

Instructor: Abdoulaye Kane

Grinter Hall 439

Tel: 352 392 6788

E-mail: akane@ufl.edu

Office hours: Wednesday, 10:30 AM to 11:30 AM.

ANG5354/ANT4354/AFS4935/ “Anthropology of Modern Africa”

Meeting: Tuesday: Periods 7 (1:55PM to 2:45PM)

Thursday: Periods 7-8 (1:55PM to 3:50PM)

Room: TUR 2328

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course examines the anthropological records in taking Africa and Africans as object of study since the birth of the discipline in the 19th century to contemporary times. The initial interest was to compare African “primitive” societies and Western “civilization.” African small-scale societies were represented as close, unchanging, backward and therefore outside of human history as it was conceptualized in Western perspective. These early anthropological representations and framings of Africa and Africans have unfortunately lasting impact on the way many in the West continue to perpetuate inaccurate and misleading portrayals of the continent and its people. These misconceptions are still present in way western media cover Africa or in the depictions of the continent in films, magazines, and popular culture.

From the end of World War II to our contemporary era, anthropologists started to focus on social transformations of African societies in response to external forces such as colonization, neocolonial economic and political configurations, globalization and neoliberal economic policies. These generations of anthropologists moved away from the evolutionary and structural functionalists approaches of African societies. They instead emphasized the agency of Africans and their ability to adopt innovative strategies in their engagement with the contemporary global economic and political context. Today Anthropology provides a useful way of combatting misconceptions and generalizations about Africa. Detailed ethnographic studies help demonstrate that African cultures and communities are just as “modern” as their western counterparts, although they are affected and have responded differently to global structural forces. Therefore, Anthropologists - whose discipline was first to label African societies as

primitive – were first to think of African alternative modernity. Africa and Africans were modern in their own terms and should not be evaluated with a Western centered concept of modernity.

This course will, through the use of essays, ethnographies, journal articles, and films, focus on the major debates and discussions among Anthropologists and Africanists at large regarding the representation of “modern Africa” in western scholarship.

OBJECTIVES

The main objectives of this course are:

- To expose students to anthropological perspective in the representation of Africa and African societies and cultures by examining the wider historical processes that has set the stage for the transformation of the anthropological views on the African societies as object of analysis.
- To help students cultivate a greater command over current trends in social analysis and theorization about modernity, postcolonial subjects, and the changing perspective on African realities.
- To enhance students’ critical thinking and analytical writing skills.

READING MATERIAL

Required Reading

1. James Ferguson (2006). *Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order*. Durham: Duke University Press. (Online)
2. Sasha Newell (2012). *The Modernity Bluff: Crime, Consumption, and Citizenship in Côte d’Ivoire*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
3. Charles Piot (2010). *Nostalgia for the Future*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press.
4. Achille Mbembe (2021). *Out of the dark night: essay on decolonization*. New York: Columbia University Press. (Online)

5. Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. (Online)

Only one book need to be purchased at the UF bookstore (Nostalgia for the future). All the other books are available online at the UF Library website. Additional reading material will be available on canvas.

REQUIREMENTS

1-Attendance, Readings, and Participation (75 points)

Each student will be expected to participate in class discussion. Students will be evaluated for their familiarity with required readings and their productive contributions to class discussions. Attendance is compulsory. Any absence has to be justified to the satisfaction of the instructor. Any unjustified absence will seriously undermine your final participation grade. An attendance sheet will be distributed at the end of each session and students are required to sign it.

2-Questions on readings: (75 points)

Each student will be expected to write 2 questions that he or she found important about the required readings. The questions have to be uploaded weekly on canvas on Wednesdays by 11:59pm.

3-Précis's on Reading material: (200 points)

Each student is required to write a précis for four sessions. A précis is a relatively brief (500 words) summary of critical thought that arise during your reading. It should include: (1) the primary argument of the text (s); (2) note on the object of analysis and kinds of evidence; (3) the intellectual, disciplinary, and /or political context of the work. These should be on canvas before the dateline.

4-Reaction paper (100 points)

The reaction paper should address critically one of the central topics covered by the reading material. Students should cite at least three references related to the topic. The length of the reaction paper should be 1000 words.

5-Final Paper: (150 points)

Each student will be expected to write a research paper of 3000 words. The paper should be double-spaced, in 12pt font, with 1" margins on all sides. This paper may review some substantive matter of interest to the student, or directly address a theoretical issue of relevance to African modernity. Please talk to me about your topic and focus by the end of September. This paper will be due on the last day of class. You

can send your paper by e-mail or place it in my mailbox in the Anthropology Office by 4 pm on that day. There will be no extensions.

Grading Scale: The following scale will be used for grades on all assignments and exams: 94-100=A; 90-93=A-; 87-89=B+; 83-86=B; 79-82=B-; 76-78=C+; 72-75=C; 69-71=C-; 66-68=D+; 62-65=D; 59-61=D-; 58 and below=E (failing). Regarding university grading policies, be advised that a grade of C- is not valid for major, minor, Gen Ed, Gordon Rule, or for college basic distribution credit. For questions about minus grades, please see <http://www.isis.ufl.edu/minusgrades.html> ([Links to an external site.](#))[Links to an external site.](#) ([Links to an external site.](#)) [Links to an external site.](#) [Links to an external site.](#)

You may consult current UF policy on how grade point averages are calculated at <http://www.registrar.ufl.edu/catalog/policies/regulationgrades.html>.

Required Policies

In-Class Recording

Students are allowed to record video or audio of class lectures. However, the purposes for which these recordings may be used are strictly controlled. The only allowable purposes are (1) for personal educational use, (2) in connection with a complaint to the university, or (3) as evidence in, or in preparation for, a criminal or civil proceeding. All other purposes are prohibited. Specifically, students may not publish recorded lectures without the written consent of the instructor. A “class lecture” is an educational presentation intended to inform or teach enrolled students about a particular subject, including any instructor-led discussions that form part of the presentation, and delivered by any instructor hired or appointed by the University, or by a guest instructor, as part of a University of Florida course. A class lecture does not include lab sessions, student presentations, clinical presentations such as patient history, academic exercises involving solely student participation, assessments (quizzes, tests, and exams), field trips, private conversations between students in the class or between a student and the faculty or lecturer during a class session.

Publication without permission of the instructor is prohibited. To “publish” means to share, transmit, circulate, distribute, or provide access to a recording, regardless of format or medium, to another person (or persons), including but not limited to another student within the same class section. Additionally, a recording, or transcript of a recording, is considered published if it is posted on or uploaded to, in whole or in part, any media platform, including but not limited to social media, book, magazine, newspaper, leaflet, or third-party note/tutoring services. A student who publishes a recording without written consent may be subject to a civil cause of action instituted by a person injured by the publication and/or discipline under UF Regulation 4.040 Student.

Students Requiring Accommodation

Students with disabilities who experience learning barriers and would like to request academic accommodations should connect with the Disability Resource Center by visiting <https://disability.ufl.edu/students/get-started/>. It is important for students to share

their accommodation letter with their instructor and discuss their access needs, as early as possible in the semester.

UF Evaluations Process

Students are expected to provide professional and respectful feedback on the quality of instruction in this course by completing course evaluations online via GatorEvals. Guidance on how to give feedback in a professional and respectful manner is available at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/students/>. Students will be notified when the evaluation period opens, and can complete evaluations through the email they receive from GatorEvals, in their Canvas course menu under GatorEvals, or via <https://ufl.bluera.com/ufl/>. Summaries of course evaluation results are available to students at <https://gatorevals.aa.ufl.edu/public-results/>.

University Honesty Policy

UF students are bound by The Honor Pledge which states, “We, the members of the University of Florida community, pledge to hold ourselves and our peers to the highest standards of honor and integrity by abiding by the Honor Code. On all work submitted for credit by students at the University of Florida, the following pledge is either required or implied: “On my honor, I have neither given nor received unauthorized aid in doing this assignment.” The Honor Code (<https://www.dso.ufl.edu/sccr/process/student-conduct-honor-code/>) specifies a number of behaviors that are in violation of this code and the possible sanctions. Furthermore, you are obligated to report any condition that facilitates academic misconduct to appropriate personnel. If you have any questions or concerns, please consult with the instructor or TAs in this class.

Counseling and Wellness Center

Contact information for the Counseling and Wellness Center: <http://www.counseling.ufl.edu/cwc/Default.aspx>, 392-1575; and the University Police Department: 392-1111 or 9-1-1 for emergencies.

The Writing Studio

The writing studio is committed to helping University of Florida students meet their academic and professional goals by becoming better writers. Visit the writing studio online at <http://writing.ufl.edu/writing-studio/> or in 2215 Turlington Hall for one-on-one consultations and workshops.

Please note: The Instructor may make minor adjustments to class readings or assignments during the course of the semester. Any and all modifications will be announced ahead of time.

Course Schedule

(I reserve the right to add films and documentaries in the Schedule)

Week 1:

Tue. Jan 10

Course overview and review of the syllabus

Thu. Jan 12

Week 2: Enduring Themes

Tue. Jan 17 / Thu. Jan 19:

Anthropology of Africa: Enduring Themes (Economic Anthropology of Africa, Kinship, Witchcraft)

Reading: Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Part I, chap 1 & 3. (e-book available at the UF Library)

Week 3: Anthropology of Africa: Critique and Decolonizing Themes

Tue. Jan 24 / Thu. Jan 26

Reading: Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Part II, chap 7 & 10, (e-book available at the UF Library)

Week 4

Anthropology of Africa: Post-colonial and Emerging Themes

Tue. Jan 31 / Thu. Feb 2:

Reading: Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Part III, chap 12, 15 & 16 (e-book available at the UF Library)

Week 5:

Anthropology of Africa: Reflexivity

Tue. Feb 7 / Thu. Feb 9

Reading: Roy Richard Grinker, Stephen C. Lubkemann, Christopher B. Steiner, , and Euclides Gonçalves (2019). A companion to the Anthropology of Africa. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. Part IV. Chap 18 & 20. (e-book available at the UF Library)

First Precis should be submitted by February 5.

Week 6:

Globalization and African Modernity

Tue. Feb 14 / Thu. Feb 16

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Introduction, Chapter 1,2, and 3 (Available online at UF Library)

Week 7:

Globalization and Alternative modernity

Tue. Feb 21 / Thu. Feb 23

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chap. 4,5 and 6

Week 8

Globalization Alternative modernity

Tue. Feb 28 / Thu. Mar 2

Reading: James Ferguson: Global Shadows. Chap. 7 to end.

Week 9:

Spring Break (No Classes on Tue, Mar 7 and on Thu. Mar 9)

Week 10:

Neoliberal Order, Transnational Religious Movement and the Death of Tradition

Tue. Mar 14 / Thu. Mar 16

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the future. Introduction, chap 1 and 2

Week 11:

Neoliberal Order, Transnational Religious Movement and the Death of Tradition

Tue. Mar 21 / Thu. Mar 23

Reading: Charles Piot: Nostalgia of the Future. Chap 3 to end.

Week 12:

Urban and Youth Cultures

Tue. Mar 28 / Thu. Mar 30

Reading: Newell Sasha: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 1 to 2

Second Precis should be submitted by March 23

Week 13:

Tue. Apr 4 / Thu. Apr 6

Reading: Newell Sasha: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 3 & 4.

Week 14:

Tue. Apr 11 / Thu. Apr 13

Reading: Newell Sasha: The Modernity Bluff. Chap 5 to end.

Week 15

Decolonization revisited

Tue. Apr 18 / Apr 20

Reading: Achille Mbembe (2021). Out of the dark night: essays on decolonization. Chap 1 and 2

Third Precis should be submitted by April 11

Week 16:

Tue. Apr 25

Reading: Achille Mbembe (2021). Out of the dark night: essays on decolonization. Chap 3 & 4.

Fourth Precis should be submitted by April 25.

Final Paper Submission