



ANTH 310A / BAS 310A

Fall 2008

# Introduction to Peoples and Cultures of Africa

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## Dr. John C. McCall

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## □ Course Objectives

This course surveys societies of Sub-Saharan Africa from an interdisciplinary perspective. A brief introduction to African geography is followed by an overview of African history in the pre-colonial and colonial eras. The remainder of the course is devoted to the study of present-day Africa including readings on social organization, religion, music, art, literature, popular culture, politics, economics and development. Films are used to provide additional views of African life. The objective of this course is to provide knowledge of life in modern Africa and insights into the problems and potentials of contemporary African societies. Special attention is given to the impact of colonial and post-colonial nation states on African affairs and the ways in which traditional social structures and world-views articulate with modern conditions.

## □ Texts

**AFRICA**, Phyllis M. Martin and Patrick O'Meara, editors. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. Vol. 3, 1995.

**ARROW OF GOD**, Chinua Achebe. London: Anchor. 1989.

**KING LEOPOLD'S GHOST: A Story of Greed, Terror, and Heroism in Colonial Africa**, Adam Hochschild. New York: Houghton Mifflin. 1998.

**DECOLONISING THE MIND**. Ngugi wa Thiong'o. Heinemann. 1994.

**STARVED FOR SCIENCE**. Robert Paarlberg. Harvard U. Press. 2008.

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## □ Assignments

- ✓ **Map Quiz (5%)**  
An in-class map quiz covering the political geography of modern Africa.  
**Date: Tuesday, August 26**
  
- ✓ **News Report (15%)**  
Tuesdays will be “African News Day.” Beginning August 26, Tuesday classes will begin with a news report by students. Over the course of the semester, each student will prepare a brief news report on an African news item of their choice and present a 3-5 minute report in class. Students are encouraged to use [allafrica.com](http://allafrica.com) as their primary source for African news items.  
  
**Date: Different students will present reports on different days.** A sign-up sheet for the News Report is posted next to my office.
  
- ✓ **Question on the Achebe book (5%)**  
We will read and discuss Chinua Achebe’s novel *Arrow of God*. Each student is required to hand in two questions or comments about the novel. I will use these submissions to define topics for class discussion. The questions should focus on aspects of culture and history represented in Achebe’s story.  
**Date: Thursday, September 11**
  
- ✓ **Three Book Reaction Statements (10% each)**  
Write a 2-3 page ‘Reaction Statement’ on the books by Hochschild, Ngugi and Paarlberg. Your statements will help me know how to focus the in-class discussion of the books. The reaction can include (a) identification and discussion of key themes in the book; (b) questions the reading raised for you; (c) connections you’ve made between this book and other reading or things you’ve learned about Africa. Don’t summarize the book! Give me your reaction to it.  
**Dates:       Hochschild: October 7**  
              **Ngugi: October 28**  
              **Paarlberg: December 4**
  
- ✓ **Three Exam Essays (15% each)**  
Students are required to prepare three brief exam essays (2-3 pages) over the semester. Prompts for the essays will be distributed in class.  
**Dates:       First Essay Due: Tuesday, October 14**  
              **Second Essay Due: November 11**  
              **Final Essay Due: Written in-class on December 13**

## □ Grading Standards, the following factors determine your grade:

- ❖ **Attendance** — You can miss two classes for free, after that **your grade drops by half a point for every class you miss**. Please notify me if you need to miss class because of sickness, a religious holiday, or some other legitimate excusable reason. (This does not include extra-curricular events, work for other classes, etc.)
- ❖ **Written Work and Exams** — If you turn assignments in on time and your work is well written, shows enthusiasm, intellectual involvement and a grasp of the concepts you will get an A. If it is competent and adequate you will get a B. If it’s sloppy, poorly conceived or shows little effort you will get a C. If you misunderstand and/or misrepresent the key concepts and facts you will get a D. If you fail to turn in the assignment, or turn it in late without notifying me ahead of time, you will get an F.
- ❖ **Plagiarism** — Representing the research or writing of another as your own, or failing to properly identify and cite the sources of your research, will result in a failing grade for the course. Students who traffic in illicit term papers may face additional consequences.
- ❖ **Participation** — I want to this to be a student driven course. Come to class with questions about the readings. Engage your critical sensibilities when you watch films and ask questions in the subsequent discussion. I find that question driven discussion is much more engaging and educationally fruitful than simply listening to canned lectures. Consistent constructive participation in class discussion is characteristic of the “A” student. Let me know why you are taking this course. Learning is not a passive activity. Don’t just sit there!
- ❖ In other words: if you convince me during the course that you want to learn something about Africa and at the end of the course that you have learned something, you don’t need to worry about your grade.

# C O U R S E C A L E N D A R

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## C O U R S E I N T R O D U C T I O N


### Week 1 (August 19-21)

#### Tuesday:

Introduction

#### Thursday:

 Africa: Problems and Perspectives (Martin & O'Meara)

 The Contemporary Map of Africa (Michael McNulty in Martin & O'Meara)

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## A F R I C A H I S T O R Y

### Week 2 (August 26-28)

#### EARLY HISTORY


#### Tuesday:

 Africa News 1

 In-class quiz - The Map of Africa

 Aspects of Early African History (John Lamphear and Toyin Falola in Martin & O'Meara)

#### Thursday:


 Islam and African Societies (John H. Hanson in Martin & O'Meara)

### Week 3 (September 2-4)


#### THE COLONIAL ERA

#### Tuesday:

 Africa News 2

 Africa and Europe Before 1900 (Curtis A. Keim in Martin & O'Meara)

#### Thursday:


 The Colonial Era (Sheldon Gellar in Martin & O'Meara)

### Week 4 (September 9-11)

#### POSTCOLONIAL LIFE

#### Tuesday:

 Africa News 3

 Video: *Chinua Achebe*

#### Thursday:

 Two questions about *Arrow of God* due

Discussion of *Arrow of God*

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# AFRICAN CULTURE & SOCIETY

## Week 5 (September 16-18) CULTURE AND ECONOMY

### Tuesday:

#### ✪ Africa News 4

📖 Decolonization, Independence, and the Failure of Politics (Edmond J. Keller in Martin & O'Meara)

📖 Economic Life in African Villages and Towns (Mahir Saul in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

🎥 Video: *Asante Market Women*

## Week 6 (September 23-25) SOCIAL ORGANIZATION

### Tuesday:

#### ✪ Africa News 5

📖 Social Organization in Africa (John C. McCall in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

📖 "Rethinking Ancestors in Africa." (John C. McCall) [*Africa*. 1995. 65(2): 256-270.]

\*Get from JSTOR or just download it at:

<http://www.siu.edu/~anthro/mccall/articles/RethinkingAncestors.pdf>

## Week 7 (September 30-October 2) PHILOSOPHY AND WORLD VIEW

### Tuesday:

#### ✪ Africa News 6

Special Lecture: *The Witches of Nollywood*

### Thursday:

📖 African Systems of Thought (Ivan Karp in Martin & O'Meara)

📖 "Portrait of a Brave Woman." (John McCall) *American Anthropologist*. 1996. 98(1): 127-136.

\*Get from JSTOR or just download it at:

<http://www.siu.edu/%7eanthro/mccall/articles/BraveWoman.pdf>

## Week 8 (October 7-9)

### Tuesday:

#### ✪ Africa News 7

📖 Reaction Statements on *King Leopold's Ghost* due

🎥 Video: *Lumumba: Death of a Prophet*

### Thursday:

Discussion of *King Leopold's Ghost*

## Week 9 (October 14-16) AFRICAN MUSIC, AFRICAN DANCE

### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 8
- 📌 History Essay Due
- 📖 African Music Performed (Ruth Stone in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

- 📺 *The Yam Festival in Ohafia*

## Week 10 (October 21-23) AFRICAN ARTS

### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 9
- 📖 African Art (Patrick R. McNaughton and Diane Pelrine in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

- 📺 Video: *Igbo Masquerades*

## Week 11 (October 28-30) AFRICAN LITERATURE

### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 10
- 📌 Reaction Statements on *Decolonizing the Mind* due
- 📖 African Literature (Eileen Julian in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

- Discussion of *Decolonizing the Mind*

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## CONTEMPORARY AFRICAN POLITICS

## Week 12 (November 4-6) SOCIAL CHANGE IN AFRICA

### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 11
- 📖 Social Change in Contemporary Africa (Claire Robertson in Martin & O'Meara)
- 📖 Popular Culture in Urban Africa (Dele Jegede in Martin & O'Meara)

### Thursday:

- 📺 Video -- Ngozi Onwurah's *Monday's Girls*

### Week 13 (November 11-13) (ASA)

#### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 12
- 📌 Culture Essay Due
- 📖 African Politics Since Independence (Brian Winchester in Martin & O'Meara)

#### Thursday:

- 📖 Economic Change in Contemporary Africa (Sara S. Berry in Martin & O'Meara)
- 📖 Law and Society in Contemporary Africa (Takyiwaa Manuh in Martin & O'Meara)

### Week 14 (November 18-20) (AAA)

#### Tuesday:

- 📺 Video -- Flora M'mbugu-Schelling's *These Hands*

#### Thursday:

- 📺 Video -- Eric Campbell's *Nigeria's Oil War*

### Week 15 (Thanksgiving Break)

### Week 16 (December 4-6)

#### Tuesday:

- 📌 Africa News 13
- 📌 Reaction Statements on *Starved for Science* due
- 📖 The African Development Crisis (Richard Stryker and Stephen Ndegwa in Martin & O'Meara)
- 📖 South Africa (C.R.D. Halisi and Patrick O'Meara in Martin & O'Meara)

#### Thursday:

Final Discussion

### Week 17 (Finals Week, Thursday, December 13)

- 📌 Final Exam  
(3:10-5:10 P.M.)

#### Official SIUC Emergency Procedures:

Southern Illinois University Carbondale is committed to providing a safe and healthy environment for study and work. Because some health and safety circumstances are beyond our control, we ask that you become familiar with the SIUC Emergency Response Plan and Building Emergency Response Team (BERT) program. Emergency response information is available on posters in buildings on campus, available on the BERT'S website at [www.bert.siu.edu](http://www.bert.siu.edu), Department of Public Safety's website [www.dps.siu.edu](http://www.dps.siu.edu) (disaster drop down) and in the Emergency Response Guidelines pamphlet. Know how to respond to each type of emergency.

Instructors will provide guidance and direction to students in the classroom in the event of an emergency affecting your location. It is **important that you follow these instructions and stay with your instructor during an evacuation or sheltering emergency**. The Building Emergency Response Team will provide assistance to your instructor in evacuating the building or sheltering within the facility.