

Instructor: Professor Michael Schatzberg, 415 North Hall

Instructor's Office Hours: Wednesday, 9:00 - 11:00 or by appointment
263-2392 or schatzberg@polisci.wisc.edu

Teaching Assistants:

Mr. Samuel Darkwa, 122 North Hall, (sdarkwa@wisc.edu)

Ms. Jennifer Petersen, 122 North Hall, (jpetersen2@wisc.edu)

Ms. Susanne Ress, 122 North Hall, (ress@wisc.edu)

TA's Office Hours: TBA

AFRICA: AN INTRODUCTORY SURVEY

A. Course Goals:

This survey of the cultures and societies of Africa is designed to be a broad interdisciplinary introduction to the study of this extraordinary continent. And because we shall examine Africa from a variety of disciplinary perspectives, each of you will have registered for one of the following: African Languages and Literature 277; Afro-American Studies 277; Anthropology 277; Geography 277; History 277; Political Science 277; or Sociology 277.

Since one goal of this course is to introduce students to Africa from a variety of different disciplinary perspectives, we assume no prior knowledge. Nonetheless, your responsibility in this course is slightly different than in most others you have taken. The format requires you regularly to reconcile the different approaches, styles, and perspectives of the course materials (readings, lectures, discussions, video clips, films), making linkages among their various subjects and orientations. You will have plenty of material to work with, and help from the instructor and your teaching assistant, but ultimately it is up to you to weave a coherent understanding of Africa out of the material presented.

For example, when listening to a lecture or reading an assignment, as you are concentrating on the material at hand, at the same time try to think of how the ideas being presented connect to other lectures or readings, support them, or perhaps contradict them. Always try to compare and contrast readings, lectures, discussions, and films with each other. Remember throughout that a second goal of the course is for each of you to come away with some understanding of the complexities and diversities of contemporary and historical Africa. You will discover, for example, that generalizations about "Africa" — whether by the media, academics, policy makers, or even the instructor — rarely hold across the entire continent.

By long custom, this interdisciplinary course draws on occasional guest lectures from a variety of Wisconsin faculty members engaged in the study of Africa because the continent's history, politics, cultures, and societies are so rich, diverse, and complex no single individual can

possibly hope to know everything there is to know about the continent — even in an introductory course. I have therefore carefully selected a variety of guest specialists from various disciplines in the social sciences and humanities to cover subjects that they know far better than I do. There will be enough guests to ensure the interdisciplinary orientation this course is known for, but not so many that the course loses focus or coherence. A third goal of the course, therefore, is to whet your appetites to learn even more about Africa after you complete this course by enrolling in some of the other Africa-centric courses that this university is known for.

B. Course Requirements:

1. Lectures and Discussion Sections:

I expect faithful attendance at all lectures and discussion section meetings. Lectures meet from 2:30 – 3:45p.m. on Tuesdays and Thursdays in Van Vleck B130. Please note that in order to facilitate a comfortable learning environment for all, recording devices of any sort will be permitted only with the instructor’s consent. All cell phones, pagers, ipods and other devices should also be turned off during class sessions. Students wishing to use laptop computers to take notes may do so, but please stay focused on the course: surfing, gaming, or updating “Facebook” entries will detract from your performance and will distract those seated around you. During certain periods laptops will be prohibited (during exams or films, for example), so please respect those times.

In addition to lectures twice a week, each student will attend a weekly discussion section. You must be formally enrolled in one of the twelve scheduled discussion sections and attend that section every week. If you are not enrolled in a discussion section, you are not enrolled in the course. **Please be aware that the assigned readings for any given week will generally be discussed in section the following week.**

Each discussion section will be the responsibility of one of our three teaching assistants. The teaching assistants are graduate students who have had considerable experience in Africa and are carrying out Africa-related research toward a Ph.D. degree. They have been selected for their extensive knowledge, their experience of life in Africa, and their disciplinary diversity. In discussion section they will help you review and sort out ideas presented in lectures, lead discussion and debate, help you analyze your readings, evaluate the written work you submit, and help you prepare for exams. **Please note that no discussion section meetings will be held during Week 1, Week 8, or Week 10 (as noted on the course schedule below).**

Your teaching assistants are:

Mr. Samuel Darkwa, sdarkwa@wisc.edu

Ms. Jennifer Petersen, jpetersen2@wisc.edu

Ms. Susanne Ress, ress@wisc.edu

Their office hours will be posted and announced.

2. Assignments and Grades:

There will be a map quiz, administered in discussion section, during Week 4 (**15, 16, or 17 February 2012**). You will be given a blank map and asked to identify where various African countries, and major cities are located.

A mid-term examination will be held on **Tuesday, 13 March 2012**. It will consist of both identifications and essay questions chosen from among several possibilities. The first format (short ID) will call on you not only to identify, but to demonstrate what you have learned about a particular person, concept, idea, or subject that has been treated in either lecture, discussion section, or the readings. The second format (essay question) will ask you to demonstrate your mastery of the course materials from lecture, reading, and discussion section by integrating them into a coherent essay on a major theme or themes of the course.

By university fiat, the final examination will be on **Friday, 18 May 2012, from 5:05 - 7:05 p.m.** The final will be comprehensive and cover the entire course, but there will most likely be an emphasis on materials treated since the mid-term. The format will be announced later in the semester, but it will probably be the same as the mid-term. (Sorry, the scheduling of the final so late in exam week, and so late in the day, was definitely *not* my idea. Please note well that since you have been alerted to this awkward and inconvenient bit of university scheduling on day one of the semester, requests to take the final at alternative times because of fear of sorcery, obligations to your “big man,” or summer break travel arrangements will *not* fall on sympathetic ears.)

In addition, every student will write a five-page paper that will be due in lecture on **Tuesday, 24 April 2012**. Students taking the course for honors credit will write a ten-page paper. The precise assignment for the paper will be distributed in February.

Grades for the course will be weighted as follows:

Map quiz	5%
Mid-term exam	20%
Section grade	25%
Paper	20%
Final exam	30%

Section grades will be determined on the basis of both your attendance and on the quality of your contributions to the collective deliberations of the group. Obviously, if you are not present it will be impossible to contribute to the group discussions. Quality of contribution is measured by the usefulness of your in-class statements and the evidence you employ to support them. In addition, from time to time you may also be responsible for demonstrating knowledge of content in brief in-class writings and other small written assignments.

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Please note that *all* required work must be submitted to be eligible to receive a passing grade. (Students affiliated with the McBurney Center are warmly and strongly encouraged to see their teaching assistant as soon as possible if they will need alternate arrangements of any sort.)

The list address for this course is: polisci277-1-s12@lists.wisc.edu

3. Required Reading:

The following books will be used extensively. In theory, the University Book Store and the reserve reading room of the College Library in Helen C. White Hall should have copies available. They may also be purchased at other book stores or, of course, on-line.

April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon, eds. *Understanding Contemporary Africa*, 4th edition (Boulder: Lynne Rienner, 2007).

Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart* (New York: Anchor Doubleday, 1994), but any paperback edition will do.

Adam Ashforth, *Madumo: A Man Bewitched* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

John Carlin, *Playing the Enemy: Nelson Mandela and the Game that Made a Nation* (New York: Penguin, 2008).

Trevor R. Getz and Liz Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men: A Graphic History* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012).

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Central Africa* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999).

In the course outline which follows, all readings are required. Required books should be on three-hour reserve in the College Library at Helen C. White Hall. In addition, if required articles do not have their own web link, then they may be accessed either through Learn@UW or the following web link: <http://users.polisci.wisc.edu/schatzberg/ps277>. (Throughout the remainder of this syllabus this will be abbreviated as [web].) Some of the recommended articles may also be accessed through other indicated links. You may need to access these from a UW email or web address, but the relevant journal articles or book chapters should then be accessible. To facilitate easy access, I will send electronic copies of this syllabus (in WordPerfect, Word, Adobe pdf, and html) to the classlist. A copy of this syllabus named "277 syllabus" will also be accessible through [web] and Learn@UW.

C. Course Outline and Reading Assignments:

1–Organization; Introduction: Perceptions of Africa

26 January 2012

No Sections This Week

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 1 ("Introduction"), 1-6.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 2 ("Africa: A Geographic Preface"), 7-22.

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa," *Granta* 92 (Winter 2005): 91-95 [web]

2–African Diversities, 1

2 February 2012

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 1-109.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 8 (“Africa’s Environmental Problems”), 235-264.

3–African Diversities, 2

9 February 2012

Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*, 110-209.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 3 (“The Historical Context”), 23-56.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 9 (“Family and Kinship”), 265-292.

4–Precolonial Africa: Politics, Economics, Society, 1

16 February 2012

*****Map Quiz in Section*****

Getz & Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men*, frontmatter, 1-79.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 11 (“Religion in Africa”), 317-350.

5–Precolonial Africa: Politics, Economics, Society, 2

23 February 2012

Getz & Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men*, 80-137.

Ngũgĩ wa Thiong’o, “Power Daemons” [[web](#)].

6–Colonial Rule, 1

1 March 2012

Getz & Clarke, *Abina and the Important Men*, 138-179.

7–Colonial Rule, 2

8 March 2012

Hochschild, *King Leopold’s Ghost*, 1-139.

Peter K. Ekeh, “Colonialism and the Two Publics in Africa: A Theoretical Statement,”

Comparative Studies in Society and History 17:1 (January 1975): 91-112 [[web](#)].

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8–Analytical Interlude, 1

15 March 2012

*****MID-TERM EXAM: TUESDAY, 13 MARCH 2012*****

*****No Sections This Week*****

9–Nationalism: Cultural & Political, 1

22 March 2012

Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 140-234.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 12 (“African Literature”), 351-395.

10–Post Independence Politics, 1

29 March 2012

*****No Sections This Week*****

Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 235-306.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 4 (“African Politics”), 57-107.

Spring Break

11–Post Independence Politics, 2

12 April 2012

Carlin, *Playing the Enemy*, 1-131.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 6 (“African International Relations”), 155-201.

12–The Political Economy of Development

19 April 2012

Carlin, *Playing the Enemy*, 133-261.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 5 (“The Economies of Africa”), 109-154.

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 10 (“Women and Development”), 293-316.

13–Analytic Interlude, 2

26 April 2012

*****TERM PAPER DUE: TUESDAY, 24 APRIL 2012*****

14–Everyday Life: Leisure, Society, & Culture, 1

3 May 2012

Ashforth, *Madumo*, 1-133.

Wole Soyinka, “Psychopaths of Faith vs. The Muse of Irreverence,” *New Perspectives Quarterly* 23:2 (Spring 2006): 13-16 [[web](#)].

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, chapter 7 (“Population, Urbanization, and AIDS”), 203-234.

15–Everyday Life: Leisure, Society, & Culture, 2

10 May 2012

Ashforth, *Madumo*, 134-255.

Jo Ellen Fair, “Me Do Wu, My Val: The Creation of Valentine’s Day in Accra, Ghana,” *African Studies Review* 47:3 (December 2004): 23-49 [[web](#)].

Gordon & Gordon, *Africa*, Chapter 13 (“Trends and Prospects”), 397-415.

***** FINAL EXAMINATION:**

FRIDAY, 18 MAY 2012, FROM 5:05 - 7:05 P.M.; LOCATION: T.B.A.***