



Course Outline

COURSE:	Course Title AFRI6000F: Thinking from Africa
TERM:	Fall 2023
PRECLUSIONS:	
Day & Time:	Wednesdays 9am-11.25am
INSTRUCTOR:	Prof Shireen Hassim (she/her)
CONTACT:	Office : DT 1707 Email : Shireen.Hassim@Carleton.ca

This course examines key themes in the evolution of African Studies as a discipline, including the historical and ongoing debates over its boundaries and genealogies and its changing research paradigms. The course takes an interdisciplinary approach and interrogates the ways in which key historical processes, intellectual strands and institutional and political developments have shaped contemporary Africa. We address ethical and epistemological questions in the study of Africa, beginning from the position that Africa is a site of complex theoretical foment. Intellectual, institutional and ideological contexts shaping production and dissemination of knowledge about Africa, Africans and people of African heritage will receive particular attention in this course.

The course will be run as a seminar, requiring a high level of participation from students. By the end of the course, students will demonstrate ability to explain African Studies as a coherent discipline, its key analytical and methodological approaches coming from different disciplinary perspectives within African Studies and should be able to craft research questions and projects that will take the discipline forward. Students taking this course will also be expected to attend the Institute of African Studies seminar series, held on Wednesdays.

This course has a strong emphasis on the development of a research question.

Please note: My teaching mode is highly interactive and each class cohort shapes the content of discussion, depending on their specific curiosities. I will endeavor to keep that openness to your interests as far as possible, and I hope that each of us will take responsibility for building a community that is open to learning from each other, and safe for raising what are likely to be challenging questions.

Please note the 9am start for the class

I want to really emphasise that this class works best when there is full commitment from students, including

preparation for each class and willingness to risk stepping into conversations. To underscore this, some part of your final grade is comprised of a participation assessment; please read that section carefully. Also, you will see that some weeks have more reading than others but do not be put off by this. We will make time for reading!

Evaluation

Seminar participation (continuous assessment): 10%

Seminar presentation: 15%

Essay proposal: 20%

Final Essay: 40%

Final Presentation: 15%

Participation

Weekly seminars will consist of discussion. A seminar is a forum within which to examine and discuss ideas and interpretations of assigned weekly readings. The success of a seminar depends entirely on student preparation and participation. Students should arrive to class having read all assigned texts and prepared to discuss them. Your **class attendance and the quality** (not quantity) of your contribution to class discussion will form the basis of your participation grade. Note that active listening is a crucial aspect of effective participation.

Knowing Africa Seminar Series

The seminar programme is an extension of the curriculum designed to introduce you to the leading ideas and thinkers working on Africa today. While attendance is not mandatory, it will enrich your research to attend these. Please join the IAS mailing list to follow the precise dates and speakers.

Seminar Presentation

At the first class on September 6, each student will select one theme on which to present an intervention in class (please consider your preference ahead of class). You need to sign up for this date and be ready to introduce the discussion in class for that seminar. Your presentation should pose at least three questions that arise out of the readings, and then answer at least one of these. The written text of your presentation should be circulated to the class 24 hours in advance. Please note that this is graded. The participants in class will be expected to consider whether the three questions are the most relevant, to suggest other questions that might be asked of the literature and to consider whether the presenter's answer is a cogent one based on the readings.

Essay Proposal

On November 2, all students will present their ideas for an essay addressing key themes in African Studies. Each student will have 15 minutes, including time for feedback, to present their topic to the class. Presentations should include the topic, a proposed thesis statement/ hypothesis, the major question(s) to be addressed, and sources to be utilized. The objective of the presentation is to elicit useful critical comments and questions from your peers and the instructor before completing the essay. The written proposal should be 5 pages double-spaced Times New Roman font size 12 single-spaced not including bibliography. The written proposal and should be circulated to Prof Hassim as well as to the rest of the class due by noon on October 31.

Essay

The major assignment should be a critical examination of a topic that is part of current conversations in the discipline of African Studies. You may choose to write a literature review that compares and contrasts a body of writing on a specific topic, or you may use this essay to develop a dissertation proposal. The essay must demonstrate substantial

reading, critically assess research sources in a coherent analysis, and be well written and formally referenced. The essay must be between 20 pages Times New Roman font size 12 double-spaced, and is due on November 24.

Knowing Africa Seminar Series

Details to be announced

Summary of Requirements

TASK	WEIGHT	DATE DUE
Seminar participation	10%	Continuous assessment
Seminar presentation	15%	Select topic by Sept 20, present on Oct 4. Consult with Prof Hassim
Essay proposal	20%	October 25
Presentation – Knowing Africa	15%	Present on November 24
Final Essay	40%	November 30

COURSE SCHEDULE

September 6: Introduction

This class serves as an introduction to the course. We will discuss objectives, readings, evaluation and organization of the course.

Please come prepared to select a topic from the outline for the seminar presentation.

September 13

Epistemology 1: History of African Studies

Binyavanga Wainana, 2005, 'How to write about Africa,' *Granta* 92, <https://granta.com/how-to-write-about-africa/>

JesutoFunmi Odugbemi, Orapelegn Rammala, Wangui wa Kamonji, 2019, 'There is no African in African Studies'

<https://africasacountry.com/2019/08/there-is-no-africa-in-african-studies>

Jean Allman, 2019, '#HerskovitsMustFall: A meditation on whiteness, African Studies and the unfinished business of 1968', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 62, Issue 3:6-39

Amina Mama, 'Is it ethical to study Africa? Preliminary Thoughts on Scholarship and Freedom', *African Studies Review*, Vol. 50 Issue 1, 2007: 1-26

Watch: Simukai Chigudu on activism and academia, here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QGhPBLxX_Vs

September 20

Epistemology 2: On knowledge production

Verónica Amarante, Ronelle Burger, Grieve Chelwa, John Cockburn, Ana Kassouf, Andrew McKay & Julieta Zurbrigg (2021): Underrepresentation of developing country researchers in development research, *Applied Economics Letters*, DOI:10.1080/13504851.2021.1965528

Toby Green, North-South dynamics in academia, *J of African Cultural Studies*, Vol 31, No. 3 2019,

<https://doi.org/10.1080/13696815.2019.1630263>, Pages 280-283

Insa Nolte, The future of African Studies: What we can do to keep Africa at the heart of our research, *J of African Cultural Studies*, Vol 31, No. 3 2019, pages 296-313

Brenda Nyandiko Sanya and Anne Namatsi Lutomia, "Archives and Collective Memories: Searching for African Women in the Pan-African Imaginary," *Feminist Africa*, no. 20 (July 2015): 69-76.

September 27:

Epistemology 3: Decolonization and decoloniality

Sabelo Ndlovu-Gatsheni, 2020, 'The cognitive empire, politics of knowledge and African intellectual productions: reflections on struggles for epistemic freedom and resurgence of decolonisation in the twenty-first century', *Third World Quarterly*, available here:

https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/01436597.2020.1775487?fbclid=IwAR1g9O3zsBSobTRO7Qglm103nndU_ZM7d-ospr0tQD31O8luspJmBnK13qc&journalCode=ctwq20

Olúfémi Táiwò, 2022, *Against Decolonization* (Hurst Publishers), (Introduction and ch 1 'What, after all, is decolonization?').

Kavish Chetty (2023): The politics of decolonial investigations, *Social Dynamics*, DOI: 10.1080/02533952.2023.2239010

October 4: Patriarchy, colonialism and settler capitalism

Cambridge University workshop; all students invited. Details and zoom link to follow.

October 11: Gender and Feminism

Oyewumi, Oyeronke. "Conceptualizing Gender: The Eurocentric Foundations of Feminist Concepts and the Challenge of African Epistemologies." *Jenda: A Journal of Culture and African Women Studies*. 2, no. 1, 2002.

<http://www.jendajournal.com>.

OR: see Oyewumi, Oyeronke, *The Invention of Women: Making an African Sense of Western Gender Discourses*, University of Minnesota Press, 1997, chapters 1 and 2.

Bakare-Yusuf, Bibi. "[Yorubas Don't do Gender](#). A critical review of Oyeronke Oyewumi's 'The Invention of Woman: Making an African sense of Western gender discourses'." *African Identities*. 1, No.1 (2003).

Nnaemeka, Obioma "Mapping African Feminisms" in Obioma Nnaemeka (ed) 1998 *Sisterhood, Feminisms and Power: From Africa to the Diaspora*, Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, pp.31-42.

Catherine Cole, Takiwaa Manuh and Stephen Miescher, "Introduction: When Was Gender?" in *Africa After Gender?*, eds. C. Cole, T. Manuh, and S. Miescher, (2007), pp.1-14.

October 18: WRITING WORKSHOP

Details circulated closer to time

October 24-28 FALL UNIVERSITY BREAK (No class)

November 1: Colonial Violence

Frederick Cooper, 2005, *Colonialism in Question*, University of California Press, Part 1, chapters 1 and 2, available here: <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/j.ctt1ppzr9>

Adam Hochschild, *King Leopold's Ghost*, 1998, ch 19 ("The great forgetting") but the whole book is enthralling

Howard W. French, 2019, "Africa's Lost Kingdoms", *New York Review of Books*, June 27 2019, (possibly) available

here: https://www.nybooks.com/articles/2019/06/27/medieval-africa-lost-kingdoms/?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=NYR%20Medieval%20Africa%20Andrea%20Dworkin%20Sierra%20Leone&utm_content=NYR%20Medieval%20Africa%20Andrea%20Dworkin%20Sierra%20Leone+CID_0afec56c89eae3997a101557bfa54bc6&utm_source=Newsletter&utm_term=Africas%20Lost%20Kingdoms

November 8: Fanon on the colonial condition

Frantz Fanon, *Wretched of the Earth*, Grove Press 2004 edition, pp.35-55

Fanon, Franz. [1952] 1982. *Black Skin, White Masks*. New York: Grove Press. Introduction and Chapters 1, 4, 5.

November 15: Order and Disorder

Patrick Chabal and Jean-Pascal Daloz, 1999, *Africa Works: Disorder as political instrument*, chapter 1 (pages 3-16) and ch 2 (pages 17-30)

Jean-Francois Bayart, *The State in Africa: Politics of the Belly*, chapter 4 (pages 104-115).

Achille Mbembe, 2001 *On the postcolony*, p. 25-65

Jean Comaroff and John Comaroff, *Law and disorder in the postcolony*, 2006 Introduction

Adom Getachew, 2019 *Worldmaking After Empire: The Rise and Fall of Self-Determination*, Princeton University Press, pages 1-36

November 22: Bureaucratic States

Cheeseman, Nic 2018 "Understanding African politics: Bringing the state back in," in N. Cheeseman (ed.)

Institutions and Development in Africa: How the rules of the game shape political development, Cambridge U Press.

Thandika Mkandawire, 2010, 'Good governance: the itinerary of an idea' in Andrea Cornwall and Deborah Eade, *Deconstructing Development Discourse: Buzzwords and Fuzzwords*, OXFAM.

Podcast: "The death of democracy," BBC, listen here: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b0b1p51m>

Thomas Bierschenk and J-P Olivier de Sardan, 2014, "Studying the dynamics of African bureaucracies: An introduction to states at work" in *States at Work: Dynamics of African Bureaucracies*, Leiden: Brill.

Crawford Young, 2004, 'The end of the postcolonial state in Africa?' *African Affairs* 103: 23-49

Mahmood Mamdani, 1994, *Citizen and Subject*, chapter 1: 3-34

November 29: WRITING WORKSHOP

December 6: Development Dreams

Daron Acemoglu and James Robinson (2010) "Why is Africa Poor?" *Economic History of Developing Regions* 25(1): 21-50.

<https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/03056244.2014.928278>

Thandika Mkandawire, 2010, 'Aid, accountability and democracy in Africa,' *Social Research* 77, No.4: 1149-1182 (also "Thinking about developmental states in Africa")

Celestin Monga, 2020, 'Discrimination and Prejudice in Development', available here:

https://www.brookings.edu/blog/future-development/2020/07/15/discrimination-and-prejudice-in-development/amp/?_twitter_impression=true&fbclid=IwAR3F5OW0eONhIVvhBu_MwYe9ka7x5k6vzWflyK-eSZgTEZaQ5q7nmW-eyNo

Michela Wrong, 2009. *It's our turn to eat: The Story of a Kenyan Whistle-Blower*, chapters 1 and 2

Emmanuel Kwaku Ayeampong, Robert H. Bates, Nathan Nunn and James Robinson, 2014, *Africa's Development in Historical Perspective*, Cambridge Press. Read Introduction: Africa: The historical roots of its underdevelopment