

HIS 581-01 Images of Africa in Film
Dr. Colleen Kriger
2107 MHRA Building
Telephone: 334-5205 (office); 334 5992 (History Department)

SPR 2012 - Thursdays 6:30-9:20 pm, 1214 MHRA
Office Hours: 11 am-12 noon, Tuesdays and Wednesdays
and by appointment

Course Objectives: In this course we analyze the multiple mappings of race, gender, class, and sexuality in contemporary Francophone Cinema, and discuss the ongoing flows between Francophone African countries and France. Along the way, we will examine the historical intricacies of Africa's pre-colonial and colonial eras, struggles for independence, and the legacies of these histories in the current post-colonial period. We will focus on the ways in which Africa and Africans have been portrayed in a variety of film genres, and so we will be especially concerned with issues of *content* – that is, messages conveyed in film about Africa and Africans – and the ways in which those messages are conveyed in order to decode them. We look at stereotypes about Africa in film, where those stereotypes have come from, in what forms they persist over time, and responses to them by politically aware and engaged filmmakers. We will therefore identify historical, social, economic, political, and cultural forces at play both in the productions of the films and in the content. What are the challenges of imagining Africa on its own terms and not in relation to the west, especially the former colonial power? How are interactions with the West negotiated? Finally, we will consider how some films and their circulation may change perceptions of Africa both from within and outside the continent.

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;
- Describe and critically analyze scenes or segments of films;
- 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 the graduate student should be able to:

- Present to undergraduate students a clear, formal summary of a published critical analysis of a film.

Course requirements for undergraduate students: Weekly Position Papers (based on readings, ½ - 1 p. typed), together worth 30% of final grade; Paper #1 (film summary and scene selection essay, 5 pp. typed), 25% of final grade; Paper #2 (film scene analysis essay, 6-7 pp. typed), 30% of final grade; and Preparation and Participation, 15% of final grade.

Course requirements for graduate students: Weekly Position Papers (based on readings, ½ - 1 p. typed), together worth 25% of final grade; Paper #1 (film summary and scene selection essay, 5 pp. typed), 25% of final grade; Paper #2 (film scene analysis essay, 8-9 pp. typed), 30% of final grade; Preparation and Participation, 10% of final grade; Class Presentation, 10% of final grade.

Required Texts on Blackboard E-Reserves: See the calendar for weekly readings and films.

Policies:

- Written and in-class assignments are due by the date and time indicated in the syllabus. All papers must be handed in typed, in hard copy. No electronic copies will be accepted. Late work will NOT be accepted unless you contact me beforehand/immediately and provide written documentation of your emergency;
- Attendance is required. One and only one unexcused absence is allowed. For one additional absence, one percentage point will be deducted from your final grade. For any other absences, your final grade will be dropped a half grade for each additional absence;
- Students are to spend a minimum of two hours preparing for the course for every hour in class (that is, a minimum of six hours a week). Film screenings are not factored into this calculation. Optional class film screenings will be held on Tuesdays from 5 to 7 in 1214 MHRA. You are encouraged to attend these screenings, but they are not required. In any case, you must see the film before discussion on Thursdays. All films will be on reserve in Jackson Library, and must be viewed on the premises. Many of the films are also available on Netflix if you prefer watching them at home;
- No cell phone use or use of any other gadgets is allowed in class, including texting and emailing.

ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

As members of the UNCG community, students are expected to uphold academic integrity at all times. In many classroom activities you may be asked to work with others; in addition, you are encouraged to study with others in order to help understand the information presented in the course. This kind of collaboration is acceptable and encouraged.

However, any written and oral work that forms the bases of your final grade in the class MUST be your own original work. You will be charged with plagiarism if you: copy verbatim or paraphrase from published courses without adequate documentation; purchase a pre-written paper; let someone else write a paper for you; pay someone else to write a paper for you; or submit as your own someone else's unpublished work, either with or without permission.

Often students commit plagiarism without intending to do so. If you use any portion of someone else's ideas without attribution or documentation and pass them off as your own, this is plagiarism. Please contact me if you have any questions regarding what constitutes plagiarism or academic dishonesty. All incidents of violations of the Academic Integrity Policy will be reported to the Dean of Students. Please see UNCG's Academic Integrity Policy:

<http://academicintegrity.uncg.edu/complete/>

Final Examination:

In lieu of a final exam, you will turn in Paper #2 by 5:00 pm on Thursday 26 April (in the box outside my office, 2107 MHRA, or in my History Department mailbox, 2118 MHRA).

Course Communication: I do not use Blackboard (except for the occasional group email announcement) and I do not accept email or text messages unless they are absolutely necessary, relevant, and coherent. No assignments are accepted as email attachments. Face to face discussions and appointments are still the most useful and efficient modes of communication. If you are confused about any aspect of the course, COME IN AND SEE ME.