

## **SOUTHERN AFRICA**

HIS 261-01, Spring 2017

T/Th 9:30-10:50, ARH 131

Elizabeth Prevost

[prevoste@grinnell.edu](mailto:prevoste@grinnell.edu)

Mears 306, x4958

Office hours: Mon & Tues, 2:00-4:00; Thurs, 1:00-3:00; and by appointment

The Southern African subcontinent encompasses a distinctive and richly diverse region by virtue of its geography, its peoples, and the particularities of its internal and global history. In this class we will examine various intersections of statecraft, economy, society, and identity, by looking at how conflicts over resources and labor have played out in changing mechanisms of power, accommodation, and resistance. The course will focus particularly on the experience of *apartheid* in South Africa by tracing its causes, character, and consequences and examining the narratives and testimonies of various participants, culminating in a historical role-play in which students will assume the persona of the different constituencies who had a stake in the complex transition to democracy that occasioned—and continues to merit—both hope and anxiety.

### ***Course objectives***

Students in this course will:

- Develop a historical consciousness and critical awareness of some key issues and developments in modern southern Africa;
- Develop a historical empathy with a diversity of actors and voices of the past;
- Develop competencies in reading and interpreting primary sources, secondary sources, memoirs, and autobiographies;
- Strengthen their analytical writing skills;
- Strengthen their oral communication skills and ability to contribute to a collective dialogue.

### ***Course requirements and evaluation***

Contribution to class discussions: 30%

Although class days will occasionally include short lectures and group work, the vast majority of our time together will be devoted to collective discussion. History happens in dialogue; therefore, I evaluate class participation quite rigorously. If you do not participate regularly and substantively, you will receive a significantly lower grade for the course. For each day of discussion, you may earn four potential points: one for being there, two for making your voice heard, three for utilizing the text effectively in your comments, and four for responding to your peers in a way that advances the overall discussion. Note that this mode of evaluation assigns more worth to the quality than the quantity of your participation each day; offering one thoughtful, helpful, and well-substantiated comment will earn you more points than dominating the discussion with unfounded or tangential observations. Late arrivals, leaving the room excessively during class time, and talking privately while someone else has the floor undermines a

collective atmosphere of mutual respect and commitment, and will be duly noted when assessing participation grades.

To prepare for discussion, you should engage in two levels of inquiry with the reading (or film viewing). The first is to understand what the texts are saying and doing. To that end, you should address the following questions about each source. Make a note of your answers in the margins of the text and/or keep a separate running record.

I. For primary sources (texts produced during the period under investigation, i.e. pieces of the historical record):

- 1) What was the writer's (or filmmaker's, or artist's) intent in creating that text?
- 2) Who or what is the subject of the piece? Whom does the author claim to represent or speak for?
- 3) Who was the intended audience? How does the author attempt to connect with that audience?
- 4) What kind of story is the author trying to tell, and how does he/she structure that narrative? What argument does the author seek to advance? Which passage best exemplifies the underlying point of the piece?
- 5) What rationale or evidence does the author employ to make his/her case? Which elements of the story are factual, and which are subject to interpretation?
- 6) What was the particular historical context in which the author was working?
- 7) What kind of background or bias shaped the author's message?
- 8) Which aspects of the account seem trustworthy, and which less so?

*(Note: if any of above questions cannot be answered by the text itself, or if any textual references are unclear, do a little googling!)*

II. For secondary sources (historians' analyses of the past):

- 1) What question is the writer (or filmmaker) posing?
- 2) How does the author answer that question? Which sentence(s) best state the writer's overall argument?
- 3) What other assumption/interpretation(s) does the author appear to be arguing against?
- 4) How does the author develop the argument throughout the piece? What are the sub-arguments that bolster the main argument? What kind of story is the author trying to tell?
- 5) How does the author use evidence to prove the argument?

The second level of inquiry in preparing for discussion involves extrapolating larger sets of interpretations from the readings and grappling with their significance. Ask yourself how the texts for the day relate to one another and to the larger themes and other readings you have encountered in the course – do they reinforce or complicate a particular angle of interpretation? What overlaps or discrepancies emerge when you hold up these texts next to each other? What kind of story do they tell about continuity and change over time? Additionally, I will usually email specific discussion questions in advance to help guide your analysis of the bigger picture. If you must miss class for illness or an off-campus commitment, you may make up the day's participation points by submitting a written response to these discussion questions.

**\*\*Always** be sure to bring your own annotated copy of the assigned reading to class!\*\*

I do understand that speaking up in class can be difficult. As in honing any critical skill, contribution to group discussions requires preparation, practice, and feedback. I will provide

weekly averages of your point scores to give you a sense of how your participation is developing. Please come see me if you would like to talk further about strategizing your participation.

Two short analytical papers (25%)

These essays will require you to engage critically with a specific historical issue or problem by synthesizing and analyzing primary and secondary sources. I will post the specific topics and instructions on Pweb about two weeks before each deadline. All work must be typed and double-spaced, using 12-pt font and 1-inch margins. Citations must be in footnotes or endnotes using Chicago (or Turabian) Style – see document on Pweb for guidelines.

The first paper (due Feb 10) will be 2-3 pages, and will comprise 12% of your final grade. The second paper (due Mar 10) will be 4-5 pages, and will comprise 13% of your final grade. You have the option of revising one of these two papers (your choice) based on my comments, for a new grade. If you choose this option, you must track changes, append a brief summary of your revisions, and submit it no later than one week after the initial paper was returned.

In-class exam (April 6): 15%

This exam will test your grasp of the material we have covered in weeks 1 through 9 of the semester. More specific guidelines will be circulated closer to the exam.

Position paper and constitutional draft, Multiparty Negotiating Process: 12%

During the MPNP, you will submit a 2-page statement of your party's position on April 13, and a group constitutional draft on April 25. Specific instructions will be distributed along with the roles at the exam.

Final essay (due May 17): 18%

This 6-7-page essay is a more sustained analysis of a broader issue, which will focus in particular on the material we have examined in the weeks since the exam, but will also require you to incorporate the themes and sources we have used throughout the semester. I will distribute the essay topics and instructions about two weeks before the deadline. Your essay must be typed and double-spaced, using standard font size and margins and employing proper citations.

Policy on late assignments:

Each of you may take a free 48-hour extension on one writing assignment (with the exception of the MPNP roleplay assignments). Remember, however, that you are still responsible for preparing the class reading or other assignments that may coincide with your revised paper deadline. If choosing this option, you must notify me of your intent to take the extension no later than 24 hours before the deadline. For all other assignments, late submissions will receive a grade deduction. Exceptions may be made for serious health or personal issues, at my discretion, if accompanied by documentation from the appropriate office.

Note: absolutely NO written work will be accepted after 5:00 on Friday, May 19. The college requires that ALL coursework be submitted by the end of exam week unless you are taking an incomplete in the class.

### ***Policy on electronic devices***

I ask that you refrain from using all electronic devices in class (including phones, laptops, and tablets) unless you have been given explicit permission to do so, e.g. for purposes of accommodation. Please let me know if you have any questions or concerns about this policy.

### ***Disabilities***

Grinnell College makes reasonable accommodations for students with documented disabilities. Students need to provide documentation to the Coordinator for Disability Resources, Autumn Wilke, located on the 3rd floor of the Rosenfield Center (x3702) and discuss your needs with her. Students should then speak with me as early as possible in the semester so that we can discuss ways to ensure your full participation in the course and coordinate your accommodations.

### ***Religious observation***

Grinnell College offers alternative options to complete academic work for students who observe religious holy days. Please contact me within the first three weeks of the semester if you would like to discuss a specific instance that applies to you.

### ***Course texts***

The following texts are required and can be obtained at the college bookstore, through online sellers, or on reserve at Burling Library. They are listed here in the order in which you will need them.

- Clifton Crais and Thomas V. McClendon, eds., *The South Africa Reader: History, Culture, Politics* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2014)
- Nancy L. Clark and William Worger, *South Africa: The Rise and Fall of Apartheid* (New York: Routledge, 2016)
- Nelson Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom* (New York: Back Bay Books, 1995)
- Sindiwe Magona, *To My Children's Children* (New York: Interlink Books, 2006)
- Mark Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa* (New York: Free Press, 1986)
- Rian Malan, *My Traitor's Heart: A South African Exile Returns to Face His Country, His Tribe, and His Conscience* (New York: Grove Press, 1990)

Additional assignments are available on Pweb or in the MPNP coursepack (as noted below). Readings on Pweb should be printed and brought to class as hard copies.

### ***Schedule of meetings and assignments***

#### Land, labor, and identity formation

Tues, Jan 24: Concepts in context

- Peter Skalnik, “Tribe as Colonial Category,” in Emile Boonzaier and John Sharp, eds., *South African Keywords: The Uses and Abuses of Political Concepts* (Cape Town: David Philip, 1988) – Pweb

Thurs, Jan 26: Settlement and slavery

- Leonard Thompson, “Southern Africa to 1795,” in Philip Curtin et al., *African History: From Earliest Times to Independence*, 241-96 (London: Longman, 1995) – Pweb
- Crais & McClendon, eds., *The South Africa Reader*, pp. 9-16, 33-74

Tues, Jan 31: Migration, statebuilding, and religion

- Thompson, “Southern Africa, 1795-1870,” in Curtin et al., *African History* – Pweb
- *South Africa Reader*, pp 17-31, 75-122

Thurs, Feb 2: The mineral revolution

- Clark & Worger, *South Africa: The Rise & Fall of Apartheid*, pp. 10-20
- *South Africa Reader*, section IV (pp. 123-195)

Tues, Feb 7: The segregation era

- Clark & Worger, pp. 20-31
- *South Africa Reader*, section V (pp.197-260)
- Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, parts 1 & 2 (pp. 1-92)

#### The architecture & experience of apartheid

Thurs, Feb 9: Implementing policy

- Clark & Worger, pp 35-84
- Verwoerd, “Explaining Apartheid,” and Mandela, “Verwoerd’s Grim Plot” – Multiparty Negotiating Process (MPNP) packet

***Fri, Feb 10: \*Paper 1 due on P-web by 4:30\****

Tues, Feb 14: Organizing dissent

- Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, parts 3-5 (pp. 93-261)
- *South Africa Reader*, pp. 279-338

Thurs, Feb 16: Adopting violence

- Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*, parts 6 & 7 (pp. 265-378)
- Mandela, “I am Prepared to Die” (full transcript of opening statement from the dock at the Rivonia trial) – MPNP packet

Tues, Feb 21: Women & everyday life

- Magona, *To My Children's Children*
- Clark & Worger, Document 4

Thurs, Feb 23: Growing up under apartheid

- Mathabane, *Kaffir Boy*, part 1 (Road to Alexandra)

Tues, Feb 28: Black Consciousness

- Clark & Worger, pp. 84-92 and Documents 7-11
- *South Africa Reader*, pp. 339-344; 361-383
- Biko speeches – MPNP packet

Thurs, Mar 2: Youth politics

- Mathabane, parts 2 & 3 (Passport to Knowledge & Passport to Freedom)

Tues, Mar 7: The turbulent 1980s

- Clark & Worger, pp. 92-117
- *South Africa Reader*, pp. 384-444

Thurs, Mar 9: Visualizing Soweto

- *Mapantsula* (film screening TBA)
- *South Africa Reader*, pp. 261-277

***Fri, Mar 10: \*Paper 2 due on P-web by 4:30\****

### The demise of apartheid

Tues, Mar 14: Liberal dilemmas

- Malan, *My Traitor's Heart*, books 1 & 2 (Life in this Strange Place & Tales of Ordinary Murder)

Thurs, Mar 16: The way forward?

- Malan, part 3 (Root in Arid Ground)

(SPRING BREAK)

Tues, April 4: Regional perspectives

- Frederick Cooper, "The late decolonizations: Southern Africa 1975, 1979, 1994," in *Africa Since 1940: The Past of the Present* (Cambridge Univ Press, 2002) – Pweb
- *South Africa Reader*, pp 357-359

**Thurs, April 6: \*In-class exam\***

### Negotiating democracy and forging the "New South Africa"

*From April 11 to May 2, we will engage in a historical roleplay centered on the Multiparty Negotiating Process in April 1993. Separate instructions, schedules, and materials will be distributed in advance, but know that you will be required to do regular reading and to submit one individual position paper (due April 13) and one group constitutional draft (due April 25) in conjunction with your role (to be assigned at the exam).*

### Truth and Reconciliation?

Thurs, May 4

- Clark & Worger, pp. 125-144
- *Facing the Truth* (film screening TBA)

Tues, May 9

- *South Africa Reader*, section VIII (pp. 470-581)

Thurs, May 11

- Videoconference with Ilan Lax, a member of the TRC

Thurs, May 18

*\*Final essay due on P-web by 12 noon\**

Have a great summer! If you're looking for a good summer read, I recommend Trevor Noah's *Born a Crime: Stories from a South African Childhood* (New York: Spiegel & Grau, 2016).