

AFRICAN STUDIES (AFR)

AFR 501: Key Issues in African Studies

3 Credits

A seminar to review leading issues in African Studies and African development.

AFR 505: African Studies Methodology

3 Credits

This course is an interdisciplinary research seminar in African Studies for graduate students in the humanities. In the seminar, students will explore key debates and issues in the field while examining the diversity of theoretical and methodological approaches that scholars of African Studies have used to approach these debates. Through research articles that each employ a different set of methodological tools to examine questions of modernity and tradition, development, gender, ethnicity, conflict, and transnationalism, students will understand the possible approaches that can be employed to identify a research questions, gather evidence, and analyze it. Through reading and discussing such research articles, and discussing with scholars who visit class to present their research, students will gain conceptual tools to advance a research project in methodologically-grounded ways. While some topics will apply more directly to the student's individual research project, the themes studied are those that all scholars of African Studies should have some knowledge and mastery over, and each module will give students an opportunity to experiment by applying the theory and methods referenced in the scholarly literature to primary sources relevant to the student's own research. See syllabus in supplementary materials for more information.

AFR 510: Post-Colonial Theory

3 Credits

The term post-colonial within itself has manifold meanings and implications. It is also considered a controversial term as many wonder exactly what is post to colonialism. In this class, we will explore colonial discourse theory, the roots of European imperialism and racism, and feminist constructions in relation to post-colonial theory. We will engage with and read critical theory, literature, and film to analyze the relations of power that (re)generate the roles of domination and dominated, and the in-between states of negotiation.

AFR 512: Decolonial Methods for Interdisciplinary Research

3 Credits

This course surveys contemporary scholarship in multiple disciplines to provide an overview of decolonial research methods and analytical frameworks. Each week, the readings will engage a different topic related to historical and contemporary ways of thinking about land, personhood, and power. Intended for students who are interested in initiating their own research projects in the future, the course is structured to enable students with little prior knowledge of archives or research methods to plan, begin, document, and revise an original project. Combining the study of theoretical readings with weekly research and reflection, students will develop critical tools for thinking, speaking, and writing about colonialism at the University and in a subject area of their choice. Theories are enabling, dynamic, and helpful tools for approaching texts, objects, situations, places, narratives. In this course, they will encounter things both familiar and unfamiliar in ways that unsettle not only their

expectations but also their presumed relationship to what they know, where they are, and what might happen next.

Recommended Preparations: Students should have taken at least one research methods course.

Cross-listed with: EDCE 512

AFR 520: Readings in African History

3 Credits

AFR 520 is a graduate seminar that gives students an overview of key literatures, methodologies, and debates in recent scholarship concerning various areas of precolonial, colonial, and postcolonial African history. Its broad temporal framing reflects the long, diverse histories of African peoples and their relations to Europe, the Americas, and Asia, while also allowing for examination of more recent and localized histories. Beginning in the era of transatlantic slavery and continuing to the present day, the selected texts constitute a sweeping examination of African history. In addition to covering a wide geographic scope-with works situated in North, East, South, and West Africa-the books engage with themes including slavery, health and healing, gender, religion, colonialism, nationalism, postcolonialism, and China's work on the continent. In addition to covering more recent additions to African historiography, course readings and assignments will encourage students to refine their research questions, interrogate the craft of history, strengthen their analytical writing, and expand the contours of their own fields. Graduate students will be prepared to: teach on the most recent studies of North and Sub-Saharan African history; more efficiently read and review academic texts; and carefully consider how they would frame, market, and detail their prospective dissertations as a potential book. This course is open to graduate student across departments.

Cross-listed with: AFAM 520

AFR 526: African Social and Cultural Systems

3 Credits

The African continent may be the most diverse of all the continents in its composition of ethnic groups, social and kinship arrangements, belief systems, and political processes. Its cultures have been subjected to further transformation by different colonial governance structures, decolonial apparatuses, differing ideals of modernity, and differing interactions with religions like Christianity and Islam. However, with all the differences and transformations, what are the elements that tell us about societies across the continent? This course details various social and cultural systems, from a regional perspective, to provide background knowledge to help students develop their understanding of the many different societies on the continent. The regional focus is further divided by into topics such as kinship relations, governance, and religion. As each region and topic area is covered, students will begin to understand areas of intersection, fissures brought by modernity, bridges and divides across ethnicities and regions: Kinship This subsection of the course on kinship provides an analysis of how kinship theories of social formation can facilitate our understanding of the different dimensions of African social practices in historical and contemporary Africa. It propels students' understanding of multiple theories of kinship, with a focus on the relationships between kinship and life-span relations, pension sharing, circular migration, gender, politics, and patronage. Governance Most African countries, irrespective of their degree of economic sophistication, are characterized economically by dual forms of governance-one that derives its authority from the state and the other that may be construed as traditional. The traditional governance section of the course addresses

three overarching questions: (1) Why have traditional institutions of governance remained relatively robust in post-independent Africa even when faced with relatively hostile governments? (2) What are the levels of adherence and allegiance of rural Africans to traditional institutions? and (3) How are disputes resolved within traditional institutions? Religion There are three dominant forms of religions in Africa: Christianity, Islam, and Traditional African religions. These practices of these religions were affected by the experiences of colonialism and postcolonialism as well as Africa's subsequent integration into the global economy. All of these religions are related to various forms of social organization, authority, and power and may vary between regions and ethnic groups.

AFR 527: Migration, Urbanization, and Policy in the Developing World

3 Credits

This course examines the dynamics of migration and urbanization processes, as well as their policy implications, in non-industrialized regions of the world.

Cross-listed with: SOC 527

AFR 530: Perspectives on African Language Research in the Global South

3 Credits

The innovations and challenges of the Global South extend beyond an agenda that redresses exclusions. Rather, these are deep-seated challenges to the core tenets of language research as well as new directions for theories and practices on language research in the Global South in general. A renewal of southern epistemologies requires an understanding of the absences such knowledge implies. To engage with the transformative potential of non-Eurocentric thinking, the course explores the relevance of a decolonial imagination that makes it possible to envisage an alternative reality and justice that engenders "radical hope." Topics central to the course are the decolonization of research methods, feministic perspectives on African languages, Southern Multilingualisms and education, digitization of African cultural practices, indigeneity, an engagement with "Indigenous cosmovisions," and reinvented traditional concepts, such as ubuntu or sumac kawsay, that suggest that the formation of other worlds is feasible. These newly reinvented cosmovisions render it feasible to move beyond the limitations of Western-centric politics and knowledge production. The course is far more than a critique of the Global North's scholarship. It will cultivate a decolonial imagination, consequently producing African language knowledge with the South, and not on the South.

Cross-listed with: APLNG 530

AFR 532: Environment and Livelihoods in Africa

3 Credits

An enquiry into the relationships between the environment, resource control, resource conservation, rural livelihood systems and poverty in Africa. AFR 532 Environment and Livelihoods in Africa (3) The seminar examines the relationships among the environment, resource control, conservation and rural livelihoods in sub-Saharan Africa. Readings will allow students to develop a critical understanding of the ideology and epistemology of environmental management, resource control, rural development and poverty in sub-Saharan Africa. Students will be encouraged to interrogate modernist doctrines such as population-environment narratives, poverty-stewardship narratives and related environmental ideologies/narratives that embody sustainability and rural (under)development in sub-Saharan Africa. Through case study

examples, students will use these conceptual foundations to trace the relationships between sustainability and poverty in a number of livelihood systems and resource control regimes. Some examples are resource (land/water) management between the state and nomadic pastoral systems; land reform and rural peasant livelihood systems; mining and rural livelihood systems; and national parks, trans-frontier parks and rural livelihood systems.

AFR 534: Political Economy of Energy and Extractive Industries in Africa (Oil and Mining)

3 Credits

Given the rising global demand for energy and resources, Africa's production of oil and solid minerals has already produced very significant positive as well as negative impacts on the continent's political, economic, and social conditions. This seminar examines the extractive industry-driven changes in Africa's political economy, as well as in the continent's foreign relations. Students will examine the institutional basis under which the expansion of the industry is taking place in Africa. This will involve discussions of the institutional characteristics of Africa, including issues of land tenure and property rights laws, how institutional systems are changing in order to facilitate the industry's expansion, and the repercussions of these changes upon society. The course also interrogates the relevance of international efforts to mitigate some of the adverse impacts of the industry. Among such efforts is the UN Guiding Principles for Business and Human Rights. Overall this seminar examines the industry's impact on Africa's socioeconomic development and global relations, and concludes with how African countries might deal with the adverse impact of the Oil and Mining industry.

Cross-listed with: INTAF 534, PLSC 534

AFR 537: Gender, Sexuality and Islam in Africa: Exploring Contemporary Feminist Scholarship

3 Credits

A course about discourses of sexuality and gender in studies of Islam in Africa, with South Africa as a case study.

Cross-listed with: WMNST 537

AFR 543: Comparative and International Trends in Adult Literacy Education

3 Credits

This course critically examines the broad contemporary issues and interdisciplinary trends of literacy education with an international and comparative framework. CI ED (ADTED/AFR) 543 Comparative and International Trends in Adult Literacy Education (3) This course provides a comparative synthesis of what is known about literacy education and adult learning and what it will mean for the 21st century: the context in which literacy takes place; who participates; what they learn and why; the nature of the learning processes; new approaches to adult learning; social media and mobile devices; development theory in adult learning; and other issues relevant to understanding literacy education and adult learning in sociocultural, political, and international contexts. It also examines the newer approaches to adult learning: embodied, spiritual and narrative learning; learning and knowing in non-western perspectives; and cultural theory, poststructural and feminist perspectives. This course investigates questions such as: What does it mean to be literate in the 21st century? Why are teachers experiencing difficulty teaching students skills needed to understand and produce written work? Can schools

in the 21st century inundated with digital technologies help students navigate the new literacies? How should adult literacy participants deal with the reality of new media and new literacies? What is the role of non-governmental organizations in this crisis? Overall, this course challenges graduate students to engage other international and non-western frameworks of learning and knowing to think about the purpose of education and learning as well as question the nature of knowledge production itself.

Cross-listed with: ADTED 543, CIED 543

AFR 550: African Feminisms

3 Credits

African feminisms are deeply rooted in the continent's rich historical traditions and diverse cultural contexts. In this interdisciplinary graduate seminar, students will become familiar with the theoretical frameworks that guide African feminist scholarship, as well as the activist histories from which they emerged. This course will consider the epistemological foundations of African feminist thought and how they differ from feminisms in other parts of the world. This course will also examine key areas of conjuncture - how African feminisms map on to larger transnational movements. Particular emphasis will be placed on the fluidity of African gender systems, the ways in which African women have negotiated politics, religion, militarism, sexuality, and violence, and the role of creativity, art, and beauty in nurturing and sustaining activist momentum. Students in the course can expect to engage with a number of different types of texts: documentaries, feature films, memoirs, novels, newspapers, scholarly books, and articles.

Cross-listed with: WMNST 550

AFR 596: Individual Studies

1-9 Credits/Maximum of 9

Creative projects, including nonthesis research, that are supervised on an individual basis and which fall outside the scope of formal courses.

AFR 597: Special Topics

1-9 Credits

Formal courses given on a topical or special interest subject which may be offered infrequently; several different topics may be taught in one year or semester.