History Special Topics (HIS. 473): The Challenges of National Liberation in Southern Africa
(Aka Contemporary Crises in Southern Africa)
ACM Botswana Program: Development in Southern Africa
January-May 2015 Semester

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The Course

Are contemporary African societies or colonial powers more responsible for the economic and political strife in Africa? Have Africans been the victims or the villains? How have people inside and outside Africa perceived this discussion? Using Botswana, Rwanda, South Africa, and Zimbabwe as examples, this course will explore how different colonial and post-colonial policies contributed to the emergence of problems in post-colonial African states. Although the course focuses on a handful of sub-Saharan African countries, it will give students an opportunity to understand both the achievements and failures of national liberation movements in the post-colonial states in Africa.

Starting off with an overview of colonialism and the various national liberation movements that emerged in response to it, we will investigate a number of critical challenges of development facing Botswana and the aforementioned countries. These will include the impact of foreign aid, civil, economic, political strife, HIV/AIDS as well as problems of conservation and environment. This course will be taught through a combination of discussion, lecture, historical documents, films, and site visits to areas in and around Botswana and South Africa.

Required Texts
(I strongly suggest purchasing these books before you depart for Botswana).


Evaluation

Final grades are based on a weighted average for the term. Grade cutoff points (in terms of percentage of total points) are as follows (as per the University of Botswana system): A = 80-100%; B+ = 75-79.9%; B = 70-74.9%; B- = 65-69.9%; C+ = 60-64.9%; C = 55-59.9%; C- = 50-54.9%; D+ = 45-49.9%; D = 40-44.9%; D- = 35-39.9%, E = < 35%.
Evaluation will be as follows:

Assignment 1: Neighborhood Walk 1 .....................3%
Assignment 2: Book review..................................8%
Assignment 3: Topic proposal..............................6%
Assignment 4: Neighborhood Walk 2 ............5%
Assignment 5: Research paper: (8-10 pages) ..............28%
Presentation of research paper: (12 minute presentation of research paper) ... 8%
Participation and attendance...............10%
Discussion leadership.........................12%
One time exam: Will ask students to write cogently about key terms and ideas from the
common readings ..............................20%

Written Assignments

Assignments 1 and 2: Neighborhood Walks, Gaborone, Botswana.

Learning Goals:
- Develop or use navigational skills (the city, public transit, crossing streets, maps, etc.)
- Practice skills of observation and analysis
- Practice interviewing skills
- Establish a marker for your understanding of the culture (1st walk)
- Explore writing as a strategy for recording your experience in an environment

For this assignment, you will be assigned the location to visit, and your first job will be to
locate the site and then visit it. Remember to bring along a notebook so you can take notes.
Use the questions below to help guide your observations.

[Added to 2nd Walk: During your first week in Botswana, you walked a prescribed route
through a particular neighborhood. Now we would like you to re-visit the route!]

As you walk through the neighborhood what are your impressions? What strikes you? What
seems familiar, strange, unusual or otherwise notable? What puzzles you? What impresses
you? Why? How does knowing or not knowing the language (s) you hear or see help you
understand the neighborhood? Are there ways in which the academic work you have done
or other experiences you have had previously help you understand and interpret what you
are observing? What skills help you navigate your way?

Find at least one person to interview at the location. What does the location mean to that
person? How do they see it? How often does he or she come here? What strikes them about
it?

[Added to 2nd Walk: If you did an interview on your first neighborhood walk, what is
different about doing it this time? For example, how are your questions different?]
Feel free to take a photo of something that strikes you as familiar or strange, and to try out a new food. Please be mindful there are places where taking pictures is prohibited. If you want to take pictures of people, be sure to ask for their permission.

Once you have noted your observations and the responses to your interview (s), write 500-1,000 words, describing what you have observed and your thoughts about it. This isn’t a formal essay; instead, think of it as “talking on paper.” Do write with some care, however, as you will share your observations with your classmates, your instructor as well as staff at the ACM office.

Assignment #2: For this assignment, you will be required to write a 2-3-page (800-1000 word) review of one book which should be an important piece of scholarship selected from the list of suggested readings. It is my hope that the process of writing such a review may also help you identify a research question for the research project. If you do not find a book that interests you, please search for others and run the result by me, and we will arrive at a final decision as to its suitability for the book review assignment. Even if you use a book that is on this list, please notify me of your choice by the end of the third week of classes.

Assignment #3: For this assignment, you will be required to produce a topic proposal for your 10-12 page paper. For specific details on topic proposals, see instructions for “assignment #5.”

Assignment #4: Neighborhood Walk 2: Refer to instructions on page 2.

Assignment #5: The production of a research paper is a major expectation in the course. The focus of your essay can be chosen from one of the topics dealt with in class. But my desire here is that you select a particular issue brought up in class and apply it to your own area of research/interest (i.e., to material that is appropriate to your discipline and linguistic skills. In addition to discussing the subject of your research with the professor, you will be expected to submit a topic proposal that includes a bibliography of at least ten items that demonstrate adequate source material for research. The proposal’s bibliography and the final bibliography should include at least three journal articles and one primary source.

Course Organization

Participation: includes regular attendance, readings completed, participation without domination, tolerance for differing opinions, and attentive listening.

Discussion Leadership: I would like discussion to be student initiated as much as possible. Below are the expectations for the group-led discussion.

Groups of 2-3 students will be responsible for commenting and generating questions around assigned readings for each class, i.e students will be the discussion facilitators (depending on total enrollment, each student will likely be responsible for facilitating two discussion sessions). During the first week of class, we will draw up a schedule of reading review assignments for discussion facilitators. Subsequently, each student facilitator will open the discussion with a brief (5 minute) comment on the readings and a posing of 1-2 initial focus questions. Try to generate insightful, substantive and provocative questions
that will provide a good basis for discussion. The quality of your commentary and questions, as well as your effectiveness in facilitating discussion, will form a portion of your participation grade.

Tentative Course Readings (ACM Botswana), Spring 2015
To be revised as the schedule for UB classes has been confirmed

Week 1 (January 20-23): Introduction to Botswana and Southern Africa
D1: Exploring Gaborone and its surroundings
D2: Introduction to course
D3: Discussion assignments

Saturday, January 24 to Sunday, January 25
- International Student Cultural Excursion (Tentative)

Week 2 (January 26-30): European colonization of Southern Africa: The Establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate
D1: Lecture: European colonization of Southern Africa and the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate
D2: Discussion 1: The struggle for political freedom and political independence in Botswana
D3: Guest speaker: “The emergence of political parties in Botswana”
Hand in Neighborhood Walk Assignment #1

Saturday, January 31 to Monday, February 2
- Mochudi Homestay Visit (Tentative)

Week 3 (February 2-6): Botswana, South Africa and the Legacy of Apartheid
  a) Anti-apartheid struggle in southern Africa
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 2
D3: Guest speaker: Botswana’s role in the anti-apartheid struggle

Week 4 (February 9-13): South Africa and the Legacy of Apartheid
  b) Post-Apartheid South Africa
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 3
D3: Guest speaker:

Week 5 (February 16-20): Environment and Struggles Over Land in Southern Africa
  a) Why do struggles over land remain so central to post-colonial South Africa and Zimbabwe
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 4
D3: Guest speaker: Land tenure in Botswana
Saturday, February 21 to Monday, February 23
  • Soweto and Johannesburg trip (Tentative)

Week 6 (February 23-27): Environment and Struggles Over Land in Southern Africa
  b) South Africa
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 5
D3: Guest speaker:

Week 7 (March 2-6): Parks and local People: Privileging wildlife over People?
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 6
D3: Guest speaker:
Hand in book review assignment

Tuesday, March 10 to Tuesday, March 17
Mid-semester Vacation
  • Maun Trip-Okavango Delta (Tentative)

Week 8 (March 18-20): Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Africa
  a) Rwanda: Who are the victims, who are the villains?
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 7
D3: Guest speaker

Week 9 (March 23-27): Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Africa
  b) Botswana and Zimbabwe
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 8
D3: Guest speaker
Hand in topic proposal

Week 10 (March 30-April 2): Is Mugabe a victim or villain?
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 9
D3: Guest speaker

Friday, April 3 to Monday, April 6
  • Easter Break

Week 11 (April 7-10): Are Diamonds a curse or blessing? Politics, Diamonds, and Development in Botswana
  a) Botswana
D1: Lecture
D2: Discussion 10
D3: Guest speaker:
Week 12 (April 13-17): Are Diamonds a curse or blessing? Politics, Diamonds, and Development in Botswana
   b) Zimbabwe
   D1: Lecture
   D2: Discussion 11
   D3: Guest Speaker

Friday, April 17 to Sunday, April 19
   • Jwaneng Diamond Mine Trip (Tentative)

Week 13 (April 20-24): The AIDS Epidemic in Africa: Why has the AIDS epidemic been especially devastating in Africa?
   Botswana
   D1: Lecture
   D2: Discussion 12
   D3: Guest speaker
   Hand in Neighborhood Walk Assignment #2

Week 14 (April 27-May 1)
   D1: Presentations
   D2: Presentations
   D3: Exam Prep and Presentations
   Hand in research paper

Week 15-16: Finals Week (May 5-18)
Discussion Readings (some of these readings will be posted on the course site)

Discussion 1: European colonialism in Southern Africa and the establishment of the Bechuanaland Protectorate

**Required Readings:**

**Suggested Readings:**

Discussion 2: Botswana, South Africa and the Legacy of Apartheid

a) Anti-apartheid struggle in southern Africa

**Required Readings:**

**Suggested Readings:**

Discussion 3: South Africa and the Legacy of Apartheid

b) Post-Apartheid South Africa

**Required Readings:**

**Suggested Readings:**
Discussion 4: Environment and Struggles Over Land in Southern Africa

a) Why do struggles over land remain so central to post-colonial South Africa and Zimbabwe

Required Reading:

Suggested Readings:
Alexander, J. 'Institutions, Ideas and Authority over the Land in Zimbabwe', Afriche e Orient, special issue on 'Competing Rights: Land and Natural Resources in Africa' 9 (2007)

Discussion 5: Environment and Struggles Over Land in Southern Africa

b) South Africa

Required Readings:
Discussion 6: Parks and local People: Privileging wildlife over People?
Required Readings:

Discussion 7: Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Africa
a) Rwanda: Who are the victims, who are the villains?
Required Readings

Suggested Readings:
Gourevitch, P. We Wish to Inform You That Tomorrow We Will be Killed (UK, Picador; First Edition edition, 1998).

Discussion 8: Race, Ethnicity, and Conflict in Africa
b) Botswana and Zimbabwe
Required Readings:

Suggested Readings:


**Discussion 9: Is Mugabe a victim or villain?**

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Readings:**


Scoones, I. *Zimbabwe’s Land Reform: Myths and Realities* (London: James Curry, 2010).

**Discussion 10: Curse or Blessing: Diamonds in Botswana and Zimbabwe**

  a) Botswana

**Required Readings:**


**Discussion 11: Curse or Blessing: Diamonds in Botswana and Zimbabwe**

  b) Zimbabwe

**Required Readings:**


**Discussion 12: The AIDS Epidemic in Africa: Why has the AIDS epidemic been especially devastating in Africa?**

**Botswana**

**Required Readings:**


**Suggested Readings**


Horwitz, S. ‘Migrancy and HIV/AIDS’ *SAHJ* 45 (2001), 103-123.


Rigillo, N. ‘Faith in God, but not in condoms: Churches and competing visions of HIV prevention in Namibia’ *CJAS* 43 (2009), 34-59.
