Methods for Historical Research in Non-Literate Societies  
Fall 2012: Methodologies for Modern African History

This seminar will combine readings and workshops to familiarize students with non-traditional sources and evidence used by historians and social scientists to write about modern Africa. Beyond the classic dichotomy of oral/written evidence, we will push the boundaries of what can be “read” by researchers, and explore testimonies, rumors, fictions and images. We will also discuss the particular challenges and opportunities offered by ephemera such as internet sources and live performances. We will try and track elusive places of meaning such as emotions, feelings, and the psyche. In looking at the methods and theories in modern history/anthropology, we will interrogate the position of the researcher herself, not only in terms of social, racial or cultural biases, but also in terms of the ways in which scholarly knowledge has been shaped by the imperial past. We will also examine the “competitive” context in which archives and sources are used by specialists of different disciplines (History and Anthropology for instance), and different fields (African and European/Colonial History).

Readings:
[e-books] and [e-articles] are available through online databases at Memorial Library. The other readings have been uploaded on the course website at Learn@UW. The following books (required and recommended) are available for purchase at the University Bookstore, and also available on reserve at Helen C. White:

- Required:
  - Marc Bloch, *Historian’s Craft* (1964)
  - Albert Memmi, *The Colonizer and the Colonized* (1965)
• Recommended: [in particular for students of Africa, to start or augment your library]

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**REQUIREMENTS**

1) You will write 8 shorter critical responses (1-2 page, single lined) on the main reading(s) for each reading week, and make them available for all members of the course to read online. These short essays should offer critical assessment of the week’s readings – significance of the key arguments, most and least persuasive aspects, new research inspired by the work – and may also analyze how the readings relate to other course and outside texts. Your commentaries should avoid summarizing the readings and should instead focus on a particular theme or issue addressed by the author(s). These essays will serve, along with the introductory remarks prepared by the discussion leader, as the basis for in-class discussions. Please post your response essays on the course website (via Learn@UW) by 8:00 pm on the Tuesday before our class meeting on Wednesday.

2) In addition, you will choose one week in the semester for which you will lead the discussion and write a longer essay (8-10 pages, double spaced) that will engage both with the main reading and the recommended readings for that week. This essay will also be posted online prior to the seminar for all to read.

3) I’ll hand out the materials ahead of time for the workshops. You will prepare an essay analyzing the source(s) proposed for that week, and you will post it two days before class on the course website for all members of the seminar to read. The papers will be the basis for the discussion in class.

4) Grading will be based on assessing your writing, analysis of sources and oral participation in discussions.

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1. **Wednesday Sept. 5 -- Oral, Written, Performative, Virtual : What is an Archive?**

   Luise White, *Speaking with Vampires* (2000). Read chapters 1 and 2, and choose one other chapter to discuss.

   Ann L. Stoler *Along the Archival Grain*, 1-53

   Carolyn Hamilton, Verne Harris and al. *Refiguring the Archive*, 7-17


   Roy Rosenzweig, Scarcity or Abundance? Preserving the Past in a Digital Era, *AHR* (June 2003): 735-62 [e-article]

**RECOMMENDED**

ON PERFORMANCE


2. Sept 12. -- Life Stories


RECOMMENDED


3. Sept. 19 -- Workshop on Life Stories


- Partout les sorciers. Récit de vie de Kayembe Beleji: 63-104

If you don’t read French [check with me for permission], you have two options:

1/ Work on the following reading;

2/ Choose a life-story or testimony in a language of your choice, and provide a translation in English with your analysis.

4. Sept. 26 -- Historicizing Fiction

Emily Callaci, Lovers and Fighters: Manhood and Migration in the Urban Literary Scene in Dar Es Salaam, 1967-80 (2012)


RECOMMENDED
- Brian Larkin, Indian Films and Nigerian Lovers: Media and the Creation of Parallel Modernities, Africa 67-3 (1997) (about Hausa pulp novelas) [e-article]
- Stephanie Newell, Ghanaian Popular Fiction: Thrilling Discoveries in Conjugal Life and Other Tales (2000)
- Roland Barthes, Pleasure of the Text (1975)

5. Oct. 3 -- Fantasy and Fancy

Albert Memmi, The Colonizer and the Colonized (1991) [1965]

Frederick Cooper, The Rise, Fall and Rise of Colonial Studies, 1951-2001, in F. Cooper, Colonialism in Question (2005): (especially on 'psychologizing colonialism': 41-3)

Jan Vansina, Being Colonized (2010) (two dream vignettes collected among the Kuba in the 1950s, and explanation of his method in intro): 1-9, 228-35, 320

RECOMMENDED
- Franz Fanon, The Wretched of the Earth [1961]
- Aimé Césaire, Discourse on Colonialism [1955] (1972)

6. **Oct. 10 -- Workshop: Fiction and Fancy**

   You will analyze a work of fiction of your choice [novella, short novel or a story], and will provide a script of the story. I’ll provide you with ideas of works if necessary, and will give you guidelines in advance.

7. **Oct. 17 -- TBA**

8. **Oct. 24 -- Historicizing Social Space**


**RECOMMENDED**

- Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1979) [chapter on panopticon]
- Odile Goerg, Colonial Urbanism and Confinement, in HPCA: 119-34
- Christopher Gray, L’enfermement de l’espace, in HPCA: 165-90
- Pierre Boilley, Administrative Confinements, in HPCA: 221-37

9. **Oct. 31 -- Workshop on Social Space**

   I’ll provide you with a dossier ahead of time.

10. **Nov. 7 – Visual Sources: Photographs, Paintings, Video, Graphic Novels**

    Christopher Pinney, *Photography and Anthropology* (2011)
RECOMMENDED

ON CINEMA AND VISUAL MEDIA

ON GRAPHIC NOVELS AND COMICS
- Comment faire de la BD en Afrique ?, *Africultures* 84 (May 2011)
- Hergé, *Tintin au Congo* (1947)

11. Nov. 14 -- Workshop on Visual Archives

We will be working on a choice of videos and/or cartoons.

12. Nov. 21 -- Thanksgiving, no class

13. Nov. 28 -- Historians and Anthropologists on Consumption and Commodities


RECOMMENDED

14. **Dec. 5 – On Emotions, the Body and Senses**


**RECOMMENDED**

• Ann Laura Stoler, Affectives States, in D. Nugent and J. Vincent, eds. *A Companion to the Anthropology of Politics* (2004): 4-20
• Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish* (1979)

15. **Dec. 12 – Present/Past/Future: Locating Historical Narratives**

Marc Bloch, *Historian’s Craft* (1964)