HIST201 Winter 2010
History of Modern Africa

Julie MacArthur
Julie.macarthur@mcgill.ca
Phone: 514-398-4856
Office: Leacock 634
Office Hours: Monday, 3:00pm-5:00pm

MWF 11:35am-12:25pm
On alternating weeks the Friday lecture will be replaced with a conference.

Course Overview

This course examines the histories of “Modern Africa,” itself a problematic idea, from 1800 to the present. We will explore themes of pre-colonial societies and structures; colonial conquest, collaboration and resistance; the nature of the colonial state; cultures of gender, ethnicity and work under colonial rule; violent nationalisms and constitutional reforms; independence and the legacy of the colonial state; postcolonial conflict and democratization; AIDS, aid and the future of Africa. While taking a comprehensive approach to themes and historical currents across the continent, this course will pay particular attention to case studies in Ghana, Algeria, Rwanda, Kenya and South Africa. Students will be expected to analyze primary sources such as archival documents, films and novels. Conferences will provide a space for students to debate and compare historical approaches, methodologies and important texts.

Required Texts (All Texts Available at the McGill Bookstore):

Richard Reid, A History of Modern Africa (West Sussex, 2009)
Chinua Achebe, Things Fall Apart (Nigeria, 1958)
Course Reader, Available at the McGill Bookstore
Primary Documents will be handed out in class

One of the following novels:

Ousmane Sembene, God’s Bits of Wood (Senegal, 1959)
Tsitsi Dangarembga, Nervous Conditions (Zimbabwe, 1989)
Amadou Hampate Ba, The Fortunes of Wangrin (Mali, 1973)
Ngugi Wa Thiong’o, A Grain of Wheat (Kenya, 1967)

Course Evaluation:

Mid-term Quiz 20% 12 February 2010
Book Review 20% (1500 words) Due 5 March 2010
Final Exam 40% TBA
Conference Attendance and Participation 20%
“In the event of extraordinary circumstances beyond the University’s control, the content and/or evaluation scheme in this course is subject to change.”

“In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.”

Academic Integrity statement:

“McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).”

Week One (4, 6, 8 January): Introducing Modern Africa


Week Two (11, 13, 15 January): Africa in the Nineteenth Century: West and North

**Required Readings**: Richard Reid, Part One and Two; Parker and Rathbone, Ch. 4; Paul Lovejoy, *Transformations in Slavery* (1983), 140-164.


Week Three (18, 20, 22 January): Africa in the Nineteenth Century: East and South


**Week Four (25, 27, 29 January): Scramble for Africa: Resistance and Religion**

**Required Readings:** Richard Reid, Part Three, Ch. 11 and readings for conference.


**29 January 2010 Conference 1:** Debating Resistance: The Chimurenga Rebellion. **Readings:** T.O. Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia* (1967), 1-42, 345-286 (whole text recommended); J. Cobbing, 'The Absent Priesthood' *Journal of African History* 18, no. 1 (1977), 61–84 (available online); Primary Documents (to be handed out in class)

**Week Five (1, 3, 5 February): Colonial Regimes: Decentralized Despotism and Social Transformations in Colonial Africa**

**Required Readings:** Reid, Ch. 12; Parker and Rathbone, 101-113; Mahmood Mamdani, *Citizen and Subject*, Ch.2 and readings for conference.


**5 February 2010 Conference 2:** Did things fall apart? Discussion of Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall Apart*. Instructions for Book Review and Mid-Term Exam

Recommended Reading for conference: Elizabeth Isichei “Myth, Gender and Society in Pre-Colonial Asaba” *Journal of the International African Institute*, Vol. 61, No. 4 (1991), 513- 529 (available online)
Week Six (8, 10, 12 February): Mid-Term Review

No Class 10 February 2009 (use time to review readings and maps for Mid-Term Exam)

12 February 2010: Mid-Term Exam

Week Seven (15 and 17, 19 February): Culture and Imperialism: Gender, Religion and Customary Law


Week Eight (1, 3, 5 March): Coping with Contradictions: Post-War Developmentalism and Anti-Colonialism


5 March 2009: BOOK REVIEW DUE // FILM SCREENING: Battle of Algiers
Week Nine (8, 10, 12 March): Nationalism and Independence in the era of the Cold War: Transfer of Power or Liberation Struggles?

Required Readings: Reid, Ch. 18, 19, Parker and Rathbone, Ch. 6 and readings for conference.


Week Ten (15, 17, 19 March): South Africa: Apartheid and Cultures of Resistance


19 March 2010 FILM SCREENING: Mapantsula

Week Eleven (22, 24, 26 March): Postcolonial Africa: State Formation and Conflict

Required Readings: Reid, Ch. 20, 21; Frederick Cooper, *Africa Since 1940: the Past and the Present* (2002), Ch. 7 and readings for conference.


Week Twelve (29 and 31 March): Democratization and Civil Society


Week Thirteen (7 and 9 April): Africa now: Aid and AIDS

Exam Questions handed out


9 April 2010 Conference 6: Exam Prep

Week Fourteen (12 and 14 April): Exam Review Classes

**Recommended General Texts:**