

INTRODUCTION TO AFRICA

**ANTHROPOLOGY 2100 GEOGRAPHY 2100 COMPARATIVE LITERATURE 2100
HISTORY 2100 SOCIOLOGY 2100 AFRICAN STUDIES 2100**

***Class Schedule:* Tuesdays and Thursdays. 8:00 – 9:15 a.m. 214 SLC**

***Primary Instructor:* Randall Beckloff *Office:* 147 Joseph Brown Hall**

***Office Hours:* Monday 10:30 – 12:30 and by appointment**

***Phone:* 706-542-9836 (Office); *E-mail:* beckloff@uga.edu or WebCT mail (Preferred Address)**

***Course Faculty Advisor:* Dr. Akinloye Ojo; akinloye@uga.edu**

Course Description

This course is an introduction as well as an overview. It is designed to serve two purposes: first, to be a general introduction to the field of African Studies; and second, to allow faculty associated with the African Studies Institute to discuss their areas of expertise, so that students will both learn about scholarship related to Africa that is currently being conducted at UGA and have opportunities to select areas of focus for individual study. Thus, the course is a group-taught effort with a primary instructor as coordinator. The course is cross-listed in six departments and, as it is a survey course, no single region or subject will be given exclusive or extended attention.

A major focus of the course will be the ways in which African societies are structured into groups, including nations, states, linguistic groups, classes, regions and occupations. At the end of the class, students will have a better understanding of three topics: first, the immense diversity found on the African continent; second, the ways in which Africa's diversity is beneficial as well as detrimental to the continent; and finally, the ways in which this diversity is expressed through history, religion, and identity as both solidarity and conflict. The underlying theme of the course is the way that learning about Africa's past and present can help us identify the challenges that Africans will face in the future.

Textbook and other reading material:

Required Text: *Understanding Contemporary Africa* (4th edition), (2007). Edited by April A. Gordon and Donald L. Gordon; Boulder, Colorado, and London: Lynne Rienner. This is the primary text for the course and is listed as *UCA* on the class schedule.

Additional readings, to be announced, will be on reserve in the main library, distributed in class or placed on WebCT. The password for electronic reserves for this course is "**introtoafrica**"

Course Requirements

- ◆ **ATTENDANCE AND PARTICIPATION:** Regular attendance is vital as material discussed in class will differ from that covered in the textbook. I will expect you to be prepared to discuss any and all assigned reading.

I will usually take attendance by circulating a roll sheet for signatures. Students who arrive after the roll sheet has completed a circuit of the classroom should see me after class. I will *not* recognize claims of attendance not reflected on the roll sheet after a class period.

Each student begins the semester with a full credit of 100 points for attendance/participation. Points will be lost during the semester due to irregular attendance (*more than three unexcused absences*); lack of preparation for class; lack of participation in class activities (sleeping, surfing the net, doing something else other than listening to a speaker, etc.); or engaging in disruptive behavior such as talking while a speaker is speaking, regularly allowing cell phones to ring, or ignoring directions from the instructor. In most cases I will not inform students when participation points are lost. If you are concerned about losing points, you are encouraged to speak with me.

- ◆ **MAP QUIZ:** A list of countries found on the continent of Africa (including islands) and a blank map will be posted on WebCT. On *January 24* you will be given a paper copy of the map and the country list and asked to write the countries on the map in the correct location.
- ◆ **TESTS:** During the semester three sixty-minute tests and a final exam will be given. These will involve material from lectures, reading assignments, and other class activities or assignments. While the three tests will cover only specified material, the final exam will be *cumulative*.

Due to the amount and diversity of the information covered in the course, a review sheet will be prepared and placed on WebCT prior to each exam.

- ◆ **AFRICAN NEWS JOURNAL:** An important component of the course is keeping up with African events covered in the international press and discovering African news that may go unreported here in the United States. To achieve this you will be expected to visit selected African websites on a weekly basis and record what you find there in a journal. Your journal will be submitted for evaluation on three occasions as noted in the course schedule.

Beginning the week of January 22 and ending the week of April 8 (skipping spring break) once a week you will be expected to browse the internet and make journal entries as follows:

1. Search at least one of the following websites: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/default.stm> , <http://www.afrol.com/> or <http://allafrica.com/> and briefly summarize (do not cut & paste) stories you find concerning (a) the Darfur situation, (b) events in Somalia, (c) the US from an African perspective (for example—stories about U.S. government actions in Africa or the US elections) and (d) one other African news story (your choice) currently on the site. In the event that you don't find new stories about a, b or c on a given week just note this but be aware that your instructor will also follow news on these sites.

2. For an African country, which will be assigned to you, visit one internet news source devoted to that country. You will need to take time the first week to identify a suitable website that you will visit each week. **Summarize two stories in the news on the day you visit.** You are encouraged to follow the same stories from week to week as much as possible.

Your journal will be evaluated in terms of regularity and quality of entries—*quality of entries will be more important than the amount written*. I expect you to read news stories, think about them and write a short but accurate summary. A format for the journal will be placed on WebCT and you are encouraged to use it. As this is a cumulative journal, keep the original copy of everything submitted and returned to you. For the second and third submissions just add the new material to what has already been turned in.

Additionally, the third submission should include (a) brief summaries tracing the development of the news stories in your journal throughout the semester (b) comments on what you consider to be the two biggest events you read about during the semester and (c) comments on the coverage these two events received in the United States—to what extent were they covered and did you notice any differences in the coverage in the United States and that you found on the internet?

The first and second submissions will be worth a maximum 40 points each and the third submission will be worth a maximum 70 points.

- ◆ **GROUP PROJECT:** The concluding assignment for the course is a group project in which an African country is researched. Each group will present the results of their research to the class and submit a formal paper to the instructor. This assignment is designed to allow students to narrow their focus from the entire continent to a specific country. The presentations are a vital part of the course as it reinforces course content and further illuminates the continent by describing in some detail approximately one third of the countries on the continent.

Additional details will be provided on this assignment later but the following are important activities and due dates:

- *March 20* – Inform instructor of group members (3 - 4 members, groups should be student-formed but students not self-placed in a group will be randomly assigned to a group by the instructor)
 - *April 1* – Submit country and two topics to be researched to the instructor
 - *April 15, 17, and 22* – Presentations made to the class (10 - 15 minutes)
 - *April 24* – Formal paper due (8 - 10 pages)
- ◆ **EXTRA CREDIT:** Students will be given opportunities to earn *limited* extra credit by attending designated events throughout the semester. This will be announced in class and posted on WebCT.

Course Guidelines

WebCT will be used to facilitate communication among students and the instructor. Students are strongly encouraged to **check it at least on a weekly basis**. Also, **please use the email function to communicate with the instructor**.

All written work for this course should be typed, double-spaced in a 12-point font. Margins should be 1 to 1.5 inches. **Email submissions of work will incur an automatic 10% penalty.**

No make-up tests will be given. In accordance with university policy, if you miss a test I will need to see documentary evidence of the reason for your absence. Acceptable documents include but are not limited to doctor's notes and funeral announcements. *In the absence of such evidence, your grade on the test in question will be zero.* If the conditions of university policy are met, I will meet with you to establish an agreement as to how the missed test will be accounted for.

As this is a survey course, we will cover a large amount of information from a variety of sources. This may pose special challenges. You are encouraged to develop and utilize strategies that will help you to integrate and analyze this material – strategies you can use to bring the disparate information you will receive into a meaningful, integrated framework. Look for connections between information from various sources; consider applying ideas in different contexts; and consider how new information challenges your previously held views.

Persons with Disabilities – I am committed to doing whatever is necessary to make this course as fulfilling as possible for people who may have special needs due to a disability, whether visible or invisible. If there is anything I can do – such as providing materials in alternative formats, assuring physical access to class sessions, or being sensitive to interaction difficulties that may be posed by communication and/or learning disabilities – please take time to discuss your concerns with me early in the semester so we can work together to make the necessary accommodations for you. Please know that anything you discuss with me in this regard will be held in strictest confidence. We will work with the University's Office of Disability Services to ensure your equal access to the course activities.

Cell Phones – If you need your cell phone for emergency reasons, please put it on silent mode.

Academic Honesty – All academic work must meet the standards described in the University of Georgia pamphlet "A Culture of Honesty." This document can be found at: http://www.uga.edu/ovpi/honesty/culture_honesty.htm. I take this seriously, and cases of suspected academic dishonesty will be reported to the Office of the Vice President for Instruction.

Grading

Course grades will be calculated as follows:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Attendance/Participation | 100 |
| Map Quiz | 50 |
| Internet News Journal | 150 |
| Group Project | 200 |
| Test #1 | 100 |
| Test #2 | 100 |
| Test #3 | 100 |
| Final Exam | 200 |
| Total Points | 1000 |

Grades will be assigned as follows:

| | |
|-----------|----|
| 1000–933 | A |
| 932–900 | A- |
| 899–867 | B+ |
| 866–833 | B |
| 832–800 | B- |
| 799–767 | C+ |
| 766–733 | C |
| 732–700 | C- |
| 699– 600 | D |
| below 600 | F |

Class Schedule

| Week | Date | Class Topics/Activities | Readings – <i>Read before scheduled day!</i> | Speakers -- <i>Subject to change!!!!!!</i> |
|------|--|---|--|--|
| 1 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 8 • Jan. 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Course Introduction & Africa Overview • Facts & Figures/ Geography | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Chapters 1 & 2 (or Electronic Reserves # 7,1 & 3) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randy Beckloff Randy Beckloff |
| 2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 15 • Jan. 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Language & Society; • Language and Extinction | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Reserves #8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Akinloye Ojo Dr. Norm Thomson |
| 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 22 • Jan. 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pre-colonial Africa Start News Journal • Colonial rule & Independence Map Quiz | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Chapter 3 • UCA: Chapter 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Timothy Cleaveland Dr. Timothy Cleaveland |
| 4 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jan. 29 • Jan. 31 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-colonial Political Developments • Video – Savannah Homecoming | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Chapter 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Abdulahi Osman Randy Beckloff |
| 5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 5 • Feb. 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 1 • Religion in Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Chapter 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randy Beckloff Randy Beckloff |
| 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 12 • Feb. 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion Day News Journal #1 Due • Agricultural Development in Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Ch. 5. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randy Beckloff Dr. Maria Navarro |
| 7 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 19 • Feb. 21 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic Development • Family & Kinship in Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Ch. 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Jack Houston ASU panel |
| 8 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feb. 26 • Feb. 28 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kinship/ Ethnography in Madagascar • Sports & Games | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Reserve #2 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dr. Rose Chepyator-Thomson |
| 9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 4 • March 6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 2 • Video– Leopards of Zanzibar News Journal #2 Due | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Randy Beckloff Randy Beckloff |
| 10 | March 10-14 | SPRING BREAK | | |

| | | | | |
|----|--|---|--|---|
| 11 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 18 • March 20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gender Issues • Environmental Issues | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Ch. 10 • UCA: Ch. 8 and electronic reserves #9 | <p>Njeri Marekia-Cleaveland</p> <p>Dr. John Carroll</p> |
| 12 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • March 25 • March 27 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • HIV/AIDS • Literature & Cinema | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Ch. 7 • UCA: Ch.12 | <p>Dr. Karim Traore</p> |
| 13 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 1 • April 3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music & Dance • Theatre in Africa | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Electronic Reserves 6 & 10 | <p>Dr. Jean Kidula</p> <p>Dr. Freda Scott-Giles</p> |
| 14 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 8 • April 10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Test 3 – • Video: Lost Boys of Sudan • News Journal #3 Due | | <p>Randy Beckloff</p> <p>Randy Beckloff</p> |
| 15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 15 • April 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group project presentations • Group project presentations | | <p>Students</p> <p>Students</p> |
| 16 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • April 22 • April 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group project presentations • Last Class/Discussion Day • Final Projects Due | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • UCA: Ch. 13 | <p>Students</p> <p>Randy Beckloff</p> |
| 17 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May 1 8:00 AM | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Exam | | <p>Randy Beckloff</p> |

Special events that may be of interest to the class:

February 27—King-Mandela Symposium

March 6—Annual Snyder Lecture

April 17-20—Annual Conference on African Linguistics

The course syllabus is a general plan for the course; deviations announced to the class by the instructor may be necessary.