

SOCI 4434 – Emerging Social Issues in Africa

KSU SUMMER STUDY ABROAD: June 30 –July 24, 2015

Director/Course Instructor: Sam Abaidoo, Ph.D.

Meetings: M/W 8:30 – 11:00 am

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Brief Course Description

This course is intended to provide a sociological background for critical analysis of social issues in contemporary Africa, especially sub-Saharan. The focus will begin with a contextualization of emerging social issues within the sociopolitical history of Africa, including an examination of the effects of global realignments, slavery, colonialism, imperialism and post-colonial military adventurism. Attention will be paid to the multiple roles of social movements, resistance, and alternative consciousnesses that emerged during the immediate pre-colonial era. This will include an examination of Pan-Africanism and anti-colonial nationalisms. These will be followed by a critical engagement of contemporary social issues, problems and trend in Africa, all of which will be cast against the preceding sociopolitical and historical background. Relevant learning will not only occur in the classroom but during several field trips.

Course Strategies

This course will involve assigned readings by the students and *critical discussions* in the classroom during the study abroad period. Participation in class discussions is expected. Students would be expected to come to class with discussion points and questions ready for discussions.

There will be several field visits to centers of learning, such as the DuBois Center, museums, palace, and slave castles. During these educational visits students will be expected to engage in sociological observations, ask questions, interact and learn from instructor and staff of sites visited. Students will also discuss their observations with host families and include those in their written reflections.

Course Goals

1. To help students gain an appreciation of the nature of emerging social issues in Africa.
2. To provide a deep socio-historical framework in which these issues can better be contextualized and understood.
3. To provide students with an understanding of the relative roles of endogenous and exogenous factors, as well as the interplay of these two factors, in shaping these social issues. This will include extensive consideration of the role of long-term and more recent African Diaspora.
4. To help students understand some of the discernible implications and impacts of the social issues for the future of Africa and African peoples.
5. To guide students in a critical examination of the nature and efficacy of emerging responses and remedies to the identified social issues.

Texts

Walter Rodney. 1982 [1972] How Europe Underdeveloped Africa, Washington, D.C.: Howard University Press.

Asamoah, Ansa, 2001. On Social Change in Sub-Saharan Africa: A Guide to the Study of the Process of Social Transformation, Accra: CAF Publication Services

Recommended

W.E.B DuBois 1979. The World and Africa Inquiry Into the Part Which Africa Has Played in World History, International Publishers Co.

Assignment

Personal Observation, Reflection and Analyses Folders

During the study abroad, students will **observe and document** social patterns, practices, and manifestations of social issues discussed in class. Students should write brief **reflection comments** on the observations they make. These reflections need to be informed by informal interviews with key informants in the community, including students' host families. The informal interviews/inquires will help students put their observations in broader contexts.

Students' observations should also draw from different media such as print-news, television and African movies that they can access on television and/or from their homes. The media-based observations in particular can be good subjects for students' **analyses**. Students will share selections from their findings/observations with the class on a regular basis (in class and/or during field trips). Towards the end of the study abroad period the folders/portfolios containing the observations, associated reflections and analyses will be handed in, with the student's name printed on the index tab (it will be easier to get your empty folder ready before the study abroad begins).

The personal observations part of the portfolio will consist of documenting statements, experiences, comments, conversations about Africa that students participate in, experience or witness during the study abroad. The observations will therefore be both participant and non-participant in nature. Students will write brief descriptions of such observations, what happened and how, including any other relevant information, and what response (if any) the student had to these events. Students are asked to share in class and on field trips only the observations and reflections they feel comfortable sharing. Again, students should record whatever relevant citation material they can for these observations, including place, time, date, circumstances, and then place them in the folder.

Students should include in the folder a brief overall **analysis** of the materials they have collected and/or the observations they have recorded. The analysis of all the collections/observations will not exceed 4 pages. **Students should properly document their recorded observations** [publication name, date, page number, movie title, television program title, date, time etc.]

To recap there will be three parts to the folders to be submitted. These are observations; reflections and summative or overall analyses.

This assignment will be discussed further during pre-departure orientation and also in class. Folders should be letter [A4] size, color does not matter.

Reading Presentations

Each student will be asked to present a very short summary and commentary on one of the chapters or a portion of a reading, one time during the study abroad. Presentations should highlight main points in the reading, students' understanding of the readings and the theories it contained or which are applicable, and finish with several short questions for us to consider as basis for class discussion. These presentations will be short, between ten-fifteen minutes in length.

Attendance Policy

Attendance in all classes is required and will be excused only in serious, documented circumstances. Students should come to class prepared to transform their reading and analysis into critical discussion.

Participation Requirement

It is required that students participate in the discussions each week. The format of the course is based upon short lectures and guided weekly discussion themes. The bulk of our time will be spent in discussion of the readings and relevant social issues. **10%** of final grade will be determined by class participation as a partial measure of individual work on the readings. A good idea is to generate a list of questions, during and after reading the week's assignments, about anything that comes to mind relative to the readings, so that in class you will have questions ready to enter the discussion with.

Fieldtrip Engagement – Another aspect of participation will be how well and often students engage in educational interactions during fieldtrips. This could be in the form of students sharing/discussing new observations, reflecting on readings, cultural adjustments and what is being learnt in the process. This activity will involve both spontaneous and intentional engagement. **10%** of the final grade will be determined by this activity. The study abroad director will give periodic feedback to students on this activity.

Students needing any particular considerations in this regard (reasons they feel that they cannot participate) should bring these to the instructor's attention near the beginning of the study abroad. Reasonable concerns will be considered, but otherwise, all students will be asked to make to participate.

Grading

Two Levels of Participation	20%
Documented Personal <i>Observations, Reflections</i> and Analyses	50%
Class Presentations	30%

A: 90 – 100%	B: 80 – 89%	C: 70 – 79%	D: 60 – 69%	F: 59% or less
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WEEKLY READING AND DISCUSSION SCHEDULE

Lecture Outline: (This outline may be altered to accommodate contingencies)

Pre-departure

Overview and Introduction: **The Social History of Africa and the Nature of Pre-Colonial African Social Systems**

- Walter Rodney pp. 31-82.
- Ansa Asamoah: chapters 1&2

Week 1

Africa in the World Economic System, Colonialism and the Problem of Development

- Walter Rodney pp. 82-281
- Ansa Asamoah, chap. 3&4

Week 2

Transitions: Colonial to Post-Colonial Era, Neo-Colonialism, Post-Colonial Practices and their Consequences

- Ansa Asamoah, chap. 5-6

Week 3

Emerging Social Issues, Future Patterns and Implications of Change in Africa

- Ansa Asamoah, chap. 7

KSU Academic Integrity – Plagiarism and Cheating Statement

“No student shall receive, attempt to receive, knowingly give or attempt to give unauthorized assistance in the preparation of any work required to be submitted for credit (including examinations, laboratory reports, essays, themes, term papers, etc.). Unless specifically authorized, the presence and/or use of electronic devices during an examination, quiz, or other class assignment is considered cheating. Engaging in any behavior which a professor prohibits as academic misconduct in the syllabus or in class discussion is cheating. When direct quotations are used, they should be indicated, and when the ideas, theories, data, figures, graphs, programs, electronic based information or illustrations of someone other than the student are incorporated into a paper or used in a project, they should be duly acknowledged. No student may submit the same, or substantially the same, paper or other assignment for credit in more than one class without the prior permission of the current professor(s)” (KSU Department of Student Conduct and Academic Integrity).

KSU Attendance Policy

Attendance in classes, laboratories and lectures is important. All students are expected to attend these activities in accordance with their schedule of courses. The instructor determines the attendance policy for each course. All instructors will provide the students, at the beginning of each semester, a clear statement regarding their policies in handling absences. Instructors will also be responsible for counseling their students regarding the academic consequences of absences.

Students must not be absent from announced quizzes, laboratory periods or final examinations unless the reasons for the absences are acceptable to the instructors concerned. Students should also understand that they are responsible for all material covered during their absences and that they are responsible for the academic consequences of the absences. Students who are absent because of their participation in university-approved activities such as field trips and extracurricular events will be permitted to make up the work missed during their absences.