Course description

Colonialists, politicians, aid workers, peace corps volunteers, missionaries, human rights advocates, scholars and many others have asked, "How can we save Africa?" This class critically interrogates this question, its motivations, and the ways in which people have answered it by examining international efforts to "save" Africa. Focusing on texts by African and Pan-African authors as well as African liberation struggles and social movements, we will study the ways in which international relations and the colonial legacy shape contemporary African politics. Special attention will be given to the politics of "tribes," ethnicity, race, class and gender, as well as ideas about culture, tradition, and modernity. We will focus on the international dimensions of violent conflicts in Africa, the dilemmas of humanitarian intervention, and efforts to promote peace, justice and reconciliation. We will investigate the historical roots of "underdevelopment," African contributions to the development of Europe and the Americas, and contemporary development and aid projects. Case studies include Rwanda, Darfur, and South Africa.

This is an upper division class for students who have previously taken African Studies or International Politics classes.

professor  Jonneke Koomen, Ph.D.  
contact  jkoomen @ willamette.edu  
office  Smullin 319  
office hours  M 12:30-1:30pm (drop in);  W 4.15-5.15pm (sign up online);  
F 11:30am-12:30pm (drop in) & by appointment.
About This Class
Africa is often treated as an “exotic” continent set aside from the rest of the world, a place of unimaginable crises, and an exception or special case. This class takes a different approach. As the anthropologist James Ferguson has argued, we should understand Africa as a “place in the world.” We will examine how Africa and African politics are profoundly implicated in international political and economic relations, including the politics of colonial rule and independence struggles.

The study of Africa and African politics helps us understand the politics of colonialism, development, humanitarianism, international law, and human rights. We will examine how our understanding of Africa is often shaped by efforts to colonize, intervene, develop, and “save” it. As such, this class will ask you to critically interrogate ideals many of us hold dear, including development, missionary work, volunteerism, human rights and humanitarianism. This can be uncomfortable and painful. Remember, to “critically interrogate” an ideal or a project does not mean we should dismiss or disparage it. Rather, it requires us to rigorously examine the foundations, implications and political stakes of widely embraced efforts to “save Africa.”

Historically, the academic study of Africa in the US and European academies has been dominated by non-Africans. This class, in contrast, will focus on the scholarly, literary, and political works of Africans and Pan-Africanists, including Mahmoud Mamdani, Walter Rodney, Nelson Mandela, WEB DuBois, and many others. Many of these authors are simultaneously revolutionaries and scholars. As such, these writings respond to the political urgencies and necessities of their time.

Finally, remember that Africa is huge! As there are well over 50 different nation-states on the African continent, a semester-long course cannot adequately address each one (or even every region). Thus, we will focus on three key themes in the study of African politics and international relations: (1) colonial rule and resistance (2) violent conflict and the politics of humanitarian intervention, and (3) efforts to promote justice. Key case studies include South Africa, Rwanda, and Darfur.

Required Reading
We will use an “online course packet” and the following required texts, which can be purchased from the Willamette Bookstore:

- Students who took Africa since 1945 with Prof. Murillo only: *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime* by Elinor Sisulu.
- Mahmood Mamdani, *Saviors and Survivors: Darfur, Politics, and the War on Terror* (Pantheon 2009)
Learning Objectives
By the end of the course students should be able to:

• Write and speak about African politics and international relations in an informed, thoughtful and coherent way;
• Analyze the ways in which international politics and the colonial project shape contemporary African politics;
• Critically scrutinize scholarly accounts and media representations of Africans and Africa;
• Interrogate the politics of contemporary international efforts to intervene in African crises and, more broadly, efforts to “save Africa.”

Assignments and due dates Note: you must complete every assignment to pass the class.

Portfolio & Class participation
Your portfolio is your research file. Use it to respond to authors, reflect on readings, develop ideas, file your research notes, reflect on out of class events, and more. Reading responses will be required at least once a week, all semester. Your portfolio will help you to write your papers, including your final paper, and (in some cases) help you prepare for your senior thesis. Post weekly entries on to the WISE forum and keep a back up of all your entries in a word doc which you will turn in during week 13.

Class participation means coming to class on time and fully prepared to engage with the material (always bring your books and notes as hard copies). On several occasions you will formally present your work in class, prepare class questions, and/or facilitate group discussions.

The portfolio & participation grade reflects: (1) the scope and depth of your portfolio at the end of the semester, (2) your contributions to class discussion, short homework assignments, in class writing assignments, quizzes, and out-of-class participation in events related to African politics.

Part I Rule & Resistance
Midterm exam: The colonial project. In class on Monday, February 6. 15%

Midterm take-home essay: Colonial rule and resistance. Due in class Friday, February 24. 15%

Part II Violence & Intervention
Midterm Paper: Violent conflicts and the politics of humanitarian intervention. Due in class Friday, March 23. 25%
Part III Justice

International justice case brief / amicus curiae and presentations. 10%

Final paper and presentation: The Politics of Justice. The final paper is due on Tuesday, May 8 at 11am. Leave a hard copy in my mailbox and upload an electronic copy on WISE. Absolutely no late papers will be accepted under any circumstances.

Attendance, punctuality, preparedness

Absences, lateness, and/or lack of preparation will lower your portfolio and participation grade. Invariably, it will also negatively affect your grade on your assignments.

Classroom Conduct

This class requires a high level of student participation and engagement both inside and outside the classroom. I expect that all students will be engaged in events related to the study of Africa outside our class, including but not limited to the 22nd Cascade Festival of African Film http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/ and WU’s Africa week.

The classroom is a professional, scholarly environment and we must each conduct ourselves appropriately. In particular, I expect all participants in this class -- including myself -- to behave respectfully to each other. Respectful behavior includes coming to class on time, being prepared to contribute to discussion, and listening to each other. Respectful behavior also includes being thoughtful about your language, demeanor, and your interactions with other class participants.

In a class on the politics of Africa (or any other class for that matter), we must all seriously reflect on the ways in which our language and behavior can marginalize class participants and denigrate the people and places we study. There is never any place for homophobic, sexist, racist, or otherwise degrading, threatening, or offensive language or behavior. This does not require you to stay clear of controversial issues. Quite the contrary, in fact! Our classroom should be a safe, productive and inclusive environment for everyone to discuss controversial and sometimes painful subject matters in a thoughtful way.

Laptop use almost invariably undermines classroom participation. For this reason, I ask students not to use computers in class. Similarly, please turn off your cell phones. Do not read the newspaper or do other class work during our class, even if you think you have completed your task or discussion.

Attendance Policy

I expect all students to attend every class session. Do not come to class late and do not pack up and leave class early. Similarly, I will strive to begin and end class on time. Excused absences will only be granted in cases of documented medical illness and documented emergencies. If you observe a religious holy day or participate in a scheduled University-sponsored event that prevents you from attending class (or part of class), please notify me by the second week of class (or as soon as possible). Students who are absent due to illness or emergency remain responsible for catching up on missed work, borrowing notes from fellow students, reading WISE for class handouts and announcements, etc. While students may choose to miss class for other reasons, please do not request an “excused absence” for such purposes. Several unexcused absences will result in a grade penalty.
Accommodations
I am committed to making reasonable accommodations for students with disabilities that have been documented by Disability Services (see www.willamette.edu/dept/disability). If you wish to discuss academic accommodations for this class, please contact me by the second week of class.

Course Outline and Readings*
* Reading assignments will regularly be adjusted to reflect the needs of the class.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Part I: Colonial Encounters, Rule, &amp; Resistance</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key questions:</strong></td>
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**Week 1  MLK week**
**Jan.16-18-20**
**Monday**
Introduction
**Wednesday**
Imagining Africa

**Stories (read both):**


**Tools (pick at least one you haven’t read/seen before):**


**Portfolio**
Drawing on Wainaina OR Larson OR Adichie, write a response to the story of Will and Hand and Finkel’s article. Bring your response to class on Wednesday (hard copy) and post it on the WISE forum before midnight on Tuesday.
Friday

**Slavery and Underdevelopment**


Who is Walter Rodney?
[http://www.marxists.org/glossary/people/r/o.htm#rodney-walter](http://www.marxists.org/glossary/people/r/o.htm#rodney-walter)

Speech by Prince Willem Alexander of the Netherlands in Elmina, Ghana, 15 April 2002

*Optional listening:* BBC Story of Africa: Slavery

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**Week 2**
**Jan. 23-25-27**

**Colonialism as Underdevelopment**

**Monday**

*Portfolio assignment:* What is Underdevelopment? Due on Sunday at midnight.

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1973), Ch.5


*Optional listening:* BBC The Story of Africa: Africa & Europe

**Wednesday**

**Colonialism as Underdevelopment**

*In class:* The dreaded map quiz (capitals and nation-states).

Walter Rodney, *How Europe Underdeveloped Africa* (1973), Ch.6


**Friday**

**Colonialism as Humanitarianism**


Selected voices on colonialism from the late 1800s: Germany, Britain, France, West Africa.
Week 3  Black History Month
Jan 30, Feb 1 - 3

Monday

The Politics of Colonial Rule

*Portfolio assignment:* What is the bifurcated state? What is decentralized despotism? How do these concepts help us understand contemporary African politics?

Crawford Young, “The Colonial Construction of African Nations” in *Nationalism*

Mahmood Mamdani, “The Birfurcated State” and “Decentralized Despots” in *Citizen and Subject* (1996), 16-27 and 37-61


Wednesday

The Politics of Colonial Rule & Resistance in Kenya


Friday

Colonialism, Capitalism, and Racism

*Portfolio assignment:* What is the relationship between colonialism and racism?


Jan Nederveen Pitserse, “The Parade of the Vanquished” from *White on Black: Images of Africa and Blacks in Western Popular Culture* (Yale, 1992)

Saturday

Optional event: 3:00pm. [WHY ARE THEY HERE? CHINESE STORIES IN AFRICA](http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/in-africa/) (35 min) at the 22nd Annual Cascade Festival of African Film at the Portland Community College Cascade Campus

For more information: [www.africanfilmfestival.org/calendar/](http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/calendar/)
Week 4  
Feb 6–8–10

Monday

In class exam: The colonial project(s)

Wednesday

The Struggle for National Liberation: South Africa

Mahmood Mamdani “South African Exceptionalism” in Citizen and Subject (1996), 27-32

A History of the ANC by the ANC: www.anc.org.za/show.php?id=206

Group 1: Nelson Mandela, A Long Walk to Freedom, Part Three and Four, “Birth of a Freedom Fighter” and “The Struggle is My Life”


Friday

Group 1: Mandela, A Long Walk, Parts Five and Six, “Treason” and “The Black Pimpernel”


Resources: ANC treason trial www.anc.org.za/events.php?t=Treason%20trial  

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Week 5  
Feb.13-15-17

Africa Week

Please attend at least two Africa Week events.

Portfolio Assignment

When and why did Sisulu and/or Mandela argue it was necessary to turn to armed struggle?

Group 1: Mandela, A Long Walk to Freedom, “Rivonia” and selections from Parts Eight, Nine and Ten.


Resources: Mandela’s Speech from the dock at the Rivonia trial, April 20, 1964 http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ltrials/mandela/mandelaspeech.html
Rivonia Trial historical papers at the University of the Witwatersrand
www.historicalpapers.wits.ac.za/?inventory/U/collections&c=AD1844/R/


Monday night  
**Film Screening:** Catch A Fire! (Phillip Noyces/Shawn Slovo 2006)

Wednesday  

Group 2: *Walter and Albertina Sisulu: In Our Lifetime*. Part Four “Riding Out The Darkness” (compare with *Long Walk*)

Friday  
Nelson Mandela and Fidel Castro, *How Far We Slaves Have Come!* (entire)

Take a look: Cuban documents and several declassified U.S. government records relating to Cuba and Africa
www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB67/index2.html


Saturday  
Special event: 22nd Annual Cascade Festival of African Film at the Portland Community College Cascade Campus

1:00pm, 76 min. **LETTER: AN AMERICAN TOWN AND “THE SOMALI INVASION”** 2:20pm, 56 min. **BROKEN DREAMS** Focus on the New African Diaspora: Somali-Americans with Film Director Fathia Absie.

7:30pm, 90 min. **HOPEVILLE** (South African 2010)

For more information: http://www.africanfilmfestival.org/calendar/

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**Week 6**  
Feb. 20-22-24

**Monday**  
Special class on the Arab Spring. Reading TBA.

**Monday evening**  
Special event 7pm: The Arab Spring with Prof Zackary Heern.

**Wednesday**  
The Struggle for National Liberation: South Africa. Reading TBA.

**Friday**  
Rule and Resistance take home essay due in class.
Part II

Violent Conflicts & The Politics of Humanitarian Intervention

Week 7
Feb.27-29, Mar.2

Monday

The International Politics of the Genocide in Rwanda


Alan J. Kuperman, “Rwanda in Retrospect” Foreign Affairs, 79 (1) 2000

Eric Weiss, Humanitarian Intervention, selections.

Key Reports: Alison Des Forges, Leave None to Tell the Story (Human Rights Watch 1999). Available at www.hrw.org/legacy/reports/1999/rwanda/

National Security Archive, UN and US government documents on the genocide www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB53/index.html

Wednesday

Genocide & History


Friday

Gender & Genocide

Hutu ten commandments www.rwandafile.com/Kangura/k06.html


Week 8  
March 5-7-9  

**Monday**  

**Development & Genocide**


**Wednesday**  

**After Genocide: Continental Catastrophe**


**Friday**  

**After Genocide: Remaking Rwanda**


**Resources:** Remembering genocide [genocidememorials.cga.harvard.edu/](http://genocidememorials.cga.harvard.edu/)

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Week 9  
March 12-14-16  

**Darfur & the Save Darfur Movement**

Nicholas Kristof’s Darfur columns kristof.blogs.nytimes.com/tag/darfur/


Further reading assignments TBA. Darfur resources on WISE.

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**Week 10**

**March 19-21-23**

*Mon.-Wed.*

**Darfur & the Save Darfur Movement**


Further reading assignments TBA. Darfur resources on WISE.

**Friday**

**Paper II: Paper due Friday, March 23**

International Justice cases assignments.

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**Spring Break**

**March 26-30**

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**Part III  The Politics of International Justice in Africa**

**Week 11**

**April 2-4-6**

*Monday*

**The Politics of International Law & Justice in Africa**

**Watch before class:** *The Reckoning: The Battle for the ICC* (documentary 2009) Available free streaming online http://skylightpictures.com/resources/

*Note*: you have to create a log-in to stream the film but it is free. Use my viewing guide available on WISE.


*Wed.- Friday*  

Readings TBA.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>The Politics of International Law &amp; Justice in Africa: Case Week</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>April 9-11-13</td>
<td>Case assignments, presentations, and readings.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday-Wed</td>
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<tr>
<td>Friday</td>
<td>Rethinking Justice: Readings TBA.</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Rethinking Justice</th>
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<tr>
<td>April 16-18-20</td>
<td>Readings TBA.</td>
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<td>Mon. &amp; Frid.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Monday evening</td>
<td>Film Screening: <em>Bamako</em> (Abderrahmane Sissako, 2006). Time &amp; place TBA.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Portfolio assignment: How do the people in the Bamako courtyard affirm and challenge formal justice models?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wednesday</td>
<td>SSRC Wednesday 18 April (no class)</td>
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<td>Turn in final portfolios this week.</td>
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<th>Week 14</th>
<th>The Politics of Justice</th>
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<td>April 23-25-27</td>
<td>Readings TBA. Class presentations and paper drafts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Mon.-Wed.-Fri.</td>
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<th>Week 15</th>
<th>Last class.</th>
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<td>April 30</td>
<td>Mon.</td>
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**Explanation of grades**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>93–100% A</td>
<td>This grade is awarded only for <strong>excellent work</strong>, i.e. achievement outstanding relative to the level necessary to meet course requirements, exceeding the expectations and requirements of the assignment. A-grades are awarded <strong>rarely</strong>.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90–92 A-</td>
<td>This grade is awarded only for <strong>good and very good work</strong>, i.e. achievement significantly above the level necessary to meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>88–89 B+</td>
<td>This grade is awarded for <strong>satisfactory work</strong>, i.e. achievement meeting course requirements in every respect.</td>
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<tr>
<td>83–87 B</td>
<td>This grade is awarded for <strong>below standard work</strong>, i.e. work that does not fully meet course requirements.</td>
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<tr>
<td>80–82 B-</td>
<td>Performance <strong>failing to meet the course requirements</strong>.</td>
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<tr>
<td>59% or less F</td>
<td>Performance <strong>failing to meet the course requirements</strong>.</td>
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**Answers to frequently asked questions about grades**

Unless otherwise noted on the assignment brief, all assignments are due in class. Always turn a hard copy **and** upload an electronic version in your drop box on WISE. All late assignments receive a full-grade deduction (i.e. 10% will be taken off your score) for each day and/or part of a day they are late. Absolutely no late assignments will be accepted on the final paper. I do not grade “on a curve.” I do not offer extra-credit assignments or incompletes. Students must attend class and complete all assignments to receive a passing grade. Intellectual dishonesty, including but not limited to plagiarism, in any assignment will result in a score of zero for the assignment, an “F” for the class, and will be reported for investigation to the Dean’s Office.

**Scholastic Dishonesty**

I define scholastic and intellectual dishonesty broadly. It includes plagiarizing, cheating on assignments or exams, engaging in unauthorized collaboration on academic work, acquiring test materials without permission, dishonestly obtaining grades, fabricating or falsifying data or analysis. I will report all suspected cases of scholastic dishonesty to the Dean’s Office for investigation. Students found to engage in scholastic dishonesty will be assigned zero (0) points for the assignment and an “F” for the class.

Students may collaboratively work together in order to prepare papers. You should also read each other’s papers and provide feedback. However, unless specified in the assignment, writing assignments are not group projects. Papers that appear to have been written as unauthorized collaborations are in violation of this scholastic dishonesty policy.