

Tentative and subject to change

Migration and Refugees in African History

Instructor

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Office: 306G College Hall (8-2188)

Spring 2024: W: 1:45-4:44

Room: 305 Van Pelt

Office hours: M: 12-2 and F: 11-12 or by appointment

Aims

This seminar will examine the experience of recent African immigrants and refugees within and out of the African continent from a historical and comparative perspective. We will look at the relations of overseas Africans with both their home and host societies, drawing on some of the extensive comparative literature on immigration, ethnic diasporas, and transnationalism. Other topics include reasons for leaving Africa, patterns of economic and educational adaptation abroad, changes in gender and generational roles, issues of cultural, religious, and political identity, and the impact of international immigration policies. Students will have the opportunity to conduct focused research on specific African communities in Philadelphia or elsewhere in North America, Europe, or the Middle East. We will employ a variety of sources and methodologies from different disciplines--including newspapers, government and NGOs, literature and film, and diaspora internet sites--to explore the lives, aspirations, and perceptions of Africans abroad. The course will also feature members of the African diaspora in Philadelphia as invited guests to share their immigration experiences in addition to field visits.

Format

Class meets Wednesdays from 1:45-4:44 and will consist of a combination of lectures (including several by invited guests), discussions, video screenings, and presentations by students of their research in progress. We will begin each class session with a roundtable discussion based on students' responses to the readings, lectures and films. Then we will take a short break of 10 min. After the break, the remainder of class time will be devoted to a general discussion of the readings and primary sources as a class or in small groups. General discussions will be led by the instructor and a student.

Course requirements

All students are expected to keep up with the weekly assigned readings, to participate in a weekly Canvas forum, to submit written assignments on the dates indicated in the syllabus, and

to participate actively in class discussions. The weekly forum post is due Tuesday 8:00 pm. Written assignments include: 1) an analysis of the media's coverage of an event involving African immigrants or a film or novel about Africans abroad; and 2) a report on the nature and content of an African diaspora website. 3) There is also a final project which may build on one of the earlier assignments but which must involve substantial new documentary, oral, or field research (15 pp.) Each week, one or two students will be asked to co-lead the discussion with the instructor, and at the end of the semester, students will make an oral presentation to the class, individually or as part of a team, on some aspect of his/her final project. In this way, everyone will contribute to our cumulative knowledge of the African immigrant experience.

Attendance and class participation

This is a seminar; therefore, regular attendance and participation in class discussions are essential. You are expected to be thoroughly familiar with the readings for each meeting and to participate actively in discussion. These readings will provide background to your individual research projects and help you complete the weekly assignment. Assigned reading is indicated on the syllabus for each week. It is the student's responsibility to complete the required reading on schedule so as to participate fruitfully in the weekly discussion. Both attendance and in-class participation will count towards your grade. **Absence is excused only in case of health emergency. Unexcused absences will be penalized. All absences should be reported on the Course Absence Report portal.**

Laptops allowed for not taking only. Cell phones should be turned off at all time. The use of AI tools to complete an assignment of this class is prohibited.

Grading

Media analysis 15 points due Feb. 21

Website report 15 points due April 24

Class participation (forum, discussion, leading) 30 points

Term paper 40 points.

Students may choose to write their papers on selected topics related to the experience of sub-Saharan African immigrants and refugees within the continent of Africa or abroad. Topics could include but are not limited to: West African immigrant businesses; The changing profile of West African immigrants in host societies; The spiritual lives of African immigrants; Leisure among African immigrants; The relationships between African immigrants and local governments; Dynamics of African immigrant households; Second generation African immigrants; Presence and performance of African cultures abroad. The relationships between African immigrants and their countries of origin. Immigrants' political activism. Etc...

Academic integrity

Students are expected to adhere to the university's academic integrity and plagiarism policies on all assignments. Plagiarism consists of using other people's ideas without proper acknowledgment. Students who violate the university's academic integrity policies may fail the course. (For more on academic integrity see <http://provost.upenn.edu/policies/pennbook/2013/02/13/code-of-academic-integrity> (Links to an external site.)

Books

The following required books are available at Penn Book Store and at Van Pelt Library.

Cheikh Anta Babou, *The Muridiyya on the Move: Islam, Migration and Place Making* (Ohio University Press, 2021)

Catie Coe, *The New American Servitude: Political Belonging Among African Immigrant Home Care Workers* (NYU, 2019)

Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers* (Random House, 2016)

Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie, *Americanah* (Anchor Books, 2013)

Other required readings will be posted on the course's **Canvas** site.

Provisional Schedule of Meetings and Assignments

1. Jan 24. Intro and overview; issues and approaches

PART I. Internal African migrations

2. Jan 31. Old and new migratory patterns

Film: *Taxi to Timbuktu*, DVD, 002 318: *screen at home*

Lecture: Migration in African history

Readings:

Babou, ch.1, 2 and 3: Kea, CV 1-21

3. Feb. 7. African regional migration

Readings:

Whitehouse, CV 25-57

Dougnon, "Comparing Dogon and Songhay migrations," 177-201 CV

Julien Brachet, 'Local impacts and dynamic of migration to and through the central Sahara,' 238-256, Jalloh, CV

PART II: Undocumented immigrants, Refugees, and Asylum Seekers

4. Feb.14 Why Africans emigrate and where to they go

Film: La Pirogue: Franklin : <https://video-alexanderstreet-com.proxy.library.upenn.edu/watch/la-pirogue-goor-fitt?context=channel:black-studies>:

Readings:

Manchuelle, *Willing Migrants*, pp. 179-227 CV

Flahaux De Haas, CV
Jones, CV; Afrobarometer, CV

5. Feb 21 -African refugees in Africa
Betts CV
xxxx-Media report due in class (4-5 pp)

Part III: The New African Diaspora

6. Feb. 28. The challenges of integration
Readings:

Shepard 1-4, CV
Babou, chapter 4 and 6

7. March 13 Racial, Gender and spatial identities

Film: Film: *The Neo African Americans*

Readings:

Imbolo Mbue, *Behold the Dreamers* (Random House, 2016)

8. March 20. African Women Abroad

Readings: *Americanah*

Film: La Noire De: <https://www.kanopy.com/en/upenn/watch/video/10913163>

9. March 27. Work and welfare among African immigrants

Guest speakers: Binette.

Readings:

Share NYT article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2023/03/07/world/africa/eritrea-almaz-negash-african-diaspora.html>

Coe: *The New American Servitude*

10. April 3. African immigrants in Philadelphia

Vitiello, chapt 3, CV 102-142

Extended Lives, CV

Guest speakers: Elhaj Ndiaye

11. April 10. Spiritual lives of immigrants

Readings:

Babou, chapt 5 and 7, Geminiani, CV

Guest speaker: Mbacke Thioune

12. April 17. African professionals and the 'brain drain'

Readings:

Arthur, *African Diaspora*, 35-77, CV

Abel Chikanga, "Medical Leave", 1-34, CV;

Lavoisier, CV

https://www.youtube.com/results?search_query=African+doctors+working+abroad

13. April 24. Field visit

+++Report on African diaspora website due (4-5 pp.)

14. May 1. Term paper presentations