AFRICAN CINEMA AAAS 102A
Th 2:00 PM–4:50 PM
Shiffman Humanities Ctr201

SPRING 2017

Department of African and Afro-American Studies
Brandeis University
MS 092, 415 South Street
Waltham, MA 02454

Instructor: Salah M. Hassan

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Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:30-4:30PM, OR By Appointment

COURSE OBJECTIVES
This course explores the foundation and development of African cinema. Students will be introduced to cinema as a visual artistic medium in a non-western context through technical and formal and content analysis. African cinematic genres will be addressed including the "return to the source" of the pre-colonial past, "Social Realist" narrative and critique of postcolonial Africa, reconstruction of colonial history from the colonized perspective, and the documentary in addition to new cinematic waves and experimental ones. This course offers a distinctive lens for examining African cultures and exploring issues of social change, gender, class, tradition, and modernization through African eyes. Thus, historical, cultural, and political issues will be considered in the context of film study. Students will develop critical and analytical skills necessary for assessing visual media.

TEXTS:


**Thackway, Melissa. *Africa Shoots Back. Alternative Perspectives in Sub-Saharan Francophone African Film.* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 2003) (This has good additional references, sources and filmography).


RECENT PUBLICATIONS ON AFRICAN CINEMA:

Cinematic/Film Terminology/Glossary:
The following web links provide useful access to film and cinematic terms:
https://filmglossary.ccnmtl.columbia.edu/term/
http://www.filmsite.org/filmterms1.html
http://www.springhurst.org/cinemagic/glossary_terms.htm
https://www.nyfa.edu/student-resources/glossary/

USEFUL SOURCES:
N. Frank Ukadike, Black African Cinema, University of California Press 1994
N. Frank Ukadike, Questioning African Cinema: Conversations with Filmmakers.
(University of Minnesota Press 2002)

ALL REQUIRED READINGS OR FILMS ARE ON LATTE AND/OR RESERVE DESK

GRADING
10% Journal
25% Introductory paper and critique
25% Class participation (including attendance)
40% Term Paper

COURSE REQUIREMENTS
Attendance:
Attendance is required at all class meetings. You may miss one class without penalty, but your final grade will be reduced after the second absence. This penalty is in addition to the lower grades received for not handing in the critiques on time.

Readings:
All students should be ready to discuss readings in class on the assigned dates. The organization of the course requires students to be active participants. Class participation
is required and on specific dates students will be asked to lead class discussion of a film by summarizing the readings and posing analytical questions to the class and raising issues concerning the significance of the films.

**Journals:**
Students are required to keep a film journal by taking notes on each film during its screening. The journal will help you to recall critical details from one week to the next for the purposes of discussion. Film Journals should be submitted through Discussion section of the Black Board.

**Critiques:**
Please submit one four to six page typed paper for the films discussed within each course units. Make sure to include your name and title at the top of the title page, and the paper must be double-spaced, using 1" margins, and 12-pt Times New Roman font. Use footnotes in a citation manner that conforms to a specific manual of style (MLA, Chicago). It must be submitted on the Monday of the week following the completion of the course unit.

**Term Paper:**
Your paper will be based on one of the course films or filmmakers of your choice. Develop a thesis concerning style, genre, cinematography, or critical and analytical issues related race, class, gender, politics, religion, or other social issue as it relates to the film. Draw on literature, other visual culture, historical studies, or films for comparative material. Length: 15 typed pages plus endnotes and a bibliography and double-spaced. As always, grammar, spelling, clarity, and elegance in writing will be considered in grading the paper.

**IMPORTANT NOTICES:**
1. Paper Topics Must be Approved by the Instructor.
2. Proposal for Term Paper Plus a Preliminary Bibliography due March 2, 2017

1. **INTRODUCTION: AFRICA AND THE MOVING IMAGE (Jan. 19-26)**
   **Film Screenings:**
   - *World of Film: Africa* (USA) 1994, 26 minutes
   - *African Film: New Forms of Aesthetics and Politics: Filmmakers in Conversation* (Germany), 2010, 30 minutes.

**Readings:**
* Diawara, Manthia. *African Film: New Forms of Aesthetics and Politics*. Chapters 1 and 2. (pp. 18-89).

“Visions of a New African Cinema” in Diawara, Manthia. *African Film: New Forms of
Aesthetics and Politics. (pp. 196-258

2. AFRICA AND DECOLONIZATION: THE CASE OF ALGERIA (Jan 26-Feb 2)

Film Screenings (two films):
The Battle of Algiers (Gillo Pontecorvo, Italy and Yacef Saadi, Algeria, 1966) 123 min. In French and Arabic with English subtitles.

Readings (Battle of Algiers):

Readings (Indigènes):
* Shillington, Kevin. History of Africa. p. 275-278 and 381-382.

3. AFRICAN INDEPENDENCE AND ITS AFTERMATH: THE SOCIAL REALIST NARRATIVE (Feb 9)

Readings (Xala):
* Gugler, 126-38.
4. THE COLONIAL/ POSTCOLONIAL EXPERIENCE (Feb 16)

Film Screenings (Two films)


Readings:

5. “RETURN TO THE SOURCE”: HISTORY AND THE POSTCOLONIAL IMAGINATION (March 2)

Film Screening (two films):

*Yeelen* (Brightness) (Souleymanne Cissé, Mali, 1987) 105 mins. In Bambara with English Subtitles
*Sankofa* (Haile Gerima, Ethiopia/USA, 1993) 124 mins. English

Readings (Yeelen):
* Gugler, 29-36.
* Thackway, 7-48.
* MacRae, Suzanne. “Yeelen: A Political Fable of the Komo Blacksmith.” In *Research in
African Literatures 26:3 (Fall 1995)

Readings (Sankofa):

6. ALLEGORY AND POSTCOLONIAL AFRICA
Film Screenings:

Readings (Touki Bouki):

Readings (Bamako):

7: LEGACY AND IDENTITY: APARTHEID AND POST-APARTHEID SOUTH AFRICA (March 2):

Film Screenings (Two Films)
Mapantsula (Hustler) (Oliver Schmitz and Thomas Mogotlane, South Africa, 1988) 104
min. In English, Zulu, Sotho, and Afrikaans with English subtitles
*Tsotsi* (Gavin Hood, South Africa, 2005) 115 min.

**Readings (Mapantsula):**
* Gugler, 65-105.

**Readings (Tsotsi):**
Interview: “Writer/Director Gavin Hood Discusses His Film, Tsotsi”
[http://movies.about.com/od/directorinterviews/a/tsotsi071806.htm](http://movies.about.com/od/directorinterviews/a/tsotsi071806.htm)

**8: THE DOCUMENTARY: COLONIAL REALITIES AND POSTCOLONIAL MEMOR: (March 9):**

**Film Screenings:**

**Readings (Arlit):**
*“Uranium in Niger Mining,”: [http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,686774,00.html](http://www.spiegel.de/international/world/0,1518,686774,00.html)

**Readings (Indochina):**
9: NEW FORMS/NEW AESTHETICS: NOLLYWOOD
Film Screenings (Two Films) (March 16)

Welcome to Nollywood (Jamie Meltzer, 2009) 58 min. English
Thunderbolt: N'Gun (Tune Kelani, Nigeria, 2000), 110 min, English and Yoruba.

Readings:
*Manthia Diawara, “‘Nollywood’ in Diawara, Manthia. African Film: New Forms of
Aesthetics and Politics. Chapters 3. (pp. 162-185).
*Jonathan Haynes, “TK in NYC: An Interview with Tunde Kelani.” Postcolonial Text
3.2 (2007).
*Jonathan Haynes, “What Is to Be Done? Film Studies and Nigerian and Ghanaian
Videos.” Viewing African Cinema in the Twenty-First Century: Art Films and the
Nollywood Video Revolution. Eds. Ralph A. Austen and Mahir Saul. Athens: Ohio UP,
2010. 11-25.
3324.
*Onookome Okome, “Nollywood and Its Critics,” Viewing African Cinema in the
Twenty-First Century: Art Films and the Nollywood Video Revolution. Eds. Ralph A.
Cinema and Social Change in West Africa. By Onookome Okome and Jonathan Haynes.
Jonathan Haynes, “TK in NYC: An Interview with Tunde Kelani.” Postcolonial Text 3.2
(2007).

10: NEW FORMS/NEW AESTHETICS: THE NEW AVANTE GARDE (March 23-
March 30)

Film Screenings:
Pumzi (Wanuri Kahiu, Kenya, 2009) 21 min. In English
Awaiting for Men (En attendant les homes) Katy Lena N’diaye (Senegal/Belgium) 56 min
2007. English subtitles
Ye Wonz Maibel (Salem Mekuria, Ethiopia), USA, 1996, 1997) 69 min. In English and
Amharic with English subtitles.

Readings:
Yaba Badoe, Amina Mama and Salem Mekuria “Editorial: African Feminist
Engagements with Film’ In Feminist Africa (16) Special Issue, 16: July 2012, pp. 1-7

Salem Mekuria “Representation and Self Representation: My Take” In Feminist Africa
(16) Special Issue “African Feminist Engagements with Film” Issue 16: July 2012, 8-17.

http://africanwomenincinema.blogspot.com/.

11: NEW FORMS/NEW AESTHETICS: THE NEW AVANTE GARDE (April 6-April 20)

Film Screenings:
Jean-Pierre-Bekolo, Les saignantes, 97 min, (Cameron, 2005)
Jean-Pierre-Bekolo, Le Président (The President), 64 min, (Cameron, 2013)

Readings:


Achille Mbembe, On the Postcolony (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001)


12. CONCLUDING SESSION (April 27)

AFRICAN CINEMA: SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY: