The Culture of Race, Resistance and Revolution in South Africa, Then & Now

**Winter 2018-19 Study Abroad: Cape Town, South Africa**
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**COURSE DESCRIPTION**
This course provides students with a deeper understanding and appreciation of the key issues facing South Africa, then and now, as related to three things that have shaped the nation: race, resistance and revolution. Starting with pre-colonial South Africa and lingering in the contemporary cultural sphere, we look to understand the "why" and "how" of South Africa’s recent history, and the deep roots of debates in the country up to the present day. Our aim is to get a handle on South African culture beyond the too-simple Mandela-as-savior veneer, with an emphasis on the "born-free"/post-Apartheid generation and the country’s present-day criminal justice crisis.

Our class is interdisciplinary in nature, exploring South African culture in the form of literature, film, memoir, music, journalism, pop culture, primary and secondary historical sources and criminal justice texts. Our class is also hands-on, involving daily visits to profound historical landmarks, meetings with cultural influencers and history-makers, and—most critically—time engaging with incarcerated individuals inside two storied Cape Town prisons that have played vital roles in South Africa’s struggle since the Apartheid era.

**COURSE OBJECTIVES**
- Gain an overall understanding of the key issues facing South Africa, then and now, as related to three things that have shaped the nation: race, resistance and revolution
- Become better readers of a range of cultural texts, both contemporary and historical
- Become adept at using culture to better understand history and using history to better understand culture
- Compare the complex cultural dynamics of two countries (the US and South Africa) with similar yet very different historical legacies
- Engage with another culture’s rich achievements and profound complexities
- Draw connections between history and modern-day cultural politics
- Write clearly and cohesively about culture, history and contemporary experience

**COURSE POLICIES**
- You cannot miss any of the course meetings or outings. Attendance is mandatory, all the time.
- Maturity is a must. Travel demands it; travel to South Africa, on the other end of the globe, absolutely mandates it. I will support your international transition and am here as a source of guidance and support throughout.
- No late papers accepted. Period. All assignments are due when they are due.
- Consumption of illegal drugs is grounds for immediate dismissal from the program.
REQUIRED TEXTS
Thompson, A History of South Africa
Crais and McClendon, The South Africa Reader: History, Culture, Politics (R)
Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue
Mathabane, Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth's Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa
Mandela, Long Walk to Freedom
Gordimer, July's People
Tutu, No Future Without Forgiveness
Shaka Sisulu et al, editors, Writing What We Like: A New Generation Speaks
Dreisinger, “For Black Comedians in South Africa, the Power is in the Punch Lines” (New York Times)
Zehr, The Little Book of Restorative Justice
Dreisinger, Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Justice in Prisons Around the World
Noah, Born a Crime
Other readings in course packet, per below syllabus
*As this is a highly condensed course with a heavy reading load, I strongly recommend that all students get a head start on their readings, attempting to get through as much of the material before leaving the US.

COURSE ASSESSMENT
Active participation: 40 points
-You will be assessed on your engagement with the course material, excursions and guest speakers, as well as your understanding of key issues discussed.
Journal entries: 25 points
-You will keep a daily journal during the overseas dates of the course, during which you reflect on everything you are reading, seeing, feeling, encountering and thinking that relates to being and learning in Cape Town.
Final paper: 35 points
-You will write a final research paper of 10-15 pages on a topic of your choosing, to be approved by the professor while abroad. You will utilize at least three sources from the class readings and three of your own choosing. Papers are due 10 days after returning from South Africa.

COURSE SCHEDULE
December 7 (at John Jay): Setting the stage (6-8 PM English conference room)
Thompson, A History of South Africa

January 12: Travel day
Fly to Cape Town, South Africa, arriving the 12. Meet for orientation and dinner.

January 13:
Morning:
Mphahlele, Down Second Avenue
Mathabane, Kaffir Boy: The True Story of a Black Youth’s Coming of Age in Apartheid South Africa
ASSIGNMENT: Write a three-page epilogue to Kaffir Boy in Mathabane's voice, ten years after the book ends. Due in two days.
Afternoon:
Tour of the townships: Gugulethu/Langa
January 14: Close lens on Apartheid and Mandela
Morning:
Trevor Noah, *Born a Crime*
Excerpts from prison writings of Govan Mbeki, Walter Sisulu, Ahmed Kathrada
Excerpt from Fredrickson, *White Supremacy: A Comparative Study in American and South African History*
Afternoon:
Free time

January 15:
Morning-Afternoon:
Visit to Robben Island
Discuss Mandela, *Long Walk to Freedom*

January 16: The culture of revolution
Morning:
Excerpts from Krige, *Soweto 16 June 1976: Personal Accounts of the Uprising*; watch short film on the uprising
Watch Mandela speeches and his first TV interview
Afternoon:
District Six Museum, Cape Town walking tour

January 17: The Truth and Reconciliation Commission
Morning:
Gordimer, *July's People*
Tutu, *No Future Without Forgiveness*
Afternoon:
Guest Speaker: TRC Executive Secretary Ruben Richards

January 18: SA's contemporary criminal justice crisis
Morning:
Visit to Drakenstein Prison, formerly Victor Verster Prison, where Mandela was released from. We will be led by radio host and prison activist Preston Jongbloed and will spend much of the day engaging with the incarcerated men he teaches, mentors and assists in reentry.
Afternoon: (class and lunch at Solms vineyard)
Excerpts from Dreisinger, *Incarceration Nations: A Journey to Justice in Prisons Around the World*
Zehr, *The Little Book of Restorative Justice*
Evening:
Dinner in Constantia accompanied by PJ Pote, local hip-hop artist who was incarcerated at Pollsmoor

January 19: The contemporary racial fray, from politics to culture
Morning:
Dreisinger, “For Black Comedians in South Africa, the Power is in the Punch Lines” (New York Times)
R 524-530, 552-581
Watch: Clips from “Late Night News”; Zuma cartoons
Writing What We Like: A New Generation Speaks
Listen: Music of SA: Struggle songs, Miriam Makeba, Kwato documentary

Afternoon:
Guest Speakers: Naeemah Maoset, Editor, Media24’s Kwela Books, devoted to black/coloured South African writers; Yaaseen Barnes, comedian

Evening:
Cape Town Comedy Club

January 20: Reconciliation? Resolution? Part one
Morning:
Visit to Pollsmoor Prison, where Mandela was incarcerated for six years, with Hope Prison Ministries, to learn about its groundbreaking restorative justice work there.
Evening:
Farewell dinner, Camps Bay

January 21: Reconciliation? Resolution? Part two
Morning:
Visit to Chrysalis Academy

January 22: Return to NYC

February 10: Final papers due, emailed to Professor Dreisinger