

# AFRICAN STUDIES

Council on African Studies  
 The MacMillan Center  
 137 Rosenkranz 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*), Jill Jarvis (*French*), Kaveh Khoshnood (*Epidemiology*), Louisa Lombard (*Anthropology*), Urania Magriples (*Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences*), Meleko Mokgosi (*School of Art*), LaRon Nelson (*Nursing*), Sunil Parikh (*Public Health; Internal Medicine*), Carla Staver (*Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*), Jonathan Wyrzten (*Sociology*)

**Assistant Professors** Amy Bei (*Epidemiology*), Lauren Berquist (*Economics*), Nicholas R. Jones (*Spanish*), Benedito Machava (*History*), Hani Mowafi (*Emergency Medicine*), Kyama Mugambi (*Divinity*), Nontsikelelo Mutiti (*School of Art*), Oluwatosin Onibokun (*Obstetrics, Gynecology, and Reproductive Sciences*), Nana Osei Quarshie (*History*), Tracy Rabin (*Internal Medicine*), Jeremy Schwartz (*Internal Medicine*), Sheela Shenoit (*Internal Medicine*), Carla Staver (*Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*), Jessica Thompson (*Anthropology*)

**Lecturers** Adalgisa Caccone (*Ecology and Evolutionary Biology*), Lacina Coulibaly (*Theater and Performance Studies*), Leslie Gross-Wyrzten (*African Studies*), 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 and Civilizations*), Matuku Ngame (*French*), Nandipa Sipengane (*isiZulu*), Kiarie Wa'Njogu (*Swahili*)

## 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, 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 900) during which students will complete the required thesis; with permission of the DGS, AFST 951 may be substituted for AFST 590. 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: Kiswahili (eastern and central Africa), Wolof (through a consortium agreement with Columbia University), Yorùbá (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 565a / ANTH 512a, Infrastructures of Empire: Control and (In)security in the Global South** Leslie Gross-Wyrtzen

This advanced seminar examines the role that infrastructure plays in producing uneven geographies of power historically and in the "colonial present" (Gregory, 2006). After defining terms and exploring the ways that infrastructure has been conceptualized and studied, we analyze how different types of infrastructure (energy, roads, people, and so on) constitute the material and social world of empire. At the same time, infrastructure is not an uncontested arena: it often serves as a key site of political struggle or even enters the fray as an unruly actor itself, thus conditioning possibilities for anti-imperial

and decolonial practice. The geographic focus of this course is the African continent, but we explore comparative cases in other regions of the majority and minority world.

**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 688a, Anthropology of Education** Staff

This course explores how the insights and concepts of social anthropology contribute to improved understanding of educational theory and practice in multicultural settings. The course draws on ethnographic approaches to provide students with a comprehensive understanding of the intricate relationship between personhood, learning, and the centrality of culture within various educational contexts in sub-Saharan Africa. It illustrates the realities of what it means to be growing up and living in multicultural and multilingual African nations. Students are encouraged to think critically about the potential benefits and challenges of applying the discourses, models, and systems of Western education as a means of “development.” Assigned readings will help critically examine traditional categories such as “gender,” “class,” “race,” “kinship,” “religion,” and “nation.” Class discussions acknowledge the intricate interplay of these categories in the context of contemporary experiences of migration. By end of the course, students develop a deeper understanding of the complex dynamics shaping educational systems and intercultural relations in Africa and beyond. Ultimate aim is to equip students with the confidence and cultural sensitivity necessary for making informed comparisons of teaching and learning practices within a global context.

**AFST 836b / HIST 836b, Histories of Postcolonial Africa: Themes, Genres, and the Contingencies of Archival Research** 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, detention, violence, environment and technology, women and gender, affect, fashion, leisure, and popular culture.

**AFST 839b / HIST 839b, 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 889a / CPLT 889a / ENGL 889a, Postcolonial Ecologies** Cajetan Iheka

This seminar examines the intersections of postcolonialism and ecocriticism as well as the tensions between these conceptual nodes, with readings drawn from across the global South. Topics of discussion include colonialism, development, resource extraction, globalization, ecological degradation, nonhuman agency, and indigenous cosmologies. The course is concerned with the narrative strategies affording the illumination of environmental ideas. We begin by engaging with the questions of postcolonial and world literature and return to these throughout the semester as we read primary texts, drawn from Africa, the Caribbean, and Asia. We consider African ecologies in their complexity from colonial through post-colonial times. In the unit on the Caribbean, we take up the transformations of the landscape from slavery, through colonialism, and the contemporary era. Turning to Asian spaces, the seminar explores changes brought about by modernity and globalization as well as the effects on both humans and nonhumans. Readings include the writings of Zakes Mda, Aminatta Forna, Helon Habila, Derek Walcott, Jamaica Kincaid, Ishimure Michiko, and Amitav Ghosh. The course prepares students to respond to key issues in postcolonial ecocriticism and the environmental humanities, analyze the work of the major thinkers in the fields, and examine literary texts and other cultural productions from a postcolonial perspective. Course participants have the option of selecting from a variety of final projects. Students can craft an original essay that analyzes primary text from a postcolonial and/or ecocritical perspective. Such work should aim at producing new insight on a theoretical concept and/or the cultural text. They can also produce an undergraduate syllabus for a course at the intersection of postcolonialism and environmentalism or write a review essay discussing three recent monographs focused on postcolonial ecocriticism.

**AFST 937b / AFAM 850b / ENGL 6137b, African Urban Cultures: Mediations of the City** Stephanie Newell

This course approaches the study of African cities and urbanization through the medium of diverse texts, including fiction, nonfiction, popular culture, film, and the arts, as well as scholarly work on African cities. Through these cultural “texts,” attention is given to everyday conceptualizations of the body and the environment, as well as to theoretical engagements with the African city. We study urban relationships as depicted in literature and popular media in relation to Africa's long history of intercultural encounters, including materials dating back to the 1880s and the 1930s. Previously ENGL 937.

**AFST 969a / CPLT 985a / FREN 969a, Islands, Oceans, Deserts** Jill Jarvis

This seminar brings together literary and theoretical works that chart planetary relations and connections beyond the paradigm of francophonie. Comparative focus on the poetics and politics of spaces shaped by intersecting routes of colonization and forced migrations: islands (Sri Lanka, Mauritius, Martinique), oceans (Indian, Mediterranean, Atlantic), and deserts (Sahara, Sonoran). Prerequisite: reading knowledge of French; knowledge of Arabic and Spanish invited. Conducted in English.

**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 640a, Intermediate Kiswahili II** Veronica Waweru

Continuation of SWAH 630.

**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 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 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 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 680a, Advanced Topics in Yorùbá Literature and Culture** Oluseye Adesola

A course for students with advanced proficiency in Yorùbá who are interested in discussion and research in Yorùbá at a level not covered by existing courses. A term paper or its equivalent is required.

**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 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 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.