

Identity and Multi-culturalism

AFRS-3000 (3 credits)

South Africa: Identity, Multiculturalism, and Social Political Transformation

This syllabus is representative of a typical semester. Because courses develop and change over time to take advantage of unique learning opportunities, actual course content varies from semester to semester.

Course Description

The Multiculturalism and Identity course is delivered through four interrelated modules. Through lectures, discussions and excursions to relevant sites, this course aims to provide students with a broad understanding of the historical background to South Africa's Apartheid system, how Apartheid shaped and continues to impact social policy, the visions for post-Apartheid South Africa and the political, economic and social structure of the future South Africa. The course begins with the necessary foundational and contextual materials relating to South Africa's socio-political, cultural, and economic history required to place the remainder of the course and program components into proper context. From there the course covers topics on multiculturalism's theoretical foundations, national unity and reconciliation, power asymmetries across gender, race, class and ethnic lines, the efficacy of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission in serving justice and human rights, liberal democracy, social and economic development, and peaceful co-existence. Multiculturalism carries a variety of connotations, but the discourse of power generally images it as a positive thing, along the liberal humanist lines of "celebrating diversity," whose South African equivalent is "Rainbow Nationalism." Also important for this course is the discourse that challenges liberal humanism because of its connections with hegemonic globalization. The goal will be to expose students to a variety of views, and to encourage students to process and reach their own conclusions, as well as to emerge from the experience with new and insightful questions to take forward. We will look at aspects of identity that are pertinent to issues around multiculturalism such as social change in education, language use, land, social justice organizations, party politics, development, social welfare NGOs and tourism, for example.

Learning Outcomes

Upon completion of the course, students will be able to:

- Describe the ways in which the global colonial project influenced the constructions of race, and how these were reified during apartheid into a racist legal system of white domination and black oppression, and the multiple resistances to these;

- Compare and contrast the constructions and mobilization of race and racism in their structural formulation, and personal impact during colonialism, apartheid and after 1994;
- Illustrate the ways in which this past is present in contemporary social life and social issues pertaining to class, culture, language, ethnicity and space;
- Apply theoretical and contextual of Race and the politics of Racism in the South African context to the development and completion of a secondary research paper into a theme or topic;
- Work during the course consist of a combination of direct class contact hours with local staff; small group work; academic reading; documentaries; films and reflection, learning and synthesizing sessions in written forums and group calls.

Language of Instruction

This course is taught in English, but students will be exposed to vocabulary related to course content as well as the nuances of multiculturalism and identity in South African context.

Instructional Methods

The course will be delivered through a combination of classes and excursions to relevant sites. Guest lectures with different backgrounds and experiences will be invited to speak and share their stories.

Required Texts

ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS. (2019). In Satgar V. (Ed.), *Racism After Apartheid: Challenges for Marxism and Anti-Racism* (pp. ix-X). Johannesburg: Wits University Press. doi:10.18772/22019033061.4

Blakeley, G., & Bryson, V. (2002). Introduction. In Blakeley G. & Bryson V. (Eds.), *Contemporary Political Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (pp. 1-13). LONDON; STERLING, VIRGINIA: Pluto Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt18fs3n8.4

Hirschmann, D. (1990). The Black Consciousness Movement in South Africa. *The Journal of Modern African Studies*, 28(1), 1-22. Retrieved April 21, 2020, from www.jstor.org/stable/160899

Posel, D. (2001). Race as Common Sense: Racial Classification in Twentieth Century South Africa. *African Studies Review*, 44(2), 87-113. doi:10.2307/525576

Wilson, A., & Wilson, K. (2002). 'Ethnicity', 'Race' and Racism. In Blakeley G. & Bryson V. (Eds.), *Contemporary Political Concepts: A Critical Introduction* (pp. 126-144). LONDON; STERLING, VIRGINIA: Pluto Press. doi:10.2307/j.ctt18fs3n8.11

Additional readings and articles as assigned.

Module 1: South Africa: Historical and Contemporary Issues, Foundations and Context

Engaging a broad range of lecturers and activities, and taught primarily in Cape Town, this introductory module works to develop a critical and nuanced lens through which to view the South African experience. The aim is to provide a common frame of reference for students to explore issues of multiculturalism and human rights more fully in South Africa. Students will be exposed to a wide range of lecturers and field visits that will examine South Africa's history of colonialism and apartheid and its visible and deeply felt legacy. These contextual lectures are complemented by visits to the District Six Museum, the Robben Island Museum, Langa and sites of memory and resistance in and around Cape Town.

Module 2: Xhosa Identities: History and Culture

This module focuses on the historical and current development of Xhosa identity. Students will be exposed to both the urban and rural realities of life in South Africa. A series of lectures will complement experiences gained from time in the community and study of the Xhosa language. To facilitate an introduction to rural life, students will visit with Xhosa-speaking families in rural Eastern Cape. In this rural context, we will focus our studies on rural development, education, and livelihoods.

Module 3: Afrikaner Identities: History and Culture

Afrikaner society is undergoing major transformation as it attempts to stake its place in contemporary South Africa. We explore the history of colonization through the Dutch East Indian (VOC) Company and the ideology that led to the development of Apartheid. Through lectures, discussions, and site visits we take a contemporary look at this society and how it is currently expressing its identity through politics, art, religion, and economics.

Module 4: Coloured Identities: History and Culture

This module will examine the complexity surrounding the so-called "Coloured" identity through lectures, discussions, and site visits. We will place the spotlight on the process of displacement of communities during the Apartheid regime and how this history is currently playing out in Cape Town. Here also we will examine issues of race and racism in contemporary South Africa.

Assignments and Evaluation

Assignment Descriptions and Grading Criteria

1) Student Led Seminar (30%)

The student led seminars require groups of students to work together to present and facilitate a class seminar based the prescribed readings. Every student will be part of at least one facilitating group during the semester. All students are expected to come to the session having read the prescribed readings, and ready to bring their academic and experiential learning related to the topic to the class discussion. The purpose is not to dissect or critique the readings (and they do have their flaws), but rather to use the readings to assist in contextualizing, learning, making sense of and reflecting on student's experiences (both past, present and future). Readings have been chosen because of the information they convey, as well as an attempt to expose you to a variety of voices, ideologies and approaches (this is one

way of exploring the theme of the course). Interesting discussions can be sparked by bringing readings into conversation with each other. Facilitators are encouraged to use creative and facilitative processes to generate group discussions rather than present information.

2) Book Review (40%)

The book review offers you the time and space to select and explore one piece of professional academic literature from South Africa in a variety of topics such as cultural identity, history and memory, contemporary politics, political economy, gender, xenophobia, education, human rights or multicultural policies, theory or discourse. You may wish to use this opportunity to read something that maybe relevant for your ISP.

Requirements

You are required to review a South African book relevant to the course theme. The book selected can be a scholarly book, edited collection, biography, auto-biography or work of fiction. You should plan to discuss your interests during your first one-on-one meeting after orientation and make a book selection shortly after. The SIT library is well stocked and current, but books are available on a “first come, first served” basis. Your review should be approximately 2000 words, and has the following objectives:

- To provide students with an opportunity to read in-depth a scholarly work, edited collection or biography concerned with current issues in South Africa;
- To provide students with an opportunity to explore a potential ISP topic;
- To expose students to the art of critical reading and analysis of academic literature;
- To encourage students to practice literature selection, synthesis, and writing skills.

3) Reflective Essay on the South African Experience (20%)

From any of your experiences in South Africa write a reflective essay. You are required to write about past events and the experiences you got out of them. The main aim of the essay is to help you learn to analyze events that had impacts on you, as well as help draw conclusions not about abstract and detached notions, but rather about something you took part in. Reflective essays are always thrilling to write, as most of them are associated with repeated emotional experiences. The structure of reflective essays is traditional; your paper should contain an opening paragraph, a main body, and a conclusion. You have the freedom to express what you want to say the way you consider the most appropriate. You also are to analyze your behavior and state how hindsight has made you think about it differently. It is necessary to show how the described experience changed you or made you who you are, be reflexive.

4) Participation (10%)

This includes active involvement in lectures, readings, discussions and excursions using the following criteria:

- Attendance - promptness to class and positive presence in class.
- Active Listening - paying attention in class and during virtual excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm (this includes body language), entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.

- Involvement in Class Discussions - either in small or large groups, sharing knowledge. This means challenging yourself to speak up if you usually don't, and also means allowing others to speak if you are a person who tends to dominate class discussions.
- Group Accountability – positive participation in the group during classes and discussions.
- Displaying Respect – culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities.

Assessment

Student Led Seminar – 30 %
 Book Review – 40%
 Reflective Essay – 20%
 Participation – 10%

Attendance and Participation

Due to the nature of SIT Study Abroad programs, and the importance of student and instructor contributions in every class session, attendance at all classes and for all program excursions is required. Criteria for evaluation of student performance include attendance and participation in program activities. Students must fully participate in all program components and courses. Students may not voluntarily opt out of required program activities. Valid reasons for absence – such as illness – must be discussed with the academic director or other designated staff person. Absences impact academic performance may impact grades and could result in dismissal from the program.

Late Assignments

SIT Study Abroad programs integrate traditional classroom lectures and discussion with site virtual visits and debriefs. The curriculum is designed to build on itself and progress to the culmination (projects, ISP, case studies, internship, etc.). It is critical that students complete assignments in a timely manner to continue to benefit from the sequences in assignments, reflections and experiences throughout the program.

Students may request a justified extension for one paper/assignment during the semester. Requests must be made in writing and at least 12 hours before the posted due date and time. If reason for request is accepted, an extension of up to one week may be granted at that time. Any further requests for extensions will not be granted. Students who fail to submit the assignment within the extension period will receive an 'F' for the assignment.

Grading Scale

94-100%	A
90-93%	A-
87-89%	B+
84-86%	B
80-83%	B-

77-79%	C+
74-76%	C
70-73%	C-
67-69%	D+
64-66%	D
below 64	F

Program Expectations

- Attendance: promptness to class, and positive presence in class.
- Active listening: paying attention in class/during virtual excursions, asking appropriate questions, showing interest and enthusiasm, entertaining contradictory perspectives, taking notes.
- Involvement in class discussions: either in small or large groups sharing knowledge and information.
- Group accountability: participates as part of a group during virtual excursions and classes.
- Respect: culturally appropriate interaction with hosts, SIT program staff, SIT lecturers and communities
- Show up prepared. Be on time, have your readings completed, where assigned, and points in mind for discussion or clarification. Complying with these elements raises the level of class discussion for everyone.
- Have assignments completed on schedule and done accordingly to the specified requirements. All the assignments will be evaluated according to the fulfillment of instructions, organization, analytic quality, depth, argumentation, and evidence presentation.
- Ask questions in class, not for the sake of questions or demonstrating your engagement, rather for clarification, to satisfy your curiosity, to expand your understanding.
- Comply with academic integrity policies. No plagiarism or cheating, nothing unethical.
- Respect differences of opinion. This includes the opinions of classmates, lecturers, and local constituents that you interact with during visits. You are not expected to agree with everything you hear, but you are expected to listen across difference and consider other perspectives with respect.
- Content Considerations: Some texts and activities you will encounter in this course delve into sensitive topics that may be emotionally and intellectually challenging. Our classroom is a space where we can engage with challenging ideas, question assumptions, and navigate difficult topics with respect and maturity. To the extent possible, we will flag content and activities that are especially graphic or intense, so we are prepared to address them soberly and sensitively. If you are struggling to keep up with the work or participate in the course because of the nature of the content and activities, you should speak with your Academic Director and/or seek help from our counseling services.

SIT Policies and Resources

Please refer to the [SIT Study Abroad Handbook](#) and the [Policies](#) section of the SIT website for all academic and student affairs policies. Students are accountable for complying with all published policies. Of particular relevance to this course are the policies regarding: academic integrity, Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA), late assignments, academic status, academic appeals, diversity and disability, sexual harassment and misconduct, and the student code of conduct.

Please refer to the SIT Study Abroad Handbook and SIT website for information on important resources and services provided through our central administration in Vermont, such as [Library resources and research support](#), [Disability Services](#), [Counseling Services](#), [Title IX information](#), and [Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion](#) resources.