

HIS-581-01 African History Special Topics: Images of Africa in Print Media and Film
Spring 2008 - T/Th 3:30 - 4:45 pm, 1209 MHRA Building

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Office Hours: 11 AM to 12 noon, T & W
and by appointment

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Course objectives: This course examines the ways Africa and Africans have been portrayed in a variety of print media and film genres. We will be especially concerned with issues of *content* – that is, messages that are conveyed about Africa and Africans – although we will have to familiarize ourselves with print and film as media 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 print and 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 journalists, scholars, and filmmakers.

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

- Identify, describe, and analyze common stereotypes Americans have about Africa and/or African people;
- Compile a dataset of information from print or film media and subject it to critique in writing;
- Explain the historical and political dimensions of media studies.

Graduate Student Learning Goals – In addition to the above learning goals, at the completion of this course, graduate students should be able to:

- Summarize and evaluate major theoretical approaches to the analysis of print media and/or film in historical studies.

Course requirements for undergraduate students: 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.

Course requirements for graduate students: Analytical paper (18-20 pp.), 40% of final grade; short writing assignments and class presentation, 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, so it is therefore essential that students attend class regularly and promptly, and they must be well prepared. 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 or may receive an 'F' for attendance/participation. Late papers will be penalized; all electronic devices must be turned off.