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Urban African History
Academic Bldg 3200
Thursday 9:50 AM-12:50PM
Email cbrown@panix.com

Dr. C. A. Brown
Spring 2018
Van Dyck 110
Off: 848 932-8559

Seminar on African Urban History : Gender, Culture and Politics



Marashea Gang
South Africa

**“Black Coffee” – South African
“House” Music D.J.**

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wamL0A9Qzxc>

Chimamanda Adichie
Nigerian Writer

Course Description

African cities are exciting spaces of creativity, struggle, and, in some cases, personal assertion. This course introduces advanced undergraduates to the methodologies that historians of Africa use to reconstruct and analyze this history. The course is chronologically organized with readings structured around research methodologies used by authors of articles and other sources used. We will begin with a session at the Rutgers Library, where you will be introduced to the various research tools for your own paper. We then will study several case studies of pre-colonial cities that use archeological evidence but most of the course is focused on the 20th and 21st centuries – both the colonial and post-colonial city.

The course has a social history perspective which concentrates on ‘ordinary people’ and the ways that they fashioned lives in the cities and confronted obstacles to their own existence. It assumes that ‘the struggle in the city’ is the context in which these people ‘create’ their world, whether under colonial rule or post colonial Africa . A central concern for the colonial period will be the construction of identities based on race, class and gender and the role that culture, leisure and collective action shape the city. A number of the sources are novels, and films as they capture the complexities and dynamism of African cities. Much of the course will focus on cultural materials – novels, poems, films, music (including ‘rap’), photographs. The class presents a unique perspective on urban life in a continent that many think of only in rural terms.

Course Requirements

- **Attendance:** This is a seminar that meets once a week and you are only allowed one absence.
- **20% of Grade Class Participation:** This includes classroom discussions and in class projects.
- **20% TWO Short Papers (10% each)** these will lead up to the completion of your final research paper. These are related to the readings as well as various aspects – bibliography, research design, thesis statement, etc. – of the final paper.

- **60% Research Paper: 20 pages.** This paper is to use library resources, both primary and secondary materials. The paper is due the last day of class, however, the last several weeks of the course will be spent with class presentations. All students are to critique these presentations and these critiques should be taken into consideration when you are preparing the final version of the paper. You will be given a list of possible paper topics in the second class. This list is not designed to be exclusive.
- There are a series of 'bench marks' in the preparation of your research paper and constitute steps in the production of the paper. They will be distributed in the near future.

Required Books : Please be sure you get the correct edition of the books below. Some of them are a bit outdated.

Mary Lynn Rampolla, **A Pocket Guide to Writing in History**, 8th Edition (Bedford Martin, 2015)
ISBN-13: 978-1457690884

Bill Freund, **The Making of Contemporary Africa**, 3rd edition (Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2016)
ISBN-13: 978-1626375765

Buchi Emecheta, **The Joys of Motherhood**_2nd edition (George Braziller1 979) ISBN 978-0807616239

Noor Nieftagodien **The Soweto Uprising** (Ohio University Press , 2014) ISBN-978-0-8214-2154-3

Brad Weiss, **Street Dreams and Hip Hop Barbershops: Global Fantasy in Urban Tanzania** (Indiana, 2009) ISBN 978-0-253-22075-2