

HIS-399-01 / INS-333-04 Images of Africa in Film
Spring 2004 - Tuesday evenings, 6 - 8 PM and Thursday evenings, 6 - 8:50 PM
Room 225, Curry Building

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Office Hours: 11 AM to 12 noon, T & Th
and by appointment
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Course objectives: This course examines the ways Africa and Africans have been portrayed in a variety of film genres. We will be especially concerned with issues of *content* – that is, messages conveyed in film about Africa and Africans – although we will have to familiarize ourselves with film as a medium in order to learn *how* those messages are conveyed and how to decode them. In other words, this is a course primarily about Africa and African history and it is an extended exercise in critical thinking. We will look at stereotypes about Africa in film, where those stereotypes have come from, how and in what forms they persist over time, and responses to those stereotypes by politically aware and engaged filmmakers. Much of this course will therefore serve as an introduction to the vibrant worlds of Third Cinema, Black Independent Film, and African Cinema.

Student Learning Goals – At the completion of this course, the student should be able to:

- Demonstrate an awareness of common stereotypes about Africa and an ability to critique them;
- Demonstrate an understanding of the historical origins of Black Independent Film and African Cinema;
- Appreciate the historical and political dimensions of film studies.

Course requirements: Analytical paper (10-12 pp.), 40% of final grade; short writing assignments, 40% of final grade; class attendance and participation in discussions and group work, 20% of final grade.

*****ATTENDANCE POLICY: This course consists of discussion meetings (Tuesday evenings) and screenings of films (Thursday evenings). It is therefore essential that students attend class regularly, promptly, and prepared for class viewings and discussions. A student who has more than three unexcused absences, or who fails to complete short writing assignments and in-class presentations, risks being dropped from the course. Late papers will be penalized; cell phones and pagers must be turned off.

Required readings and viewings:

There is no textbook that covers all the issues and films we will be investigating.

Required readings and viewings are listed under each class meeting; readings are available online and in the reserves section of Jackson Library. Most (but not all) of the films are from the video collection in the Teaching and Learning Center, McNutt Building.

Students are to come to class with two copies of a position paper on at least one of the readings for that evening. One copy will be handed in, the other will be used in class.