Africa occupies a crucial place in the imagining and invention of the modern world. The making of Africa itself is a product of a combination of many factors, both internal and external, including the creativity of its peoples, their ability to tame nature and its resources into formidable civilizations like ancient Egypt and medieval Timbuktu but also the actions of forces from other parts
of the world, both near and afar, mediated through trade, war, migration, and conquest. Nevertheless, Africa’s presence in the world, or its incorporation in it, was never always on an equal footing. The late 15th century, which saw a massive trade in Africans across the Atlantic, can be said to have started the peripheralization of the continent which intensified further in subsequent centuries under conditions of colonialism and ‘neo-colonialism.’ Although, there are signs of reversal in several areas, the fundamentals of Africa’s dependency and marginalization are still intact.

The course is organized to offer a discussion about Africa and its place in the modern world. It interrogates the idea of global Africa, Africa’s role in the making of the modern world, and its contemporary location. It seeks to understand the current condition of Africa through a discussion of development, cultural economy, migration and transnational politics, and the politics of sovereignty. The course is designed as a research seminar involving critical reading of texts, presentations, discussion and writing of research papers.

**REQUIREMENTS**

Class participation and presentations account for 50% of the final grade; papers will make up the remaining 50%. The following include expectations in class during the semester:

- Coming to the seminar well prepared to actively discuss the readings and participate in the discussions
- Participating in the formulation of agendas for leading discussion during one meeting

- Writing five short papers (3-4pp) on five of the following seven major topics covered in the seminar and one longer final paper (15pp)

  ✓ 1st Paper (Sept. 26): on neoliberalism & development
  ✓ 2nd Paper (Oct. 10): on public parks or land grabbing
  ✓ 3rd paper (Oct. 17): on migration
  ✓ 4th paper (Oct. 31): on cultural economy of globalization
  ✓ 5th Paper (Nov. 07): on nation-states/sovereignty
  ✓ 6th paper (Nov. 14): on the Chinese presence in Africa
  ✓ 7th Paper (Nov. 21): on resistance

- Giving a 15-minute presentation of your final paper

REQUIRED READING


RECOMMENDED BOOK AT MELVILLE LIBRARY

ONLINE READINGS

Weekly readings, predominantly articles, will be made available on class Blackboard.

SEMINAR SESSIONS

Class 1 (08/29): INTRODUCTION: Topics, Objectives, Requirements, & Assignments
Class 2 (09/5): REPRESENTATION: The Ideas of Africa

Readings:

Class 3 (09/12): DEFINITION: Africa and Globalization

Readings:
Michael O. West, “Global Africa: The Emergence and Evolution of an Idea,” Review (Fernard Braudel Center), Vol. 28,
**Class 4 (09/19):**  
**HISTORY:** Globalization, the African Diaspora & the Making of the Modern World  
**Readings:**  

**Class 5/6 (09/26, 10/03):**  
**ECONOMY:** African Development & the Politics of Structural Adjustment  
**Readings:**  
James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, Chaps. 3,5  
E. Osei Kwadwo Prempeh, “Anti-

**Class 7 (10/10):**

**DEVELOPMENT:** Conserving vs. Exploiting Nature (Land Grabbing & the Politics of National Parks)

**Readings**
ACCORD, *Natural Resources, the Environment and Conflict* (ACCORD, 2009)

**Class 8/9 (10/17, 24):**

**CROSSINGS:** Globalization and the Geopolitical Economy of African Migration and Incorporation

**Readings:**

**Class 10 (10/31):**
**IDENTITY**: Of Mimicry and Membership: Africa and the Cultural Economy of Globalization

**Readings:**
James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, Chap. 6

**Class 11 (11/7):**
**‘NATION-STATE’**: Thinking beyond the
‘State’ and ‘Civil Society’ in African Politics

Readings:
James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, Chap. 2, 4

Class 12 (11/14):
SOVEREIGNITY: Africa, Globalization, and Paradoxes of Independence

Readings:
James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, Chap. 8

Class 13/14 (11/21, 28):
RESISTANCE: Africa & the Politics of Liberation
**Readings**


**Class 15 (12/5):**

**DISCUSSION:** ‘Globalization’ and Africa’s Future

James Ferguson, *Global Shadows*, Chap. 7