Module information for African Studies and / or Anthropology

MODULE DESCRIPTION

**The Social Life of the Economy (20 credits)**

Taught by Max Bolt in semester 2, this module introduces students to economic anthropology (it is not a module in economics!). The module asks questions such as: What is the economy? In what sense can we distinguish it from other aspects of social life? How do we make sense of economic changes, and their effects on people around the world? You will tackle fundamental questions about how humans produce, exchange, distribute and consume resources. After questioning what the economy is in the first place, we will examine what money, commodities and gifts are, and what they do in society. We will examine the different meanings of work in different places, and how understandings of time lie at the heart of economic life. And we will use the broad, comparative perspective of the course to rethink capitalism itself: What is the market? How can we best understand globalisation? What is the everyday, social life of global finance?

SEMESTER 2 ONLY.

Thursday 12-2pm.

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**Rural Livelihoods and Development Interventions (20 credits)**

Taught by Reg Cline-Cole in semesters 1 and 2, this module is particularly recommended to taking SH African Studies with Development and to students taking JH Anthropology programmes. Within the wider context of globalisation and modernity, and from a variety of conceptual and analytical perspectives, but particularly livelihoods, the module examines changing rural geographies of household, village and regional livelihood systems and processes during the colonial and post-independence periods in the first semester; and assesses 'development' interventions aimed at transforming the rural sector through the agency of state and non-state actors in specific geographical contexts during the second semester.

SEMESTER 1 AND 2

Monday 2 – 4pm

**African Popular Culture (20 credits)**

Designed by Karin Barber and taught by a new member of staff in semester 1, this module introduces students to cultural anthropology, with a particular focus on African popular culture. It looks at West African genres ranging from "traditional" oral performance arts to "modern" innovations of the colonial period such as concert party, travelling theatre, popular fiction and popular music, in the context of twentieth-century cultural and political change. Topics covered in the second half of the semester include theatre for development, protest genres and township culture in Eastern and Southern Africa, in the context of colonisation, apartheid and the liberation struggle Texts and video recordings are studied in order to gain a sense of the aesthetics of these forms and the way their messages are constructed.

SEMESTER 1 ONLY

Wednesday 11-1pm.

**African Canon (20 credits)**

This module is taught by Stewart Brown in semester 1. It examines the contexts – literary, cultural, political - of African Literature in English (and in translation) by considering the work of several of the continent’s major contemporary writers who might be said to represent ‘the canon’ of African literature as it is taught and studied in universities around the world.

SEMESTER 1 ONLY

Tuesday 12-2, possible seminar, for 1 hour on Thursday afternoon.

**African New Writing (20 credits)**

This module is taught by Stewart Brown in semester 2. It explores the variety of approaches to the business of making literature in the circumstances of contemporary Africa that the continent’s writers have evolved in the last two decades. We will look, for example, at writers’ responses to late and post-apartheid South Africa, examine the so called ‘magical realist’ strategies of some West African authors and consider the debates around the emergence of a distinctive African women’s literature. The problems of constructing adequate and appropriate critical tools for the discussion of such work will be considered.

SEMESTER 2 ONLY

Tuesday 12 -2pm,possible seminar, for 1 hour on Thursday afternoon.

**Atlantic Slavery (20 credits)**

This module is taught by Kate Skinner in semester 1. The module will provide an overview of the structure and volume of the transatlantic slave trade and the numbers of people it involved; describe the practices of slave-raiding, slave-trading and slave-owning in selected pre-colonial West African states; explain why the slave trade was abolished; analyse slaves’ experience of the ‘middle passage’; explain the economics of plantation slavery, and explore the social and cultural life of slaves on selected **Caribbean islands; analyse slave rebellions on selected Caribbean islands.**

**NO** **PLACES AVAILABLE**.

**South Africa in the C20 (20 credits)**

Taught by Keith Shear in semester 2, this module studies South Africa from the late nineteenth century to the end of political apartheid in 1994. The emphasis falls equally on the consolidation of settler domination and on the varieties of African initiative and resistance that shaped and challenged white rule and accumulation. Topics include the causes and consequences of the Anglo-Boer War and their relationship to the gold mining industry; the segregationist institutions and policies of the settler dominion from 1910-1939; the meaning and making of apartheid after 1948; black nationalism at home and in exile; and the insurrections, states of emergency and negotiations that produced the new South Africa.

SEMESTER 2 ONLY

Wednesday 9-11am

**Trajectories of Emancipation (20 credits)**

Taught by Benedetta Rossi in semester 1, this module looks at the process of emancipation from slavery in twentieth century West Africa. Between the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, European powers legally abolished slavery in their West African colonies. In spite of slavery's legal abolition, emancipation was a protracted process in West African societies. This module focuses on the agency and experience of slaves and slave descendants. It looks at the legal frameworks of abolition; forced labour and its reform; labour migration and ‘proletarianisation’; the relationship between slave descent, ethnicity, and citizenship; and the gendered aspects of slavery (including concubinage and sexual slavery).

SEMESTER 1 ONLY

Thursday 9-11am

**Theory and Ethnography (20 credits)**

Taught by Max Bolt and Benedetta Rossi in semesters 1 and 2, this module covers essential elements of social theory for Anthropology, and anthropological theory for the Social Sciences and Humanities. It provides training in theories and theorists who have influenced anthropological thought and ethnographic research (e.g. Marx, Durkheim, Weber, etc.); and in the historical development of anthropological schools of thought in Britain, the US, and France, from the nineteenth century to the present day.

SEMESTER 1 AND 2

Thursday 4 – 6pm