

## 8:157 TOPICS IN AFRICAN CINEMA: VISUALIZING HUMAN RIGHTS

INSTRUCTOR: MARIE KRÜGER

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TIME: W 6:30 – 9:00 PM

in E 146 AJB

OFFICE HOURS: M 12:30 – 1:30 PM; W 4:00 – 6:00 PM and by appointment

in OFFICE: 370 EPB

PHONE: 335-3121

The discussion of human rights has been a prevalent topic in contemporary African film and literature. Freedom of expression, equal access to health care and educational opportunities, and the equitable distribution of land and food are some of the recurrent themes in the cinematic and literary representations of Africa. However, any debate of human rights will need to consider that concepts such as ‘freedom,’ ‘equality’ and ‘justice’ which inform the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (1948) also carry culture-specific meanings. In discussing African films we will examine how being human and the rights and responsibilities accorded to human beings are shaped by various cultural and historical contexts.

The class is organized into three related topics that explore 1) colonialism and the right to self-representation; 2) race relations and politics in South Africa; and 3) the AIDS pandemic and public health. To what extent have African films provided alternative representations of African history and cultures that reject the often derogatory portrayals of the continent propagated by European colonialism? What are the notions of ‘forgiveness’ and ‘reconciliation’ that guided the work of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in post-apartheid South Africa, and how has the transition to democracy been presented in South African films and literature? And finally, how do culture-specific concepts of gender, sexuality and health influence representations of HIV/AIDS in African film and literature?

### FILMS (Films are available at Media Services, Main Library):

*Matamata and Pilipili*. Belgium 1996.

*Africa, I will fleece you*. Cameroon 1992.

*Lumumba: The death of a prophet*. France/Switzerland/Germany 1992.

*Lumumba*. Belgium/France/Haiti/Germany 2001.

*A Walk in the Night*. South Africa 1998.

*Long Night's Journey into Day*. South Africa 2003.

*Zulu Love Letter*. South Africa 2004.

*State of Denial*. South Africa/US 2003.

*Everyone's Child*. Zimbabwe 1996.

*Yesterday*. South Africa 2004.

### TEXTS (available at University Bookstore):

Ferdinand Oyono. *Houseboy*. Portsmouth, NH 1966.

Alex la Guma. *A Walk in the Night and other stories*. Evanston, IL 1968.

Antjie Krog. *Country of my Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*. New York 1998.

Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *A Human Being Died that Night: A South African Woman Confronts the Legacy of Apartheid*. Boston, MA 2003.

(recommended) Adam Hochschild. *King Leopold's Ghost: A Story of Greed, Terror and Heroism in Colonial Africa*. Boston, MA 1999.

### Other Readings available on ICON.

**\*\*\*\* In this class we will be discussing some politically and emotionally charged issues [race; sexuality; colonialism; imperialism, etc.]. I encourage you to share your opinions on these topics, and to respectfully listen to and discuss the perspectives that other students express in class. \*\*\*\***

#### COURSE REQUIREMENTS AND EVALUATION POLICY:

Course requirements include regular attendance and active participation, four short papers (2 pages), one longer paper (5 – 7 pages), and a film review. Students will be expected to work in groups occasionally and to lead a final discussion (**May 6**) on one of the films discussed in class. In addition, students will be asked to bring to each class written responses to the readings. Occasionally during the semester I will collect these notes which will contribute to your participation grade for the course. Handwritten notes are acceptable.

#### ATTENDANCE, PARTICIPATION, AND ORAL PRESENTATION (30 %):

Regular attendance is a mandatory requirement for this course. Please be on time for each class and turn off your cell phone while in class. 30 % of your grade is based on participation; therefore, it is in your interest to contribute to every class as an active writer and discussant.

Up to two absences will be excused. **More than two absences will negatively affect your grade by ½ a grade for every class missed.** In case of emergency or serious illness, please contact me as soon as possible.

#### POSITION PAPERS (4 @ 10 % each = 40 %); FILM REVIEW (5 %):

You are required to submit four position papers of 2 pages (double-spaced). These papers will help you to improve your writing and critical skills and to engage with the theoretical issues we will be discussing this semester. In addition, a **film review** of *Africa, I will fleece you* is due on **Wednesday, February 18**.

- 1) First position paper: due on **Wednesday, February 25**. Discuss the representation of colonial and postcolonial history in *Africa, I will fleece you* and *Lumumba*. What relationship do these films establish between the colonial intervention and the postcolonial experience?
- 2) Second position paper: due on **Wednesday, March 11**. Discuss the representation of apartheid and its legacies in the novel and the film *A Walk in the Night*. How does the daily experience of violence and discrimination affect the main characters and their moral conditioning (=their sense of right and wrong)?
- 3) Third position paper: due on **Wednesday, April 8**. Discuss the films and texts from weeks 9 and 10: How do these works represent the trauma of apartheid and the possibility of forgiveness and reconciliation?
- 4) Fourth position paper: due on **Wednesday, April 22**. Discuss the films and texts from weeks 11 and 12: How do culture-specific concepts of gender, sexuality and health influence representations of AIDS in African film and literature?

Please bring your papers to class, or deposit them in my office mailbox (370 EPB) or in my departmental mailbox (310 EPB = Zimansky reading room). I will not accept late papers.

#### FINAL PAPER (25 %):

In your final paper (5 – 7 pages; double – spaced) you will discuss two of the films from this semester with reference to the issues addressed in class. Please make sure that your arguments are supported by appropriate quotes from the films. In addition to reading the critical articles and books listed with each film on the syllabus, I expect you to do secondary research in the library on the films you are writing on. Your paper should include a bibliography of all articles you have consulted (See the *MLA Handbook* for details on citation).

I encourage you to start thinking early on about the topics you would like to address in your final paper. In your paper you must demonstrate that you are able to engage with the theoretical issues discussed in class and apply them to your analysis of the films and texts. You will be required to meet with me at least once to discuss the topic you have chosen for your paper. Final papers are due on **Wednesday, May 6 in class.**

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**WEEK 1: JANUARY 21**  
**INTRODUCTION TO THE COURSE**

**\*\*\*\* Please note that you are required to watch most of the films outside of class at Media Services, Main Library \*\*\*\***

**WEEKS 2 - 6**  
**COLONIALISM, INDEPENDENCE AND REPRESENTATION**

**WEEK 2: JANUARY 28**

**EUROPEAN IMAGES OF AFRICA**

Readings: Patrick Brantlinger. "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent." Gates, Henry Louis Jr. "Race," *Writing and Difference*. 1985. 185 – 222.

Jan Nederveen Pieterse. "Savages, Animals, Heathens, Races." *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture*. 1992. 30 – 51.

Binyavanga Wainaina. "How to Write About Africa." Special Issue on *The View from Africa*. *Granata* 92 (Winter 2005): 91 – 95.

**WEEK 3: FEBRUARY 4**

**THE STEREOTYPE OF THE "LAZY NATIVE:"** *Matamata and Pilipili*. Belgium 1996.

Readings: Ferdinand Oyono. *Houseboy*.

Film description at [http://icarusfilms.com/new97/matamata\\_.html](http://icarusfilms.com/new97/matamata_.html)

**WEEK 4: FEBRUARY 11**

**CAMEROON - HISTORY FROM "THE PERSPECTIVE OF THE NATIVE:"**

*Africa, I will fleece you [Afrique je te plumerai.]* Cameroon 1992.

Readings: Melissa Thackway. "Memory, History: Other Stories." 93 – 109.

Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org> [*Africa, I will fleece you*]

**WEEK 5: FEBRUARY 18**

**\*\* PLEASE NOTE EXTENDED CLASS TIME [9:30 PM] TO ACCOMMODATE THE LENGTH OF THE FEATURE FILM \*\***

**THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO - THE STRUGGLE FOR INDEPENDENCE:**

*Lumumba*. 2001.

Reading: Ludo de Witte. "Preparing the Gallows." *The Assassination of Lumumba*. 1 – 26.

Watch the documentary *Lumumba: The death of a prophet*. 1992.

Film reviews at <http://www.hartford-hwp.com/archives/35/287.html>

<http://www.webster.edu/~corbetre/haiti-archive/msg06464.html>

**\*\*\*\*\* Film Review due of *Africa, I will Fleece you* \*\*\*\*\***

**WEEK 6: FEBRUARY 25**

**DISCUSSION** of *Africa, I will fleece you* and the films on Patrice Lumumba (feature film and documentary).

Reading: Ludo de Witte. *The Assassination of Lumumba*. 46 – 124.

David Moore. “Raoul Peck’s Lumumba: history or hagiography?” Bickford-Smith, V. and R. Mendelsohn, eds. *Black and White in Colour*. London 2007. 223 - 239.

\*\*\*\*\* 1<sup>st</sup> Position Paper due \*\*\*\*\*

**WEEKS 7 – 10**

**APARTHEID, RACISM AND FORGIVENESS**

**WEEK 7: MARCH 4**

**SOUTH AFRICA DURING AND AFTER APARTHEID:**

*A Walk in the Night*. South Africa 1998.

Readings: Alex la Guma. *A Walk in the Night*.

Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org/> [*A Walk in the Night*]

**WEEK 8: MARCH 11**

**DISCUSSION** of the film and the novel *A Walk in the Night*.

Reading: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *A Human Being Died that Night*. [1 – 47].

\*\*\*\*\* 2<sup>nd</sup> Position Paper due \*\*\*\*\*

**WEEK 9: MARCH 25**

**FORGIVENESS AND RECONCILIATION:**

*Long Night’s Journey into Day*. South Africa 2003.

Readings: Pumla Gobodo-Madikizela. *A Human Being Died that Night*. [48 – 148].

Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org/> [*Long Night’s Journey into Day*]

**WEEK 10: APRIL 1**

**THE TRAUMA OF APARTHEID:** *Zulu Love Letter*. South Africa 2004.

Readings: Antjie Krog. *Country of my Skull: Guilt, Sorrow, and the Limits of Forgiveness in the New South Africa*. 1998. [1 – 66; 103 – 127; 142 – 175]

Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org/> [*Zulu Love Letter*]

**WEEKS 11 - 14**

**AIDS – DENIAL, STEREOTYPE AND PREJUDICE**

**WEEK 11 – APRIL 8**

**CHILDREN’S RIGHTS AND AIDS:** *Everyone’s Child*. Zimbabwe 1996.

Reading: Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org/> [*Everyone’s Child*]

\*\*\*\*\* 3<sup>rd</sup> Position Paper due \*\*\*\*\*

**WEEK 12 – APRIL 15**

**OFFICIAL RESPONSES TO THE AIDS PANDEMIC:** *State of Denial*. South Africa/US 2003.

Readings: Film description at <http://www.newsreel.org/> [*State of Denial*]

Howard Phillips, “HIV/AIDS in the Context of South Africa’s Epidemic History.”

Kauffman, Kyle D. and David L. Lindauer, eds. *AIDS and South Africa: The Social Expression of a Pandemic*. New York, NY 2004.

**WEEK 13 – APRIL 22**

**DISCUSSION** of *Everyone’s Child* and *State of Denial*.

Readings: Short stories from *Nobody Ever Said AIDS: Stories and Poems from Southern Africa*. 2004.

\*\*\*\*\* 4<sup>th</sup> Position Paper due \*\*\*\*\*

**WEEK 14 – APRIL 29**

**WOMEN’S RIGHTS AND AIDS:** *Yesterday*. South Africa 2004.

Reading: Film summary at <http://www.yesterdaythemovie.co.za>

Assignment: Work on group presentations and final paper

**WEEK 15 – MAY 6**

Group presentations – Final discussion

\*\*\*\*\* Final Paper due \*\*\*\*\*

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**THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS AND SCIENCES**

**POLICIES AND PROCEDURES**

**Administrative Home**

The College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is the administrative home of this course and governs matters such as the add/drop deadlines, the second-grade-only option, and other related issues. Different colleges may have different policies. Questions may be addressed to 120 Schaeffer Hall or see the CLAS *Student Academic Handbook* [[www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic\\_handbook/index.shtml](http://www.clas.uiowa.edu/students/academic_handbook/index.shtml)].

**Academic Fraud**

Plagiarism and any other activities when students present work that is not their own are academic fraud. Academic fraud is a serious matter and is reported to the departmental DEO and to the Associate Dean for Undergraduate Programs and Curriculum. Instructors and DEOs decide on appropriate consequences at the departmental level while the Associate Dean enforces additional consequences at the collegiate level. See the CLAS *Student Academic Handbook*.

**Making a Suggestion or a Complaint**

Students with a suggestion or complaint should first visit the instructor, then the course

supervisor, and then the departmental DEO. Complaints must be made within six months of the incident. See the CLAS [Student Academic Handbook](#).

### **Accommodations for Disabilities**

A student seeking academic accommodations should first register with Student Disability Services and then meet privately with the course instructor to make particular arrangements. See [www.uiowa.edu/~sds/](http://www.uiowa.edu/~sds/) for more information.

### **Understanding Sexual Harassment**

Sexual harassment subverts the mission of the University and threatens the well-being of students, faculty, and staff. All members of the UI community have a responsibility to uphold this mission and to contribute to a safe environment that enhances learning. Incidents of sexual harassment should be reported immediately. See the UI [Comprehensive Guide on Sexual Harassment](http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html) at [www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html](http://www.uiowa.edu/~eod/policies/sexual-harassment-guide/index.html) for assistance, definitions, and the full University policy.

### **Reacting Safely to Severe Weather**

In severe weather, class members should seek appropriate shelter immediately, leaving the classroom if necessary. The class will continue if possible when the event is over. (*Operations Manual*, **Part IV**, 16. See items e, h, and i.)

### **Homework Expectation**

For each semester hour of credit that an English Department course carries, students should expect to spend approximately two hours per week outside of class preparing for class sessions. That is, in a three-credit-hour course, instructors design course assignments on the assumption that students will spend six hours per week in out-of-class preparation.

### **Student Classroom Behavior**

The ability to learn is lessened when students engage in inappropriate classroom behavior, distracting others; such behaviors are a violation of the **Code of Student Life**. When disruptive activity occurs, a University instructor has the authority to determine classroom seating patterns and to request that a student exit immediately for the remainder of the period. One-day suspensions are reported to appropriate departmental, collegiate, and Student Services personnel (Office of the Vice President for **Student Services** and Dean of Students).

### **RESOURCES:**

- **Writing Center** 110 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0188, [www.uiowa.edu/~writingc](http://www.uiowa.edu/~writingc)
- **Speaking Center** 12 English-Philosophy Building, 335-0205, [www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking](http://www.uiowa.edu/~rhetoric/centers/speaking)
- **Tutor Referral Service** Campus Information Center, Iowa Memorial Union, 335-3055, [www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor\\_referral\\_service](http://www.imu.uiowa.edu/cic/tutor_referral_service)