

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY  
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY AND ANTHROPOLOGY**

**ANTH2620A  
FALL 2025  
ETHNOGRAPHY OF SUB-SAHARAN AFRICA**

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**Method of Delivery:** In-person

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**Course Description and Objectives:**

This course examines contemporary social and cultural life in sub-Saharan Africa through the lens of ethnographic research. It begins by critically assessing how Africa has been represented in anthropology and other knowledge traditions, acknowledging both the discipline's complicity in colonial projects and its contributions to understanding African societies. Students will engage with a range of themes, including colonialism, governance, everyday livelihoods, youth and social becoming, cities and urban life, migration, religion, gender, and environmental politics. Emphasis is placed on understanding African practices as historically situated and dynamically shaped by local, national, and global forces. Drawing on perspectives from Africans, Africanists, and their interlocutors, the course fosters critical reflection on common assumptions about Africa and highlights the creativity, resilience, and diversity with which Africans navigate and transform their worlds. Through readings, discussions, and case studies, students will develop a nuanced and reflexive understanding of Africa's place in wider anthropological debates.

**Learning Outcomes:**

By the end of this course, students will be able to:

1. Critically assess how Africa has been represented in anthropology, media, and other knowledge traditions, and identify the historical and political contexts shaping these representations.
2. Identify and critically engage anthropological concepts and debates related to governance, livelihoods, mobility, religion, gender, environment, and development in sub-Saharan Africa.
3. Analyze ethnographic case studies to evaluate how African social and cultural practices are shaped by local, national, and global forces.
4. Evaluate common assumptions about African societies and demonstrate how these assumptions have been reinterpreted, challenged, or transformed by Africans in diverse contexts.
5. Communicate anthropological knowledge in a concise and clear manner in writing and discussions.

## **COURSE REQUIREMENTS & METHODS OF EVALUATION**

Assessment of learning outcomes will take place through a variety of methods. Below are the assessment components, required assignments, and the percent value of each assignment for determining your course grade.

<b>Assessment Component/ Assignment</b>	<b>Weight</b>
Participation	10%
Critical Thought Responses (3 out of 5)	30% (3 at 10% each)
Midterm Exam	20%
Class Exercise (Group Presentation)	15%
Final Paper (Book review)	25%