ANT4352: African Peoples and Cultures; Section RVC

Professor Dr. Jean Rahier

Phone: 305 348-2246; Office: SIPA 328 (MMC)

Office Hours: Through Adobe Connect by appointment or in person on Fridays from 10:00am to 12:00pm in SIPA 328

E-mail: Via the Canvas Inbox system only

Course Description and Purpose

The Florida International University course catalogue describes this anthropology course as follows:

A survey of the cultures and civilizations of sub-Saharan Africa. It includes discussions of history, geography, sociopolitical structures, religion, art, music, and oral literature.

The instructor teaches this upper level undergraduate course by dividing it in two major sections: The first is dedicated to the period of European colonialism in Africa (from 1884-1885 to 1994), which in many ways provides major foundations to contemporary African societies. The second focuses on the critical reading of a number of ethnographies of African cities. Indeed, by 2020, more than half of continental Africa’s population will be leaving in cities—some of them, such as Lagos (21 millions inhabitants) in Nigeria or Kinshasa (9.5 millions inhabitants) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, of mega-proportions. These readings will move us away from mainstream American stereotypes that portray Africa as an undifferentiated land where people live in savanna-like environments never far away from wild animals. African societies will therefore be approached as they have been developing in modernity.

This critical reading will bring us to discuss the series of theoretical and methodological decisions made by each individual ethnographer for the conduct of his/her field research and for the writing of his/her book.
Hence, this course will not only be about the various African “cultures” and the socio-economic and political realities in which African peoples live, it will also be aimed at critically engaging, deconstructing, and evaluating the various research and writing strategies adopted by the distinct ethnographers/writers. This exercise in critical ethnography reading should be of great value for students interested in engaging, in graduate school or elsewhere, in making a series of theoretical and methodological choices for their own research.

**Course Objectives**

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

- Have an excellent understanding and appreciation of contemporary African societies.
- Better comprehend the place and participation of continental Africa within the global flux of commodities and cultural politics.
- Critically approach book-length ethnographies.
- Better engage with research design.
- Better select the appropriate writing strategies for their own research projects.

**Important Information**

Before starting this course, please review the following pages:

- Policies
- Technical Requirements and Skills
- Accessibility and Accommodation
- Academic Misconduct Statement

**Course Prerequisites**

There are no prerequisites for this course.

**Textbook and Course Materials**

**Laumann, Dennis**

ISBN: 9780190647520

**Simone, AbdouMaliq**

2004  For the City Yet to Come: Changing African Life in Four Cities.

**Hoffman, Danny**

Callaci, Emily
2017  Street Archives and City Life: Popular Intellectuals in Postcolonial Tanzania.

Ntarangwi, Mwenda
Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press. 206 pages.

You may purchase your textbook online at the FIU Bookstore  

Ground Rules

- Plagiarism is a serious offense. If you use the work of other authors without giving them credit, you will receive a '0' for the assignment and you will be reported to Academic Affairs. All assignments will be combed by turnitin.com
- Papers must include a title, your name, the course name and number, and page numbers.
- All Canvas message correspondence must begin with a salutation ("Professor Rahier," "Dear Dr. Rahier," "Hi Professor," etc.) and end with your name. I will not read your email if you fail to include this.
- In this course, we will be discussing topics some might consider sensitive, provocative, or taboo such as race, sexuality, and religious beliefs. It is imperative that you express your opinions in a respectful manner.
- In your essays and quizzes you must avoid quoting at all cost. You must, instead, paraphrase (use your own words). Paraphrasing should be limited as well. Again, beware of plagiarism.
- You may not quote or make reference to Wikipedia. If you do so, points will be taken away from your assignment. You may use only and only scholarly sources, that is to say texts published in peer-reviewed scholarly journals or presses. Not everything you find on the Internet has the same quality.
- When writing your papers, you must make use of the Chicago manual of Style (author-date) available on this course's website. Failure to do so will result in points being taken away from your assignment.

Expectations of this Course

This is an online course, which means most (if not all) of the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performance in an online course are the same for a traditional course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills which can make these courses more demanding for some students.
This is an online course, which means that all the course work will be conducted online. Expectations for performances in an online course are the same as they are for a face-to-face delivery course. In fact, online courses require a degree of self-motivation, self-discipline, and technology skills that can make these courses more demanding for some students.

- Review the how to get started information located in the course content
- Introduce yourself to the class during the first week by posting a self-introduction in the appropriate discussion forum
- Take the practice quiz to ensure that your computer is compatible with Canvas
- Interact online with instructor/s and peers
- Review and follow the course calendar
- Log into the course at least 4 times per week
- Participate in e-discussions in a timely fashion (see the relevant section in this syllabus)
- Submit assignments by the corresponding deadline
- Consult the announcement pages every time you enter on the site. The contents of all announcements will be considered known by all students. It is students’ responsibility to check for new announcements.
- Avoid leaving voice mail at the professor’s office number. The most rapid and effective way to get in touch with him is to send a Canvas message. It might happen that the professor does not go to his office every single day, while he does check his Canvas messages at least once daily.
- Communication between students and the professor in this course will take place via Canvas messages ONLY (called “Inbox”). Do not use the professor’s FIU e-mail address to communicate with him. When writing to the professor using Canvas, do NOT copy the entire class! Do NOT assume that your concern is of interest to everyone. I do post announcements when needed

The instructor will:

- Log in to the course daily
- Respond to discussion board postings at least twice weekly
- Respond to Canvas messages daily
- Grade assignments within 14 days of the assignment deadline

Discussion Forums

Keep in mind that your discussion forum postings will likely be seen by other members of the course. Care should be taken when determining what to post.

The reading report format can be found in the student resources on this site. We will discuss it on the very first Adobe Connect session. That report should be used to structure our discussions of the ethnographies for modules 3 to 6. It should also be used to structure students’ interventions about the required readings for modules 3 to 6 in the Discussion Forums.

Time has been incorporated in the course’s unfolding. This means that student participation in the discussion forum for each module MUST take place in due time. The discussions are related to specific modules. When the discussions of a particular module end, the discussion of the following module will open; and so on until the end of the course. Discussion forums of “past modules” will not be reopened.
Quizzes

In order to mitigate any issues with your computer and online assessments, it is very important that you take the Practice Quiz from each computer you will be using to take your graded quizzes and exams. For quiz duration, grading criteria and feedback response time, please review the important information about quizzes page.

The quizzes will consist in a combination of short answer-questions and essay-questions. They will be aimed at assessing students’ comprehension of required readings. Answers will be combed by Turnitin.com.

The unfolding of this course is timed. Students must make sure they keep visiting the site and keep doing the required readings and the assignments IN DUE TIME. These quizzes will be taken online. THERE IS ONE AND ONLY ONE TIMED ATTEMPT FOR EACH QUIZ. You must take a quiz in one sitting. You do not have the option to pause or stop a quiz. Obviously, you must have gone through the material for each covered section of the course before you decide to take the quiz in one sitting. This strategy is the only way to get an “A” grade on the quizzes. The quizzes are made up of demanding short-answer and essay questions.

Once closed, quizzes will not be re-opened. Timely student participation in this online course is required and expected.

THE MAP QUIZ

All students must take—in due time—a geography map quiz focused on continental Africa’s country names and names of capital cities. The only way to score well on this quiz (students will not receive the same countries or capital cities to identify) is to learn the political map of Africa (including island-countries members of the African Union [AU]) by heart. The questions about country names will be asked separately from the questions about capital cities’ names. There is one and only one attempt per question and per student. This quiz is timed. The objective here is to “force” students to familiarize with the map of Africa (see the map resources at your disposal on this site).

Assignments

Please review the important information about assignments page.

FINAL PAPER:

The final paper will consist in about 10 or more double-spaced pages (without including the title page, abstract, and References Cited) discussion of a topic selected by individual students. The topic or focus of the paper MUST be approved by the professor by September 15. The focus of the paper MUST be on any societal aspect and/or cultural politics aspect of a chosen African city. The primary materials used by students to write the paper will include secondary sources (and principally ethnographic books). A small research and active reading of selected sources will have to take place prior to writing the paper. This is the main assignment for this course (500/1,000 points).
Adobe Connect

Adobe Connect is an online meeting room where you can interact with your professor and fellow students by sharing screens, sharing files, chatting, broadcasting live audio, and taking part in other interactive online activities.

Requirements for using Adobe Connect:

- Disable any window pop-up blocker.
- Adobe Flash Player ([http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/](http://get.adobe.com/flashplayer/)) is required to successfully run your Adobe Connect meeting. You can [test your computer](http://online.fiu.edu/html/blackboardlearn/mastertemplate/adobe_connect/meetingtest) to make sure your computer and network connections are properly configured to provide you with the best possible Adobe Connect meeting experience.
- Use of a combination [headset and microphone](http://online.fiu.edu/app/webroot/html/blackboardlearn/mastertemplate/adobe_connect/#headset) with USB connection is recommended to ensure quality sound and reduce technical difficulties.

Reference Adobe Connect (Tutorials & Help) to learn about the tool, how to access your meeting rooms and recordings.

Grading

Course Grades Distribution Table

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<th>Course Requirements</th>
<th>Number of Items</th>
<th>Points for Each</th>
<th>Total Points Available</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Course Participation (Discussion Board on Canvas)</td>
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<td></td>
<td>100</td>
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<tr>
<td>Course Participation (Adobe Connect Sessions)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Map quiz</td>
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<td>50</td>
<td>50</td>
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<tr>
<td>5 Quizzes (short answer and essay questions)</td>
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<td>Final paper</td>
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Grading Schema
**Course Summary:**

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<td>Sun Sep 2, 2018</td>
<td><a href="https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/8718/assignments/236453">Map Quiz</a> due by 11:59pm</td>
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<td><a href="https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/8718/assignments/221015">Final Paper</a></td>
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<td>[Module 1</td>
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**Letter Grade Distribution Table**

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<th>Range%</th>
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<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>920 or above</td>
<td>B</td>
<td>830 - 869</td>
<td>C</td>
<td>700 - 769</td>
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<tr>
<td>A-</td>
<td>900 - 919</td>
<td>B-</td>
<td>800 - 829</td>
<td>D</td>
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<td>B+</td>
<td>870 - 899</td>
<td>C+</td>
<td>770 - 799</td>
<td>F</td>
<td>620 or less</td>
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**Course Calendar**

- **Syllabus for ANT4352 RVC 1188** [https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/8718/assignments/syllabus](https://fiu.instructure.com/courses/8718/assignments/syllabus)