AAAS 209b
Spring 2017

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AFRICA RISING? NEW AFRICAN ECONOMIES/CULTURES AND THEIR GLOBAL IMPLICATIONS, II

This course is being taught as part of the African Studies Workshop at Harvard (ASW). It will consist of two components: (i) a public session, to be held every Monday evening at 6.00-8.00, at which a speaker invited from outside the university, a member of the Harvard faculty, or an advanced graduate student will present a pre-circulated paper to an audience similarly composed of faculty, visiting scholars, graduate students, and Africanists from other institutions in the greater Boston area. Each session will include a brief introduction to the paper by its author, a commentary by a discussant, and an open conversation, in which graduate students will be given the floor first for a period, followed by anyone else present; (ii) a graduate seminar component, to be held every Monday at 12.00-1.30, at which participants will discuss the paper to be presented on the same evening in the public session, along with relevant readings drawn from the contemporary Africanist canon. While the public sessions of the workshop are intended as a laboratory for international scholarly exchange, the graduate student component aims, in large part, to provide a professional apprenticeship for doctoral Africanists-in-training across the disciplines.

The theme of the graduate course derives from a story in *The Economist* in 2011 under the title, “Africa Rising.” It argued that the continent has come to epitomize both the "transformative promise of [capitalist] growth and its bleakest dimensions. During the spring semester, we shall explore Africa’s changing place in the world – and the new economies, legalities, socialities, and cultural forms that have arisen there; this in relation to the papers presented in the public sessions of the ASW. We shall also interrogate the claim that the African present is a foreshadowing of processes beginning to occur elsewhere; that, therefore, it is a productive source of theory about current conditions world-wide.

The theme of the course, *Africa Rising?* is itself part of a broader program of the ASW, under the rubric *Africa and the World at Large: Or, What the New Global Order Has to Learn from the Contemporary African Experience*. Under this rubric, several major topics will be addressed: (i) Crime, the State, and the Problem of Social Order, (ii) Changing Economies, Changing Polities, Changing Faces of Capitalism, and (iii) Health and Crises of Reproduction.

Participants in the graduate course will be expected to attend each Monday meeting at noon, having read the paper to be presented later that day in the public session. From the second week onward, one participant in the class will introduce the discussion, while all other participants will be expected to come to the meeting having prepared at least one written question to be shared with the class. [We shall divide the labor at the first

meeting.] Grades will be determined by class participation and by a term essay based on a reading of one or more of the ASW presentations.

PROGRAM

1/23 Introduction: “Africa Rising?”

1/30 Juan Obarrio (Johns Hopkins University), “Micropolitics, Matter, and Magic in Mozambique’s Transition from Socialism.”

2/6 Carolyn Rouse (Princeton University), “The Practice and Politics of Forgiveness: Theorizing Post-Colonial Pragmatism from Ghana.”

2/13 Christian Crouch (Hutchins Center, Harvard University), “Alamayu of Ethiopia and his Photographic Capture.”

2/20 PRESIDENTS’ DAY

2/27 Abdoulaye Gueye (University of Ottawa), “Reaching Out to the Homeland: The African Academic Diaspora and Universities in Africa.”

3/6 Zebulon Dingley (University of Chicago),

3/13 SPRING BREAK

3/20 Melusi Nkomo (Hutchins Center, Harvard University), “Abantu basekhaya”: Cultural difference and representation of social order on the South African platinum belt.”

3/27 Jesse Shipley (Haverford College), “A Practical *Coup d’État*.”

4/3 Derek Hook (Duquesne University), “Petrified Life: Post-apartheid Temporality.”

4/10 Myles Osborne (University of Colorado; Hutchins Center, Harvard University), “Rastafari and Reparations: Nation and Community in Jamaica and Kenya.”

4/17 Abidemi Babalola (Hutchins Center, Harvard University), “[Re]Centering Africa in the Global History of Technological Innovation and Change: The Precolonial Glass Production in Ile-Ife, Nigeria.”

4/24 Casey Golomski (University of New Hampshire), “Race and Joking Relations in a South African Alzheimer’s Home.”

There are also a few basic texts, available at the Coop, that we ask you to read over the course of the semester – as early in it as possible – since they are likely to feature frequently in our conversations:

Achille Mbembe, *On the Polstcolony*
James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*
Janet Roitman, *Fiscal Disobedience*
Jean and John Comaroff, *Theory from the South*
Law and Disorder in the Postcolony