



HISTORY 225-1, The Global African City

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 1:30-3:30PM
MWF 12:05-12:55 pm
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COURSE DESCRIPTION:

We typically think of globalization as a twenty-first century phenomenon, yet African cities have been global hubs of culture, ideas and economic exchange for centuries. This course invites students to explore the global histories and cosmopolitan cultures of cities on the African continent over several centuries. During the semester, we will visit a range of places and times, including the fifteenth century Swahili city-states on the Indian Ocean coast; the era of apartheid and revolution in Johannesburg, South Africa; and the explosion of the Nollywood film industry in Lagos, Nigeria. We will explore the history, culture and everyday life of African cities as experienced and shaped by a range of people, including traders, artists, entrepreneurs, workers, aristocrats, slaves, scholars, and revolutionaries. Along the way, we will encounter various primary historical sources, including archaeological ruins, oral history, fashion, fiction, popular music, art and films.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES AND COURSE FORMAT

The most common western images of Africa feature a vast open savannah, or a dense tropical rainforest. We don't typically think of a bustling and cosmopolitan city. At the same time, when we DO see images of African cities in the media, they are often portrayed as sites of disaster, chaos, and poverty. Historical perspective offers a much more nuanced way of viewing African cities, and this is what you will gain in this course. By the end of the course, I would like you to understand African cities as sites of human innovation, social organization and global exchange.

At the same time, I would like you to be able to ask critical questions about the historical processes that have shaped life in contemporary African cities.

My first and most basic objective is to provide you with knowledge about the historical circumstances in which cities have come into being in different places and times in Africa. Building on this knowledge, we will analyze how African city-builders and urban-dwellers have interacted with the outside world, and how the terms of these engagements have changed over time.

After an introductory segment about various forms of African urbanism, will ground our inquiry in three in-depth case studies. First, we will consider the rise of Swahili urbanism at the crossroads of the Indian Ocean world in present-day Kenya and Tanzania in the fifteenth century and follow those urban histories through the present day. Next, we will explore the history of Johannesburg, South Africa, from the economic boom following the discovery of mineral wealth in the late nineteenth century through the rise, defeat and afterlife of apartheid. Finally, we will move on to a study of Lagos, Nigeria, from its rise as an Atlantic world port in the era of the slave trade to its growth in the late twentieth century into what has been called a “megacity.” By focusing on these three African urban centers, I will offer you the tools to think comparatively about processes of urbanization and globalization in Africa.

In all three case studies, we will pay particular attention to the experiences, perspectives and innovations of African city-dwellers themselves. Global connectedness has had different implications for slaves and slave traders; for migrant workers and their rural families; for men and women; and for urban youth and middle class property owners. By exploring the everyday lives of people from various walks of life *within* African cities, students will gain an understanding of how globalization impacts different members of urban communities.

Finally, nearly each week, you will have the opportunity to hone your skills of historical analysis through the interpretation of primary historical sources. We will gain particular familiarity with the kinds of sources and methods used by historians of Africa.

This course combines the lecture and seminar formats. I will typically present lectures on Mondays and Wednesdays, but even on those days, students should expect to participate in discussion and analysis in class. Our Friday sessions are reserved for discussions and participatory group activities. **All weekly reading assignments must be completed in time for Friday discussions.**

EVALUATION:

Map Quiz (5%)

You will be given a blank map of Africa and asked to identify several nations, cities, and relevant topographical features. Study materials will be available on our Learn@UW site.

3 short essays, (15% each x 3 = 45%)

There will be four short essay assignments over the course of the semester. Each student must complete three of them. You may choose whichever three most suit you. The three short writing

assignments are designed both to get you delve deeper into the three regional case studies, and to relate them to the broader themes of the course. The essays will each be approximately three pages long. Topics and guidelines will be posted to the Learn@UW course site. Essays will be collected on the following dates:

Monday, September 24

Friday, October 19

Monday, November 19

Monday, December 10

Participation (15%)

This class is designed to be interactive and participatory. I want you to have a chance to try out new analytical skills and ideas through discussions of both the readings and of primary sources that I bring to class. You can only participate fully if you show up, and if you have completed the readings!

Weekly discussion question or comment (5%)

By **7pm on Thursday evenings**, students are required to submit a comment or question to the course website, based on the readings or lectures. Students are encouraged to build upon questions and comments of their peers, so that the discussion board looks like a conversation, rather than a list of questions. These questions will not be graded, but they are required.

Take home exam (30%)

The final take-home exam will be an essay question or questions that asks you to step back and think critically and comparatively about the three urban histories we explored over the course of the semester.

REQUIRED TEXTS:

Most of the texts required for this course will be made available through the course website. In addition, the following two required texts are available for purchase at the university bookstore. Inexpensive copies of these novels can also be ordered online.

- Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to our Hillbrow: A Novel of Postapartheid South Africa*, (Athens: Ohio University Press 2011)
- Chris Abani, *Graceland*, (New York: Farrar, Straus and Girous, 2004)

RESOURCES AND POLICIES

We will spend time in class discussing writing, style, and citation methods. In addition, I encourage you to make use of the resources and services available at the Writing Center. More information about this can be found here:

<http://www.writing.wisc.edu/>

The University of Wisconsin takes matters of academic honesty very seriously. Plagiarism in

particular is a very serious offense that can pose a real threat to your success, and to the integrity of our broader learning community. I will strictly enforce the university policies on academic honesty. The rules about plagiarism can sometimes be confusing. If you are unsure about them, please be on the safe side and check. You can start here:
http://writing.wisc.edu/Handbook/QPA_plagiarism.html

If you are still unsure about what constitutes plagiarism, and whether you are committing plagiarism, please come speak to me during office hours. It is better to be safe than sorry! More detailed information about student codes of conduct may be found here:
<http://students.wisc.edu/saja/misconduct/UWS14.html#points>

Disability guidelines for course accommodations may be found at the UW McBurney Disability Resource Center site: <http://www.mcburney.wisc.edu/>

Finally, you are all encouraged to come to my office hours to discuss any aspect of the course or your progress in it. These hours are set aside specifically for your benefit. I hope to see you there!

QUESTIONS FOR PROFESSOR CALLACI/EMAIL PROTOCOL:

I read and respond to student emails in the evenings. You can expect a response to your emailed question within twenty-four hours. Before sending your questions, please review the syllabus first to make sure the question has not already been answered there. If your question has not been answered in the syllabus, please then refer to the “Frequently Asked Questions” section on the Learn@UW page, under the “Forums” tab. If you find that your question has not been addressed in either of these two places, you may ask your question in an email. I ask that you please compose all emails in a professional and courteous tone.

When you send me a question that is of relevance to the entire class, I will post your question, without your name, to the Frequently Asked Questions forum. I will then respond to your question in that forum, so that everyone in the class can benefit.

SCHEDULE:

Week 1: Introduction

Wed, 9/5: Introduction to Course

Fri, 9/7: Opening Discussion

Reading:

1. Binyavanga Wainaina, “How to Write about Africa,” *Granta* 92, (2005).
<http://www.granta.com/Magazine/92/How-to-Write-about-Africa/Page-1>
2. Roderick McIntosh and Susan Keech McIntosh, “Finding Jenne-jeno, West Africa’s Oldest City,” *National Geographic* 162, no.3 (1982): 396-418.

Week 2: Urban Forms in Precolonial Africa, Part I

Mon, 9/10: Ecology and Social Complexity: Jenne-Jeno and Aksum

Wed, 9/12: Timbuktu, Islam and Urbanism in West Africa

Fri, 9/14: DISCUSSION and MAP QUIZ

Reading:

1. Peruse the photographs at: <http://www.dogon-lobi.ch/architecturealbum.htm>
2. John Hunwick, *The Hidden Treasures of Timbuktu: Historic City of Islamic Africa*, 9-16
3. Ibn Batuta in Black Africa, 60-70
4. Leo Africanus, description of Timbuktu (1526)
http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/med/leo_afri.asp

Week 3: Urban Forms in Precolonial Africa: Part II

Mon, 9/17: Agricultural Metropolises

Wed, 9/19: Atlantic Port Cities

Fri, 9/21: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. George E. Brooks, "The Signares of Saint-Louis and Gorée: Women Entrepreneurs in Eighteenth-Century Senegal," in *Women in Africa: Studies in Social and Economic Change*, eds. Hafkin and Bay, (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1976), 19-44. (e-books)
2. Innocent Pikirayi, *The Zimbabwe Culture*, (New York: Altamira, 2001), 123-155.
3. Frederick Cooper, "What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective," *African Affairs* 100, no. 399 (2001) (excerpts)

CASE STUDY #1: SWAHILI CITIES AND TOWNS

Week 4: Swahili Civilization and the Indian Ocean World

Mon, 9/24: The Rise of Swahili Civilization

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY #1

Wed, 9/26: The Zanzibari Sultanate

Fri, 9/28: DISCUSSION

Readings:

1. Ibn Battuta, *Ibn Battuta in Black Africa*, eds. Hamdun and King, (Princeton: M. Wiener, 1994), 15-25
2. Selections from “Vasco da Gama’s Discovery of East Africa for the Portuguese 1498”, “Vasco da Gama’s Return Voyage from India 1499” and “The Anonymous Narrative of the Voyage of Pedro Alvares Cabral 1500,” in G. S. P. Freeman-Grenville, *The East African Coast: Select Documents from the first to the earlier 19th century* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1962), 50-63
3. Thomas Gensheimer. “Globalization and the Medieval Swahili City” in Toyin Falola and Steven J. Salm, eds., *Globalization and Urbanization in Africa* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, Inc., 2004), 171-185
4. Mark Horton, “The Swahili Corridor,” *The Scientific American* 257, no 3 (1987), 86-93

Week 5: Slavery. Abolition and Colonial Conquest

Mon, 10/1: Consumption and Wealth in the Swahili Golden Age

Wed, 10/3: Slavery, Abolition and Urban Life

Fri, 10/5: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008), 1-5, 34-87
2. “Mishi wa Abdala” in *Three Swahili Women: Life Histories from Mombasa*, eds. Strobel and Mirza, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1989), 69-86 (e-book)

Week 6: Independence and After

Mon, 10/8: Colonialism in Mombasa and Dar es Salaam

Wed, 10/10: Urban Life, African Nationalism, and Independence

Fri, 10/12: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. Laura Fair, “Kickin’ It: Leisure, Politics and Football in Colonial Zanzibar, 1900s-1950s,” *Africa* 67 (2) 1997, 224-251
2. Laura Fair, “Siti Binti Saad: “Giving Voice to the Voiceless,” Swahili Music, and the Global Recording Industry in the 1920s and 1930s,” in *The Human Tradition in Africa*, ed. Dennis Cordell, (Lanham, MD: Rowman and Littlefield, 2012), 175-187
3. Laura Fair, “Remaking Fashion in the Paris of the Indian Ocean,” in *Fashioning Africa: Power and the Politics of Dress*, ed. Jean Allman, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2004), 13-28

4. Excerpts from J.A.K. Leslie, *A Survey of Dar es Salaam* (1961)

Week 7: Cosmopolitanism and Nationalism in 20th Century Swahili Cities

Mon, 10/15: African Socialism and Urban Youth in the 1960s and 1970s

Wed, 10/17: Cosmopolitanism, Global Migrations and Contemporary East African Cities

Fri, 10/19: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. Alex Perullo, "Here's a Little Something Local": An Early History of Hip-hop in Dar es Salaam," in *Dar es Salaam: Histories from an Emerging African Metropolis*, eds. Brennan, Burton and Lawi, (Dar es Salaam: Mkuki na Nyota, 2007), 250-269
2. Thomas Burgess, "Cinema, Bell Bottoms and Miniskirts: Struggles over Youth in Revolutionary Zanzibar," *The International Journal of African Historical Studies* 35, no. 2-3 (2002), 287-313
3. Jeremy Prestholdt, "Superpower Osama: Thoughts on the Symbolic Discourse in the Indian Ocean after the Cold War," in *Making a World African Empire*, ed. Christopher Lee, (Athens, OH: Ohio University Press, 2010), 315-341

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY #2

CASE STUDY #2: JOHANNESBURG

Week 8: Johannesburg, City of Gold

Mon, 10/22: Geology, the discovery of gold, and the making of Johannesburg

Wed, 10/24: Urban space and everyday life in early Johannesburg

Fri, 10/26: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. David Coplan, "Black Johannesburg, 1900-1920," from *In Township Tonight! South Africa's Black City Music and Theatre*, (New York: Longman, 1982), 56-110
2. Charles van Onselen, *New Babylon, New Nineveh: Everyday Life on the Witwatersrand, 1886-1914*, (Johannesburg: Jonathon Ball Publishers, 1982), 1-46

Week 9: Race, Migrant Labor and the Rise of Apartheid

Mon, 10/29: Mining and the Migrant Labor Economy

Wed, 10/31: City, Country and Apartheid

Fri, 11/2: discussion

Reading:

1. Belinda Bozzoli and Mmantho Nkotswe, "Leaving Home, 1920-1935," from *Women of Phokeng* 81-105
2. Excerpts from Ellen Hellman, "Rooiyard: A Sociological Study of an Urban Native Slum Yard," Rhodes-Livingstone Papers No. 13, Oxford University Press: 1948
3. On the course website for this week, I have posted an archive of photographs of Johannesburg taken during the apartheid era. Each student should choose a photograph that captures some aspect of urban life under apartheid. Be prepared to speak about the photograph that you have chosen.

Week 10: Apartheid and Urban Life

Monday, 11/5: Sophiatown and the Urban Cultural Renaissance

Wed, 11/7: in-classfilm, *African Jim (Jim Comes to Jo'burg)*

Fri, 11/9: DISCUSSION

Reading:

Bloke Modisane, *Blame Me on History*, (New York: Dutton, 1963), 5-69; 92-152; 205-229

Week 11: The Defeat of Apartheid and the Neoliberal Era

Mon, 11/12: Urban Resistance and the Defeat of Apartheid

Wed, 11/14: Segregation and Inequality in Post-apartheid South Africa

Fri, 11/16: DISCUSSION

Reading:

Phaswane Mpe, *Welcome to our Hillbrow*, (Athens, OH: Swallow Press, 2011).

CASE STUDY #3: LAGOS

Week 12: Lagos and the Atlantic World Economy

Mon, 11/19: Regional Economies and the Atlantic Slave Trade

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY #3

Wed, 11/21: Abolition and the Rise of "Legitimate Commerce"

Fri, 11/23: THANKSGIVING BREAK, NO CLASS

Reading:

1. Sandra Barnes “The Economic Significance of Inland Coastal Fishing in Seventeenth Century Lagos,” in *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, ed. Toyin Falola, (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2009), 51-64
2. Lisa Lindsay, “Brazilian Women in Lagos, 1879-1882,” in *Shaping Our Struggles: Nigerian Women in History, Culture and Social Change*, eds. Obioma Nnameka and Chima Korieh, (Trenton: Africa World Press, 2011), 129-140
3. A.G. Hopkins, “A Lagos Merchant and his Money: I.B. Williams, 1846-1925,” in *The Changing Worlds of Atlantic Africa*, ed. Toyin Falola, (Durham, N.C.: Carolina Academic Press, 2009), 201-219

Week 13: Colonialism and Independence in Lagos

Mon, 11/26: Work, Identity, and Family in Colonial Lagos

Wed, 11/28: Petro-dollars and Urban Life in Postcolonial Lagos

Fri, 11/30: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. Chris Abani, *Graceland*, 1-81
2. Lisa Lindsay, “Working with Gender: The Emergence of the Male Breadwinner in Colonial Southwestern Nigeria,” in *Africa After Gender?*, eds Catherine Cole, Takyiwaa Manuh, and Stephan Miescher, (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2007), 241-250
3. Fela Ankilapo-Kuti, selected songs and album artwork

Week 14: Oil Boom and Bust in Postcolonial Lagos

Mon, 12/3: Wealth, Poverty and Urban Growth

Wed, 12/5: Devaluation and New Urban Economies

In-class: excerpts from the film *Welcome to Nollywood*

Fri, 12/7: DISCUSSION

Reading:

1. Abani, *Graceland*, 82-206
2. Jonathon Haynes, “Nollywood in Lagos, Lagos in Nollywood Films,” *African Today*, vol. 54, no. 3, 2007, 131-150

Week 15: City of the Future vs. Planet of Slums

Mon, 12/10: Contemporary Perspectives on the African City

In-class: watch excerpts of the film *Lagos/Koolhaas*

DUE DATE FOR ESSAY #4

Wed, 12/12: DISCUSSION

Fri, 12/14: final review before exam; distribute take-home

Reading:

1. Abani, *Graceland*, 207-end

Distribution of Final Exam Question

December 22: TAKE-HOME EXAM DUE