *Review of African Political Economy*, 35, 115, 23-42.
- Brautigam, D. (2009). *The dragon's gift: The real story of China in Africa*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. READ: Prologue & "Rogue Donor? Myths and Realities"

Recommended:

- Gill, B., & Reilly, J. (June 07, 2007). The Tenuous Hold of China Inc. in Africa. *The Washington Quarterly*, 30, 3, 37-52.
- Large, D. (October 04, 2007). Beyond 'Dragon in the Bush': The Study of China Africa Relations. *African Affairs*, 107, 426, 45-61.
- Alden, C. (2007). *China in Africa*. London: Zed Books. READ: selections TBD
- Video: BBC The Chinese are coming! (Also, see Dambisa Moyo's "Schism" TedTalk)

Week 5 (Feb 2 & 4): How to be a hegemon

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Ch 4: How to be a hegemon

Key Topics & Readings

- i. The State & Democracy in Africa
 - Chabal, P., & Daloz, J.-P. (1999). *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*. London: International African Institute in association with James Currey, Oxford. READ: Section I The informalization of Politics

Recommended:

- Bayart, J.-F. (1993). *The state in Africa: The politics of the belly*. London: Longman. READ: Selections TBD.

- Haggmann & Peclard. "Introduction: Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa". In *Negotiating Statehood: Dynamics of Power and Domination in Africa*
 - Kasfir, N. (January 01, 1998). Civil society, the state and democracy in Africa. *Commonwealth & Comparative Politics*, 36, 2, 123-149.
 - Hydén, G., Leslie, M., & Ogundimu, F. F. (2002). *Media and democracy in Africa*. New Brunswick, N.J: Transaction Publishers. READ: Selections TBD
 - Bratton, M., & Van, W. N. (1997). *Democratic experiments in Africa: Regime transitions in comparative perspective*. Cambridge, U.K: Cambridge University Press. READ: Ch.7 The Prospects of Democracy
 - Wasserman, H. (2011). *Popular media, democracy and development in Africa*. London: Routledge. READ: Selections TBD.
 - Barkan, J. D. (January 01, 2002). DEMOCRACY - THE MANY FACES OF AFRICA - Democracy Across a Varied Continent. *Harvard International Review*, 24, 2, 72.
- ii. Ethnicity & politics of identity
- Chabal, P., & Daloz, J.-P. (1999). *Africa works: Disorder as political instrument*. London: International African Institute in association with James Currey, Oxford. READ: Ch4. Of Masks and Men: the Question of Identity
 - Hydén, G. (2006). *African politics in comparative perspective*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. READ: Ch.9 Ethnicity & Conflict

Recommended:

- Fearon, J. D., & Laitin, D. D. (October 01, 2000). Violence and the Social Construction of Ethnic Identity. *International Organization*, 54, 4, 845-877.

Week 6 (Feb 9 &11): Matters of State

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Ch 5: Matters of State

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Limits of Sovereignty & International interventions
- Deng, F. M. (1996). *Sovereignty as responsibility: Conflict management in Africa*. Washington, DC: Brookings Institution. READ: Preface.

NOTE: Students will be designated groups according to the following categories, and will be responsible for respective readings and summarizing key issues to the larger class.

- a. Military & Peacekeeping
- DE, W. A. A. L. A. L. E. X. (January 01, 2009). Mission without end? Peacekeeping in the African political marketplace. *International Affairs*, 85, 1, 99-113.
 - Badescu, C., & Bergholm, L. (January 01, 2009). The Responsibility To Protect and the Conflict in Darfur: The Big Let-Down. *Security Dialogue*, 40, 3, 287-309.
- b. International Criminal Court
- Snyder, J., & Vinjamuri, L. (January 01, 2004). Trials and Errors: Principle and Pragmatism in Strategies of International Justice. *International Security*, 28, 3, 5-44.
 - Villa-Vicencio, C. (January 01, 2000). Why Perpetrators Should Not Always Be Prosecuted: Where the International Criminal Court and Truth Commissions Meet. *Emory Law Journal*, 49, 205-222.

- Akhavan, P. (January 01, 2001). Beyond Impunity: Can International Criminal Justice Prevent Future Atrocities?. *American Journal of International Law*, 95, 7-31.
- Stephen A. Lomony. Blog Post: “Is the International Criminal Court really picking on Africa?” <http://africanarguments.org/2013/04/16/is-the-international-criminal-court-really-picking-on-africa-by-stephen-a-lamony/>
- Michael Birnbaum. The Washington Post. “African leaders complain of bias at ICC as Kenya trials get underway” http://www.washingtonpost.com/world/europe/african-leaders-complain-of-bias-at-icc-as-kenya-trials-are-underway/2013/12/05/0c52fc7a-56cb-11e3-bdbf-097ab2a3dc2b_story.html
- ICC Kenya Monitor <http://www.icckenya.org/>
- c. Human Rights Conventions
 - Simmons, B. A. (2009). *Mobilizing for human rights: International law in domestic politics*. Cambridge [U.K.: Cambridge University Press. READ: selections TBD
 - Nelson, P. (December 01, 2003). At the Nexus of Human Rights and Development: New Methods and Strategies of Global NGOs. *World Development*, 31, 12, 2013-2026.
 - Manzo, K. (November 01, 2003). Africa in the rise of rights-based development. *Geoforum*, 34, 4, 437-456.
 - Hodgson, D. L. (2011). *Gender and culture at the limit of rights*. Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press.

Week 7 (Feb 16 &18): Money & Land Part I

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Ch 3: Money & Land

Key Topics & Readings

- i. The “New Scramble for Africa” – ‘land grabbing’ in Africa
 - Cotula, L. (2013). *The great African land grab?: agricultural investments and the global food system*. Zed Books. Selections TBD
 - Fairhead, J., Leach, M., & Scoones, I. (April 01, 2012). Green Grabbing: A new appropriation of nature? *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39, 2, 237-261.

Recommended:

- Zoomers, A. (April 01, 2010). Globalisation and the foreignisation of space: Seven processes driving the current global land grab. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 37, 2, 429-447.
- Robertson, B., & Pinstrup-Andersen, P. (July 20, 2010). Global land acquisition: Neo-colonialism or development opportunity?. *Food Security*, 2, 3, 271-283.
- Margulis, M. E., McKeon, N., & Borras, J. S. M. (February 26, 2013). Land Grabbing and Global Governance: Critical Perspectives. *Globalizations*, 10, 1, 1-23.
- De, S. O. (April 01, 2011). How not to think of land-grabbing: three critiques of large-scale investments in farmland. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 38, 2, 249-279.
- Wily, L. A. (May 01, 2011). 'The Law is to Blame': The Vulnerable Status of Common Property Rights in Sub-Saharan Africa. *Development and Change*, 42, 3, 733-757.
- Corson, C., & MacDonald, K. I. (April 01, 2012). Enclosing the global commons: The convention on biological diversity and green grabbing. *Journal of Peasant Studies*, 39, 2, 263-283.

- ii. The ‘network society’ & ‘land grabbing’: the role of social media in resisting land appropriations

NOTE: this class will hopefully include a guest presentation regarding a study in southern Kenya.

- Readings TBD.

Week 8 (Feb 24 & 26): Money & Land Part II

Primary Reading:

n/a

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Politics of neoliberal conservation & displacement
 - Video: Place without People
 - Büscher, B., & Fletcher, R. (2014). Accumulation by Conservation. *New Political Economy*, (ahead-of-print), 1-26.
 - Arsel, M., & Büscher, B. (January 01, 2012). Nature™ Inc.: Changes and Continuities in Neoliberal Conservation and Market-based Environmental Policy. *Development and Change*, 43, 1, 53-78.

Recommended:

- Igoe, J., & Brockington, D. (January 01, 2007). Neoliberal Conservation: A Brief Introduction. *Conservation and Society*, 5, 4, 432-449.
- Azarya, V. (November 01, 2004). Globalization and International Tourism in Developing Countries: Marginality as a Commercial Commodity. *Current Sociology*, 52, 6, 949-967.
- Other readings TBD, including selections from
 - Dowie, M. (2009). *Conservation refugees: The hundred-year conflict between global conservation and native peoples*. Cambridge, Mass: MIT Press.
 - Honey, M. (1999). *Ecotourism and sustainable development: Who owns paradise?*. Washington, D.C: Island Press.
 - Nelson, F. (2010). *Community rights, conservation and contested land: The politics of natural resource governance in Africa*. London: Earthscan.
 - Brockington, D., Duffy, R., & Igoe, J. (2008). *Nature unbound: Conservation, capitalism and the future of protected areas*. London: Earthscan.
- ii. ‘Suffering for territory’, indigeneity, & resistance
 - Hodgson, D. L. (2011). *Being Maasai, becoming indigenous: Postcolonial politics in a neoliberal world*. Bloomington, Ind: Indiana University Press. Selections TBD.
 - Nelson, F. (2010). *Community rights, conservation and contested land: The politics of natural resource governance in Africa*. London: Earthscan. READ: Ch 14 Democratizing natural resource governance: Searching for institutional change

Recommended:

- Moore, D. S. (2005). *Suffering for territory: Race, place, and power in Zimbabwe*. Durham: Duke University Press. READ: Introduction: Situated Struggles
- Galaty, J. (2013). “Land Grabbing in the East African Rangelands” In Scoones, I., Catley, A., & Lind, J. (2013). *Pastoralism and development in Africa: Dynamic change at the margins*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.

Week 9 (March 2 & 4)

NO CLASSES – READING BREAK!!

Week 10-13 (March 9 to April 1): Student-identified research topics & presentations

Key Topics & Readings

TO BE DETERMINED BY STUDENTS.

Note: each student must identify at least 2 primary readings related to their topic, which must be circulated to everyone at least one week prior to the presentation date. These readings will help foster/facilitate critical discussion following your presentation.

Week 14 (April 6 & 8): Twenty-first Century Development

Primary Reading:

Ellis, Chapter 6: Twenty-first Century Development

Key Topics & Readings

- i. Post-development & social movements

NOTE: this class may include a guest presentation from a Africa Diaspora researcher/activist who will share about his experience with international alliances and social movements in Africa.

- Matthews, S. (March 01, 2004). Post-development theory and the question of alternatives: a view from Africa. *Third World Quarterly*, 25, 2, 373-384.
- Ellis, S., & Kessel, I. (2009). *Movers and shakers: Social movements in Africa*. Leiden: Brill.
READ: selections TBD Escobar, A. (1992). "Imagining a postdevelopment era? Critical Thought, Development and Social Movements". *Social Text*. 31, 32, 20-56.

Recommended:

- Ziai, A. (2007). *Exploring post-development: Theory and practice, problems and perspectives*. London: Routledge. READINGS: selections TBD.
- ii. 'Turbulent terrains': complexity, resistance, and new hope
 - Case Studies TBD
 - Ngoitiko et al. "Pastoral Activists: Negotiating power imbalances in the Tanzanian Serengeti". In Nelson, F. (2010). *Community rights, conservation and contested land: The politics of natural resource governance in Africa*. London: Earthscan.

***** FINAL PAPERS DUE BY 11:59PM ON MONDAY, APRIL 13th*****