Anthropology 340:
The Anthropology of Sub-Saharan Africa: Care and Power

Instructor: China Scherz - Office ETC 112A – cscherz@reed.edu
Meeting time: Tuesdays and Thursdays 2:40-4pm
Meeting location: Elliot 216
Office hours: Tuesdays 10:30-11:30, Wednesdays 3-5 and by appointment

In this course we will draw upon a series of classic and contemporary works to explore the interplay of care and power as two themes central to the history and anthropology of Sub-Saharan Africa. While this course will highlight the tremendous diversity of political, cultural, and historical situations that shape the experiences of people living in Sub-Saharan Africa, we will also consider the commonalities that tie this vast region together and what is allowed and foreclosed by thinking of Africa as a unified entity. Moving out from a set of conversations on slavery and patronage that emerged in the 1970s this course will examine the ways in which care and power cut across discussions of politics, kinship, personhood, love, religion, medicine, witchcraft and corruption in a range of historical and ethnographic contexts.

Course Requirements

Participation and Attendance: Conference participants are expected to come to each class having read and thought about the readings. Our discussions will focus on coming to a collective understanding of the assigned readings, evaluating the evidence and claims made by the authors, and considering other possible approaches to the same topics. During class each person should expect to make a contribution to the conversation.

Discussion Questions: Each conference participant will be required to develop a set of discussion questions twice during the semester. The assigned conference participant should come to class with a set of 3-5 questions designed to spark our conversation.

Map Quiz: All students will be given a map quiz covering the countries and capitals of Sub-Saharan Africa on October 14th. A 90% score is required to pass the course and students are welcome to retake the quiz until they pass.

Mid-Semester Papers: Each student will be required to submit two 5-6 page mid-semester papers over the course of the term. These papers will be due IN CLASS on October 7th and November 16th. You should print out your paper, staple it, and bring it with you to class on the day it is due. I will return your papers to you within two weeks. Prompts for each of these essays will be distributed two weeks before the due date.

Final Paper: A 15-20 page final paper will be due on December 16th. Please print your paper out and bring it to my office by 5pm. Over the course of the semester you should work with me to develop a final paper topic that further develops one of the themes of course in relation to current events in Africa. Your paper should make use of course
readings, but should also incorporate some independent library research. You will be expected to submit a 250-word paper abstract and bibliography in class on **November 23rd**. The final two class sessions will be paper workshops where each student will have a chance to present and receive feedback on their work in progress.

**Policies**

**Late Papers and Extensions:** Everyone will have a 24-hour grace period on all written assignments. After 24-hours you will lose 1/3 of a letter grade for each day the assignment is late. Additional extensions will be granted only in exceptional circumstances.

**Laptops, Cell Phones...** To create an atmosphere conducive to dialogue all laptops or cell phones should be switched off before the start of class. No phone calls, texting, or computer use will be allowed during class. If you need to use your laptop to take notes for a medical reason please see me so that we can make an accommodation.

**Grading:** Your final grade in the course will be calculated out of a total of 100 points.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assignment</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mid-Semester Essays</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Final Paper</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Class Participation</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Map Quiz</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>90% or better required to pass the course</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Required Texts:**


**Electronic Reserves:** All readings will also be placed on electronic reserve via our class moodle site or hard copy reserve at the library.
Course Schedule:

August 31st: Introduction

Wealth In People


Witchcraft, Corruption, and the Post-Colonial State

September 23rd: Prompts for 1st Essay Distributed

September 28th:

September 30th:


Kinship, Marriage, and Sexuality


Fall Break – October 16th – 24th


Managing Death and Life in Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa


November 16th: 2nd Essay Due

No Class November 18th – Instructor Away at Conference – Library Workshop with Dena Hutto


No Class November 25th – Thanksgiving Holiday


December 2nd: Final Paper Workshop

Last Class December 7th: Final Paper Workshop

December 16th: Final Papers Due