AFRICAN STUDIES

Council on African Studies
The MacMillan Center
137 Rosenkrantz Hall, 203.432.1425
http://african.macmillan.yale.edu
M.A.

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Associate Professors Katharine Baldwin (Political Science), Marie Brault (Public Health), Cécile Fromont (History of Art), Cajetan Ihenga (English), Kaveh Khoshnood (Epidemiology), Louisa Lombard (Anthropology), Urania Magriples (Obstetrics, Gynecology, & Reproductive Sciences), LaRon Nelson (Nursing), Sunil Parikh (Public Health; Internal Medicine), Carla Staver (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology), Jonathan Wyrtzen (Sociology)

Assistant Professors Amy Bei (Epidemiology), Jill Jarvis (French), Benedito Machava (History), Hani Mowafi (Emergency Medicine), Christine Ngairuir (Emergency Medicine), Oluwatosin Onibukun (Obstetrics, Gynecology, & Reproductive Sciences), Nana Osei Quarshie (History), Tracy Rabin (Internal Medicine), Jeremy Schwartz (Internal Medicine), Sheela Shenoi (Internal Medicine), Carla Staver (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology)

Lecturers Adalgisa Caccone (Ecology & Evolutionary Biology), W. Casey King (Public Health), Sarah Ryan (Law), David Simon (Political Science), Veronica Waweru (African Languages)

Senior Lectors Oluseye Adesola (Yorùbá), Jonas Elbousty (Near Eastern Languages & Civilizations), Matuku Ngame (French), Nandipa Sipengane (isiZulu), Kiarie Wa’Njogu (Swahil)

FIELDS OF STUDY

African Studies considers the arts, history, cultures, languages, literatures, politics, religions, and societies of Africa as well as issues concerning development, health, and the environment. Considerable flexibility and choice of areas of concentration are offered because students entering the program may have differing academic backgrounds and career plans. Enrollment in the M.A. program in African Studies provides students with the opportunity to register for the many African studies courses offered in the various departments of the Graduate School of Arts and Sciences and the professional schools.

The Program in African Studies also offers two interdisciplinary seminars to create dialogue and to integrate approaches across disciplines. In addition to the M.A. degree program, the Council on African Studies offers students in the University’s doctoral and other professional degree programs the chance to obtain a Graduate Certificate of Concentration in African Studies by fulfilling a supplementary curriculum. (See Council on African Studies, under Non-Degree Granting Programs, Councils, and Research Institutes.) Joint degrees are possible with the approval of the director of graduate studies (DGS) and the relevant officials in the schools of the Environment, Law, Management, and Public Health.

The African collections of the Yale libraries together represent one of the largest holdings on Africa found in North America. The University now possesses more than 220,000 volumes including, but not limited to, government documents, art catalogs, photographs, manuscripts, correspondence, and theses, many published in Africa.

SPECIAL REQUIREMENTS FOR THE M.A. DEGREE

The Yale University Master of Arts degree program in African Studies was instituted in 1986. The two-year interdisciplinary, graduate-level curriculum is intended for students who will later continue in a Ph.D. program or a professional school, or for those who will enter business, government service, or another career in which a sound knowledge of Africa is essential or valuable. A student may choose one
of the following areas of concentration: history; anthropology; political science; sociology; arts and literatures; languages and linguistics; religion; environmental and development studies; and public health.

The program requires sixteen courses: one compulsory interdisciplinary seminar, Gateway to Africa (AFST 505); a second course employing an interdisciplinary approach to African Studies, approved by the DGS; four courses of instruction in an African language; four courses in one of the foregoing areas of concentration; four other approved courses offered in the Graduate School or professional schools; and two terms of directed reading and research (AFST 590 and AFST 990) during which students will complete the required thesis; with permission of the DGS, AFST 931 may be substituted for AFST 590. A student who is able to demonstrate advanced proficiency in an African language may have the language requirement waived and substitute four other approved courses. The choice of courses must be approved by the DGS, with whom students should consult as soon as possible in the first term.

THE MASTER’S THESIS

The master’s thesis is based on research on a topic approved by the DGS and advised by a faculty member with expertise or specialized competence in the chosen topic. Students must submit their thesis for joint evaluation by the adviser and a second reader, who is chosen by the student in consultation with the DGS.

PROGRAM IN AFRICAN LANGUAGES

The language program offers instruction in five major languages from sub-Saharan Africa: K̲isw̲āh̲i̲li̲ (eastern and central Africa), Tw̲i̲, W̲ol̲ō̲f̲, Yorù̲b̲á (west Africa), and isiZulu (southern Africa). Language-related courses and language courses for professionals are also offered. African language courses emphasize communicative competence, and instructors use multimedia materials that focus on the contemporary African context. Course sequences are designed to enable students to achieve advanced competence in all skill areas by the end of the third year, and the African Languages program encourages students to spend one summer or term in Africa during their language study.

Noncredited instruction in other African languages is available by application through the Directed Independent Language Study program at the Center for Language Study. Contact the director of the Program in African Languages.

More information is available on the program's website, http://african.macmillan.yale.edu.

COURSES

AFST 505a, Gateway to Africa Veronica Waweru
This multidisciplinary seminar highlights the study of contemporary Africa through diverse academic disciplines. Each session features a Yale faculty scholar or guest speaker who shares their unique disciplinary perspective and methodological approach to studying Africa. Topics include themes drawn from the humanities, social sciences, and public health, with faculty representing expertise from across Yale’s graduate and professional school departments. The course is intended to introduce graduate students and upper-level undergraduates to the breadth and depth of Yale scholarship on Africa, facilitating the identification of future topics and mentors for thesis or senior paper research. Each weekly seminar focuses on a specific topic or region, and students are exposed to various research methods and techniques in archival research, data collection, and analysis. A specific goal of the course is to impart students with knowledge of how research across diverse disciplines is carried out, as well as to demonstrate innovative methodology, fieldwork procedures, presentation of results, and ethical issues in human subjects research.

AFST 568a, Tackling the Big Three: Malaria, TB, and HIV in Resource-Limited Settings Sunil Parikh
Malaria, tuberculosis, and HIV account for more than five million deaths worldwide each year. This course provides a deep foundation for understanding these pathogens and explores the public health issues that surround these infectious diseases in resource-limited settings. Emphasis is placed on issues in Africa, but contrasts for each disease are provided in the broader developing world. The course is divided into three sections, each focusing in depth on the individual infectious disease as well as discussions of interactions among the three diseases. The sections consist of three to four lectures each on the biology, individual consequences, and community/public health impact of each infectious disease. Discussion of ongoing, field-based research projects involving the diseases is led by relevant faculty (research into practice). The course culminates with a critical discussion of major public health programmatic efforts to tackle these diseases, such as those of PEPFAR, the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, the Global Fund, and the Stop TB Partnership.

AFST 585a, Pandemics in Africa: From the Spanish Influenza to COVID-19 Jonny Steinberg
The overarching aim of the course is to understand the unfolding COVID-19 pandemic in Africa in the context of a century of pandemics, their political and administrative management, the responses of ordinary people, and the lasting changes they have wrought. The first eight meetings examine some of the best social science literature on twentieth-century African pandemics before COVID-19. From the Spanish influenza to cholera to AIDS, to the misdiagnosis of yaws as syphilis, and tuberculosis as hereditary, the social science literature can be assembled to ask a host of vital questions in political theory: on the limits of coercion; on the connection between political power and scientific expertise, between pandemic disease and political legitimacy, and, across all modern African epidemics, between infection and the politics of race. The remaining meetings look at COVID-19. We chronicle the evolving responses of policy makers, scholars, religious leaders, opposition figures, and, to the extent that we can, ordinary people. The idea is to assemble sufficient information to facilitate a real-time study of thinking and deciding in times of radical uncertainty and to examine, too, the consequences of decisions on the course of events. There are of course so many moving parts: health systems, international political economy, finance, policing, and more. We also bring guests into the classroom, among them frontline actors in the current pandemic as well as veterans of previous pandemics well placed to share provisional comparative thinking. This last dimension is especially emphasized: the current period is
studied in the light of a century of epidemic disease, affording us the opportunity to see path dependencies and novelties, the old and the new.

AFST 639b / ANTH 639b, Africa, Politics, Anthropology  Louisa Lombard
A historical-anthropological study of politics in Africa. How have anthropologists made sense of the workings of African politics, both those of state and nonstate actors? This course charts how African states came into being, how they operate, and how state agents and the people they govern negotiate legitimacy, authority, and belonging.

AFST 833b, Agrarian History of Africa  Robert Harms
This course examines changes in African rural life from precolonial times to the present. Issues to be examined include land use systems, rural modes of production, gender roles, markets and trade, the impact of colonialism, cash cropping, rural-urban migration, and development schemes.

AFST 836a / HIST 836a, Histories of Postcolonial Africa: Themes, Genres, and the Phantoms of the Archive  Benedito Machava
This course is both historiographic and methodological. It is meant as an introduction to the major themes that have dominated the study of postcolonial Africa in recent years, and the material circumstances in which they were produced. We pay close attention to the kinds of sources and archives that scholars have employed in their works, and how they addressed the challenges of writing contemporary histories in Africa. We center our weekly meetings around one key text and one or two supplementary readings. We engage with works on politics, violence, environment and technology, women and gender, affect, fashion, leisure, and popular culture.

AFST 839a / HIST 839a, Environmental History of Africa  Robert Harms
An examination of the interaction between people and their environment in Africa and the ways in which this interaction has affected or shaped the course of African history.

AFST 965b / CPLT 729b / FREN 965b, On Violence: Politics and Aesthetics across the Maghreb  Jill Jarvis
A study of twentieth-century Maghrebi texts and films that document, theorize, and critique forms of political violence. How might aesthetic works—novels, plays, poems, torture and prison testimonies, political cartoons, films—run counter to state-sanctioned memory projects or compel rethinking practices of testimony and justice for a postcolonial time? Works by Kateb, Djebar, Mechakra, Djajout, Allek, Boupha, Meddeb, Barrada, Binebine, Laâbi, Rahmani, Mouride. Theoretical readings by Fanon, Mbembe, Khatibi, Kilito, Dorlin, Benjamin, Spivak, Derrida, Lazali. Conducted in English. Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French.

SWAH 610a, Beginning Kiswahili I  John Wa’Njogu
A beginning course with intensive training and practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Initial emphasis is on the spoken language and conversation. Credit only on completion of SWAH 620.

SWAH 620b, Beginning Kiswahili II  John Wa’Njogu
Continuation of SWAH 610. Texts provide an introduction to the basic structure of Kiswahili and to the culture of the speakers of the language. Prerequisite: SWAH 610.

SWAH 630a, Intermediate Kiswahili I  Veronica Waweru
Further development of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. Prepares students for further work in literary, language, and cultural studies as well as for a functional use of Kiswahili. Study of structure and vocabulary is based on a variety of texts from traditional and popular culture. Emphasis on command of idiomatic usage and stylistic nuance. Prerequisite: SWAH 620.

SWAH 640b, Intermediate Kiswahili II  Veronica Waweru
Continuation of SWAH 630.

SWAH 650a, Advanced Kiswahili I  John Wa’Njogu
Development of fluency through readings and discussions on contemporary issues in Kiswahili. Introduction to literary criticism in Kiswahili. Materials include Kiswahili oral literature, prose, poetry, and plays, as well as texts drawn from popular and political culture. Prerequisite: SWAH 640.

SWAH 660b, Advanced Kiswahili II  John Wa’Njogu
Continuation of SWAH 650.

SWAH 670a and SWAH 671b, Topics in Kiswahili Literature  John Wa’Njogu
Advanced readings and discussion with emphasis on literary and historical texts. Reading assignments include materials on Kiswahili prose, plays, poetry, Kiswahili dialects, and the history of the language.

YORU 610a, Beginning Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
Training and practice in speaking, listening, reading, and writing. Initial emphasis is on the spoken aspect, with special attention to unfamiliar consonantal sounds, nasal vowels, and tone, using isolated phrases, set conversational pieces, and simple dialogues. Multimedia materials provide audio practice and cultural information. Credit only on completion of YORU 620.

YORU 620b, Beginning Yorùbá II  Oluseye Adesola
Continuing practice in using and recognizing tone through dialogues. More emphasis is placed on simple cultural texts and role playing. Prerequisite: YORU 610.
YORU 630a, Intermediate Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
Refinement of speaking, listening, reading, and writing skills. More natural texts are provided to prepare students for work in literary, language, and cultural studies as well as for a functional use of Yorùbá. Prerequisite: YORU 620.

YORU 640b, Intermediate Yorùbá II  Oluseye Adesola
Students are exposed to more idiomatic use of the language in a variety of interactions, including occupational, social, religious, and educational. Cultural documents include literary and nonliterary texts. Prerequisite: YORU 630.

YORU 650a, Advanced Yorùbá I  Oluseye Adesola
An advanced course intended to improve aural and reading comprehension as well as speaking and writing skills. Emphasis is on acquiring a command of idiomatic usage and stylistic nuance. Study materials include literary and nonliterary texts; social, political, and popular entertainment media such as video movies and recorded poems (ewi); and music. Prerequisite: YORU 640.

YORU 660b, Advanced Yorùbá II  Oluseye Adesola
Continuing development of aural and reading comprehension, and speaking and writing skills, with emphasis on idiomatic usage and stylistic nuance. Study materials are selected to reflect research interests of the students. Prerequisite: YORU 650.

YORU 670a, Topics in Yorùbá Literature and Culture  Oluseye Adesola
The course provides students with the opportunity to acquire Yorùbá up to the superior level. It is designed to give an in-depth discussion on advanced readings on Yorùbá literature and culture. It focuses on Yorùbá history, poetry, novels, dramas, and oral folklore. It also seeks to uncover the basics of the Yorùbá culture in communities where Yorùbá is spoken across the globe, with particular emphasis on Nigeria. It examines movies, texts, and written literature to gain insight into the Yorùbá philosophy and ways of life.

YORU 672b, Topics in Yorùbá Literature and Culture II  Oluseye Adesola
Continuation of YORU 670.

ZULU 610a, Beginning isiZulu I  Nandipa Sipengane
A beginning course in conversational isiZulu, using web-based materials filmed in South Africa. Emphasis on the sounds of the language, including clicks and tonal variation, and on the words and structures needed for initial social interaction. Brief dialogues concern everyday activities; aspects of contemporary Zulu culture are introduced through readings and documentaries in English. Credit only on completion of ZULU 620.

ZULU 620b, Beginning isiZulu II  Nandipa Sipengane
Development of communication skills through dialogues and role play. Texts and songs are drawn from traditional and popular literature and songs. Students research daily life in selected areas of South Africa. Prerequisite: ZULU 610.

ZULU 630a, Intermediate isiZulu I  Nandipa Sipengane
Development of basic fluency in speaking, listening, reading, and writing isiZulu, using web-based materials filmed in South Africa. Students describe and narrate spoken and written paragraphs. Review of morphology; concentration on tense and aspect. Materials are drawn from contemporary popular culture, folklore, and mass media. Prerequisite: ZULU 620.

ZULU 640b, Intermediate isiZulu II  Nandipa Sipengane
Students read longer texts from popular media as well as myths and folktales. Students are prepared for initial research involving interaction with speakers of isiZulu in South Africa, and for the study of oral and literary genres. Prerequisite: ZULU 630.

ZULU 650a, Advanced isiZulu I  Nandipa Sipengane
Development of fluency in using idioms, speaking about abstract concepts, and voicing preferences and opinions. Excerpts are drawn from oral genres, short stories, and dramas made for television. Introduction to other South African languages and to issues of standardization, dialect, and language attitude. Prerequisite: ZULU 640.

ZULU 660b, Advanced isiZulu II  Nandipa Sipengane
Readings may include short stories, a novel, praise poetry, historical texts, or contemporary political speeches, depending on student interests. Study of issues of language policy and use in contemporary South Africa; introduction to the Soweto dialect of isiZulu. Students are prepared for extended research in South Africa involving interviews with isiZulu speakers. Prerequisite: ZULU 650.