



Safaris, Slaves and Spice: Culture and Politics in Tanzania

TX 201B International Affairs Regional Topics in Spring 2006

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“Safaris, Slaves and Spice: Culture and Politics in Tanzania” is a two-course learning experience combining meetings and readings on campus during the first part of the spring semester, a field trip with meetings and lectures in Tanzania during spring break, and time for reflection and final presentations on campus after the journey. TX201B is the classroom segment of the experience. Students do not have to register for TX202 in order to take this course.

For many reasons, we have chosen Tanzania as the case study for the course. East Africa is the location of the earliest remnants of human existence. The intersection between the cultures of Bantu language-speaking peoples and traders from elsewhere has existed for millennia, as the Swahili Coast is historically a meeting place for African, Arab, Persian, and Indian Ocean cultures. Histories of trade in the area go back to the first century (The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea). The Arab and Persian slave trade began over 1500 years ago, and is a large part of the reason for the commingling of culture and genes along the coast. Swahili itself evolved as a lingua franca; while it is the first language today for millions, it also continues to serve as a second language for people in Tanzania, as well as Somalia, Ethiopia, Eritrea, Congo, Uganda, Rwanda, Burundi, Mozambique and Kenya. We will study precolonial, colonial (British, German, Omani), and postcolonial histories, including the slave, ivory, and spice trades, along with the role of Islam in the area. Since East Africa has served traders and tourists for so many years, students can examine the development of the tourist industry through readings and travel. Also, as protecting our ecological heritage has become increasingly important, students can investigate the effectiveness of Tanzanian eco-tourism and wildlife policy. Travel plans include trips to Ngorongoro Crater and the Olduvai Gorge, the Arusha area, Mount Kilimanjaro, the Serengeti Plain, Zanzibar, and Dar es Salaam. Tanzania historically has a well-developed tourism industry and has hosted many international students, including Americans on educational programs.

Course Expectations: The course aims to familiarize students with some of the key themes in twentieth century African politics and culture through intensive and interactive case studies of the East African country of Tanzania.

Learning Outcomes Knowledge and Understanding: To provide students with a basic understanding and general knowledge about cultures, history, and politics of East Africa in the periods of Arab and European colonialism and the era of independence.

Themes include:

I. An introduction to hominids and the earliest human settlement in Africa.

II. An introduction to the earliest recorded written document of trading in the Indian Ocean, “The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea.”

III. The significance of East Africa’s connections to Asia and the trading economy of the Indian Ocean basin, and the Arab and African states on and near the coast. The Arab slave trade is a useful study parallel to the trans-Atlantic slave trade about which American students know much more.

IV. The impact of German and British colonial rule and economic structures in East Africa, especially in response to Arab political units and the history of “Arab slaving.” This other slave trade was in part the impetus for much early colonizing activity and a force in the 1870s and 1880s before formal European colonialism.

V. The differing development trajectories of independent Tanzania and neighboring Kenya, and the relative success of African socialist and Afro-capitalist development models. These trajectories were heavily influenced by the impact of personal political rule, exemplified by Julius Nyerere and Jomo Kenyatta.

VI. The social, cultural and political repercussions of the radical revolution in Zanzibar that overthrew a centuries-old Omani dynasty on the Swahili Coast, and the impact of political unifications of Zanzibar, Pemba and the mainland of Tanganyika.

VII. To introduce students to cultures and societies markedly different from their own.

Critical Skills

- To develop critical and comparative reading skills by introducing students to both primary and secondary sources.
- To enhance ability of students to read and think critically about scholarly writing by examining a variety of texts from different theoretical and interpretative perspectives.
- To develop better oral and written communication skills as they pertain to the study of the politics and culture of East Africa.
- To foster an awareness of the importance of debate in scholarly writing and knowledge.

Course Grades will be based on:

- Blank Africa map (5%)
- Participation and attendance at class meetings (20%)
- 2 comparative, critical analyses of the texts, 5-7 pp. each (20% each)
- Annotated bibliography (10%)
- Research paper about Tanzania, 10-12 pp. (25%)

We will provide the students with guidelines on how to do a critical analysis and comparison of texts rather than simply a book report. The research paper is an opportunity for students to analyze in depth an issue of significance in East African politics and culture.

Each assignment will be weighted and assigned a grade. The grading scale is based on that in the Skidmore College Catalog. A+, A 4.00, A- 3.67, B+ 3.33, B 3.00, B- 2.67, C+ 2.33, C 2.00, C- 1.67, D+ 1.33, D 1.00, F 0.00

Texts:

Ilfie, John. *Africans: The History of a Continent*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1995. ISBN 0521484227

Glassman, Jonathon. *Feasts and Riot: Revelry, Rebellion and Popular Consciousness on the Swahili Coast, 1856-1888*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1995. ISBN 0435089587

Gurnah, Abdulrazak. *By the Sea*. New York: New Press/ W. W. Norton, 2001. ISBN 1565846583

Saitoti, Tepilit. *The Worlds of a Maasai Warrior*. Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1989. ISBN 0520063252

Segal, Ronald. *Islam's Black Slaves: The Other Black Diaspora*. New York: Farrar, Strauss and Giroux, 2001. ISBN 0374527970

Additional readings will be included on the WebCT site for the course. These may include selections from:

el Zein, Abdul Hamid M., *The Sacred Meadows: A Structural Analysis of Religious Symbolism in an East African Town*. Evanston, IL: Northwestern U. Press, 1974.

Schoff, W. H. (tr. & ed.), *The Periplus of the Erythraean Sea: Travel and Trade in the Indian Ocean by a Merchant of the First Century*. London, Bombay & Calcutta, 1912. (Excerpts available at <http://www.fordham.edu/halsall/ancient/periplus.html>)

Ilfie, John, *A Modern History of Tanganyika*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1979.

Nyerere, Julius. *Essays on Socialism*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1971. ISBN 019501474X

Scott, James. *Seeing Like a State*. New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1998. ISBN 0300078153

Stanley, Henry Morton. *The Autobiography Of Sir Henry Morton Stanley ...* Ed. By His Wife, Dorothy Stanley. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1909.

Leach, Melissa, and Robin Mearns, eds. *The Lie of the Land: Challenging Received Wisdom on the African Environment*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann, 1996. ISBN 0435074083

Course Schedule

Week 1 – January 23 - Introduction and Geographical Overview of Tanzania (data source: CIA World Factbook 2005)

Tanzania is due south of Kenya, located between Kenya and Mozambique at 6 00 S, 35 00 E. Its land area is 886,037 sq km. Its population (estimated in 2004) is 36,588,225 Tanzania's ethnic groups are (mainland) native African 99% (of which 95% are Bantu consisting of more than 130 different groups), other 1% (consisting of Asian, European, and Arab); on Zanzibar, the population is Arab, African, and of mixed descent Tanzania's religions are (mainland) Christian 30%, Muslim 35%, indigenous beliefs 35%; on Zanzibar, the population is over 99% Muslim Tanzania's languages are Kiswahili or Swahili (official), Kiunguju (which Zanzibaris call Swahili), English (official), Arabic (in Zanzibar), and local languages throughout the mainland

Week 2 – January 30 African Pre-History And Early Humans In East Africa Ancient kingdoms in Africa [focus on East Africa and Indian Ocean coast]

Read: Iliffe, *Africans*, Chapters 1-4, Schoff, ed. *Periplus* (excerpts)

Week 3 – February 6 Pre-colonialism and the Slave Trade

Map test

Read: Segal, all Skim: Iliffe, *Africans* Chapter 7

Week 4 – February 13 Tanzanian Cultures and Social Structures 19th Century Pre-colonial and Colonial Dynamics and the Scramble for Africa

Read: Saitoti, all Skim: Iliffe, Chapters 6, 8-9

Week 5— February 20 1st critical analysis is due The German and British Colonial Eras and the Rise of the Nationalist Movements (German Conquest, the East African Mandate, African Association in Tanganyika, the role of plantation agriculture)

Read: Glassman, all, Iliffe, Africans, Chapter 10, Stanley (excerpts)

Week 6— February 27 Independence, Mass Political Parties, and Personal Rule

Read: Iliffe, Modern History of Tanganyika (excerpts)

Week 7 – March 6 Development Trajectories in Tanzania and Kenya: Ujamaa Socialism and Afro-Capitalism

Read: Nyerere, On Socialism (excerpts), James Scott, “Compulsory Villagization in Tanzania,” in Seeing Like A State

Week 8 and Week 9— March 9-20 Travel to Tanzania; NO MEETINGS ON CAMPUS

Week 10— March 27 Reflections on Travel

Week 11— April 3 Guest Lecture: Professor Hedi Jaouad: East African Writers Annotated bibliography due Read: Gurnah, all

Week 12— April 10 2nd critical analysis is due Faculty Debate: Nation Building and Good Governance: What is the right model?

Week 13--14 – April 17-April 24 Paper presentations

Week 15— May 1 Conclusion – Final research paper is due Preparation for Academic Festival