THE
GRADUATE
INSTITUTE
GENEVA

INSTITUT DE HAUTES
ÉTUDES INTERNATIONALES
ET DU DÉVELOPPEMENT

GRADUATE INSTITUTE
OF INTERNATIONAL AND
DEVELOPMENT STUDIES

Department of Anthropology and Sociology (ANSO)

Academic year 2020-2021

The Political Anthropology of Media: From Africa to the World

ANSO128- Autumn - 3 ECTS
Schedule & Room

Course Description

This course takes the ethnographic analysis of African media as entry point for understanding the cultural politics of globalization in the continent. African media industries have grown exponentially over the past three decades, attracting local and global investments, provoking the emergence of new economic sectors, but also producing original popular cultural forms, and generating new constituencies and aesthetic communities. Through the exploration of a variety of ethnographic case studies from around the continent, this course will explore this burgeoning creative field and will interrogate its contribution to the understanding of Africa's position in the world. The story of the birth and growth of digital film industries in Nigeria, Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire, for instance, will be explored to analyse the emergence of new forms of pan-African popular imageries and African understandings of modernity. And the study of Chinese, Indian and Brazilian contents' circulation on African screens will be connected to the analysis of transforming landscapes of South-South interaction. The course will thus take Africa as the building ground for the production of innovative theoretical approaches to understand global processes of cultural and political transformation.

> **PROFESSORS**

Alessandro Jedlowski
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Office hours
Thursday 8 October and Thursday 15 October: 15h to 17h

Before the beginning of the course and after its end, the instructor is available for skype meetings on Thursdays (15h-17h), by appointment

> **ASSISTANT**

Atak Ayaz
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Office hours

Syllabus

Course outline:

Meeting 1: Thursday 8 October (08:15-10:00, room S3; 12:15-14:00, room S5)

08:15-10:00: Media as an object of anthropological analysis
Required readings:
Ginsburg, Faye D., Lila Abu-Lughod, and Brian Larkin, 2002, "Introduction". In *Media Worlds: Anthropology on New Terrain*. Eds. F.D. Ginsburg, L. Abu-Lughod, and B. Larkin, pp. 1-36. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Suggested readings:
Abu-Lughod, Lila. 1997. "The interpretation of culture (s) after television." *Representations* 59: 109-134.
Barber, Karin. 2018. *A History of African Popular Culture*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Chapter 6).
Peterson, Mark Allen. 2003. *Anthropology and Mass Communication: Media and Myth in the New Millennium*. Oxford: Berghahn Books. (Chapters 1 and 2).
Pype Katrien, and Alessandro Jedlowski. 2019. "Anthropological approaches to media in Africa". In *A Companion to the Anthropology of Africa*. Eds. R. R. Grinker, E. F. Gonçalves, C. B. Steiner and S. Lubkemann, pp. 351-374. London and New York: Blackwell-Wiley.
Spitulnik, Debra. 1993. "Anthropology and mass media." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 22.1: 293-315.

12:15-14:00: Cultural globalization and media sovereignty
Required readings:
Appadurai, Arjun. 1990. "Disjuncture and difference in the global cultural economy." *Theory, culture & society* 7.2-3: 295-310.
Ginsburg, Faye. 2016. "Indigenous media from u-matic to youtube: Media sovereignty in the digital age." *Sociologia & Antropologia* 6.3: 581-599.

Suggested readings:
Bernal, Victoria. 2014. *Nation as Network: Diaspora, Cyberspace, and Citizenship*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press. (Chapter 1).
Hansen, Thomas Blom, and Finn Stepputat. 2006. "Sovereignty revisited." *Annual Review of Anthropology* 35: 295-315.
Heyman Josiah and Howard Campbell. 2009. "The anthropology of global flows: A critical reading of Appadurai's 'Disjuncture and Difference in the Global Cultural Economy'". *Anthropological Theory* 9(2): 131-148.
Mattelart, Tristan. 2002. "Le Tiers Monde à l'épreuve des médias audiovisuels transnationaux: 40 ans de controverses théoriques". In *La mondialisation des médias contre la censure*, ed. T. Mattelart, pp. 17-80. Bruxelles: De Boeck Supérieur.
« Resolutions of the Third World Filmmakers Meeting, Algiers, December 5-14, 1973 », *Black Camera*, 2,1 (2010): 155-165.
Sassen, Saskia. 1997. "On the Internet and sovereignty". *Indiana Journal of Global Legal Studies* 5(2): 545-561.

Meeting 2: Friday 9 October (10:15-14:00, room S2)

10:15-14:00: The difference video makes
Required readings:
Haynes, Jonathan, and Onookome Okome. 1998. "Evolving popular media: Nigerian video films." *Research in African literatures* 29.3: 106-128.

Larkin, Brian. 2004. "Degraded images, distorted sounds: Nigerian video and the infrastructure of piracy." *Public Culture* 16.2: 289-314.

Meyer, Birgit. 2004. ""Praise the Lord": Popular cinema and pentecostalite style in Ghana's new public sphere." *American Ethnologist* 31.1: 92-110.

Spitulnik, Debra. 2002. "Alternative small media and communicative spaces." In *Media and Democracy in Africa*. Eds. G. Hyden, M. Leslie, and F. F. Ogundimu, pp. 177–206. London: Transaction Publishers.

Suggested readings:

Boyd, Douglas A., Joseph D. Straubhaar et John A. Lent. 1989. *Videocassette Recorders in the Third World*. Boston: Addison-Wesley Longman Ltd.

Hilderbrand, Lucas. 2009. *Inherent Vice: Bootleg Histories of Videotape and Copyright.* Durham: Duke University Press. (Introduction)

Jedlowski, Alessandro. 2018. "African videoscapes: Southern Nigeria, Ethiopia and Côte d'Ivoire in comparative perspective". In *Companion to African Cinema*, eds. K. Harrow and C. Garritano, pp. 293-314. London and New York: Blackwell-Wiley, 2018.

O'Regan, Tom. 1991. "From piracy to sovereignty: International video cassette recorder trends." *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies* 4.2: 112-135.

Sreberny, Annabelle, and Ali Mohammadi. 1994. *Small Media, Big Revolution: Communication, Culture, and the Iranian Revolution*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press. (Chapter 1).

Sundaram, Ravi. 1999. "Recycling modernity: Pirate electronic cultures in India." *Third Text* 13.47: 59-65.

Meeting 3: Thursday 15 October (8:15-10:00, room S3; 12:15-14:00, room S5)

08:15-10:00: Media innovation, neoliberalism and the State
Required readings
Gagliardone, Iginio. 2019. *China, Africa, and the Future of the Internet*. London: Zed Books. (Chapters 1 and 5).

Jedlowski, Alessandro. 2017. "African media and the corporate takeover: Video film circulation in the age of neoliberal transformations." *African Affairs* 116.465: 671-691.

Suggested readings

Adejunmobi, Moradewun. 2015. "Neoliberal rationalities in old and new Nollywood." *African Studies Review* 58.3: 31-53.

De Bruijn, Mirjam. 2017. "Mediated political agency in contested Africa." In *The Routledge Companion to Digital Ethnography*. Eds. Larissa Hjorth et al., pp. 396–405. London: Routledge.

Larkin, Brian. 2019. "The grounds of circulation: Rethinking African film and media." *Politique africaine* 154: 105-126.

McCain, Carmen. 2013. "Nollywood, Kannywood, and a decade of Hausa film censorship in Nigeria". In *Silencing cinema: film censorship around the world*. Eds. D. Biltereyst, and R. Vande Winkel, pp. 223-240. London: Palgrave McMillan.

Tsika, Noah. 2019. "Miracles from Mexico: Christianity, corporate restructuring, and the telenovela in Nigeria". *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 31(2): 212-225.

Ukah, Asonzeh. "Advertising God: Nigerian Christian video-films and the power of consumer culture." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33.2 (2003): 203-231.

12:15-14:00: Diaspora and transnational mediascapes
Required readings:
Bernal, Victoria. 2005. "Eritrea on-line: Diaspora, cyberspace, and the public sphere." *American Ethnologist* 32.4 (2005): 660-675.

Van Staden, Cobus. 2017. "Watching Hong Kong martial arts films under apartheid." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 29.1: 46-62.

Suggested readings:

Adesokan, Akin. 2009. "Excess luggage: Nigerian films and the world of immigrants." In *The New African Diaspora*. Eds. I. Okpewho and N. Nzegwu, pp. 401-422. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Kperogi, Farooq A. 2019. *Nigeria's Digital Diaspora: Citizen Media, Democracy, and Participation*. Rochester: University of Rochester Press. (Chapter 3).

Larkin, Brian. 1997. "Indian films and Nigerian lovers: Media and the creation of parallel modernities." *Africa*: 406-440.

Prashad, Vijay. 2003. "Bruce Lee and the anti-imperialism of Kung Fu: A polycultural adventure". *Positions: East Asia Cultures Critique* 11,1: 51-90.

Pype, Katrien. 2020. "Stones thrown online: The politics of insults, distance and impunity in Congolese polémique." In *Theorising Media and Conflict*. Eds. P. Budka, and B. Bräuchler, pp. 237-254. Oxford: Berghahn Books.

Waliaula, Solomon. 2019. "Televisual cinema and social identities: The case of Nollywood and Latin American telenovelas in Eldoret, Kenya." *Journal of African Cultural Studies* 31.2: 180-195.

Meeting 4: Friday 16 October (10:15-12:00, room S2)

10:15-12:00: (Dis)connections, hybridizations, backfiring
Required readings:

Krings, Matthias. 2015. *African appropriations: Cultural Difference, Mimesis, and Media*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press. (Chapter 7).

Okome, Onookome. 2013. "Reversing the filmic gaze: Comedy and the critique of the postcolony in *Osuofia in London*". In *Global Nollywood: The Transnational Dimensions of an African Video Film Industry.* Eds. M. Krings and O. Okome, pp. 139-157. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.

Suggested readings:

Behrend, Heike. 2003. "Photo magic: Photographs in practices of healing and harming in East Africa." *Journal of Religion in Africa* 33.2:129–145.

Gondola, Charles Didier. 2009. "Tropical cowboys: Westerns, violence, and masculinity among the young bills of Kinshasa." *Afrique histoire* 7.1: 75-98.

Kaur, Ravinder. 2002. "Viewing the West through Bollywood: A celluloid Occident in the making." Contemporary South Asia 11 (2): 199–209.

Lobato, Ramon, and Julian Thomas. 2018. *The Informal Media Economy*. New York: John Wiley & Sons. (Introduction and Chapter 1).

Saxer, Martin and Ruben Andersson. 2019. "The return of remoteness: Insecurity, isolation and connectivity in the new world disorder". *Social Anthropology* 27(2): 140-155.

Course requirements and gradings:

This course depends greatly on students' participation. Attendance is mandatory, and students are required to read all assigned material prior to class. They are also expected to actively engage in class discussion, and the assessment of their participation is part of the final evaluation.

Final grades will be calculated as follow:

1. Participation in class discussion (20% of the final grade)
2. Reading note (30% of the final grade)
3. Final paper (50% of the final grade)

More precisely students will be requested to:

1. Read all articles indicated as "required readings" prior to class;
2. Read one essay from the lists of "suggested readings" and prepare a 500 words reading note to be submitted on the last day of the course. Reading notes should briefly summarise the article, outline

and discuss its core contribution and concepts, and how it connects to the course's theme as well as possibly to the student's own research.

3. Submit a paper of no more than 4000 words (excluding bibliography and annexes), on a topic agreed upon with the instructor and related to the course's theme and main concepts.

Course Policies

- Papers and reading notes should be written in English, double-spaced, using standard 12-point font, with 1-inch margins. The student's name, the paper's title, the date, the course's title and page numbers must be included.
- Quotations and bibliography must follow the Chicago Manual of Style or the Harvard Referencing System.
- Students must hand in papers on time (deadline to be discussed with the instructor during the course). Submission should be in a Word file (no need to provide a hard copy).
- Papers that are sent late without a valid reason, significantly exceed the word limit, and do not comply with the general guidelines will not receive a negative grade
- Word limits must be adhered to within +/- 10%.
- Required readings will be made available as electronic reserve on the class' website.