

## **426: Urban Redevelopment and Social Justice: Cities in Contemporary Africa**

Instructor: Martin Murray

Fall 2010

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Class time: Tuesday 4:00pm-7:00pm

Office: Fifth Floor, Haven Hall 2255

Classroom: MH 1437

Office Hours: Tuesdays 3:00-4:00pm and by appointment

### **Aims of the Course**

This course explores cities in contemporary Africa through the lens of architecture and the built environment, informal economies and survivalist strategies, art and culture, social justice and citizenship. There is an unfortunate tendency in journalistic, scholarly accounts to portray cities in Africa as examples of distressed, distorted, truncated, or failed urbanism. This view that “cities in Africa just don’t work” is a fairly widespread perception that has embedded itself in popular culture. Rather than treating cities in Africa as undifferentiated places of socio-economic malaise, famine and war, infrastructural failure, and service breakdown, the course seeks to understand the complexity of processes at work that produce cities in Africa today. The course focuses the multiple ways that cities actually do work in Africa, but perhaps in ways that are invisible to planners, experts, journalists, and travelers.

Students will be evaluated through a combination of written assignments and class participation. The methods of instruction are lecture and discussion. While some books will be required, most class sessions will revolve around critical readings of three or four articles.

### **Course Requirements**

Students will be required to write three short papers (3-4 pages each) based on a choice of topics covered over the term. Each is worth 20 percent of the grade. Students are required to write a longer term paper in their research area. This is worth 40 percent of the final grade.

### **Required Books**

Martin J. Murray, Taming the Disorderly City: The Spatial Landscape of Johannesburg after Apartheid (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 2008). ISBN: 978-8014-7437-8

Mike Davis, Planet of Slums (London and New York: Verso, 2005).  
1-84467-022-8

AbdouMaliq Simone, City Life from Jakarta to Dakar (New York: Routledge [Taylor and Francis Group], 2010)  
ISBN: 0-415-99322-9 Or ISBN: 13:978-0-415-99322-7

James Ferguson, Global Shadows: Africa in the Neoliberal World Order (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

With the exception of the books, all required readings available on CTools.

### **Week One: Overview and Introduction**

#### Themes

Overview of the course and description of the thematic focus

### **Week Two: Approaches to Studying Africa**

#### Themes

Historical origins of the present conjuncture  
modernism and modernity versus tradition and backwardness: on the "worlding" of African cities

*Debate 1: What can we learn from history?*

*Debate 2: How do we conceptualize historical continuities (deep structures) versus historical discontinuities (ruptures)?*

#### Readings

Frederick Cooper, "What is the Concept of Globalization Good For? An African Historian's Perspective," African Affairs 100,399 (2001), pp. 189-213.

James Ferguson, Global Shadows [Introduction pp. 1-22; Chapter One, pp. 26-49].

#### Recommended

William Cunningham Bissell, "Casting a Long Shadow: Colonial Categories, Cultural Identities, and Cosmopolitan Spaces in Globalizing Africa," African Identities 5,2 (2007), pp. 181-197.

John Comaroff, "Reflections on the Colonial State, in South Africa and Elsewhere: Factions, Fragments, Facts and Fictions" Social Identities 4,3 (1998), pp. 321-361.

Jean-Francois Bayart, "Africa in the World: A History of Extraversion," African Affairs 99,395 (2000), pp. 217-267.

### **Week Three: Urban Dystopias**

#### Themes

Dystopian Imaginings

#### Readings

Mike Davis, Planet of Slums

Film: *Darwin's Nightmare*

George Packer, "The Megacity: Decoding the Chaos of Lagos," The New Yorker (November 13, 2006), pp. 62-75.

#### Recommended

Lansana Gberie, "Review Article: Africa: The Troubled Continent," African Affairs 104/405 (2005), pp. 337-342

### **Week Four: Cities in Contemporary Africa**

#### Themes

Urban Political Economy and its Discontents: Micro-Perspectives

#### Themes

Informal versus formal economies; Cultural Life

*Debate 1: Is African urbanization an exemplary expression of failed or distressed urbanism?*

*Debate 2: how do we theoretically specify urbanization processes in Africa?*

*Debate 3: why is it important to make a distinction between cities in Africa and African cities?*

*Debate 4:*

*What are the analytic and practical connections between formality and informality?*

#### Readings

Garth Myers and Martin Murray, "Introduction: Situating Contemporary Cities in Africa," in Martin J. Murray and Garth Myers (eds.), Cities in Contemporary Africa (New York and London: Palgrave/Macmillan, 2006), pp. 1-25.

Anne Pitcher with Aubrey Graham, "Cars are Killing Luanda: Cronyism, Consumerism, and other Assaults on Angola's Postwar, Capital City," in Cities in

Contemporary Africa, pp. 173-194. [along with accompanying photo essay, pp. 195-200]

### Recommended

Antoine Bouillon, "Between Euphemism and Informalism: Inventing the City" in Okwui Enwezor, *et. al.* (eds.), Under Siege: Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos Documenta 11 Platform 4 (Kassel: Hatje Cantz, 2002), pp. 81-98.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "The Visible and the Invisible: Remaking Cities in Africa," in Under Siege, pp. 23-43.

Filip DeBoeck and Marie Françoise Plissart, Kinshasa: Tales of the Invisible City (Ludion: Royal Museum for Central Africa, Tervuren, 2004).

## **Weeks Four/Five: Johannesburg**

### Themes

What can Johannesburg tell us – or not tell us – about cities in Africa?

*Debate 1: Is Johannesburg an Exception or not?*

### Readings

Martin Murray, Taming the Disorderly City

Martin Murray, "The City in Fragments: Kaleidoscopic Johannesburg after Apartheid," in Gyan Prakash and Kevin Kruse (eds.), The Spaces and the Modern City: Imaginaries, Politics, and Everyday Life (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2008), pp. 144-178.

Martin J. Murray, "Fire and Ice: Unnatural Disasters and the Disposable Urban Poor in Post-Apartheid Johannesburg," International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 33,1 (2008), 165-192.

Achille Mbembe and Sarah Nuttall, "Introduction: Afropolis," in Sarah Nuttall and Achille Mbembe (eds.), Johannesburg: The Elusive Metropolis (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2008), pp. 1-33.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "People as Infrastructure: Intersecting Fragments in Johannesburg," Public Culture 16,3 (2004), pp. 407-429.

## **Week Six: Crime and the City**

### Themes

Film *Hyjack Stories*

### Readings

Martin Murray and Albert Fu, "Cinema and the Edgy City: Johannesburg, Carjacking, and the Postmetropolis," African Identities 5,2 (2007), 279-289.  
[Reprinted in Fassil Demissie (ed.) Postcolonial African Cities: Imperial Legacies and Postcolonial Predicament (New York and London: Routledge, 2007)]

John Comaroff and Jean Comaroff, "Policing Culture, Cultural Policing: Law and Social Order in Postcolonial South Africa," Law and Social Inquiry 29,3 (2004), pp. 513-545.

## **Weeks Seven/Eight: City Life in Africa**

### Themes

City building in Africa: comparison and contrast

### Readings

AbdouMaliq Simone, City Life from Jakarta to Dakar

### Recommended

Simone, For the City Yet to Come

Okwui Enwezor, *et. al.*, "Introduction," in Okwui Enwezor, *et. al.* (eds.), Under Siege: Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos Documenta 11 Platform 4 (Kassel: Hatje Cantz, 2002), pp. 13-20.

Okwui Enwezor, *et. al.* (eds.), Under Siege: Four African Cities Freetown, Johannesburg, Kinshasa, Lagos Documenta 11 Platform 4 (Kassel: Hatje Cantz, 2002).

Carole Rakodi (ed.), The Urban Challenge in Africa: Growth and the Management of Large Cities (Tokyo and New York: United Nations University Press, 1997).

Francesca Locatelli and Paul Nugent (eds.), African Cities: Competing Claims on Urban Spaces (Leiden and Boston: Brill 2009).

Anne Pitcher and Martin J. Murray, "Exploring Cityscapes: Kinshasa and Johannesburg," African Studies Review 50,3 (2007), pp. 143-146.

Peter Gutkind, "African Urban Studies: Past Accomplishments, Futures Trends and Needs," Canadian Journal of African Studies 2,1 (1968), pp. 63-80.

### **Week Nine: Lagos**

#### Themes

Fixing the African City

*Debate 1: Can urban planning models borrowed from leading Western cities work in Africa?*

Film: Rem Koolhaas, *Lagos Wide and Close*

#### Readings

Matthew Gandy, "Planning and Anti-Planning and the Infrastructure Crisis facing Metropolitan Lagos," Urban Studies 43,2 (2006), pp. 371-396.

Matthew Gandy, "Learning from Lagos," New Left Review 33 (2005), pp. 36-52.

#### Recommended

Brian Larkin, "Bandiri Music, globalization, and Urban Experience in Nigeria," Social Text 81 (22,4) (2004), pp. 91-112.

Edgar Pieterse, "Exploratory Notes on African Urbanism," Paper Presented at 3<sup>rd</sup> European Conference on African Studies, 4-7 Leipzig 2009.

Edgar Pieterse, "African Cities: Grasping the Unknowable." Inaugural Lecture, University of Cape Town, 26 August 2009.

AbdouMaliq Simone and Abdelghani Abouhane (eds.), Urban Africa: Changing Conours of Survival in the City (Dakar: Codrestria Books, 2005).

Pieterse, City Futures

Vanessa Watson, "Seeing from the South: Refocusing Urban Planning on the Globe's Central Urban Issues," Urban Studies 46 (2009), pp. 2259-2275.

## **Week Ten: Movement and Circuits: Immigrants and Migration**

### Themes

Immigrants and immigration

Mobility and movement

### Readings

Martin J. Murray, "Alien Strangers in our Midst: The Dreaded Foreign Invasion and 'Fortress South Africa'," Canadian Journal of African Studies 37,2-3 (2003), pp. 440-466.

Caroline Kihato, "Governing the City? South Africa's Struggle to Deal with Urban Immigrants after apartheid," African Identities 5,2 (2007), pp. 261-278.

Loren Landau, "Transplants and Transients: Idioms of belonging and Dislocation in Inner-city Johannesburg," African Studies Review 49,2 (2006), pp. 125-145.

Loren Landau, "Loving the Alien? Citizenship, Law, and the Future in South Africa's Demonic Society," African Affairs 109/435 (2010), pp. 213-230.

Loren Landau and Tamlyn Monson, "Displacement, Estrangement and Sovereignty: Reconfiguring State Power in urban South Africa," Government and Opposition 43,2 (2008), pp. 315-336.

### Recommended

Dominique Malaquais, "Douala/Johannesburg/New York: Cityscapes Imagined," in Murray and Myers(eds.), Cities in Contemporary Africa, pp. 31-52.

Janet MacGaffey and Rémy Bazenguissa-Ganga, Congo-Paris: Transnational Traders on the Margins of the Law (Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2000).

Jens Andersson, "Informal Moves, Informal Markets: International Migrants and Traders from Mzimba District, Malawi," African Affairs 105/420 (2006), pp. 375-397.

Thilde Langebvang and Katherine Gough, "Surviving through Movement: the Mobility of Urban Youth in Ghana," Social and Cultural Geography 10,7 (2009), pp. 741-756.

John Chernoff, Hustling is Not Stealing: Stories of an African Bar Girl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003).

John Chernoff, Exchange is not Robbery: More Stories of an African Bar Girl (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2005).

### **Week Eleven: Networks and Connections**

#### Readings

AbdouMaliq Simone, "Pirate Towns: Reworking Social and Symbolic Infrastructures in Johannesburg and Douala," Urban Studies 42,2 (2006), pp. 357-370.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "Urban Social Fields in Africa," Social Text 56 [16,3] (1998), pp. 71-89.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "On the Worlding of African Cities," African Studies Review 44,2 (2001), pp. 15-42.

AbouMaliq Simone, "Straddling the Divides: Remaking Associational Life in the Informal African City" International Journal of Urban and Regional Research 25,1 (2001), pp. 102-117.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "Emergency Democracy and the 'Governing Composite'," Social Text 95 [26,2] (2008), pp. 13-33.

AbdouMaliq Simone, "Resource of Intersection: Remaking Social Collaboration in Urban Africa," Canadian Journal of African Studies 37,2-3 (2003), pp. 513-538.

### **Week Twelve: Cities and Globalization**

#### Themes

Modernity, Development, Globalization

#### Readings



James Ferguson, Global Shadows [Chapter Four, pp. 89-112; Chapter Seven, pp. 176-193, Chapter Eight, pp. 194-210].

### **Week Tthirteen: Power**

#### Themes

Micro-physics of Power

Predatory Urbanism

#### Readings

Danny Hoffman, "The City as Barracks: Freetown, Monrovia, and the Organization of Violence in Postcolonial African Cities," Cultural Anthropology 22,3 (2007), pp. 400-428.