

**History 201 F: Advanced Historical Literature: Africa
(Subaltern Perspectives: Africa and Beyond)**

Professor: Chikowero

Spring 2010, Monday 12PM

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Hours: Tuesday 12-2PM or by appointment

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“Third World” historiographies have for long been framed by metanarratives: colonialism, modernization, nationalism and independence. While these conceptual frames will continue to be relevant and useful in many ways, they have come under critique for privileging elite perspectives in the making and writing of history. These metanarratives have cast long shadows on histories of peasants, proletariats, women, youths and other underclasses. Likewise, conventional methodologies and sources have tended to produce the same effects, the subordination, crippling, silencing and displacement of subaltern agency, voices and place in history. Archives have been approached more as sources of knowledge and less as sites of knowledge production and contestation. This course deploys the idea of subalternity as a tool to untangle the conceptual and methodological entrapments of our reading and writing of African, Indian and Latin American histories by dominant discourses. As a concept, subalternity begins by acknowledging this epistemological subjugation and then proceeds by exploring pedagogies of liberation, selfcraft and self-narration. The course hopes to benefit from the robust theorization of the subalternity by historians and other scholars primarily of India.

The course consists of two broad components, firstly, subaltern theory and, secondly, empirical readings. The theory and conceptual segment engages with some of the major subaltern theory scholars and critics. **Important note: the readings (not themes) listed below are flexible and contingent on student composition and research interests.**

Requirements

This course is based on students’ engagement with the material, class presentations and discussion and not on conventional lectures. Students are therefore required to read the materials in preparation for discussions. The course has four examinable components: four response papers, a book review, class participation and one memo/journal. The response papers and book reviews must demonstrate a grasp of the thesis, critically assess the argument, sources and methodologies and raise questions on any difficult aspects of the readings. The response papers should be two pages long, and the book review three pages, both double-spaced. The memo or journal is a detailed, blow-by-blow train of your thoughts and progress throughout the course reflecting on new, exciting and difficult ideas that you encountered and how you may utilize or resolve these in the future. You are also invited, in this section, to suggest other approaches for teaching a course of this nature.

Rubric

1. Four response papers: 10% each
 - Instructor allocates/approves readings. Email day before presentation.
2. Book review: 20%
 - Engage with other reviewers. Due by Week 9.
3. Memo: 20%
 - A log of your readings detailing the train of your progress through the course. 5 pages length; due final week.
4. Class participation: 20%
 - Presentations and responses to colleagues' presentations throughout the course.

Readings

Subalternity: Bits of Theory

- Ranajit Guha and Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, *Selected Subaltern Studies* (select chapters).
- G.C. Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" in Cary Nelson and Lawrence Grossberg (eds.), *Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture*.
- Gyan Prakash, "Writing Post-Orientalist Histories of the Third World: Perspectives from Indian Historiography," *Comparative Studies in History and Society*, 32, 2, 1990.
- T.O. Ranger, "The Historiography of Southern Rhodesia," *TransAfrican Journal of History*, Vol.1, No. 2, July 1971, pp.63-76.
- T.O. Ranger, "Nationalist Historiography, Patriotic History and the History of the Nation: The Struggle over the Past in Zimbabwe," *Journal of Southern African Studies*, Vol. 30, 2, 2004.
- Chris Saunders, *The Making of the South African Past: Major Historians on Race and Class*.
- Frantz Fanon, "The Pitfalls of National Consciousness," in *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- Chris J. Lee, "Subaltern Studies and African Studies," *History Compass*, Vol.3, Issue 1, 2005.
- Fred Cooper, "Conflict and Connection: Rethinking Colonial African History," *American Historical Review*, Vol. 99, No.5, Dec. 1994.

Discussion question: What are the premises of the subaltern approach? How does this select set of readings illuminate or problematize the approach?

Enslavement and Slave Trade

- Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose your Mother: a Journey along the Atlantic Slave Trade Route*.
- Ato Quayson and David Theo Goldberg, *Relocating Postcolonialism* (chapters on slavery)

- Megan Vaughan, *Creating the Creole Island: Slavery in Eighteenth Century Mauritius*.
- Claire C. Robertson and Martin A. Klein, *Women and Slavery in Africa* (select chapters).

Colonialism and the Production/Crisis of Knowledge

- Bernard Cohn, *Colonialism and its Forms of Knowledge*.
- Diana Jeater, *Law, Language and Science: The Invention of the "Native Mind" in Southern Rhodesia, 1890-1930*.
- Jean-Paul Sartre, *Colonialism and Neocolonialism*
- Aime Cesaire, *Discourse on Colonialism*
- Aime Cesaire, *Notebook of a Return to the Native Land*
- Nancy Rose Hunt, *A Colonial Lexicon of Birth, Medicalization and Mobility in the Congo*
- Adu Boahen, *African Perspectives on Colonialism*.
- Terence Ranger, *Revolt in Southern Rhodesia*.
- Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*.

Underclasses: Peasants, Pastoralists and Proletariats

- Henritta L. Moore and Megan Vaughan, *Cutting Down Trees: Gender, Nutrition and Agricultural Change in the Northern Province of Zambia*.
- Keletso Atkins, *The moon is dead! Give us Our Money: The Cultural Origins of an African Work Ethic*.
- Donald Denoon, *Suffering for Territory*
- Allen Isaacman, *Cotton is the Mother of Poverty*
- David McDermott Hughes, *From Enslavement to Environmentalism: Politics on a Southern African Frontier*
- James Giblin, *The Poor Are Not Us: Poverty & Pastoralism in Eastern Africa*.
- Elizabeth Isichei, *Voices of the Poor in Africa*
- Colin Bundy, *The Rise and Fall of the South African Peasantry*.
- Steven Feierman, *Peasant Intellectuals: Anthropology and History in Tanzania*.
- Charles van Onselen, *The Seed is Mine: The Life of Kas Maine, a South African Sharecropper 1894-1985*.

Colonial Urbanity: Gendered Work, Cultures and Politics

- Benedict Carton, *Blood from your Children: The Colonial Origins of Generational Conflict in South Africa*.
- Luise White, *The Comforts of home: Prostitution in Colonial Nairobi*.
- Tim Scarnnechia, *The Urban Roots of Democracy and Political Violence in Zimbabwe*.
- Belinda Bozzoli, *Women of Phokeng: Consciousness, Life Strategy and Migrancy in South Africa, 1900-1983*.

- Elizabeth Schmidt, *Peasants, Traders and Wives: Shona Women in the History of Zimbabwe, 1870-1939*.
- Gary Kynoch, *We are Fighting the World: A History of the Marashea Gangs in South Africa, 1947-1999*.

African Identities and Selfcraft: Writing

- Achille Mbembe, "African Modes of Self-Writing," *Public Culture* 14, 1, 2002.
- African Modes of Self-Writing: Mbembe's Critiques
- Valentine Mudimbe, *The Invention of Africa: Gnosis, Philosophy and the Order of Knowledge*.
- Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In my Father's House*.
- Paul Tiyambe Zeleza, *Rethinking Africa's 'Globalization.'*
- Pier Larson, *Ocean of Letters: Language and Creolization in an Indian Ocean Diaspora*

African Identities and Selfcraft: Performance

- Leroy Vail and Landeg White, *Power and Praise Poem: Southern African Voices in History*.
- Bheki Peterson, *Monarchs, Missionaries and African Intellectuals*.
- Thomas Turino, *Nationalists, Cosmopolitans and Popular Music in Zimbabwe*.
- Mhoze Chikowero, "The 'Tribal Dance' as a Colonial Vernacular."
- Maurice Vambe, "'Aya Mahobo': Migrant Labour and the Cultural Semiotics of Harare (Mbare) African Township, 1930-1970," *African Identities*, Vol. 5, Issue 3, Dec. 2007.
- Maurice Vambe, "Diaspora, Music Identity and Desti/nations in Southern Africa," *Muziki* 5, 2, 2008.

Nationalism and Independence Struggles

- Basil Davidson, *The Blackman's Burden: Africa and the Curse of the Nation-State*
- Frantz Fanon, *The Wretched of the Earth*.
- Partha Chatterjee, *Nationalism: A Derivative Discourse*
- Walter Rodney, *Walter Rodney Speaks: the Making of an African Intellectual*
- Terence O. Ranger, *Are We not Also Men? The Samkange Family and African Politics in Zimbabwe, 1920-64*.
- Terence O. Ranger, *Peasant Consciousness and Guerilla War in Zimbabwe*
- Norma J. Kriger, *Zimbabwe's Guerrilla War: Peasant Voices*.
- Josephine Nhongo-Simbabegavi, *For Better or Worse? Women and ZANLA IN Zimbabwe's Liberation War*.
- Tanya Lyons, *Guns and Guerrilla Girls: Women in the Zimbabwean Liberation Struggle*.
- Antjie Krog, *Country of My Skull: Guilt, Sorrow and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*.

On the Postcolony

- Archille Mbembe, *On the Postcolony*
 - *On the Postcolony: Critiques and Responses*
 - Robert Muponde and Ranka Primora (eds.), *Versions of Zimbabwe: New Approaches to Literature and Culture*.
 - Sabelo Ndlovu and James Muzondidya (eds.), *Redemptive or Grotesque Nationalism? Rethinking Contemporary Politics in Zimbabwe* (Should be on the shelves soon).
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