

ANTH 6H: HONORS PERSPECTIVES FROM AFRICA

Foothill College Course Outline of Record

Heading	Value
Effective Term:	Fall 2026
Units:	4
Hours:	4 lecture per week (48 total per quarter)
Advisory:	Not open to students with credit in ANTH 6.
Degree & Credit Status:	Degree-Applicable Credit Course
Foothill GE:	Non-GE
Transferable:	CSU/UC
Grade Type:	Letter Grade (Request for Pass/No Pass)
Repeatability:	Not Repeatable

Student Learning Outcomes

- Critically examine and analyze bias against Africa and practice cultural relativism in their analyses of the social, political, and economic dimensions in the continent
- Describe historical and contemporary cultural diversity among people in the African continent and the Diaspora by analyzing ethnographic data
- Evaluate the social and political impacts of enslavement, colonialism, and globalization in the African context

Description

This course examines what African perspectives contribute to our understanding of global politics, economics, and cultures, as well as how an anthropological perspective contributes to understanding the cultures, politics, and histories of African peoples and societies. Issues addressed include: the colonial and Cold War experience and legacy in Africa; popular Western (mis)perceptions and portrayals of Africa and Africans; patterns of social organization, family, and kinship; political organization; economic systems; current political and economic conditions and ties to the global economy; conceptual systems; health and disease; popular culture; art and music; and social change. The course draws on literature from African writers, classic and contemporary anthropological research, and ethnographies. A case study approach is used for some topics allowing in-depth analysis of particular African societies. As an honors course, it is focused on reading and critically analyzing ethnographies and literature.

Course Objectives

The student will be able to:

1. Demonstrate an understanding of the cultural diversity of the peoples of Africa and their influence upon other world regions.
2. Discuss Africa's past and present as a base of understanding its future, illustrating themes from both individual and societal points of view.
3. Interpret misconceptions and characterizations that perpetuate stereotypes of Africa and Africans.

4. Analyze the contemporary world as it exists in unity, diversity, and interdependence, and understand that restrictions on freedom and justice in any part of the world adversely affect international peace and order globally.
5. Examine African organizational structures and institutions, specifically in terms of:
 - a. Family, kinship, and marriage
 - b. Sex and gender
 - c. Political and economic organization
 - d. Conceptual systems
 - e. Health and disease
 - f. Popular culture
 - g. Art and music
 - h. Social change

Course Content

1. Introduction to the study of Africa
 - a. Western representations and misrepresentations of Africa and Africans
 - b. The setting: African geography, environment, and early history
2. Colonial and Post-Colonial Africa
 - a. Scramble for Africa and forms of exploitation and hegemony
 - b. Legacies of Colonialism
 - c. African resistance and independence
 - d. Legacies of the Cold War
3. Making a living
 - a. Modes of production/subsistence
 - b. Land and labor
 - c. Trade and markets
 - d. Urbanization
 - e. Food production, distribution, and crisis
 - f. Economic crisis and the legacy of structural adjustment
 - g. Development and development aid
 - h. Globalization
4. Power and political systems
 - a. African conceptions of power
 - b. African nationalism
 - c. State and nation-building
 - d. Governance
 - e. Ethnic and regional conflict
 - f. International relations
5. Social relations
 - a. Family
 - b. Kinship
 - c. Marriage
 - d. Community
 - e. African identity
 - f. Sex and gender
6. African conceptual systems
 - a. Philosophy
 - b. Religion
 - c. Science
7. Health and healing

- a. Medical systems
- b. Conceptions and experiences of health and illness
- c. Death and dying: perspectives on the end of life
- 8. Popular culture and the arts
 - a. Defining art
 - b. Visual art
 - c. Literature
 - d. Music
 - e. Radio
 - f. Film
- 9. Dimensions of inequality and human rights
 - a. "Race," ethnicity, gender, and class
 - b. Conflict and conflict resolution
 - c. Conceptions of human rights and the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights

Lab Content

Not applicable.

Special Facilities and/or Equipment

When taught as an online or hybrid distance learning section, students and faculty need ongoing and continuous internet and email access.

Method(s) of Evaluation

Methods of Evaluation may include but are not limited to the following:

Written assignments:

1. Weekly analysis of readings and films
2. Term paper on field research and/or secondary source research based on ethnographic sources
3. In-class writing

Group work:

1. Class discussions
2. Group research and presentations

Quizzes and exams:

1. Quizzes
2. Mid-term exam
3. Final exam

Method(s) of Instruction

Methods of Instruction may include but are not limited to the following:

Lecture presentations

Class discussion

Films

Individual and group presentations

Representative Text(s) and Other Materials

Hodgson, H., and J. Byfield. Global Africa: Into the Twenty-First Century. 2017.

Grosz-Ngaté, Maria, John Hanson, and Patrick O'Meara. Africa, 4th ed.. 2014.

Grinker, Roy Richard, Stephen C. Lubkemann, and Christopher B. Steiner. Perspectives on Africa: A Reader in Culture, History, and Representation, 2nd ed.. 2010.

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. Americanah. 2013.

Dangarembga, T.. Nervous Conditions. 2004.

Nthunya, M.. Singing Away the Hunger. 1996.

Although these texts are older than the suggested "5 years or newer" standard, they remain seminal texts in this area of study.

Types and/or Examples of Required Reading, Writing, and Outside of Class Assignments

1. Reading assigned texts, articles, ethnographies, and novels, and writing analytical essays on the issues and concepts addressed in these readings
2. Examining news and popular culture sources about Africa to keep abreast of current events in Africa and to critically examine popular representations of Africa
3. Viewing films about Africa and writing analytical essays on the issues and concepts addressed in the films
4. Conducting research using primary and secondary sources, analyzing research data, and writing a final paper

Discipline(s)

Anthropology