



SYLLABUS

SWAHILI CULTURE AND HISTORY
African Studies 388/Clark Honors College HC 431
Instructors: Dr. Melissa Graboyes and Dr. Mokaya Bosire
Language of Instruction: English
UO Credits: 4
Contact Hours: 32

STONE TOWN, ZANZIBAR, TANZANIA

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course is an introduction to the cultural, social and political history of the Swahili Coast region. Together as a class, we interrogate the concept of “Swahili”—as a reference to the coastal littoral running from Mozambique to Somalia; as a language spoken by over 100 million people; and as a cultural identity taken on by the heterogeneous set of residents living in East Africa. We will focus on the unique identity of this region that crosses national borders, and which has long been characterized by global mixing through centuries of contact with the larger Indian Ocean World.

We will begin with early history and the archeological record going back over the past two millennia. However, a bulk of our time will be spent on the past 200 years, beginning with sustained European contact in the late 1800s, the workings of the colonial era (c. 1890s-1960), the struggles for independence in the late 1950s and early 1960s, and a review of this region in the independent era. Through varied course readings in disciplines crossing history, anthropology and African Studies we will discuss questions such as: who are the Swahili, whether there is a uniquely “Swahili” identity and culture, what characterizes the relationship of the Swahili Coast (and residents) with mainland Africa, and how what we now call the Swahili Coast and Swahili people have been affected by geographic, regional, and global factors.

The course will include a mixture of lectures, discussion, guest lectures and relevant field trips.

For Clark Honors College and graduate students, there will be additional readings prior to the trip, and a different final essay assignment that will consist of a longer research paper due via email on Monday, September 11. More detailed expectations will be shared by Professor Graboyes prior to departure for Zanzibar.

ASSIGNMENTS AND GRADES

Students will be assessed based on four different criteria: a map quiz, class participation, weekly response essays, and a final group project.

Map Quiz: Understanding the geography of the places we are discussing is important! Therefore there will be a map quiz during week 2. Maps will be shown and discussed in class and then posted on Canvas. The map quiz is worth 10% of your total grade.

Participation: Class participation is worth 30% of the total grade, and is a combination of two factors: daily preparedness and leading one class's discussion through a detailed explanation and analysis of the assigned reading. Preparedness is determined if students are in attendance with readings completed, notes taken, and ready to discuss materials. Each student will be required to summarize and analyze one of the class readings and create discussion questions. I will be evaluating how well you are able to distill the reading's major arguments, point out inconsistencies, raise provocative questions, and link the reading to other topics we have discussed in class.

Weekly Response Essays: These 5 response essays are each worth 6%, and together they make up 30% your final grade. Response essays must be grammatically correct, well thought out, and respond to or comment on that week's reading and lecture topics. Each essay should be between 2-3 pages in length, double-spaced. Detailed instructions on response essay expectations will be handed out in week 1. These essays will be written weeks 2, 3, 4, 5, and 6 and turned in at the start of each Tuesday's class.

Late essays will lose one-third of a letter grade for each day it is late.

Group Project: The group project is worth 30% of your final grade, and will be carried out working in groups of 2 or 3. Detailed instructions on group project expectations will be handed out and discussed by week 2 of the term. Students will be expected to identify a relevant topic of interest and to pursue basic research outside of class with both primary and secondary sources. Ideas about where to gather data will be discussed in class, but will include the Zanzibar National Archives, private photographic collections, audio collections, and conducting ethnographic observation or semi-structured interviews. The group project will culminate in each group making a 15-20 minute presentation in front of the class during week 8, and turning in a 5-6 page paper describing their research question, methodology and findings.

Map quiz	10%
Participation	30%
Weekly Response Essays	30%
Final Group Project	30%
TOTAL	100%

Attendance

To each class, you should bring the texts we are reading in addition to your notes on that text. All absences should be reported to the instructor *prior* to the class meeting time.

WEEKLY SCHEDULE

Week 1: Swahili Coast Geography, Early history and overview of Themes

- Viewing of documentary film [28 mins]. Kenny Mann, “The Swahili Beat: An Introduction to the History of the East African,” (DER Documentary, 2008). <http://www.der.org/films/swahili-beat.html> [\$165 to purchase]
- Viewing of the documentary clip [XX mins]. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., “The Swahili Coast Episode,” in “Wonders of the African World,” (PBS Home Video, 1999).

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 2008. [280 pgs]

Week 2: Pre-Colonial Zanzibar in the Global Economy

- Guest Lecture on Photographic Sources/Visit to Zanzibar National Archives
- View materials “The Humphrey Winterton Collection of East African Photographs: 1860-1960.” Northwestern University. <http://repository.library.northwestern.edu/winterton/>
- Reading Response Essay 1 Due

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 2008. [280 pgs]

Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya 1890-1925* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1981. Introduction, chs. 3-4.

Week 3: Popular Culture and Politics

- Musical Observation: live Taarab concert or practice
- Viewing of documentary film [70 mins]. Kelly Askew and Werner Graebner, “Poetry in Motion: 100 Years of Zanzibar’s Nadi Ikhwan Safaa,” (Jahazi Media, 2011).
- Viewing of documentary film [30 mins]. Martin Meulenberg, “Hali Halisi,” (Madunia, 2000). Accessible at: <http://www.africanhiphop.com/projects/documentary-hali-halisi/>
- Reading Response Essay 2 Due

Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 2002. [293 pgs]

Week 4: Women and Gender

- Guest Lecture from the Zanzibar Gender Coalition or Tanzania Media Women's Association
- Reading Response Essay 3 Due

Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 2002. [293 pgs]

Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press) 2001. [350 pages]

Week 5: Colonialism and the Re-Creation of Swahili Identity

- Work on Group Presentation/ Complete Research
- Reading Response Essay 4 Due

Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press) 2001. [350 pages]

Week 6: Colonialism and the Creation of Urban Spaces

- Guest Lecture by representative of the Aga Khan Foundation/ Architectural Tour of Zanzibar Town: Forodhani Park, Ng'ambo, Old Dispensary.
- Work on Group Presentation/ Complete Research
- Reading Response Essay 5 Due

Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press) 2001. [350 pages]

Garth Myers, "Sticks and Stones: Colonialism and Zanzibari Housing," *Africa*, 67 no 2 (1997): 252-272.

Brian Hoyle, "Urban Waterfront Revitalization in Developing Countries: The Example of Zanzibar's Stone Town," *The Geographical Journal*, 168 no.2 (June 2002): 141-162.

Week 7: Decolonization, Revolution, and a Post-Colonial World

- Guest Lecture/ Walking Tour of a Mosque, Hindu Temple and Catholic or Anglican Church
- Work on Group Presentation/ Complete Research

Week 8: Conclusions and Group Presentations

COURSE READINGS

Required Texts

Kelly Askew, *Performing the Nation: Swahili Music and Cultural Politics in Tanzania* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press) 2002. [293 pgs]

Laura Fair, *Pastimes and Politics: Culture, Community and Identity in Post-abolition Urban Zanzibar, 1890-1945* (Athens: Ohio University Press) 2001. [350 pages]

Jeremy Prestholdt, *Domesticating the World: African Consumerism and the Genealogies of Globalization* (Berkeley: University of California Press) 2008. [280 pgs]

Required Readings and Materials (available on Canvas)

Frederick Cooper, *From Slaves to Squatters: Plantation Labour and Agriculture in Zanzibar and Coastal Kenya 1890-1925* (New Haven: Yale University Press) 1981. Introduction, chs. 3-4.

Brian Hoyle, "Urban Waterfront Revitalization in Developing Countries: The Example of Zanzibar's Stone Town," *The Geographical Journal*, 168 no.2 (June 2002): 141-162.

Garth Myers, "Sticks and Stones: Colonialism and Zanzibari Housing," *Africa*, 67 no 2 (1997): 252-272.

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa," *Granta* 92 (Winter 2005).

Binyavanga Wainaina, "How to Write About Africa II: The Revenge," *Bidoun* 21.