

Postcolonial Africa class: History and Philosophy

This course is an introduction to the postcolonial history and theory of Africa, with a specific emphasis on Ghana (as a way of focusing our work). The course is founded on the methodological claim that multiple perspectives and approaches are essential for understanding the events and processes of colonialism and its aftermath, and these two disciplines have for too long worked in near isolation of each other. The course is also founded on two substantive beliefs. One is the belief that the single most important set of questions to investigate in Africa is the understanding of how and why the history of slavery and the slave trade is important to understanding present development. The second is that using the example of Ghana, the course will demonstrate that the era of populist and progressive politics in Africa ushered in the era of independence, which was immediately confronted by unmet promises. The history of colonialism has not only had an impact on former colonies, however; a less visible impact is lived out in the nations of what used to be called the First World. Because most of our students belong to that World, this course is intended to introduce them to the legacy of colonialism and how it still conditions our thinking and our practices.

Student Outcomes

1. Students will gain an introduction to the historical heritage of Ghana, particularly Akan, philosophy and history.
2. Students will gain an introduction to the colonial legacy in Ghana and some of the development problems that Ghana has confronted.
3. Students will analyze the continuing impact of colonial systems, both in Ghana and in the United States.
4. Writing assignments will demand that students learn to perceive, create and/or use criteria to assess the reasonableness, acceptability, or quality of academic sources and arguments, in others= scholarship and their own.

Requirements

1. 8-10 page research paper, due May 15th (tentatively)
2. Travel journal B at least five one-page entries including the student=s reflections on his or her specific experiences during the trip. This will also be due on May 15th.

Texts

Eze, Emmanuel Chukwundi (ed). *African Philosophy: An Anthology*. Malden, Mass.: Blackwell, 1998.

Course packet.

Lectures and Itinerary

late February (pre-departure lecture 1)

Introduction to the history of colonial Africa
History of independence movements

early March (pre-departure lecture 2)

Introduction to postcolonial theory

Douglass, AThe Nature of Slavery@ (AP 375-78)

Said, Introduction to *Orientalism*

Fanon, excerpts from *Black Skin, White Masks* and *The Wretched of the Earth* (AP 228-33)

early March (pre-departure lecture 3)

Orientation: travel, safety, health, schedule

March 15

Leave from Seattle for Accra

Begin reading for history section

March 16

Arrive in Accra (evening)

Continue reading for history section

March 17: Accra

Lecture: History of Ghana

Reading: Kevin Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 374-7

Kwame Anthony Appiah, *In My Father=s House: Africa in the Philosophy of Culture*, Chapter One

Jean Allman and Victoria Tashjian, *AI Will Not Eat Stone@: A Woman=s History of Colonial Asante*, pp. ix-xvi.

March 18: Accra

Lecture: Ghana, Development after independence

Reading: Shillington, *History of Africa*, pp. 412-3

Kwame Nkrumah, *Neo-Colonialism, The Last Stage of Imperialism*, introduction

Field study: National Museum, Independence Square

March 19: Accra

Lecture: Ghana, Contemporary trends (guest lecturer: Abdulai Iddrisu)

Reading: Adu Bohen, *The Ghanaian Sphinx: Reflections on the Contemporary History of Ghana*, pp. 1-8

Additional reading to be announced

Field study: Makola or Kaneshie market

March 20: Accra

Lecture: Ghanaian culture

Reading: Begin reading for African philosophy section

Field study: Arts Centre

March 21: Accra

Lecture: African Philosophy: Introduction

Reading: Omoregbe, AAfrican Philosophy: Yesterday and Today@ (AP 3-8)

Serequeberhan, APhilosophy and Postcolonial Africa@ (AP 9-22)

Outlaw, AAfrican, African American, Africana Philosophy@ (AP 23-42)

Field study: WEB Du Bois Memorial Center for Pan-African Culture

March 22: Accra/Cape Coast

Lecture: Philosophy and Colonial Encounter

Reading: Eze, AModern Western Philosophy and African Colonialism@ (AP 213-21)
Cesaire, ADiscourse on Colonialism@ (AP 222-27)

Field study: Cape Coast Castle

March 23: Cape Coast/Elmina

Lecture: Philosophy and Colonial Encounter

Reading: Serequeberhan, AColonialism and the Colonized@ (AP 234-54)
Okonkwo, ACultural Nationalism in the Colonial Period@ (AP 255-59)
Cabral, ANational Liberation and Culture@ (AP 260-66)

March 24: Elmina

Lecture: Philosophy and Race

Reading: Du Bois, AThe Conservation of Races@ (AP 269-74)
Appiah, AThe Illusions of Race@ (AP 275-90)
Lott, ADu Bois on the Invention of Race@ (AP 291-304)
Bell, ALiberation and Postcolonial African Philosophy@

Field Study: Elmina Castle

March 25: Elmina/Accra

Leave for Seattle

March 26:

Arrive in Seattle